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Reacting to Israel's attack, Iran's Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei says, 'The evil of the Zionist regime two nights ago should neither be magnified nor belittled... They should understand the strength, will of Iranian nation & country's youth', OTHER BK, P 6

Trump is claiming that Google CEO Sundar Pichai called him to praise his visit to McDonald's, amid reports that big-tech CEOs are 'seeing the writing on the wall' in the prez elections and therefore folding before Trump to avoid retribution, OTHER BK, P 6

Wicketkeeper-batter Muhammad Rizwan has been named Pakistan's ODI and T20 captain, replacing Babar Azam, as the selectors announce the squads for the white-ball tours of Australia and Zimbabwe beginning Nov 4, P 12

Tesla and SpaceX honcho Elon Musk is laughing off reports that he began his tech career illegally in the US after dropping out of college, even as he rails against illegal immigration, OTHER BK, P 6



DOUBLE DELIGHT

Today's bumper issue of TOI is organised in two sections, both equally packed with news and analysis. To get the full reading experience of today's edition, make sure you don't miss the other section

OTHER BOOK TOP STORIES

- PMs & CMs do attend social events at judges' homes: CJJ
- Discounts come as Diwali gift as auto cos try to drive sales
- Under-construction buildings will be surveyed from today

Indian dies in bid to cross Eng Channel

An Indian man about 40 years old died Sunday in northern France after the inflated boat he and other migrants had boarded to cross the English Channel deflated, French authorities said. The migrants returned to the beach swimming but the Indian suffered a cardiac arrest and died. **OTHER BOOK, P 6**

'Can't recall witness over counsel change'

Karnataka HC has ruled that a change of counsel by a party won't be a sufficient ground to allow an application under CrPC Section 311 for recalling a witness. The HC said the application must contain details as to why the witness is required to be recalled. **Other bk, P 3**

State govt used only 37% pollution fund

Karnataka govt utilised only Rs 222 crore, or 37%, of an allocation of Rs 598 crore between 2019 and 2024 under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) to mitigate rising levels of air pollution in four cities, including Bengaluru, says a report. **P 2**

India's value huge, Modi can impact end of war: Zelensky

'Must Go Beyond Just Saying It Is Against War'

Rudroneel Ghosh
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PM Modi can influence the end of the Ukraine war. This is the huge value of him in any conflict. This is the huge value of India," said

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky in an exclusive interview to TOI.

Asked about the possibility of PM Modi holding negotiations between Ukraine and Russia, Zelensky gave his strongest signal yet, "Undoubtedly it can be in India and PM Modi can really do that... (but) only

"You cannot be neutral because it would mean you are on the side of Russia. Between the aggressor and the victim, there cannot be neutrality. I consider this a hidden support for Russia..."

...Those at the (Brics) summit saying they would like to help solve the conflict, in my opinion, look more pro-Russia

Modi is PM of a really huge country, from perspective of population, economy, influence and impact. Such a country cannot just say we're interested in end of war...

Blocking of Russian economy, blocking of cheap energy resource, blocking of defence-industrial complex of Russia will lead to the decrease in capacity of Moscow to wage wars against us

- VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY | UKRAINE PRESIDENT

according to our format because the war is in our land... we have the platform which is the peace summit."

Ukrainian forces have been under pressure in recent months with Russia making advances in the Donbas region. Add to this the uncertainty posed by the upcoming

presidential elections in US where a Trump victory might see Kyiv lose vital American support. Washington is Kyiv's biggest source of military aid and any cut in this support will be a huge setback for Ukraine. Kyiv already faces restrictions in using American supplied long-range weapons

to hit Russian military targets deep inside Russia.

"This is the third hard winter for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people... We are step-by-step strengthening our energy systems and aren't just going to allow Russia to kill our people," said Zelensky.

On Modi's statement that he is ready to work to bring peace in Ukraine, Zelensky said a country like India "cannot just

► FULL Q&A: P 8
► EDIT PAGE: Zelensky's New Peace Formula

say we are interested in the end of the war..." Specifically, he asked Modi for help to bring back Ukrainian children forcibly deported to Russia. "PM Modi can use his influence and tell Putin just give me 1,000 Ukrainian children... Let PM Modi bring back at least 1,000 Ukrainian children," he said.

PM flags 'digital arrests', says no govt body issues phone threats

'Investigating Agencies Working To Combat Scam'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In a recognition of the rampant threat of cybercrime, PM Narendra Modi on Sunday flagged the issue of fraudsters targeting people

through 'digital arrests' as he clarified that no govt agency threatened individuals over phone or demanded money.

In his 115th episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', the PM detailed the modus operandi of the scam and explained how to handle it in case someone was cheated.

Modi suggested that anyone who receives such a call needn't be afraid. "The three

PM mentions K'taka case, urges caution

PM Modi on Sunday mentioned a recent incident of 'digital arrest' in Vijayapura. He said the complainant was cautious enough to record the video call made by fraudsters and the case served as a reminder of importance of digital literacy. **P 4**

► 30-hr digital arrest, P 7

steps to digital security are: stop, think and act. If possible, take a screenshot or record the call," he said, adding investigating agencies were working in partnership with state govt to combat the scam. However, he said, awareness was essential in protecting oneself from fraudsters. He said there was no system like digital arrest in the law and this was just a fraud.

► Don't give info: PM, P 7

Will mark Birsa Munda anniv nationally: PM

The 150th birth anniversary year of Sardar Patel will be celebrated nationally from Oct 31 and that of iconic tribal leader Birsa Munda from Nov 15, PM Modi said in his Mann Ki Baat address.

"Both these great souls faced different challenges but their vision was the same, one that of 'unity of the country'," he said. He also spoke about his visit to Jharkhand's Ulihatu village, the birthplace of Birsa Munda, last year on Nov 15. He said it was one of the most memorable moments of his life: "This visit had a great impact on me."

Interestingly, the mention in PM's monthly radio broadcast comes at a time when Jharkhand is set to go to polls in Nov. **Other bk, P 4**

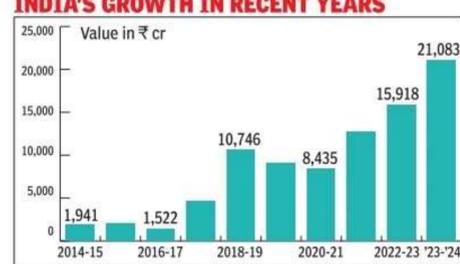
US, France & Armenia top three buyers of Indian defence exports

Rajat.Pandit@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: With India shedding its hesitations in exporting lethal arms to other countries, Armenia has emerged as its biggest client of 'finished' weapon systems like Akash air defence missile systems, Pinaka multi-launch rocket systems and 155mm artillery guns, among others.

The US, France and Armenia ranked as the top three destinations for defence exports by India, which chalked up military sales worth Rs 21,083 (\$2.6 billion) to other countries in 2023-24, official sources said on Sunday.

INDIA'S GROWTH IN RECENT YEARS



Indian public and private sector firms are exporting a wide range of arms, ammunition and fuses to 100 countries, which also include some complete weapon systems. **► Akash air missiles, P 7**

Fresh violence in Manipur, drones sighted

Fresh violence erupted Saturday night in Manipur's Imphal West and Bishnupur districts, with reports of suspected militants using sophisticated firearms and bombs in both attacks. No fatalities were reported at the time of going to press, reports Kangkan Kalita.

Militants launched an attack around 7pm in Koutruk Ching Leikai village in Imphal West, prompting retaliatory action from security forces. Residents of nearby villages said they saw drones. Around 9pm, militants struck Tronglaobi village in Bishnupur. **OTHER BOOK, P 4**

Govt will have to decide on 4 key appointments soon

Sidhartha@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Centre will have to decide on four key appointments in as many months, starting with a replacement for G S Murmu, whose term as Comptroller and Auditor General is due to end in Nov. A trusted Modi govt bureaucrat is likely to bag the coveted assignment to keep a watch over the Centre's spending and accounts.

While Murmu can't be given a fresh term, the other three incumbents — Reserve Bank of India governor, chief economic adviser and Sebi chairperson — can be reappointed. After CAG, govt has to decide if it wants to give another

G S Murmu | CAG | Term ends next month, can't be given another stint

Shaktikanta Das | RBI gov | Got job in 2018. 2nd term ends in Dec, eligible for another

V Anantha Nageswaran | CEA | Term ends in Jan 2025, can be reappointed

Madhabi Puri Buch | Sebi chief | Term ends March 1, 2025. Eligible for fresh stint but has been in controversy

her stint to Shaktikanta Das in Dec or look for a replacement for the crucial job on Mumbai's Mint Road.

► Key decisions, P 11

10 hurt as festive rush sparks Mum station stampede

Ten people were injured, with two of them in critical condition, after a stampede broke out at Bandra Terminus early Sunday when scores of passengers bound for their hometowns in UP for Diwali and Chhath Puja attempted to board unreserved Bandra-Gorakhpur Antyodaya Express.

Eyewitnesses said as the unreserved 22-coach festival special train approached platform No. 1 from the yard around 2.45am, passengers rushed to board it, leading to a stampede. As doors were locked, many people fell between the coaches. **TNN**

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In 5 yrs, city used only 37% of ₹541cr air pollution fund

Govt Points To Curbs Due To Covid & Polls

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

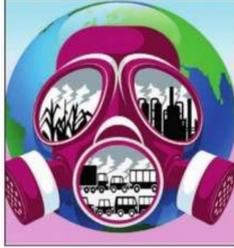
Bengaluru: Karnataka, which always complains about the Centre's unfair devolution of taxes, is now facing the charge of under-utilisation of funds allocated to it under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). The programme was launched by the Union ministry of environment, forests and climate change (MOEF&CC) in Jan 2019.

Despite an allocation of Rs 598 crore between 2019 and 2024 to take up mitigation measures to reduce the rising levels of air pollution in four cities, including Bengaluru, the Karnataka govt only utilised a mere Rs 222 crore (37%). Bengaluru, ranked among the top 10 polluted cities of India, received Rs 541 crore, of which only Rs 199 crore (37%) has been used.

A source apportionment study for Bengaluru revealed that road dust is the major contributor to air pollution, with 50-58%, followed by vehicular emissions (16-25%).

K'TAKA BETTER THAN MANY OTHER STATES: CPCB

Addressing the rising levels of air pollution across India, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) listed out 130 non-attainment and million-plus cities in 24 states and union territories. Any city that exceeded the PM10 concentration of 60µg/m3 for five consecutive years was identified as a non-attainment city (NAC), and four cities in Karnataka were considered as NACs. The National Clean Air Programme objective is to reduce the PM10 concentration in these cities by 40% by 2025-26 from what



it was in 2019-20. However, even though Karnataka failed to fully utilise the allocated funds, CPCB noted that the state's air quality standards are better than those of many others.

“It is not that the environment department has failed to use the allocated funds. We are only the channel as the funds are given to the urban development department through us. In Bengaluru, BBMP implements the programme. I'm aware that a few projects have been finalised and the funds will be utilised soon. Nevertheless, I'll hold a meeting on Monday and seek information on non-utilisation of funds

Eshwar Khandre | MINISTER FOR FOREST, ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

Out of the Rs 199 crore spent, 72% was used to control and prevent road dust, followed by 14% on construction and demolition activities, 6.6% on vehicular emission, 4% on biomass burning, and 2.2% on awareness programmes. The three other Karnataka cities chosen for the programme are Davanagere, Hubballi-Dharwad, and Kalaburagi.

Admitting its inability to fully utilise the sanctioned amount, the state govt is said

to have cited Covid-19 pandemic-induced restrictions, elections to the legislative assembly in 2023, and the parliamentary polls in 2024 as reasons for the underutilisation. In a detailed submission to the National Green Tribunal's southern zone bench, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) regional director J Chandra Babu said, “According to the feedback from the local bodies of these four cities in Karnataka, the Covid-19 restrictions

in the initial years, model code of conduct due to elections to the state assembly in 2023 and Lok Sabha in 2024 have impacted the progress in the utilisation of funds.”

CPCB also said the utilisation of funds under the NCAP programme is the responsibility of local bodies, including BBMP, with regular follow-ups by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board to ensure compliance as per the protocol under the national programme.

₹4cr plan: BBMP to improve NES Circle, 2 other junctions

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A week after locals demanded pedestrian safety at NES junction in Yelahanka, Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) officials said they would improve it along with two other junctions in Yelahanka under the 'Suraksha-75' scheme.

According to officials, the civic agency will develop Kogilu Cross, Palanahalli Junction near Kendriya Vihar, and NES Junction at an estimated cost of Rs 4 crore.

A group of citizens approached Upa Lokayukta Justice KN Phaneendra last week during a public grievance redressal meeting and complained about the problems they face at NES junction due to the ongoing flyover project and the lack of safety for pedestrians. The Upa Lokayukta instructed BBMP and traffic police to inspect the junction to find a solution. The Palike officials from Yelahanka agreed that pedestrians are unsafe



UNDER SURAKSHA-75

at the junction, which also sees heavy footfall as several govt and private offices stand in its vicinity. BBMP anticipates that the flyover project will be completed by March-end 2025.

BBMP has allocated Rs 150 crore for Suraksha-75 and will spend Rs 4 crore on three junctions in Yelahanka area. The civic body has taken up the Suraksha-75 project to enhance safety and accessibility for pedestrians and streamline vehicular movement. It also aims to avoid pedestrian fatalities at these busy junctions.

A BBMP official said tenders will soon be floated to hire

re a private firm to execute the project. The successful bidder will get six months to complete junction improvement works. The Palike will also hire a project management consultancy to oversee implementation of the work.

Another BBMP official said as the commencement of junction improvement at NES Junction will take a few more months, the civic body will make temporary arrangements for pedestrian safety. Yelahanka traffic police will deploy a police constable at the junction to manage traffic and pedestrian movement.

Under Suraksha-75, BBMP is coming up with a holistic and people-friendly redesign of 75 junctions across the city, to not only ease traffic movement but also make the spots safer for pedestrians and motorists. Bengaluru Traffic Police and World Resources Institute India, under the Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety, are BBMP's partners in the project.

OFFSIDE



2k more buses to clear rush

Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) will operate 2,000 additional buses from Bengaluru to different districts of the state and elsewhere from Oct 30 to Nov 1, to cater to the additional passenger rush in view of Deepavali and Kannada Rajyotsava. Special buses will again operate from different places to Bengaluru on Nov 3 and 4. For more details and bookings, passengers can visit www.ksrtc.karnataka.gov.in. **TNN**

Counselling for 1,315 more nursing seats

Bengaluru: The govt has approved 37 new nursing colleges, adding 1,315 BSc (Nursing) seats. KEA will hold a special round of counselling for the allocation of these seats.

Candidates can register options from Monday till noon on Tuesday. The seat allotment results will be announced on the same day at 6pm, according to a release by KEA executive director H Prasanna. The seat matrix for the new 37 colleges is published on the KEA website, and options can only be registered for these newly approved colleges. **TNN**

ALMANAC (28.10.2024)

Tula Masa II Shri Krodhi Nama Samvatsara - Dakshinayana - Sharath Ritu - Tithi: Asvina Krishna Ekadasi h. 7-51 Nakshatra: Purva Phalguni h. 15-24
Yoga: Brahma h. 6-47, 24 Rahu's Sani | Kali Day 1872146
Rahu Kalam 7.30am - 9am
— KL Vidya Shankara Somayaji

Results delay hurts career hopes of BU mass communication students

Vindhya.Pabolu | timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Fourth-semester PG mass communication students of Bangalore University (BU) and its affiliate colleges, who are set to write their final exam next month, have not received their second and third-semester results, jeopardising their career prospects.

The students say they are hesitant to even apply for jobs as recruiters demand marks cards of their first three semesters. Despite multiple queries to the exam branch, they have received no response, the students added. According to sources, 41 students are pursuing PG mass communication in the university and its two affiliate colleges — St Paul College and Oxford College of Sciences.

The students who are about to complete their course by Nov have not received their scores for the second-semester exams conducted in Sept



HINDERING JOB APPLICANTS

last year and third-semester exams held earlier this year.

A final-semester student who didn't want to be named said, “It has been more than a year and we still haven't received our results. This delay is affecting our future plans and career opportunities. The uncertainty is causing us so much stress, and it's unfair to keep students hanging like this. We feel stuck, and it's impacting our ability to apply for jobs or further studies. We deserve better communication and transparency from the university and department authorities.”

A student from St Paul's College said, “I wrote govt re-

cruitment exams and secured an assistant professor's job. However, the job application requires at least a third-semester certificate as proof. Because of the administration, I have lost the job opportunity for which I worked hard for over a year.”

However, the university administration said only 30 students haven't received their second-semester results because of attendance issues.

University registrar Srinivas C said, “We are looking into the issue. The problem is because of wrong entry of attendance of a few students by their college staff. They said they entered the wrong percentages by mistake and would upload the total attendance again. Because of this, a few students haven't met the requirement of 75% attendance, which is why they didn't get the results. We will solve the issue and give the results as fast as we can. Coming to the third-semester results, it's under process.”

IAF software institute gets key certification

Bengaluru: The Software Development Institute (SDI), Air Force, a premier institute located in Bengaluru and entrusted with the important role of enhancing the operational capabilities of the IAF, obtained a key certification, making it the first IAF institute to achieve this feat.

SDI's task involves the design and development (D&D) of mission-critical avionics software for the integration of high-tech smart weapons and sensors on frontline fighter platforms of the IAF, such as the Su30, LCA, MiG29, and Jaguar aircraft.

According to a press release from the ministry of defence, SDI became the first defence organisation in India to achieve the industry-best practices gold standard, the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI) DEV Level 3 Version 1.3 certification, in 2012. Now it has achieved CMMI DEV Level 3 Version 3.0 certification. **TNN**

IN CELEBRATION OF SENIOR CITIZENS

Chethan Shivakumar



YOUNG AT HEART: Senior citizens participated in 'Hiriyara Habba-2024', an event dedicated to celebrating and empowering the elderly, organised by Vayah Vikas at St Joseph's Institute of Management on Sunday. It saw interactive sessions, cultural programmes & other activities



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Brass miffed as legislators, MPs skip Cong poll meet

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Governing Congress found itself in an awkward situation Sunday when a virtual meeting convened by chief minister Siddaramaiah to prepare for the byelections saw a poor turnout of the party's elected representatives and ministers.

At the meeting, brass had planned to allocate campaign responsibilities to legislators for the three assembly seats, Channapatna, Shiggaon, and Sandur where bypolls will be held. But only about 60 of the party's 179 lawmakers attended, raising concerns about the seriousness of members toward the polls.

Congress has a brute majority in the Lower House with 135 MLAs, besides 35 MLCs, and nine MPs and yet attendance was notably sparse. Worse, only five of 33 ministers attended the meeting. Those present included agriculture minister N Chelvarayaswamy, law and par-



BUSINESS AS USUAL: CM Siddaramaiah, his deputy DK Shivakumar and other functionaries at an event in Bengaluru on Sunday

liamentary affairs minister HK Patil, health minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, women and child development minister Laxmi Hebbalkar, and food and civil supplies minister KH Muniyappa, alongside deputy chief minister and Congress state president DK Shivakumar.

Sources say All India Congress general secretary, Ran-deep Singh Surjewala, who oversees Karnataka, voiced his displeasure over the turnout during the meeting. State

Congress functionaries attempted to downplay the situation, suggesting that technical difficulties played a role.

They claimed the virtual meeting was held on a different platform than the usual one, leading to some members being unable to log in. However, this explanation did little to assuage concerns of the party high command.

"I had called a meeting of MLAs, MLCs, MPs, and ministers to ask them to work for party candidates in the by-

polls. Some of them could not take part since they were busy with preparations for Diwali festivities in their respective constituencies. So participation was low," Siddaramaiah said.

Unimpressed with the justification, Surjewala reportedly asked KPCC working president GC Chandrashekhara to investigate the matter and issue a stern warning to those who failed to attend. Sources say Surjewala demanded a proper explanation and directed the party to ensure better participation in future meetings.

Meanwhile, Congress is preparing to deploy elected representatives across the three constituencies where polls will be held on Nov 13. Sources say three separate lists have been drawn up, categorising members based on the regions they represent. These lists are expected to be announced on Monday, formalising the party's campaign strategy.

BJP seeks transfer of 9 govt officials

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Sandur (Ballari): BJP has petitioned the chief electoral officer, requesting his office to transfer nine govt officials of various departments to ensure a free and fair poll to Sandur assembly constituency.

BJP claimed that they previously submitted a request to the deputy commissioner and district election officer of Ballari on May 18, 2024, but their plea was ignored. They argued that the retroactive order issued on Oct 23 was unlawful, as it did not consider the validity of their original petition.

Lokesh Ambekallu, secretary of BJP state office, submitted a written request to the EC, urging it to immediately transfer the nine officials. The party did not disclose the names of the personnel they want moved out to the media.

Sandur will see a direct contest between Congress candidate E Annapoorna, wife of E Tukaram who was elected to the Lok Sabha in May necessitating the bypoll, and BJP's Bangaru Hanumantu.

BATTLE for bragging RIGHTS

The bypolls to 3 assembly seats on Nov 13 will not impact the govt, but a win will give the three major parties – Congress, BJP and JD(S) – a huge boost. A profile of the constituencies



SANDUR
Located in mineral-rich Ballari district, it is a constituency reserved for Scheduled Tribe candidates. Known for its iron ore mining, Sandur has experienced economic

growth but faces massive environmental challenges. Its significant tribal population faces issues such as access to amenities, land rights, and environmental conservation. Mining is a major economic driver but concerns over environmental degradation and the displacement of indigenous communities are prominent

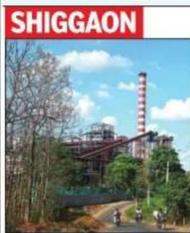
POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE
Sandur has alternated between Congress and BJP, with Congress holding a strong position recently

PREVIOUS ELECTION
In 2023, E Tukaram of Congress

won by defeating Shilpa Raghavendra of BJP

KEY ISSUES
Voter concerns include tribal welfare, land rights, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Environmental issues related to mining and basic infrastructure, like roads and healthcare, are also central to the political agenda

VOTER DEMOGRAPHICS
The constituency comprises mainly of tribal communities, with other backward classes (OBCs) and general categories making up the rest



SHIGGAON

Agriculture is the big occupation in the constituency in Haveri district. Farmers primarily grow cotton, maize, and groundnut, and rely on irrigation schemes for rural development. Small-scale industries related to agriculture also play a key role in the local economy

POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE
It was previously represented by former chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who won four consecutive times. Formerly a Congress bastion, it has consistently voted BJP in the past two decades.

PREVIOUS ELECTION
In 2023, Bommai was re-elected but vacated the seat after being elected to the Lok Sabha in May 2024, leading to a byelection

KEY ISSUES
Water scarcity, irrigation, addressing agricultural distress, rural infrastructure and unemployment are recurring problems. There is also a need for better healthcare and education services in the rural areas.

VOTER DEMOGRAPHICS
The electorate is predominantly rural, including farmers and agricultural workers. The constituency is home to Lingayats, OBCs, and Scheduled Castes, with the Panchamasali Lingayat community playing a significant role in local politics



CHANNAPATNA

The segment in Ramanagara district is famous for its toy-making industry and agriculture. Known as the 'Land of Toys', it has a mix of rural and semi-urban areas with infrastructure development a growing priority.

POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE
Ramanagara district is largely controlled by HD Kumaraswamy of JD(S) and DK Shivakumar of Congress. The bypoll is seen as a prestige battle between the two Vokkaliga functionaries.

PREVIOUS ELECTION
In 2023, Kumaraswamy was re-elected but vacated the seat after being elected to the Lok Sabha in May 2024, prompting a bypoll.

KEY ISSUES
Water scarcity, inadequate irrigation and lack of support for the traditional toy-making industry, besides rural development. Infrastructure challenges, particularly roads, healthcare, and education, remain concerns despite its proximity to Bengaluru.

VOTER DEMOGRAPHICS
Channapatna has a diverse electorate, with Vokkaligas, OBCs, and Muslims forming the major voting blocs.

—Manu Aiyappa

VOTERS CONSTITUENCY	Male	Female	Total
Shiggaon	1,21,067	1,15,717	2,36,790
Sandur	1,17,739	1,18,279	2,36,047
Channapatna	1,12,271	1,20,557	2,32,836

Cong, NDA campaigns hit by internal conflicts

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Bengaluru: Dissent within Congress and the BJP-JD(S) alliance over candidate selection has clouded their bypoll campaigns in the hotly contested Channapatna assembly constituency.

Congress' decision to field CP Yogeeshwara, a former BJP functionary, as its candidate was initially seen as a tactical win. He had previously won twice as a Congress candidate in 2004 and



ON THE TRAIL: Nikhil Kumaraswamy, NDA candidate in Channapatna, campaigns in the constituency on Sunday

CHANNAPATNA
2008 and was considered a popular choice. His return to the Congress fold was viewed as a homecoming and generated excitement among senior functionaries.

But rifts within have now marred that optimism. Local cadres, especially from the lower ranks, have expressed dissatisfaction over his nomination, having previously fought against him.

"We worked hard for six months preparing for DK

Suresh's candidature. We rallied support through welfare schemes run by the DKS Trust, only to see Yogeeshwara get the ticket," said a local Congress worker.

Suresh, the brother of deputy CM and KPCC president DK Shivakumar, was considered a likely candidate but was ultimately passed over in favour of Yogeeshwara.

Disheartened, several young party members, including Raghunandan Ra-

man, a contender for the ticket, distanced themselves from the nomination process. Many were notably absent when Yogeeshwara filed his papers last week.

Suresh downplayed divisions within Congress. "Party workers wanted me as the candidate, but it was the brass' decision to field Yogeeshwara. There is no dissatisfaction among the cadre. We are united. Shivakumar had said he would be the real candidate

regardless of who the official nominee was, and we still say the same thing. Shivakumar is our candidate, and people will vote for him," said Suresh.

In another wrinkle for Congress, Yogeeshwara's daughter, who had previously been at odds with her father, has now turned against the DK brothers. She has challenged them to clarify reports of secret video footage that allegedly influenced Congress' decision to induct Yogeeshwara. The party has dismissed her claims.

BJP functionaries irked

Meanwhile, the NDA is facing its own struggles. JD(S) has nominated Union minister HD Kumaraswamy's son, Nikhil, as the joint candidate, which has irked several BJP functionaries.

Many from the Vokkaliga community, a key vote bank, were hoping for a BJP candidate. BJP, having ceded the seat to JD(S) as part of the alliance, saw Yogeeshwara defect to Congress after the decision. To quieten the unrest, NDA formed a coordination

committee of BJP and JD(S) members, which met on Saturday. Nikhil, unfazed by the tension, officially launched his campaign on Sunday.

"There is no disunity within NDA. It's Congress that is fractured after choosing Yogeeshwara," said Kumaraswamy. The consequences of their internal division will be clear in the results, where Congress will face a crushing defeat."

As both camps grapple with conflicts, the Channapatna bypoll has become a battleground not only for votes but also for party unity.

CM assures Hallikar community on quota

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Chief minister Siddaramaiah Sunday assured the Hallikar sect of Vokkaligas that the govt will examine their demand for inclusion in Category 1 of the state's Other Backward Classes (OBC) list.

Hallikars, currently categorized under 3A of the OBC list alongside Vokkaligas, are entitled to 4% reservation. However, they are seeking inclusion in Category 2A, which offers 14% reservation.

Addressing a gathering at a Hallikar convention, Siddaramaiah said, "The govt has accepted the caste census report submitted by the Karnataka Commission for Backward Classes, but we are yet to study it. I will ask the commission to provide a report on the socio-economic and educational status of Hallikars and make an appropriate decision based on that."



ALL IN THE FAMILY: Channamma (in green), wife of former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai, campaigns on Sunday for their son Bharath, the BJP candidate in Shiggaon assembly seat

Only 11 acres belong to waqf, says MB Patil

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Vijayapura: The state govt has moved swiftly to control unrest in Honawad, Tikota taluk in Vijayapura district, stemming from notices issued to farmers asking them to vacate 1,200 acres of land claimed by the Waqf Board. The notices, citing old govt records, claimed the land belonged to the Shah Aminuddin Dargah.

VIJAYAPURA ROW

Alarmed by the notices, farmers had petitioned MB Patil, minister in charge of Vijayapura district, expressing concern over attempts to declare their ancestral land as waqf property. On Sunday,

Patil clarified that only 11 acres belonged to the Waqf Board, attributing the confusion to an "error" in an old gazette notification.

Patil, who is also industries minister, said, "Of the 11 acres, 10.1 acres are part of a burial ground, while the remaining 24 guntas house a mosque and an Idgah. The rest belongs to farmers." He added that local officials, including the tahsildar and deputy commissioner, had confirmed this.

The situation had escalated after farmers received notices following a visit by Karnataka Waqf Board chairman BZ Zameer

Ahmed Khan Vijayapura. Protests erupted in front of the district deputy commissioner's office, with farmers demanding clarity on ownership.

Patil said waqf notices were issued in 1974, 1978, and 2016. "In the 1974 gazette, the name 'Honawad' was mistakenly added in brackets alongside Mahalbagayath in Vijayapura city. After farmers brought this to my notice, I summoned officials on Oct 19 and directed them to correct the mistake," he said, urging BJP not to politicise the issue.

Responding to concerns raised by BJP MP Tejasvi Surya and MLA

Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, Patil insisted, "Not an inch of land that doesn't belong to the Waqf Board will be relinquished. Farmers need not worry. The Karnataka Waqf Board cannot claim 1,200 acres of farmers' lands."

He clarified that ownership concerning the 10 acres of buria ground is subjudice, and people should await the court's decision. Additionally, Patil said he will meet with district, revenue, and waqf officials to resolve the matter.

Farmers of Honawad expressed relief after Patil's clarification and withdrew their protest. Meanwhile, BJP has set up a committee led by MP Govind Karjol which will visit Honawad and compile a report on the matter.

PM raises V'pura 'digital arrest' case

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

His weekly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat' is known to have generated much debate and discussion in political and social circles in the past. In this Sunday's instalment, PM Modi spoke about a case in point from Karnataka with bearings for the entire

MANN KI BAAT
nation as he mentioned a recent incident of 'digital arrest' in Vijayapura.

Narendra Modi said the complainant, Santosh Choudhary, was cautious enough to record the video call made by the fraudsters. Highlighting the Vijayapura incident as a case in point, the PM cautioned the nation to remain vigilant against such scamsters operating in the digital realm.

Modi said the case served as a reminder of the importance of digital literacy and the need for heightened awareness in an increasingly connected world. "The gang of criminals involved in these are enemies of the nation," the PM added. A "digital arrest" typically involves one or more

There is no system called 'digital arrest' in law. This is just a fraud. Various investigative agencies are working with the state govt to deal with fraud undertaken in the name of 'digital arrest'

NARENDRA MODI
Prime minister

perpetrators posing as law-enforcement authorities, who extort money from victims through video calls. Rishikesh Sonawane, the Vijayapura superintendent of police, said fraudsters may call from any state and instil fear in the person receiving the call. "In the Vijayapura incident, the alert complainant recorded the conversation. Following his complaint, we registered a case of attempted online fraud," he said. "No one should transfer money [based on such calls]," he added.

Study takes Ayurveda way to learn neuropsychiatry

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Bengaluru: An ambitious research by Nimhans is seeking to understand the human body by combining biomarkers like immune factors, genomics, brain imaging and gut microbiome with Ayurvedic and yoga assessments to come up with evidence in neuropsychiatric disorders.

The Rs 14 crore Ayush-funded research, Yoga and Ayurveda in Neuroscience Translational Research Accelerator (YANTRA) Programme, with a 2,320-strong cohort is expected to aid in individual-centred treatment based on body types. There are two arms to the study: Cross-sectional study and randomised controlled trial of 'Integrated Yoga and Ayurveda Management' (IYAM).

In the first arm, researchers are collecting samples from three cohort types: healthy individuals, first-degree relatives,

The intended sample size of the five-year project by Nimhans includes 800 healthy subjects, 800 first-degree relatives, and 120 patients for each of the four diseases

and neuro-psychiatric patients with schizophrenia, multiple sclerosis, mood disorders, and Alzheimer's disease. "We will check markers such as immune factors, genomics, brain imaging and gut microbiome and find a relation to the prakriti styles. With this, we are trying to generate evidence with respect to Ayurvedic parameters. It is just a one-time assessment," YANTRA research fellow Dr Sangeeta S explained. "It is difficult to get volunteers. So far, we have recruited close to 400 subjects for the cross-sectional study. We are just collecting blood samples, stool samples, MRI, and HRV (heart

rate variability)," she said. In the second arm of the study, a group with 60 subjects for each of the four (mental health) conditions will be given treatment as usual—allopathic. "Another group of 60 subjects for each condition will be given integrated treatment. There is no placebo in this study, only active intervention, which is the aim," she explained.

Trials in 6 months

"We are just a year and a half into the five-year project but have not started the randomised control trials. They will start in six months. We are receiving medicines and sanctions from the ministry," she said.

TIMES TRIBUTE

PAYING HONOR TO THE DEPARTED SOUL

CHAUTHA-UTHAMNA

CHAUTHA



Shree Vijay Kumar R Shroff
DOB : 04-Oct-1958
Demise on 25-Oct-2024
Profession : Engineer

5 to 5.30 pm
at Sindh School,
K.K. Road, Bengaluru
on 28.10.2024

Son of : Raghunath & Bagwati Shroff
Family : Sunitha V Shroff (Jaisingh), Santosh V Shroff

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28-10-2015

(Retd.Additional secretary, Govt of Karnataka) You are loved beyond words & missed beyond measure.
Smt Sudha N.Karantha, Mahesh Karantha, Mamatha Prasad & Family members.

SAD DEMISE



John Mathew (84)
Ayroor, Edappavoor, Panamthodathil
Retd. Head of Planning & Commissioning, Shell (QGPC-Doha)
Golden Enclave, HAL, Bangalore

Funeral Service Wednesday 30th October 2024, 12 noon
at The Mar Thoma Syrian Church, Primrose Road,
Bangalore - 560025.

Wife: Late Lizy John
Children: Dr. Leena (Bangalore), Liby (Ireland)
Dr. Lindsay (USA), Lesley (USA)
Children-in-law: Dr. Sam Thomas (Ireland)
Dr. Alice Kurian (USA), Cicil Mathews (USA)
Grandchildren: Dr Jason, Jessica, Lauren, Lisa and Leah
Funeral Live: <https://youtube.com/live/11Ar6v7PM?feature=share>

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Nupur.Amarnath@timesofindia.com

WHAT IS NOT AGEING WELL

1 GENDER STEREOTYPES: Many traditional fairy tales reinforce gender stereotypes, portraying women as damsels in distress and men as strong, heroic figures. Modern society values gender equality and challenges these stereotypes

2 BEAUTY STANDARDS: Fairy tales often emphasise physical beauty as a virtue, which can perpetuate unrealistic beauty ideals. Today, there's a push for body positivity and acceptance of diverse appearances

3 PASSIVE CHARACTERS: Some protagonists in fairy tales are passive and rely on external factors, such as a prince, to solve their problems. Modern narratives often celebrate proactive and self-reliant characters

4 SIMPLISTIC MORALITY: Fairy tales often depict characters as purely good or evil, which can oversimplify moral complexities. Contemporary storytelling explores more nuanced ethical dilemmas

5 LACK OF DIVERSITY: Many traditional fairy tales lack diversity in characters and settings. In contrast, today's stories strive for inclusivity and representation of various cultures and backgrounds

Expert: Rachna K Singh, psychologist

HAPPILY EVER AFTER? PARENTS GET REAL WITH FAIRY TALES

the tireless insistence on heroism, girl parents are concerned with the preoccupation with external beauty. And the "these are just stories" argument doesn't hold up, as Doda says, "Our children are going to grow up in a far more progressive world where such stories will hold no meaning!"

Fairy Stories? Or Scary Stories?

Mumbai-based psychologist Dr Jaya Sukul says that the scrutiny is natural. "When the fairy tales were written, there was no social awareness about how gender stereotypes worked," she says. Mythographer and cultural critic Marina Warner made the point in her 1994 study, 'From the Beast to the Blonde', that most fairy tales were not originally intended for children. In 'Off With Their Heads!' Harvard academic and fairy tale scholar Maria Tatar writes that before Little Red Riding Hood was a cautionary narrative about not veering from the narrow forest path, it was a "ribald story." In an interview with BBC, Warner said that the Grimms were folklorists and scholars, the British gathered them into children's literature in the 19th Century. Later Walt Disney, whom fairy tale scholar Jack David Zipes called "that twentieth-century sanitation man," cleaned the stories further.

Journalist Libby Copeland in a 2012 Slate article 'Are Fairy Tales Out of Fashion?' wrote that she hates reading fairy tales to her young daughter. She writes: "There's a tendency to jump to the conclusion that because modern parents are squeamish about violence in fiction we must be wussy and overprotective. But is it also wussy that we don't spank anymore, or tell our children that they're wicked? We don't look at violence in the same way as we used to."

Transformational and leadership coach Monica Mascarenhas, 42, says the feeling of being stuck as adults can often be linked to childhood traumas. "There's enough documented evidence available on how fairy tales can exacerbate traumas. Tropes like the dead mother, absentee father or wicked stepmother, abandoned children are more sinister than they seem," says this mother of two boys, ages 14 and 10. She says, "There's a lot of fear in the stories — fear of losing, monsters, demons that didn't sit right with me."

Mascarenhas says many mothers are now questioning beliefs and patterns — and that includes a lot of conditioning from childhood stories. Though Sukul warns that a blanket ban on fairy tales is not a

Are fairy tales even relevant today? Many city parents, in a wave of conscious parenting and a serious look at the fairy tale messaging, are moving away from the classic stories to more contemporary narratives



good idea. "We must understand that fairy tales also inculcate creative thinking in children. Messaging is not the prime agenda of fairy tales, but yes, beauty standards or the body image issues can set up the wrong agenda in a child's head," she says. Her advice? Go for modern retellings. Or as children's book author Samina Mishra says, just use them to spark conversations.

Catch a tiger by the tale

Mishra, a writer of 'Jamlo Walks' and 'Nida Find a Way', says, "It's wonderful now that we are questioning the old morals and roles. But when we read something, it doesn't mean that we have to believe it. One can read and then disagree. I feel the key is how do we engage with children when we are reading stories to them or when they are reading on their own: are we talking to them, are we helping them to think critically," she rationalises. Mishra, as a writer, feels these stories are part of our oral tradition and the same story has many versions — "maybe pick the ones that resonate with you."

In BBC article 'Is it time to rewrite fairy tales?', children's book author Wray Delaney says that over the years, she has observed one key change among her young readers: she used to be able to ask what their favourite fairy story was and each and every one would have an answer; now, she says, hardly a hand shoots up in response. Is it a creativity crisis in the making given how J R R Tolkien cites them as an essential source of inspiration?

The parents aren't convinced. Farah Merchant, 37, mother to five-year-old Ben, is one of them. "It all boils down to personal choice. For me storytelling has to be about life lessons, something prac-

tical. I don't want to expose my child to stories that I need to amend, remove words and change narratives. I feel this confuses the child," says Merchant, who is program director at Shishuka Hospital and Utka Kids. She has replaced fairy stories with encyclopaedias, selective TV shows, and value-based learning, but feels that each child is different.

Sukul says not all fears are unfounded. "We have not seen them creating psychological issues. But when the parent is, for example, narrating it, the child does not see the fairy tale as a separate thing but as an extension of the parents' thoughts," she says. Her advice? Look for newer content.

Once Upon a Time

A 2014 study found that fairy tales had a positive effect on people's personal growth and self-acceptance, while a 2018 study said it had a positive effect on building a child's sense of cooperation. For every study that extols the virtues of fairy tales there's a cautionary study labelling them as dangerous. Psychotherapist Susan Darker-Smith's research said girls who grow up on classics such as Cinderella and Beauty and the Beast are more likely to stay in destructive relationships as adults.

Delhi-based psychologist Dr Rachna K Singh says fairy tales are not the actual felons. "Rather, it's how these stories are presented and contextualised within a child's upbringing that can influence their

beliefs and attitudes," she says. Parent to a 10-year-old boy Shilpa Mogilishetty, 44, founder of Bengaluru-based Jus Amazin foods, says it was the lack of character in the characters of these stories that put her off. "They have no personality. Fantasy works like Tolkien's and Rowling's are rooted in reality, human emotion and the protagonists think for themselves." The one thing parents now have, Mogilishetty contends, is the sheer number of literary choices and it's best to feed their interest.

Overparenting, anyone

Mogilishetty says, "I agree I do tend to overthink parenting. But why not. World, now, comprises so many different sensitivities and sensibilities than what we grew up in. These stories are not equipped to handle reality." Singh says that overthinking parenting is not necessarily an unhealthy trend. "Conscientious parenting involves thoughtful consideration of choices and a desire to provide the best possible upbringing for children. However, it's important for parents to strike a balance between being informed and feeling overwhelmed by constant self-doubt," she says.

Choices are being made. And for the better, as Doda says, "Because of this, I have noticed that my son does not have fixed notions about gender roles, choice of colours, dealing with conflicts or how life should be. We are being far more conscious than the previous generation in what we expose our children to, the impact of which we will know only after one or two decades. We can only hope for the best." And hope that is new happily ever after.



SAMINA MISHRA | WRITER

While it's wonderful that we have so many more narratives, the thing is we can read and then disagree. How do we engage with children when we are reading stories with them or when they are reading on their own is the difference in reinforcing stereotypes. Talk to them, ask questions, encourage them to challenge the tropes. Direct impact theory of media has already been challenged

There could be certain degree of overthinking or hypervigilance in parents in today's time, but that is also a product of their experiences. If they have suffered in silence, they don't want their children to suffer in silence anymore. I think it's a great change that parents are becoming more conscious about what they're exposing their children to. But if done in excess, it reduces resilience in kids

DR JAYA SUKUL | PSYCHOLOGIST AND FOUNDER, HEADSPACE HEALING



A GRIEF THAT KNOWS NO BOUNDS: Three years since the death of Puneeth Rajkumar, people of Karnataka grieve their loss by penning bhajans and songs for him

OUR HEARTS WILL GO ON, APPU

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There ain't any passing of a person in recent times like that of Puneeth Rajkumar that has deeply wounded the people of Karnataka. The grief has been so overwhelming and profound that people are weaving memories of their beloved Appu into bhajans and folk songs — to cope with their loss. *Elli hudukali appu ninna / agali hode nee nammanna...* (where should I search you Appu / you departed from us) renders one of the songs composed in the actor's memory.

Puneeth Rajkumar, the actor-son of legendary actor Rajkumar, was a philanthropist who always wore an infectious smile and bonded with the masses effortlessly. Three years after his passing on Oct 29, 2021, following a cardiac arrest, his posters and photographs still hang fresh in towns and villages across Karnataka.

At folklore evenings, music lovers insist on songs written in memory of Puneeth, says Nagaraj Jakkamanna, who runs artist collective Jai Bheem Kala Tanda in Neelagund, Gadag district. "People often request songs on Puneeth. Some even dance holding the actor's portrait," says

Nagaraj, who has ensured that his folk programme schedule always includes at least two songs on Puneeth.

Folklore scholars in the state note that a new form of songs and bhajans — composed either praising the actor or grieving his death — has emerged in the past three years, which they now refer to as 'Puneeth Janapada' or 'Puneeth Folklore'. The life of Puneeth, and his contributions to Karnataka and the world of cinema dominate bhajans, muharrum songs, and folk songs like 'gee gee pada'. "These songs are not composed by famous writers or poets. So there's an amount of anonymity to their origin, which is how exactly folk art evolves," says Dr Ramu Mulagi, a senior folklore artist based in Hubballi.

Puneeth's influence on Karnataka's folklore compositions has been extraordinary, even eclipsing that of Rajkumar, argue some of the scholars. In fact, they say, it highlights Puneeth's enduring impact as a beloved figure in the state's history.

Dr Arun Jolakkudligi, an assistant professor and folklore researcher in Kalaburagi, traces the origins of 'Puneeth Janapada' to rural Karnataka. "His untimely death has been a huge reason for this outpouring of grief. Besides, with his philanthropy,

Puneeth had secured an eternal place in the heart of every Kannadiga. He had educated several poor girls, and extended a helping hand to those who needed it most. Such selfless acts have always moved people, especially in the rural side," he says.

Arun says some bhajans on Puneeth were composed at the time of his death itself. "As riwayat songs (sung during muharram) are also connected to sad circumstances, there were compositions in both forms immediately after his death."

There's a confusion among folklore scholars on whether to accept 'Puneeth Janapadas' as folklore since, normally, folklores talk or sing about people and incidents from a very distant past, says Arun. "Scholars can debate all they want, but artists won't wait for their validation. They would sing what folklore lovers want."

Anand Hosayallapur, who trains artists at Maruti Valmiki Bhajana Sangh in Dharwad, has composed a bhajan, which he says, makes people tear up. 'Uruli hoto Karunad Kalasa' (Karnataka's pinnacle wound down and departed...) is sung regularly on occasions like jatras, Shravana and Dasara programmes, and even at competitions. "Many people get teary-eyed, and some of them, especially elders, cannot hold back their grief at all," he says.

Parvatevva Hongal, a 'sobana pada' singer in Devara Hubballi village, says that most of the folk songs and a few bhajans are composed in filmy tunes. But there aren't many 'sobana' compositions on the actor yet. "It's difficult to adopt filmy tunes in traditional songs like 'sobana pada', which are sung during family ceremonies like naming, baby showers, marriage rituals etc."

Bhajans are often composed on departed but great souls, says Shankarappa Hugar, a bhajan singer in Hole-Alur, Gadag district. "Bhajans on Puneeth are posted regularly on social media," he says. Compositions on Puneeth have a huge following on social media platforms. Arun notes that a search on 'Appu Janapada', or 'Puneeth Janapada' on YouTube will show over 50 songs.

On his third death anniversary that falls on Tuesday, fans and organisations across Karnataka are holding various constructive camps on health checkup, blood and eye donation, and cadaver donation pledge besides organising several other charity initiatives.

Why we need more people trained in ISL or Indian Sign Language

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In spite of a fully developed Indian Sign Language or ISL system for the hearing impaired, oralism remains the most preferred way of teaching children with hearing impairment in the country. "That's because we do not have enough teachers trained in sign language," says Yadlapalli Madhurya, a special educator and sign language expert.

The awareness about ISL is still very low that it could even be costing many their opportunities. Aswin Babu, a multimedia expert, has recently screened a five-minute film 'Education Without Access' in Bengaluru to draw attention to how children with hearing impairment have been facing discrimination in schools. The film speaks about a teacher's lack of empathy towards a child with hearing impairment. Aswin, who himself came to know about sign language late, says it was quite difficult for him to communicate with others without a common language that met his needs.

The first and perhaps only way to bridge this need gap is by having more teachers professionally trained in ISL. "In fact, those teachers who have learned sign language several years ago too need an upgrade because back then sign language barely got any priority," says Madhurya. As a society, we have NGOs and other service-oriented communities that can make the public aware of sign languages and educate them about its importance, and that will in turn help make society more inclusive, she says.

Aswin was among eight artists with hearing impairment who participated in 'Beyond Signs: The Power of Gesture', a transformative art exhibition held at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath in Sept to explore the role of gestures in communication and promoting inclusivity via ISL.

Need more schools

There are not enough schools with ISL-trained teachers for people with hearing impairment, says Archana Timaraju, a sculptor. She was exhibiting her sculpture 'Empowering Education in Indian Sign Language.' "We must aspire for children with hearing impairment to become doctors and engineers or to reach better positions. However, there is not enough help to prepare the ground for them, which is



A COMPLETE LANGUAGE LIKE ANY OTHER

In 1960s, research of ASL (American Sign Language) by William Stokoe showed that it was a complete and true language like English. In India, Madan Vasishtha and team were the first to study sign language and its regional variations in India. They found that it is an independent language and termed it as ISL. It is different from the other spoken languages in India and has independent vocabulary and grammar. In 1981, the first dictionary of ISL was published by the All India Federation of Deaf. Establishment of ISL cell in 2001 and autonomous identity to Indian Sign Language Research And Training Centre in 2015 are some of the key milestones that helped in the growth and research of ISL. Interpreters' training and use of sign language to teach people with hearing disabilities in higher education. Source: NIOS

costing them better opportunities. This is keeping them away from a brighter future they could've had," she says.

ISL is the most preferred medium of communication for people with hearing impairment in India. "Neither the teachers are trained well in ISL nor do the schools hire interpreters. So, children with hearing impairment don't get coached in ISL and are, instead, forced to adjust or struggle with oral methods and basic signs. The lack of adequate ISL training centres for teachers is triggering this crisis. What we need urgently is more interpreters and teachers with great expertise in sign language," she adds.

How to become an interpreter

It's hard for Vivek Kumar, a person with hearing impairment, to express his feelings and emotions. He counts himself lucky that he's an artist as he could express his feelings through his art. At the exhibition, he roped in an interpreter to further engage with his audience. It becomes important to have an interpreter as those who can hear do not understand sign language. An interpreter has to convey what is being signed as well as told. The interpreter is invisible in a way. Their engagement is needed to communicate information, discussion and clarity. Madhurya says that more youngsters need to come forward to become interpreters. "The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) is offering a two-year diploma course in sign language to help people with disabilities. Interpreters are qualified by RCI and they will hold a license."

Restrictive in many ways

Lack of knowledge about sign language is often an inadvertent reason to discriminate against or restrict those with hearing disability at an early age, says Hardeep Singh, who showcased his work 'Fragmented Face'. "There is a higher risk of them being sexually exploited in childhood. Sometimes, it is wrongly assumed that the hearing impaired employee can't work like others. It becomes more challenging if the person is a transgender or a woman," he says.

Hardeep says things can get really hard for everyone when, a lot of hearing people, who have never interacted with a hearing impaired person, assume that the latter can understand the written word in English easily.

Hardeep, who works as the inclusion coordinator at the Museum of Art & Photography in the city, also explains how creative spaces can become more inclusive. "Guided walks in museums and shows can incorporate a combination of ISL and video media. They can also employ a few hearing impaired people."

A TALE NOT AS OLD AS TIME...

Thanks to modern retellings, there are many books that reimagine fairy tales — and not all of them are for children

The Sleeper and the Spindle by Neil Gaiman

A reimagined fairy tale that weaves together a bit of Snow White and most of Sleeping Beauty but with a thread of dark magic in the classic Gaiman style

Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book? by Lauren Child

Herb never imagined the dangers when he decided to scribble on and cut up his book of fairy tales — until he falls into the book one night

I Was a Rat! by Philip Pullman

The story imagines what happens after Cinderella goes to the Ball — but told through the eyes of a minor character, a rat who became a page boy

Fierce Fairytales by Nikita Gill

Poet, writer, and Instagram sensation Nikita Gill returns with a collection of fairy tales poetically retold for a new generation of women breaking the clichés and gender stereotypes of traditional fairy tales

The Lunar Chronicles by Marissa Meyer

Once upon a time, but in the future. The Lunar Chronicles are futuristic retellings of classic fairy tales.

Hilary McKay's Fairy Tales by Hilary McKay

Ten familiar fairy tales retold in a fresh and exciting way. Hear Rumpelstiltskin's side of the story, and the creepy take on the magic mirror from Snow White

Gender Swapped Fairy Tales by Karrie Fransman, Jonathan Plackett

Once upon a time, in the middle of winter, a King sat at a window and sewed. As he sewed and gazed out onto the landscape, he pricked his finger with the needle, and three drops of blood fell onto the snow outside. These stories swap all the gender roles without changing the plot

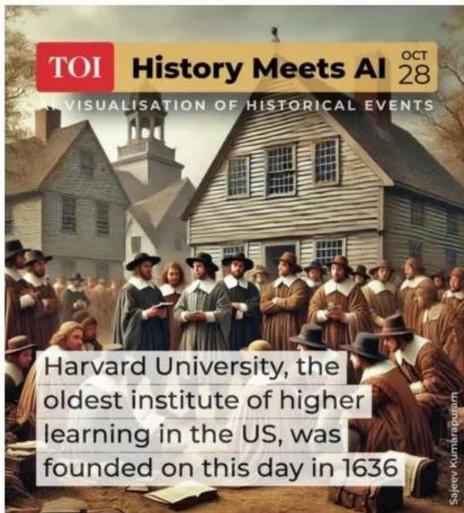
Politically Correct Bedtime Stories by James Finn Garner

Originally published in 1994, this book was an instant hit. From Cinderella rejecting unrealistic ideas of feminine beauty, to the Three Little Pigs arming themselves and overthrowing their imperialist wolf oppressors these new fairy tales are fun and leave you with some food for thought



STATES BORDERING B'DESH MUST UNITE, COORDINATE WITH BSF TO FOIL INFILTRATION BIDS: ASSAM CM

NO RESPONSE FROM INDIA TO 26/11 TERROR ATTACKS; IT WON'T BE THE CASE ANYMORE, SAYS JAISHANKAR



TOI History Meets AI OCT 28
VISUALISATION OF HISTORICAL EVENTS

Harvard University, the oldest institute of higher learning in the US, was founded on this day in 1636

Shah identifies infiltration as 2026 Bengal poll plank

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: Peace can be established in Bengal only when infiltration stops, said home minister Amit Shah on Sunday. Urging voters to give BJP a chance, Shah said, that infiltration and corruption would be rooted out from the state when the saffron party is in governance. "Bengal is witnessing state-sponsored infiltration. To stop this, you have to vote for BJP. Rabindra Sangeet has been replaced by bomb blasts here. BJP can put an end to cattle smuggling, coal smuggling, corruption and syndicate raj," he said.

Launching BJP's national membership drive here, Shah said, "2026 will be a milestone in the assembly polls in Bengal. BJP will win the election with two-thirds majority." "When you join the BJP in



Amit Shah with party leader Mithun Chakraborty at the BJP's membership drive, in Kolkata

Bengal, you also join the movement to free the state from the terror of Communists and Mamata didi," Shah said.

Referring to BJP's dismal performance in the state in recent elections, he added: "Mamata didi is happy seeing a lower seat tally for BJP. She thinks BJP has slackened pace in Bengal. Her happiness is not going to last long."

Earlier, opening a new passenger terminal at Petrapole,

Shah said that people in Bengal were not getting benefits of Central schemes. "If voted to power, BJP will roll out all Central schemes in Bengal. MGNREGA workers would get their pay. Good days are not far off," he said. Setting a target of enrolling 1 crore members in the next 20 days for his party colleagues, Shah said, "... BJP swept the polls in MP, Rajasthan and Odisha. Our govt was formed in Haryana for the third term, and I can assure BJP govt in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. Our next big target is Bengal."

"Modiji officially recognised Bangla as one of the classical languages of India, fulfilling the dream of cultural icons like Jaidev, Mahakavi Chandidas, Rabindranath Tagore, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay and Saratchandra Chattopadhyay," he said.

5 returning from wedding killed as car falls into HP gorge

Kullu: Five men returning from a wedding function were killed when their car plunged into a 300-metre gorge in Chauhar Valley of Himachal Pradesh's Mandi

district on Saturday night. The bodies of Rajesh, Ganu, Karan, Sagar, and Ajay, all from Mandi's Dhanchian village, were spotted by a shepherd near Vardhan village on

Sunday morning. Police and locals retrieved the bodies from the mangled remains of the car. Police said that the driver likely lost control of the vehicle at night. **TN**

Armenia has become first foreign buyer of Akash air def missiles

Continued from P 1

Indian public and private sector firms are exporting a wide range of arms, ammunition and fuses to 100 countries, which also include some complete weapon systems and platforms like BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, Dornier-228 aircraft, artillery guns, radars, Akash missiles, Pina-ka rockets, & armoured vehicles, sources added.

The exports to the US, however, mainly consist of sub-systems and components, which include global defence majors like Boeing and Lockheed Martin sourcing fuselage, wings and other parts of aircraft and helicopters from India.

Tata Boeing Aerospace venture in Hyderabad is making fuselage and secondary structures for Apache choppers. "France, in turn, is importing a lot of software and electronic equipment," a source said.

The former Soviet Re-

public of Armenia, on its part, has inked a flurry of deals with India over the last four years for import of 'finished products' like missiles, artillery guns, rocket systems, weapon-locating radars, bullet-proof vests, and night-vision equipment as well as a wide variety of ammunition and artillery shells.

Some of these deals were inked even during Armenia's clash with Azerbaijan — which has close ties with Turkey and Pakistan — over Nagorno-Karabakh, as reported by TOI earlier.

Armenia has become the first foreign customer for the indigenously-developed Akash air defence missiles, which have an interception range of 25 km, while other countries like Brazil are even keen on co-production and co-development of advanced versions of the system. "Brazil wants an inter-governmental agreement on it... talks are underway," another source said.

Hyd techie gets trapped in 30-hr digital arrest; call drop saves him

Pinto.Deepak@timesofindia.com

Hyderabad: A 44-year-old software professional from Hyderabad narrowly escaped from the clutches of cyber criminals Sunday, albeit after a 30-hour-long digital arrest. The ordeal that started Friday night saw the victim ride 15km from his home, at an ungodly hour, and check into a lodge — all the while being on video call with the perpetrators. It ended Sunday when the victim's call abruptly dropped, and he managed to reach out to cyber crime cops for help.

Initially, the IT professional received a series of suspicious text messages, which he ignored as spam. The torment began Saturday, when the victim received a call from the fraudsters — first posing as FedEx courier agents and then as Mumbai police officials — who said his Aadhaar number was linked to a money laundering case. This time, the victim believed it to be genuine.

The fraudsters forced him to get on a WhatsApp video call and stay on it till his account was verified. They instructed him to isolate himself from his family. The victim was on the video call even while riding to a lodge in Ameerpet as the scammers threatened him with arrest & legal trouble for his family, if he didn't obey.

Don't give away your personal information to anyone: PM Modi

Continued from P 1

However, he said, awareness is essential in protecting oneself from such fraudsters.

"As soon as you get a call, stop... don't panic, stay calm, don't take any hasty steps, don't give away your personal information to anyone; if possible, take a screenshot and record it for sure. The first step is 'stop' and the second step is 'think'. No govt agency threatens you on the phone like this, neither inquires nor demands money on a video call like this," Prime Minister Modi said.

The third step was 'take action', Prime Minister Narendra Modi said and urged victims to dial the national cyber helpline 1930 and also report such incidents on cybercrime.gov.in.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged people to inform family and police, and preserve evidence by recording the fraud call. During his broadcast, the Prime Minister also shared a conversation between a victim and a fraudster to highlight the 'digital arrest' scam.

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'There can't be neutrality between aggressor & victim. It only means you're with Russia'

PM Modi can influence the end of the war... He should also bring back at least 1,000 Ukrainian children kidnapped by Russia... Brics summit was a failure... Not everything depends on US elections... Russia is advancing but facing huge losses, we are trying to save our people... We want invitation to Nato not quick membership
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky speaks exclusively to TOI's Rudroneel Ghosh

What did you think about the Brics summit in Russia and PM Modi saying he is ready to work for peace in Ukraine at the summit?

Zelensky: First and foremost the Brics summit in Russia failed. It was a total failure. Not everyone was there, even looking at today's composition of Brics, we couldn't see many leaders whom Russia was relying upon within Brics besides the guests. Saudi Arabia wasn't there at the level of the leader and there was no unity within Brics. I think Brics is divided by Putin himself by his policy of war. And I think Putin's aim for the summit was to polarise the world and he did not achieve this. He will subvert the Brics' purpose and use the platform for his own policy of war. That's why he wants to divide the world into so-called West-plus and Brics-plus. But as of today he has failed to do that for many reasons. First, I think everyone understands that he is a murderer and a terrorist. That today Russia is just a cheap energy resource, and some of the states are using that. But even the states that understand that they can help their economy in this manner, don't want to spoil the process for themselves with Putin. Plus, Putin is not consistent, and even the proposals of Brazil and China, which were more political and not very specific, were not acceptable to Putin from the perspective of territorial integrity. And for China, I would say, this was a slap on the face. For Brazil too, and that's why Brazil was not present at the summit at the level of the leader. So Brics in effect did not take place.

standing that the energy resource they are buying is helping fuel the war - if they re-evaluated their values, then the sanctions would be functioning fully. Now they are working only partially because the world is implementing them partially.

Everyone is looking to the US elections and there is a belief that a ceasefire could be reached after the elections. Do you think that's possible?

■ So many things depend on the policies of US. But it's not a deep analysis to say everything depends on US. Many things depend, but not everything. In the beginning of war in Ukraine our nation stood together against the enemy, let me remind you, without the support of allies, including US. The unity of people of Ukraine, our population and society, this is what in fact repelled the attack of the Russians, stopped them. But the occupation, of course, we wouldn't be able to respond to without the support, or at least it would be very hard because of human losses. And that's why we are very grateful to our allies for their help and support. But still, not everything depends on US elections. US policies change not only because of the leader. We don't know who will become the US president, but undoubtedly the bipartisan support for Ukraine will stay. And the US Congress, in any case which we are cooperating with and have developed strong connections, will have its personal impact on this war. The US president will definitely shape the foreign policy because it's his or her constitutional obligation. And undoubtedly if US policy changes and it says we don't support Ukraine in its sovereign and just protection of its territories, it will be really hard for us. This is if the policy totally changes. Then we will think what we will do with that. Definitely not now, we will think on that only then.

Another argument is that we shouldn't forget that Europe is a powerful continent on its own. In fact, India and China shouldn't forget about that in spite of the fact that India and China are great economies, still Europe is five times bigger than Russia by population and dozens of times bigger economically. Hence, Europe is a more attractive market. So we need to understand that US population is half the population of Europe. And we need to understand that Europe as it is, when it is not divided, is powerful. It is important for us to preserve this unity in Europe, and not to change the policy of Europe about this war. This is the second aspect. And the third about the ceasefire, we need to understand that we are against a frozen conflict, we don't want the third war. Because in 2014, one war started, and our territories were occupied. In 2022, the full-scale war started, though before 2022 we used to have a frozen conflict. There was a ceasefire already. There were Normandy and Minsk processes where there were dozens of negotiations with Russia and other partners in different platforms. And then we had the full-scale war. So if we now freeze the conflict without a proper understanding of what will happen tomorrow, which guarantees of security the Ukrainian people will have, our children will have, then I think it is a huge risk, a very high risk. Everything should be done on paper and should be comprehensible. How this war ends, and who and how much will bear responsibility for it? Definitely the aggressor will do that.

Europe is a powerful continent on its own. India and China shouldn't forget that in spite of the fact that India and China are great economies, still Europe is five times bigger than Russia by population and dozens of times bigger economically. Hence, Europe is a more attractive market

As for the presence of the UN secretary general, I think that altogether this is a kind of a surrealistic thing. It's not only about the UN but many other countries. I think that you cannot just say that you are neutral in the war between Russia and Ukraine. You cannot be neutral because it would mean you are on the side of Russia. Neutrality really helps just Russia. And between the aggressor and the victim, there cannot be neutrality. I consider this a hidden support for Russia, and the ones who were present there at the summit and speaking about their neutrality and saying they would like to help to solve the conflict, in my opinion, they look more pro-Russia. And that means it's not about peace because Russia started this war and continues to wage it. And whether they want it or not, or understand it or not, that is not important. This is the fact: neutrality in this war means support for Russia. After all of the victims, after all of the tortures and deportation of Ukrainian children, this is how it looks.

As for the position of PM Modi, I think that any assertions today should not end with words only. Modi is the PM of a really huge country from the perspective of population, economy, influence and impact. Such a country cannot just say we are interested in the end of the war - we are all interested in that. All of the leaders would tell you that they would like to end the war, even the enemy of peace, Putin, will say that even he wants peace. This is a common thing. Especially for such a huge country like India, PM Modi can influence the end of the war. This is the huge value of him in any conflict. This is a huge value of India. Blocking of Russian economy, blocking of cheap energy resource, blocking of defence-industrial complex of Russian will lead to the decrease in capacity of Moscow to wage wars against us. Then the G20; the G20 is considered the 'Great 20' because they are main economies of the world. And the whole world is looking to them. That's why the 20 great economies can just easily put Putin in his place and end the war. Not just incentive but the opposite, slow down all of Putin's desires. And you don't need to say we would like peace, you need to act. Because the daily war is killing people.

Many would argue that sanctions haven't stopped Russia and more sanctions would cripple the global economy. So how do you convince more countries to your point of view?

■ Sanctions are working. Sanctions have led to effect. If the great economies of the world like India, China, Turkey and others, which did not impose sanctions on Russia, if they would not help Russia survive in the war economically - they actually helped Russia earn money, sometimes even with the under-



Sanctions are working. If the great economies like India, China, Turkiye and others, which did not impose sanctions on Russia, if they would not help Russia survive in the war economically - they actually helped Russia earn money - if they re-evaluated their values, then the sanctions would be functioning fully. Now they are working partially because the world is implementing them partially

You recently revealed your Victory Plan which includes quick Nato membership for Ukraine. But many countries are divided about your plan. Do you think the plan is practical or is it just a bargaining chip?

■ The Victory Plan is not a bargaining chip or a topic of negotiations with Russia. Let's not confuse this. The Victory Plan is not a platform for response for all of the countries of the world. The Victory Plan is the plan for strengthening Ukraine today. Strengthening of Ukraine before heading into those diplomatic formats of negotiations, peace summits, so that Ukraine could be strong. That's why the Victory Plan is given to countries who are ready to



strengthen Ukraine. It's not about talks with Russia, because Russia is not making us stronger, it's making us weaker. It's not a proposal for negotiations. This is a request, very specific one. I shouldn't 'ask' in my Victory Plan. As for the invitation to Nato - I would like that people don't misunderstand this - the first point is not Nato membership or quick membership of Nato. The first point is invitation to Nato so that in the future nobody can change their opinion. Everything shouldn't be just in words, but documented in papers, fundamentally and legally. We are talking about invitation, not membership, because during the war we cannot become Nato member obviously. And this point is only for the Nato countries because we would like to be invited to Nato.

The second point of the Victory Plan is strengthening the Ukrainian army with weapons today at the battlefield, not tomorrow. We are not talking with Putin about that or the countries of the Global South who do not strengthen us with weapons today. We speak about this with the Ramstein countries which helped Ukraine with weapons during this conflict. Point three is about the package of deterrence against Russia. It does not mean the use of missiles. However, this would be just because Russia is using missiles against us. But we are saying that it's not about the use of missiles but deterrence of Russia. This is the package of long-range weapons which Ukraine will not use if Russia stops the war against us. Stops the aggression against us. Stops killing our people. That is why this package of long-range weapons should be in Ukraine. This is the prevention measure of weapons. This is the warn-

ing army as part of the security of Europe. And it is exclusively about Europe. So it is not the plan that will end the war where we unite the whole world. This is the plan of victory that leads us to the plan to end the war. This is the plan of strengthening of Ukraine.

What is the position of the war as of now? Because Russia has been making some gains on the battlefield, and with winter coming many believe you will face a tough few months.

■ Well, this is the third hard winter for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. Russia is doing the same thing every year of this war. We are studying how to protect ourselves. Russia attacked our energy centres since the very beginning to breed chaos in Ukraine, so that our people would starve, so that our people will be ill without having the opportunity to provide insulation and winterisation of their houses. So that the people would die. We as a state started to oppose that. We restored our energy systems. We are step-by-step strengthening the protection of our energy systems. And we aren't just allowing Russia to kill our people. Gradually we have begun to cope with their attacks on our energy systems. We know how to retaliate to their strikes, but we do that very cautiously. We never target the people, we never target the schools and universities - which Russia does. So they have felt that Ukraine can respond. And in those operations none of our partners have helped us. This is what we have done alone in our response, unfortunately.

As for the battlefield, you are right, Russia has more people and more weapons. In many directions, technologically, we are better than them already. Many partners agree with that, especially in long-range drones, systems of electronic warfare etc. But it's not enough because the most important thing is to save the people. So we look at the battlefield from the perspective of how to save our people. We can lose equipment, we can lose technologies, but we should minimise human losses. Sometimes by the price of metres or few kilometres of land. Yes, the human being is more important than the land, though this is our land. But our land will be brought back later, but we will not be able to bring back the human being. And we live according to this law. It is hard to be at war with Russia by this law because they have a different law - if they are not attacking, if their soldiers are not on the offensive, they are shot by the Russians themselves. Russians are killed by Russians. The Russians have killed many of their own mobilised soldiers just because these soldiers were afraid to attack, to perish under the bullet or to be wounded. So they retreated and this is where they were killed by their own army. This is their law of war. They don't quantify, they don't calculate the numbers. They have approximately 650,000 victims already who were killed or wounded in Russia. Just imagine, that's a lot.

And you know what's really scary? The same is continuing and they don't even retrieve the bodies. The bodies are just rotting on the battlefield, they don't take them back. This is the face of today's Russia, today's Putin. And what's more interesting, yes they are having gains in Ukraine's east because of this strategy, because of this meat-grinder, because they are throwing bodies onto us. But when we came to Kursk region and had a preventive attack against their territory, because they wanted to have a separate operation and occupy our north, we can see that they are attacking their own territory. They are themselves killing their own civilians in Kursk. And our people are giving them food and water because they are civilians not soldiers. Our soldiers are giving away and sharing what they have. And we can see the bodies of Russian civilians, civilians who were shot by Russian artillery. This is the war.

... just one mechanism, just one ICC cannot fully correct the situation. It cannot fully influence Putin and his allies. But all of them together, the ICC, the leaders, international law, UN, G20, altogether can definitely end this war

When PM Modi was in Kyiv he along with you visited the Martyrologist Exposition dedicated to the fallen children of this war. Can you detail the overall impact of the war on Ukrainian children?

■ First of all I thank PM Modi who joined me and commemorated the perished children. You know the real number of Ukrainian children who have been killed in the war is unknown. Nobody knows the real number, unfortunately. We can definitely state that dozens of thousands of children were deported and kidnapped by Russia. But how many of them were killed, we will only get to know after the war. Dozens of thousands of deported children. Thousands with changed names and surnames. They have been forced to speak a different language. Many of them who were teens, they have been forced to the battlefield to fight against their own country. This is just horrible. Their relatives don't have their children back. And unfortunately, with dozens of thousands having been kidnapped, less than 1,000 have been brought back. That's why it's very important that many countries join the coalition to bring back Ukrainian children. We would really like India to help with this. Today, the coalition is working with more than 40 countries. But unfortunately, not many countries have managed to bring back our children. Besides this, many children have been affected by the war in Ukraine. Schools have been hit, universities have been hit. Many children have been wounded, many have lost their limbs, and many children have been killed. Many children have left Ukraine with their parents. You know that more than 7 million

We know how to retaliate to their strikes, but we do that very cautiously. We never target the schools and universities - which Russia does. So they have felt we can respond. And in those operations none of our partners have helped us. This is what we have done alone, unfortunately

Ukrainians are now abroad. A big number of them are children. Their parents are staying sometimes here. For instance, the men in the family are left here or they are on the frontline of the war. And their children are being deprived of their childhood. Some of those fathers are dying in the war. This is the situation about the children.

What can India do specifically to bring back the forcibly deported Ukrainian children?

■ You can join the coalition to bring back Ukrainian children. You can support the joint communique of the Peace Summit because the third point was about bringing back the children, you can call Putin and ask him who he is, you can force him to bring the children back, PM Modi can do that because he really has huge influence, he can just say specifically how many Ukrainian children will be given to me so that I could bring them back to Ukraine, just say that directly, just give me 1,000 Ukrainian children who will be brought back to Ukraine. This is the real step. Putin took dozens of thousands. Let PM Modi bring back only 1,000 at least. And if every such influential person as PM Modi is able to bring back 1,000, we will be able to bring back the majority of our children. That's what is needed to be done. You need to raise this issue at the meeting of G20. India can invite us to this meeting as well together with Brazil. So the G20 can divide the obligations. If 20,000 of Ukrainian children are deported, every leader should take the responsibility to bring back 1,000 children. It's not just to sit at the table during this summit but to really help the children. The world should be helping.

ICC issued arrest warrants for the forcible deportation of Ukrainian children. But those were not implemented as we saw recently with Mongolia. Do you still have faith in international mechanisms to bring back the children?

■ We believe just in the international law. We believe in the international influence of the leaders. We believe in the international mechanism. You are right, just one mechanism, just one international criminal court cannot fully correct the situation. It cannot fully influence Putin and his allies. But all of them together, the ICC, the leaders, international law, UN, G20, altogether can definitely end this war. But the results of the ICC are still felt. Putin is not travelling to the majority of world countries. We can see that. The majority of the leaders who acknowledged and approved the Rome Statute, and still acknowledge the verdict of the ICC, the majority of them try not to visit Putin. Remember, this (the deportation of children) is only the first case of war crimes. There will be many more cases for which more evidence will be provided. As for Mongolia, unfortunately it showed that it is not an independent country.

The Brics summit was a total failure... I think Brics is divided by Putin himself by his policy of war. And I think Putin's aim for the summit was to polarise the world and he did not achieve this. He will subvert the Brics' purpose and use the platform for his own policy of war. That's why he wants to divide the world into so-called West-plus and Brics-plus

Do you think there's any possibility that PM Modi can host negotiations between Ukraine and Russia?

■ As for PM Modi, we have the platform which is the Peace Summit. The second Peace Summit could be conducted in any respected capital and we communicated that it could be held in New Delhi. Undoubtedly it can be in India and PM Modi can really do that if he can organise a certain summit. But for that we need to prepare ourselves in terms of the proposals on which any number of countries could be heard - the proposals of India, EU, the African continent etc. So if Brazil and China would like to see us as well and they have proposals, please by all means, but only according to our format because the war is in our land. So I think that such a summit can be hosted in India.

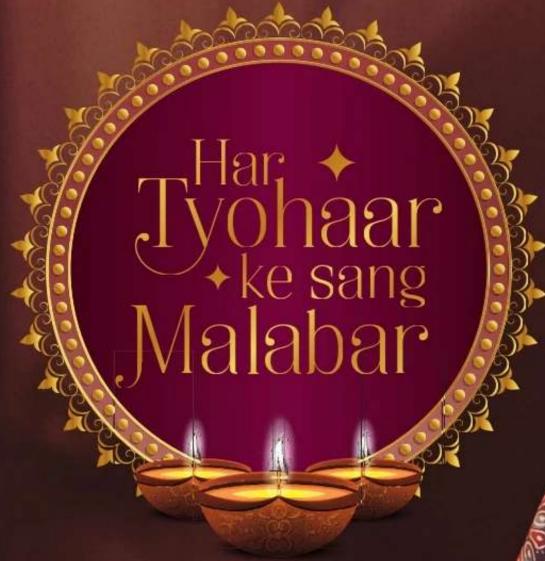
Thanks, Mr President, for speaking to The Times of India.

■ Thank you and I wish the people of India peace. This is really important.

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Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedies

- GROUCHO MARX

West Asia & Beyond

Call it the butterfly effect on US elections - Israel strikes Iran, Musk-Putin talks & fears of oil price shocks

Tuesday week is the US presidential election. Three events over the weekend unrelated to elections may still impact voting as the Trump-Harris fight comes down to the wire. First, as expected, Israel targeted Iran's military infra. What was unusual is Israel claimed the hits, making its covert war with Iran turn overt, returning West Asia's volatility to the centre of conversation. This can impact turnout in a swing state like Michigan - home to the largest numbers of Palestinian- and Lebanese-Americans in US, who helped Biden win in 2020. But, since Oct 7 last year, there has been open discontent with Democrats' support for Israel, and Biden's failure to negotiate a ceasefire. Saturday's strike may keep anti-Trump voters home, because the weekend sharpened the anti-Harris feels too.

The second event is what didn't happen. There's alarm over escalation of conflict, but global oil prices didn't react though prices soared 9-10% after Iran had sent missiles to Israel. The new reality is US and Saudi have capacity enough to cover shortfalls from Iran's absence in the oil market. Beijing buys 90% of Iran's oil, which is around 15% of China's needs, and imports the rest from Russia, Saudi etc. But for American voters, fear of global oil price shocks impacting domestic gas prices (read inflation) is a big deal days ahead of polling.

It's said the storyline of conflicts in West Asia is 'continuity'. Saturday's strike was in tune, with Tehran playing down damage, and Tel Aviv stopping after three rounds of 'targeted, precise' attacks that spared oil/nuclear facilities - as demanded by US. Washington's control over pace of West Asia conflicts is near-absolute. It's largely true even for the Russia-Ukraine war. Take, for instance, Trump's promise to stop both wars if he's elected, regardless of his ability to do so. Fact is, next phase of both wars will depend on who takes White House.

Which brings one to the third event - WSJ's potentially explosive report of Trump's vociferous supporter Musk being in frequent contact with Putin. The report triggered a demand for an investigation from Nasa chief - Musk's SpaceX has multibillion-dollar US govt contracts - and hot denials from Kremlin. That Russia interfered in US's 2016 presidential polls to sway the election outcome is established. Musk-Putin tangos little impact the Trump voter, but can both the non-Trump Republican. And Harris's campaign won't shy from a last-ditch effort to make something of it, especially since it's looking like who stays home might decide the vote.

Blowing In The Wind

Delhi's toxic air is killing us softly with its smog. Netas give a damn

Sunday's AQI touched 352, but Delhiites don't need to know the number - from their burning eyes, irritable throat, dry cough, wheezing, breathlessness, over 15% rise in cases of asthma, COPD and pneumonia as early as Sep, they can tell air's a killer. It is nothing new, but what doesn't cease to amaze, year after year, is the state's stilted response to air pollution.

Listing out what needs done is flogging a dead horse. Yet the state will slip into the same old ritual, flog ineffective plans that environmentalists have long said are either ineffective or have limited scope. Measures that should be year-round, such as ban on open burning and suppressing dust on roads and construction sites, and traffic management, are ignored till AQI hits a high note and All Scramble. Then courts All Rise, wagging a finger and scolding Delhi's neighbours on non-compliance, who in turn, will move some, but farm stubble, it will burn. There is no excuse for the collective failure of govts and authorities in NCR. Problem is, govts are acting like extensions of party offices - squawking at cross purposes with little commitment to their office, and near zero investment in public welfare.

Air pollution cripples productivity. An NCAER study in 2023 on economic costs of Delhi's air pollution calculated annual productivity loss to be ₹31.3bn and health expenditure at ₹4.1bn. Other studies have measured loss of life expectancy by 6.2 years for Delhi's residents. Improved public transport is the one thing entirely in Delhi govt/LG's control. But nothing has been done to fix it. Massive surge in PM2.5 from vehicular pollution as traffic volumes explode ahead of Diwali is deliberately unseen. How to tackle Delhi's scourge? Close your eyes. Wait till it goes away some.

The safety net

It's great...and out of reach of most Indians

Anupam Srivastava



The seller greeted me warmly and welcomed me into his office. I had told him I was on the verge of turning sixty, the time in one's life when a productive asset metamorphosises overnight into a Kafkaesque creature, bearing no semblance to one's previous self.

Without social security, wealth, or medical cover, this phase of one's life is fraught with anxiety about the future for most. I needed a medical cover, a safety net to support me if I fell ill, so that my family wouldn't bear the "catastrophic expenditure" which the National Health Policy acknowledges as a major contributor to poverty.

Soothing my frayed nerves, the seller pointed out a safety net in the display window. "That's for you, it provides medical cover of ₹5L, all paid by govt," he said, smiling.

I was transported to a state of bliss. It is human not to want to die early and prolong one's life with medical treatment when one needs it. I immediately reached out for the net, but somehow could not get to it. He explained patiently, "You will see it at a distance, always above you, until you turn seventy. After that, it will find its place below you."

Crestfallen, I pleaded that wouldn't work for most Indians as on an average Indians are expected to live less than seventy years. At sixty, their incomes dwindle, or altogether vanish. World Bank estimates there are 93mm people in the 60-69 age group, and only 45mm in the 70-80 age group. How many would cross over to the other side?

"You know how much it'll cost to cover people above sixty?" thundered the seller. Yes, but would that be too much for the world's fifth largest economy, which habitually spends on non-essentials? The seller looked upset. There was already a precedent, I argued. Govt-supported cover for its employees, the judiciary, and elected representatives was extremely generous. Why couldn't everyone have the same cover, like it was in most of Europe and so many other countries?

By this time, more people had entered the shop. The seller became occupied with them, showing them other exciting items. I withdrew, to find the safety net I would look at for the next ten years, if I lived that long.

Zelensky's New Peace Formula

It includes Global South, particularly India. Western military aid can defend Ukraine but not end the war. Here's Kyiv's new hybrid approach

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Reading his TOI interview closely, it was clear how Zelensky's thinking about how to end the war is evolving.

First, it appears he has accepted that while he may need US and his Western partners to defend against Russian attacks, the war cannot be ended without the support of Global South nations. He alluded to this during the interview when he accepted that sanctions against Russia have not functioned fully. In other words, Russia has been able to evade the impact of sanctions through bilateral trade with certain countries.

The problem, as Zelensky sees it, is that these countries, while voicing support for ending the war, are carrying out their trade with Russia on basis economic self-interest. They cite the need for dialogue to avoid taking a position on the war. Hence, Zelensky's strategy now seems to be twofold. Call out neutrality as hidden support for Russia, and compel those who say they want to help bring peace, to walk the talk.

In the process, Zelensky is laying down parameters for dialogue to end the war. Such dialogue should stem from or closely track Ukraine's Peace Formula and Peace Summit joint communiqué. Talks could also be on specific points of the formula or communicate, such as the return of forcibly deported Ukrainian children. This way, Zelensky feels, Ukraine can control the dialogue to its advantage.

Second, Zelensky clearly knows getting into peace negotiations right now is not to Ukraine's advantage. Despite the Kursk operation, Kyiv hasn't been able to completely halt the Russian onslaught. This is due to a combination of delayed military supplies to Ukraine from US, and plain old numerical advantage Russians have. Moscow can afford to throw bodies into the battlefield. Ukraine can't. Therefore, as Zelensky says in the interview, Ukraine has to

save its people by giving up land. Meanwhile, Putin, given his position in the Russian political system, can tolerate giving up people for land. And land is also what gives him a potential off-ramp to end the war.

To counter this disadvantage, Zelensky now has a 'Victory Plan' that includes the West offering - not granting - Nato membership to Ukraine and giving it a long-range weapons package as a deterrence against Russia. Zelensky wants it in writing that

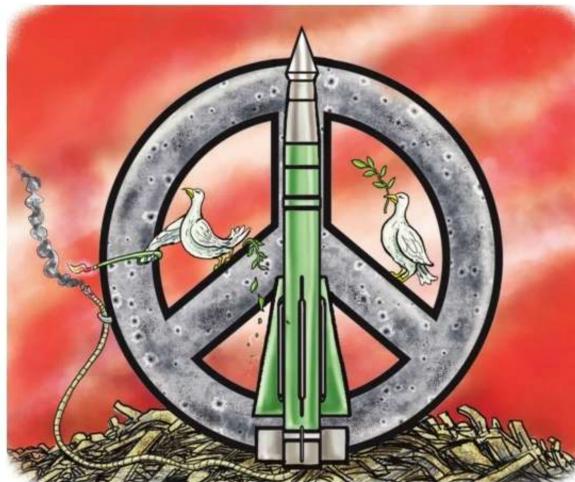
But if he can successfully pitch Ukraine's value in a post-war European security architecture, Zelensky feels he'll have greater bargaining power at the eventual negotiating table with Russia. The last thing he wants is a frozen conflict that'll allow Moscow to restart the conflict some years down the road. European and Nato security guarantees are the best way to thwart Russia's "nefarious" designs in future.

And finally, Zelensky has come to appreciate India's strategic autonomy. Still frustrated about India-Russia defence and oil trade, he nevertheless senses New Delhi at this point may have more elbow room than Beijing to consider Ukraine's point of view. There's little strategic daylight between Beijing and Moscow. New Delhi, on the other hand, can toggle between Brics and Quad. This is why he is looking at opening a humanitarian angle for New Delhi's buy-in through the issue of the return of Ukrainian children.

Modi could ask Putin to find and return Ukrainian children to Kyiv. This'll also allow Putin to follow through voluntarily. Putin could also stick to the argument that these children were relocated to protect them from the war. It would embarrass International Criminal Court, sure, but Ukraine would get its children back, Modi, a diplomatic win, and Putin, some credit.

This in turn would also be a litmus test for India in terms of how far it's willing to go to facilitate dialogue. And should there be progress on returning the children, other parleys to end the war could follow.

Zelensky knows he needs to come to the negotiating table to end the war. He knows military strength on the battlefield alone won't stop Russia. He needs a hybrid strategy that combines deterrence of Russia on the frontline and talks with Global South nations to be in a strong negotiating position. And with US elections too close to call, he is hedging his bets. Zelensky's showing a willingness to be flexible.



CHARTER (USA)

Method In Tel Aviv's Aggression

Israel's strike on Iran means it has had its revenge without crossing the red line set by US. Iran's been prevented from entering into direct conflict with Israel

Aydin Sezer



Columnist based in Ankara

With limited strikes against Iran on Saturday, Israel once again implemented its so-called strategy of 'preventive war' outside its territory. Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen are the battle zone for Israel to execute this strategy.

Almost three weeks have passed since Iran's attack on Israel. Iranian president Masoud Pezeshkian had said at the time, "Region's security means security of all Muslims. We don't want a war or massacre. I've emphasised our demand for security and peace. No country and no nation can prosper in the midst of war. We've been left with no choice but to respond. If Israel decides to retaliate, it'll face an even stronger response."

Pezeshkian has often repeated, "Our patience doesn't mean we're afraid." Undoubtedly, a message to the Iranian public, but also a call to build a front within the Islamic world. The new Iranian leadership is dealing with serious economic challenges but doesn't want to remain a bystander to the escalating developments in the region.

But it simply doesn't have the financial resources to maintain influence on the region. Balance between Iran's economic capacity and its foreign policy objectives is out of whack, and if conflict continues, this gap will only widen, with consequences for the current Iranian leadership's future itself.

Three developments help better understand the region, or predict developments, in reality largely unpredictable.

- While US's ceasefire plan was being negotiated, Hamas's Ismail Haniyeh, who was supportive of the ceasefire, was killed in Tehran.

- On the plan falling through, Pezeshkian later said, "We were deceived by the promise of a ceasefire by American and European leaders. It was to be in

exchange for not responding to Haniyeh's assassination." Iran had been stalled.

- Lebanese foreign minister also told CNN Hezbollah's Nasrallah and Lebanon had agreed to a ceasefire with Israel and had communicated the same to Israeli govt, and to US and France, with Netanyahu accepting the proposal. Immediately after this agreement, Israel killed Nasrallah.

So, what really happened after Iran's attack three weeks ago? We know Netanyahu, who has the support

with US. Washington has all along cautioned Israel against striking Iran's nuclear facilities or oil infra. Indeed, Israel's revenge strikes were precisely as authorised by US - against limited military targets.

Israel kept the promise it made to US of "proportionate response", with no energy or nuclear facilities among the targets. US said it knew of Israel's plan - Tel Aviv had informed Washington.

Iran's statements were as expected. It said that its air defence systems successfully tracked and countered Israel's "aggression" but that there was some limited damage. Israel, again as expected, warned Iran that Tel Aviv would be "forced to respond" if Tehran launched fresh escalation. It was all perfectly executed.

A key priority for US was to eliminate the risk of Iran falling into Netanyahu's trap of getting forced into a direct conflict with US military in the region. In this, US succeeded. The attack was deemed inadequate by hardliners in Israel, but Israel got to strike Iran.

Point is, there's a massive power gap between Iran and Israel. The West is all-in for Israel, while Iran has no serious supporter. To what extent Iran can trust Russia is debatable given Moscow's relations with Israel - more than a million Russian citizens live in Israel today.

It's possible to see the scope and restraint of Saturday's attack as a success of the Biden administration. If a more comprehensive attack had been carried out, Iran's immediate response could completely change the electoral climate in US. Netanyahu's influence on the US election process needs no repetition.

In fact, Israel knows and wants to prove to its allies, especially US, that Iran is not as powerful as it's perceived to be, and that fighting organisations it supports won't lead to frightening doomsday scenarios.

Israel and its allies are exploring the possibilities of changing the region's dynamics, but one must await the results of US elections to see what shape the process will take.

The writer is a former diplomat



not only of US and UK but of all Western countries, is openly dodged. After Iran's strikes, even German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called on Hezbollah and Iran to "stop their attacks on Israel", saying Tehran was "setting the whole region on fire".

This was hardly the statement of an independent or impartial observer. Biden spoke with G7 to discuss Iran's unacceptable attack on Israel and to coordinate the response, including new sanctions.

Tehran's response was swift: "The only way to prevent Israel's atrocities is to attack American targets in the region; US isn't capable of going to war with Iran."

For nearly three weeks, Israel had been working on the plan for Saturday's attack, including negotiations

Calvin & Hobbes



Sacredspace



If the many and the One be indeed the same Reality, then it is not all modes of worship alone, but equally all modes of work...all modes of creation, which are paths of realisation. No distinction, henceforth, between sacred and secular.

Sister Nivedita

If You Are Lonely, It's A Sign You Are Ready

James Anderson

We are never truly alone. Loneliness is perplexing and painful, but essentially it is an illusion, a mask created by the surface consciousness. Losing a 'soulmate' is unbearable if one doesn't recognise the immortal spirit residing in all. This truth is our first step away from loneliness. It is illusory because, innately, we are divine and one with everything.

If you are lonely, you stand on a bridge between two worlds: one of lack, the other plenitude. The lack creates a vacuum which will be assuaged if one adopts a conscious approach. Because of this, loneliness offers an ideal platform for the spiritual life. The Mother said: "Those who feel lonely in the world are ready for union with the Divine." Somehow, the emptiness has to be filled. Aloneness is generally regarded as

something to be avoided. It is radical to consider it an opportunity. When alone, many will search for props. Generally, these episodes are used unwisely. We indulge our senses. We drink or eat too much. We interact on social media and generate virtual relationships to blot out the void. We switch on the television to create new images and noises. The distraction is viewed as company: anything to expunge the nightmare. Anything but this silence. The prospect of sacrificing such accessories is considered unbearable.

The yearning for company is embedded in us the moment we are born. Then, gradually, we get with the social fabric and become magnets for every conditioning, so much so, we might interpret aloneness as a sign of inferiority. The herd mentality is what

we must swim against. Isolation leads to further morbidities and creates self-pity, a sign of misplaced self-love. Instead of loving for the sake of loving, we erect so many conditions. We identify the ego as ourselves. We must continuously step back and disengage from the flux in order to discover our Inner Friend and this is when we begin to expand and grow. Seize this vibration if it visits you and offer it to the Light.

In Integral Yoga, every knot is an opportunity for growth. We absorb a simple truth: do not expect anything from anyone. Otherwise,

you'll wind up hurt. Attachment only fosters loneliness. It comes when we slide onto the surface, far away from our "true home". We can only depend on what lies inside. The surface consciousness cannot process aloneness. There is outer and inner loneliness.

With outer, one constantly erects scaffolding to keep one's life from falling apart. It is all the ego can manage - makeshift reactions and piecemeal solutions. It is a common condition. It requires catastrophe to truly transform this affliction because it is only a reversal of awareness that will transform. Inner loneliness is 'diver'. It may be precipitated by intense grieving, bereavement or loss. The being craves affection and love. The past is often idealised and there is an aching chasm inside the heart. One might feel an intense ache and not know why. There is a remedy. Sri Aurobindo states: "The inner loneliness can only be cured by the inner experience of union with the Divine; no human association can fill the void." So, if you are in this state, take this as a sign that you are ready! It is now time to make your life divine.

The writer is coordinating editor of NAMAHA, the Journal of Integral Health



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CL 1990

Sebi notice to Axis over Max Life Insurance stake

New Delhi: Sebi has issued a show cause notice to Axis Bank and its subsidiaries in a case related to stake buy in Max Life Insurance. Axis Bank said the SCN was issued on Oct 25 through email. Axis Bank and its subsidiaries Axis Securities and Axis Capital have received an SCN through email from Sebi, it said. The SCN is being reviewed and responses will be filed with Sebi, it said. AGENCIES

PCs, telecom parts largely push rise in Chinese imports

Total Imports From Neighbour Up 11% At \$47Bn In April-Aug

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New Delhi: The increase in imports from China may largely be attributable to inflow of computers, telecom equipment and their components, with chemicals used for medicines seen to have declined.

During April-Aug, Chinese imports into India rose almost 11% to \$46.6 billion, from \$42 billion in the corresponding period last year. Within this, an increase of \$1.5 billion is on account of higher shipments of computers and machinery and another \$3.2 billion is due to more electrical machinery, electronics and telecom goods entering India, data sourced from the commerce department showed (see graphic).

According to think tank GTRI, these 10 groups accounted for 83.8% of India's imports from China and saw an average 14.7% growth during April-Aug 2024. Just three product segments — electronics, machinery and organic

TRADE DEFICIT WIDENING

Top imports from China (April-Aug)	2023	2024	% change
Electrical Machinery, Electronics, Telecom	12,146	15,304	26
Machinery, Laptops, Computers	9,037	10,556	17
Organic Chemicals	5,651	5,041	-11
Plastic, Articles	2,310	2,770	20
Iron & Steel	963	1,110	15
Scientific, Medical, Surgical Instruments, Parts	961	1,091	14
Vehicles, Parts	763	865	13
Articles of Iron, Steel	832	833	0
Aluminium, Articles	612	778	27
Miscellaneous Chemical Products	714	741	4

Source: GTRI, Commerce Dept

chemicals — account for two-thirds of India's imports from its neighbour.

In April-Aug 2024, India's trade deficit with China has widened to \$40.8 billion, as against \$35.7 billion a year ago, as imports went up and

exports fell 8% to \$6.3 billion.

Among specific products, integrated circuits, micro-assemblies and memories grew 49% to \$3.5 billion, according to GTRI data.

Mobile components and phones as a segment saw a

surge of 63% to \$2.7 billion, with bulk of it seen to be on account of parts going into manufacture of phones in India. As a category, smartphone imports from China shrank to \$76 million during the first five months of the current fiscal year, compared with \$187 million in the year-ago period.

There was, however, no stopping of computer and laptop imports, which went up 13.5% to \$2.5 billion at a time when govt is again reviewing the import regime with an eye on domestic imports and most of the goods coming from China. Similarly, solar modules, cells and panel imports were seen to be 50% higher at \$1.1 billion.

There was good news on antibiotics, whose imports stayed flat at just over \$700 million, while lithium ion cells saw a decline of 20% to \$837 million. Electronics and medicines have been among two product segments where govt has sought to reduce reliance on Chinese imports.

Check These Parameters To Track Performance Of Mutual Fund Portfolio

As many as 9.7 million new investors have come to mutual funds over the last one year. These as well as existing investors are keen to track the performance of their mutual fund portfolio. Since the net asset value (NAV) is declared every working day, it is easy to track performance over both short and long periods of time.

What Matters When Looking At MF Returns?

Financial planners believe investors should not just look at returns in isolation, but should look at many other factors while evaluating performance. An important thing would be to compare rolling returns with the right schemes and peers, study expense ratio, look at statistical factors like standard deviation and beta. They should also be looking at fund manager tenure.

Invesco Mutual Fund

An investor education and awareness initiative

For Know Your Customer (KYC) guidelines along with the documentary requirements and procedure for change of address, phone number, bank details, etc., please visit the Education and Guidance section on www.invescomutualfund.com. Investor should deal with only SEBI registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified under "Intermediaries/Market Infrastructure Institutions" on <https://www.sebi.gov.in/index.html>. For any grievance / complaint, please call us on 1800-209-0007 or write to us at mfsservices@invesco.com. Alternatively, complaints can be registered on the SEBI SCORES Portal at <https://scores.gov.in>

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

How Important Is The Expense Ratio?

An expense ratio measures how much of a fund's assets are used for administrative expenses. While passive schemes may have a low expense ratio of 25 bps, active ones have a ratio of 1.5-2%. Investors could also look at the track record of a fund house and allow 3-5 years for an equity fund strategy to bear fruit. They must compare a fund with competition and consider quality of the fund management team, its churn, quality of stocks, and volatility.

Comparing With Peers' Returns...

The right way to look at your scheme returns is to compare it with the benchmark and peers. For example, a large-cap equity scheme's

performance should be compared with the Nifty 50 or Nifty 100 and not with the Nifty Smallcap 250 or other mid or small-cap schemes. Similarly, returns from equity mutual funds should not be compared with fixed income or gold funds. A large-cap active fund must be compared with another peer in the same category. If the average return from the large-cap category over three years is 20% annualised and your scheme has returned 14%, it indicates your fund is not faring well. Financial planners feel a fund has performed well when it does better than its benchmark and category. If there are 10 funds in the category and the fund is amongst the bottom three, and not able to beat category average, it indicates that there are better funds out there.

Is Consistency In Scheme Vital?

If fund performance is unstable, or if a fund just outperforms in bull markets and underperforms in bear markets, it is better to avoid it. Sophisticated investors also look at parameters that evaluate volatility like beta and standard deviation, portfolio turnover and churn while evaluating a scheme. For example, a scheme with high volatility and churn may give returns but not suit conservative investors.

—PRASHANT MAHESH



Shriram Chair at IISc

The Shriram Group has established the Shriram Group RT Chair in Computational Mechanics at Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore. Umesh Revankar, executive vice chairman at Shriram Finance, said the aim is to foster innovation and advance knowledge in fields that are critical to both academia and industry. The Chair will be awarded to distinguished faculty conducting frontier research in computational mechanic. TNN

FPI trades, Q2 nos to shape mkt trend

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Trading activities by foreign funds, quarterly earnings by a host of blue chip companies and Waaree Energies' listing are the top factors that would drive the market in the new week.

Market players will also closely monitor crude oil price movements due to geopolitical tensions in West Asia, as well as how the rupee trades

against other major currencies. The uncertainty regarding the outcome of the US presidential elections will also weigh on market sentiment, analysts and dealers said. The week's trading would be truncated by Diwali holiday on Friday when there will be shortened, special sessions on both the BSE and NSE.

So far in the month, foreign funds have net taken out nearly Rs 90,000 crore from

the secondary market alone. Although domestic funds have net infused about Rs 1.1 lakh crore worth of funds, these institutions have not been able to cushion the impact of foreign funds' selloff on leading indices. As a result, the sensex and Nifty have both lost nearly 6% in Oct.

In the new week, too, foreign funds are likely to be the trend deciders. Foreign portfolio investors "are likely to

continue their selling in the near-term since market sentiment has turned weak due to escalation of tensions in West Asia and the uncertainty regarding the outcome of the US presidential elections," V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said. Overall quarterly results so far have been muted, which has affected investor sentiment, market players said.

EEPC backs diversified mkts

Chennai: The Engineering Exports Promotion Council has asked Indian engineering goods exporters to look at diversified markets like Africa, Latin America and CIS countries to offset slowdown in its traditional markets, the US and Europe, due to disruption in world order due to political conflicts and war. While the US remains India's largest market for engineering ex-

ports, major destinations in the European Union are Germany, Italy and UK. "While the US and Europe will continue to account for a larger share of our engineering goods exports, the focus on developing countries will enable India to export value-added products as Indian technology is best suited to these markets," Rakesh Shah, chairman (trade promotion), EEPC India. TNN

Govt faces key decisions on RBI, CEA, Sebi chiefs

Continued from page 1

Das, a former civil servant, was given a three-year term in Dec 2018 after Urjit Patel's sudden resignation following a bitter tussle with govt. Das was given a second term three years ago and is widely seen to have managed the financial sector well and has had a smooth relationship with the Centre, something his two predecessors could not manage.

A month after the RBI appointment, govt will be faced with the same question on whether to continue with chief economic adviser V Anantha Nageswaran. Given that the budget exercise kicks off in the next few weeks, govt may decide earlier if its top economist is likely to get a fresh term. The CEA provides crucial techni-

cal inputs for the budget and also authors the Economic Survey along with his colleagues in the finance ministry's economic division.

The fourth job, that of Sebi chief, is likely to pose the biggest dilemma for the govt given the controversy around Madhabi Puri Buch, the first woman and the first from the private sector to head the regulatory agency. Puri Buch has faced allegations of impropriety and conflict of interest, charges she has denied, amid chatter in govt over how civil servants are best suited to take up such regulatory assignments. On March 1, 2022, the former banker was named Sebi chief for three years and is eligible for a fresh term. At least three of her predecessors G N Bajpai, M Damodaran and C B Bhavne have had three-year stints.

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ETHIOPIAN YOMIF KEJELCHA BREAKS MEN'S HALF-MARATHON WORLD RECORD BY 1 SECOND

CHINA'S ZHENG QINWEN BEATS SOFIA KENIN TO CLAIM PAN PACIFIC OPEN TITLE IN TOKYO

A SOBERING LOSS & SOME HARD LESSONS

India's Failures In Bengaluru And Pune Were A Result Of Failing To Understand The Grammar Of Test Match Batting

Amit.Karmarkar@timesofindia.com

Pune: When Rohit Sharma said he doesn't want to be too critical of his players after seeing India's invincibility at home end against New Zealand after 12 years and 18 series in Pune on Saturday, he may have had a point.

A close look of this Test team in all conditions reveals a few serious shortcomings. Crucially, the commitment of the players and the stars to domestic multi-day cricket must be questioned.

It starts with the batters appearing in no position to either hone or polish their defensive techniques or increase their ability to bat for long periods of time. Not just because they play a very high percentage of white-ball cricket where explosiveness is rewarded more than balance, technique and patience, the busy international calendar and star culture also means they hardly get to play domestic first-class cricket.

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have not played a first-class game this season. All other pure batters in the team picked for the Test series against NZ, had played at least a game—either in the Duleep Trophy or Ranji Trophy.

The reason behind Rohit and Virat not playing any first-class game, be it either citing fitness worries or workload management, could be genuine and may have been recommended to by the medical team and team management. But not spending time in the middle, under the sun and in competitive environment can lead to failures. The runs, or lack of runs, in domestic cricket can help a player and his team to understand where he stands in terms of form and match-readiness.

When Washington Sundar made a dramatic Test comeback on the first day of the Pune game, all experts were united in their opinion: He was ready after playing against Delhi only a few days ago.

Besides Sundar, left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav also played a domestic First-Class game despite his chronic groin issue. And so did Rishabh Pant, Sarfaraz Khan, KL

Rahul, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Akash Deep, Dhruv Jurel and Axar Patel.

Like Rohit and Virat, even Ravindra Jadeja, R Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohd Siraj did not play a domestic First-Class game before the Bangladesh series or before the first Test against NZ in Bengaluru.

Rohit himself confessed that his reading of the pitch on the first day in Bengaluru was incorrect. The Pune pitch seemed to have slightly stumped him too as he took pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Akash Deep out of the game in the second innings. The talk of playing five specialist bowlers in Indian conditions never rang so hollow.

The Indian skipper with the hitherto Midas touch felt that there have been only two batting collapses, and the team should be allowed concessions after doing so well over the years at home.

It would be good to remember that India were all out for 145 (vs England, Ahmedabad 2021) and 109 & 163 (vs Australia, Indore 2023) too. While a completely doctored pitch ensured that the Ahmedabad game got over within two days, the crushing Indore defeat had seen Rohit winning the toss and opting to bat first.

When India won the 2020-21 Test series in Australia, Rohit Sharma missed the first two Tests and KL Rahul came back after missing the first Test due to injury. Virat too played just the Adelaide Test (all out 36), the game India lost.

Now, the troika is expected to provide calming influence on India's batting Down Under which seems a tall ask. Especially going by the form and manner of dismissals of Rohit and Virat in the longest form of the game.

To their credit, Rohit or coach Gautam Gambhir have not given the impression that they have not accepted the team's shortcomings—patience, technique, handling pressure and failure to bat out sessions consistently. Hence there is still optimism—for both the Border-Gavaskar Trophy Down Under and WTC qualification.



LOOK, RUNS OVER THERE: Lack of adequate match practice in red-ball cricket has hurt Indian batting stalwarts, skipper Rohit Sharma (right) and ex-skipper Virat Kohli

CLASS OF 2008

India had scored 387-4 for their most remarkable successful Test chase in recent years against England in Chennai in 2008. The target of 359 in Pune was similar. Virender Sehwag (83) had given India a blazing start in Chennai.

Yashasvi Jaiswal played a similar role in Pune with an attacking 77. But Rohit Sharma (8), Virat Kohli (17) and Rishabh Pant (0) failed to essay the kind of roles played by Gautam Gambhir (66*), Sachin Tendulkar (103*) and Yuvraj (85*) from the class of 2008.

SHORT TESTS A NORM

It was the third Test at the Gahunje stadium and none have gone into the fifth day. India added five more new Test centres, besides Pune, in recent years. They are Rajkot, Indore, Ranchi, Visakhapatnam and Dharamshala. These other five

centres have hosted a combined 14 Tests with three lasting five days, seven four days and four three days. So, Tests ending early is an overall norm. The preceding Test in Bengaluru also lasted only four days with the first day being washed out. **TNN**

SHASTRI BACKS GAMBHIR AFTER SERIES DEFEAT TO NZ

Pune: Former India head coach Ravi Shastri came out in support of the current Indian head coach Gautam Gambhir after the side conceded the ongoing Test series to New Zealand. India, captained by Rohit Sharma, marking their first Test series loss at home in 12 years. Shastri explained that since Gautam Gambhir is in the early phase of his coaching stint.

Indian batters collapsed against the Kiwi spin attack led by Mitchell Santner, who took 13 wickets as New Zealand defeated India by 113 runs to secure the series 2-0 with a game to go. "New Zealand have beaten them (India) handsomely in both the Test matches. It's food for thought (on series loss). He (Gambhir) has just taken over the job. It is never easy being coach of a team that has such a big following. It is still early days in his career as a coach. But he'll soon learn," Shastri said on commentary during the second Test in Pune. **ANI**

SANTNER EXPOSED INDIAN BATTERS' TECHNIQUES: DOULL

Pune: Former New Zealand pacer Simon Doull attributed India's shocking series defeat to their batsmen's inadequacies against spin bowling but he was not ready to write off underwhelming star batter Virat Kohli.

"There's a misconception that Indian players are better players of spin. I think they've had better spinners and they've been able to expose the opposition batters. But in this Test (at Pune), their batters were exposed a little bit by a very, very good performance from Mitchell Santner," Doull told **PTI Videos**.

"I think you get used to playing on such good wickets. And when it does turn, techniques get exposed. For a long time, when India played on turning surfaces, they still had the best spinners in the world in Jadeja and Ashwin. So, they've been able to undo other sides. In this Test, they were undone by a New Zealand side that, with all due respect, is not a world-class spin attack," he added. **PTI**

TURNERS HAVE AFFECTED INDIAN BATTERS' CONFIDENCE: BHAJJI

New Delhi: India's star batters have lost a lot of confidence over the years by playing on rank turners, feels former off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

"If you have had great record at home for so long and if you lose, obviously there will be chatter. It was a tailor-made condition for spinners where ball was supposed to turn from first hour," Harbhajan told **PTI** in an interaction. The man who played in over 100 Tests stressed the reasons for the batting woes.

"Look at the trend during last decades. We are playing mostly on turners through the last decade with the hope that we will win the toss, score 300 and control the game," he added.

"Our batters have lost a lot of confidence playing on these tracks. The biggest example is Ajinkya Rahane, a fine player. His career suffered because of these kind of surfaces," Harbhajan said. **PTI**

PERFORMANCE OF LEFT-ARM SPINNERS VS INDIA IN TESTS IN THE LAST TWO DECADES

Bowler	For	Span	T	Wkts	Ave	Best inns	Best match	5WI	10WM	SR
Monty Panesar	Eng	2006-12	11	36	40.94	6/81	11/210	2	1	85.1
Rangana Herath	SL	2009-17	11	33	48.06	7/48	7/115	2	0	88.8
Shakib Al Hasan	Ban	2007-24	10	25	40.88	5/62	7/174	1	0	62.6
Mitchell Santner	NZ	2006-24	4	23	29.60	7/53	13/157	2	1	53.1
Paul Harris	SA	2007-11	9	22	51.86	4/129	5/179	0	0	106.9
Tom Hartley	Eng	2024	5	22	36.13	7/62	9/193	1	0	68.3
Jack Leach	Eng	2021-24	6	21	33.90	4/54	6/178	0	0	62.2
Ajaz Patel	NZ	2020-24	5	21	28.42	10/119	14/225	1	1	47.8
Daniel Vettori	NZ	2009-10	6	21	41.80	5/135	6/199	1	0	96.3
Steve O'Keefe	Aus	2017-17	4	19	23.26	6/35	12/70	2	1	56.5

—Rajesh Kumar

Panesar to Santner, India's woes vs left-arm spin remain

Mitchell Santner's 13-wicket haul in the Pune Test is not the only time that a left-arm spinner has troubled India. **TOI highlights some other instances post 2010.**

MONTY PANESAR (ENG: 5-129, 6-81 AT MUMBAI, 2012)

After beating England at Ahmedabad earlier, India were confident of turning over their rivals on the red dirt of Wankhede. Kevin Pietersen's stunning 186 helped England reply to India's 327 with a robust 413. Monty Panesar, who had toiled for 47 overs for his five-for in the first innings (which included a brute to dismiss Sachin Tendulkar bowled), found the pitch much more to his liking in the second dig. He got Tendulkar again with an arm ball, this time lbw and devoured the rest of the batters with his quickish deliveries to help Alastair Cook's side record a famous 10-wicket thumping.



TOM HARTLEY (ENG: 7-62 AT HYDERABAD, 2024)

England had no business competing in this Test after India had rattled up 436 in reply to England's 246. At 5-163, and a deficit of 27, defeat, possibly by an innings loomed large. But Ollie Pope produced an innings for the ages like Pietersen had in Mumbai to score 196 and give India a nervy chase of 231 on a crumbling pitch. Cashing in on India's diffidence and lack of technique, Hartley, on debut, exploited the conditions perfectly and bowled England to a famous win by 28 runs in fading light.

MATT KUHNEMANN (AUS: 5-16 AT INDORE, 2023)

A late venue swap from Dharamshala to Indore didn't aid pitch preparation as the venue, known for belters dished out a bald, dry track. India won the toss and batted, but Matthew Kuhnemann bowled in the right areas to exploit the roughness in the surface to have batters stumped or caught at slip. With dream figures of 5-16, India could manage just 109 in 33.2 overs. Nathan Lyon produced an 8-for in the second dig as Australia won by nine wickets.



AJAZ PATEL (NZ: 10-119, 4-106 AT MUMBAI, 2021)

Red soil pitch in Mumbai with bounce is a left-arm spinner's delight. Murali Kartik, Nilesh Kulkarni, Ankeet Chavan, Ravi Shastri, have run through sides in domestic cricket. Ajaz Patel, a Mumbai-born Kiwi found the pitch to his liking too as he got the turn to produce the edges and got the ball to skid on too using natural variations to get batters bowled or lbw. With 10-119, he became just the third cricketer in Test history after Jim Laker and Anil Kumble to bag a perfect 10. He wasn't done, in the second dig, he got four more. His 14 scalps are the most by an overseas bowler in India.

RANGANA HERATH (SL: 7-48 AT GALLE, 2015)

At 3-5 and still trailing India by 192 runs, an innings defeat loomed for the hosts. But then Dinesh Chandimal summoned his inner Viv Richards and belted an aggressive 162 off 169 balls to give Sri Lanka a sniff by setting India 176 to win in the fourth innings.

Rangana Herath, who had gone wicketless in the first innings after bowling 33 overs, then ran through India with a sublime spell of 7-48 to bowl India out for 112 and make it a sombre Independence Day. That he was there in the current NZ coaching set-up for the sub-continent sojourn, seemed like poetic justice.

STEVE O'KEEFE (AUS: 6-35, 6-35 AT PUNE, 2017)

At 94-3, replying to Australia's 260, things looked steady for India as they hoped to be on par with Steve Smith's side on the first innings. Enter Steve O'Keefe. The left-arm spinner just landed the ball on a length and challenged the batter's defences as India lost 7-11 to be bowled out for 105. On a pitch that was dry, a 155-run deficit soon turned into a target of 441 as Smith produced a masterclass on how to bat on a turner and grinded out a 109. O'Keefe was in business again exploiting the pitch, which had by now started to turn ragged and produced identical figures in both innings of 6-35. India lasted just 33.5 overs as Australia won by a mammoth 333 runs.

EX-CHEPAUK CURATOR PARTHASARATHY DEAD

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Renowned curator K Parthasarathy, who was in charge of the pitches and outfield at the MA Chidambaram Stadium for a long time, passed away in Chennai on Sunday. He was 71 years old and is survived by his wife and daughter. Parthasarathy served the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) from 1972 to 2013 in a career spanning nearly four decades. He prepared surfaces for some of the iconic matches at Chepauck and was also involved in the famous India-Australia tied Test in 1986. Parthasarathy earned accolades from players and coaches for dishing out "lively"

pitches, which offered good balance between bat and ball. Former Tamil Nadu spinner Sunil Subramaniam said that Parthasarathy, fondly referred to as 'Pacha' in the local cricket circles, had the knack of delivering tracks that offered good bounce.

"I learnt a lot from him. He prepared pitches that generated good bounce and he had his own way of doing it. He certainly knew how to make a bouncy track. I feel lucky that we bowled at a time when Chepauck had reasonable bounce," Subramaniam told **TOI**.

Parthasarathy was in charge of the pitches for the India-Australia Tests in 1998 and 2001 and the long-format match between India and England in 2008, when the hosts achieved the highest successful fourth-innings chase in Test history.

GALLERY

MANIKA'S CAMPAIGN ENDS

Star paddler Manika Batra crashed out of the WTT Champions after a quarterfinal straight game defeat against China's Qian Tianyi in Montpellier, France. The Indian, a world No. 30, went down to Tianyi 8-11, 8-11, 10-12 in just 25 minutes on Saturday night. The first Indian to enter the WTT quarterfinals, Batra had shocked world No 14 Bernadette Szocs of Romania 11-9, 6-11, 13-11, 11-9 on Friday to enter the last eight. Sreeja Akula, the other Indian in fray and world No. 25, had made a first-round exit.

Consolation win for WI: Opever Evin Lewis blazed his way to an unbeaten century to give the West Indies a consolation eight-wicket victory in Saturday's rain-hit third and final ODI against Sri Lanka. Returning to 50-over matches after a three-year hiatus, Lewis left spectators at Pallekele in awe as the visitors reached their target of 195 with six balls to spare. **Brief scores:** Sri Lanka: 156/3 in 23 overs (Pathum Nissanka 56, Avishka Fernando 34, Kusal Mendis 56)

lost to West Indies: 196/2 in 22 overs (Evin Lewis 102 n.o., Sherfane Rutherford 50 n.o.).

Mumbai, Odisha share spoils: Mumbai City FC and Odisha FC played out a 1-1 draw at the Mumbai Football Arena in the Indian Super League match on Sunday. Goals by talismanic strikers Roy Krishna (14th minute) for Odisha FC and Nikolaos Karelis (23rd) for Mumbai resulted in both teams sharing the honours. **Result:** Mumbai City FC 1 (Nikolaos Karelis 23) drew with Odisha FC 1 (Roy Krishna 14)

Bates, Devine star in NZ win

India's Batting Flounders As Hosts Lose By 76 Runs

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Ahmedabad: New Zealand head coach Ben Sawyer had talked about the need for partnerships, which was missing from their batting show in the opening ODI.

On Sunday in the second ODI here, New Zealand women delivered on his talk. Senior batters Suzie Bates (58 off 70b; 8x4) and Sophie Devine (79 off 86b; 7x4, 1x6) led with big knocks while Bates's fellow opener Georgia Plimmer (41 off 63b; 6x4, 1x6) and middle-order batter Maddy Green (42 off 41b; 5x4) chipped in with meaningful contributions as the White Ferns accumulated 259/9, which proved more than enough as the hosts were bowled out for 183. The series is tied, with the final ODI to be played on Tuesday.

Chasing a stiff target of 260, India's start was hardly the one they were looking for. Southpaw Smriti



CLASS ACT: Sophie Devine

Mandhana (0) had a loose waft at a wishful delivery and was caught at point by Plimmer on the second attempt off Lea Tahuu (3/42). Fellow opener Shafali Verma (11) hit two sublime boundaries but was trapped in front by pacer Jess Kerr (2/49). Number three Yastika Bhatia (12) too was caught behind off Tahuu's away-going delivery as India slipped to 26/3 in five overs. Harmanpreet Kaur (24) and

Jemimah Rodrigues (17) steadied the ship with a 38-run partnership but the latter's dismissal, caught behind off Devine's (3/27) bowling, pegged India back. The New Zealand captain then struck another telling blow, having Kaur caught at deep midwicket to leave India reeling at 77/5.

Tejal Hasabnis, Deepti Sharma and Arundhati Reddy followed soon. But, Radha Yadav (48 off 64b; 5x4), who picked up 4/69 to go along with three catches, and Saima Thakor (29 off 54b; 3x4) added 70 for the ninth wicket to save India from a huge loss.

They married intent with defence as Yadav unfurled some good cut shots, cover drives and sweep shots to reach her maiden ODI fifty. They were separated when Bates at cover intervened to catch a mistimed lofted shot by Thakor: Yadav's quest for her maiden 50 ended two runs short when she skied a shot to point off Devine's bowling.

Earlier, Bates and Plimmer raced to 87 in 15.3 overs as they made good use of the batting conditions to find boundaries at regular intervals and rotate strike at will. **Brief scores:** New Zealand 259/9 in 50 overs (S Devine 79, S Bates 58; R Yadav 4-69, D Sharma 2-30) bt India (R Yadav 48; S Devine 3-27, L Tahuu 3-42)

Rizwan named white-ball captain

Karachi: Wicketkeeper-batter **Muhammad Rizwan** was on Sunday named Pakistan's ODI and T20 captain, replacing Babar Azam, as the selectors announced the squads for the white-ball tours of Australia and Zimbabwe beginning Nov 4. Babar, pacers Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah were

PAKISTAN CRICKET

turned to the Pakistan team for the Australia tour after being sidelined for two Tests against England.

Squads: Australia tour: ODI squad: Mohammad Rizwan (captain), Salman Ali Agha (vice-captain), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Arafat Minhas, Babar Azam, Faisal Akram, Harris Rauf, Haseebullah (WK), Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Hasnain, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi.

T20I squad: Rizwan (c), i Agha (VC), Minhas, Babar, Rauf, Haseebullah (WK), Jahangir Khan, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Irfan

Khan, Naseem, Omaid Bin Yousuf, Sahibzada Farhan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sufyan Moqim, Usman Khan.

Afridi demoted: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Sunday demoted premier pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi to Category B from Category A, and did not offer central contracts to senior players Fakhar Zaman, Iftikhar Ahmed and Osama Mir for the 2024-25 season. Test skipper Shan Masood remained in Category B despite Pakistan scoring a come-from-behind 2-1 series victory over England recently.

List of centrally contracted players: Category A: Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan; Category B: Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Shan Masood; Category C: Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Harris Rauf, Nonman Ali, Saim Ayub, Sajid Khan, Salman Ali Agha, Saud Shakeel and Shadab Khan; Category D (D): Aamir Jamal, Haseebullah, Kamran Ghulam, Khuram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Hurrari, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Mohammad Wasim Jnr and Usman Khan. **AGENCIES**

India lose to Nepal in penalty shootout

Kathmandu: India crashed out of the SAFF Women's Championship as they lost to Nepal 2-4 in penalty shootout in the semifinal match marred by utter confusion after the home side held up play for more than one hour in protest against a decision of the referee, here on Sunday.

Nepal will play Bangladesh, who beat Bhutan 7-1 in the other semifinal, in the final, laid in front of a packed house at the Dasharath Stadium, the shoot-out was applied after the full-time ended in a 1-1 draw in a match that witnessed more drama off the pitch than inside.

In fact, when the shoot-out ended, the total duration of the match was nearly three hours since the start. India took the lead in the 62nd minute through Sangita Basfore. Nepal then scored but the goal was denied by the referee. The match was held up for more than 70 minutes as Nepal refused to continue, protesting the referee's decision. **PTI**

SNAP SHOTS



ALL SMILES: Tanishka Kapil Kalbhairav

TANISHKA CLINCHES U-17 SINGLES CROWN

Tanishka Kapil Kalbhairav bagged the U-17 girls singles title at the Kosmos Centenary State Ranking table tennis tournament held in Dharwad on Sunday. In the final, Tanishka battled past Himanshi Chowdhary 11-7, 7-11, 11-6, 12-10. Earlier in the semifinal, the 13-year-old defeated Saanvi Vishal Mandekar 11-6, 11-5, 11-4. Meanwhile, Himanshi had sealed her place in the final with a 13-11, 11-7, 6-11, 11-9 win over Neeti Agrawal.

Results: U-17 Girls: Singles: Final: Tanishka Kapil Kalbhairav bt Himanshi Chowdhary 11-7, 7-11, 11-6, 12-10. **Semifinal:** Tanishka bt Saanvi Vishal Mandekar 11-6, 11-5, 11-4; Himanshi bt Neeti Agrawal 13-11, 11-7, 6-11, 11-9.

Easy win for Young Orion's: Pratyanshu and Gautham with 27 points each led Young Orion's Sports Club's charge in their 99-57 win over Southern Blues in the State 'A' division basketball league championship at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium courts in Bengaluru on Sunday. At half-time, Young Orion's were leading 50-19 and continued the momentum after the break. In the other match, Beagles BC defeated Vivek's SC 84-76.

Results: Young Orion's SC 99 (Pratyanshu 27, Gautham 27, Arjun 18) bt Southern Blues 57 (Surya) 18, Rohan 11) HT 50-19; Beagles BC 84 (Surya) 34, Achintya 19) bt Vivek's SC 76 (Sanjay 36, Markesh 15) HT: 43-39.

Agniputhra edge past FCBU: FC Agniputhra eked out a 2-1 win over FC Bengaluru United in the BDF Super Division league championship at the Bangalore Football Stadium on Sunday. Azfar Noorani put Agniputhra ahead in the 39th minute, while V Surendrasad doubled the score in the 66th minute. In the 70th minute, Akshuna Thyagi pulled one back for FCBU. In the day's other match, MEG & Centre FC clinched a 1-0 win over ASC & Centre FC, with Niyaz Nazar scoring the winner.

Results: FC Agniputhra 2 (Azfar Noorani 39, V Surendrasad 66) bt FC Bengaluru United 1 (Akshuna Thyagi 70); MEG & Centre FC 1 (Niyaz Nazar 38) bt ASC & Centre FC 0. **Today's matches:** MFAR Students Union FC vs BFC (12.45pm); Real Chikmagalur FC vs Sporting Club Bengaluru (3.45pm).

SAINZ SHOWS CLASS

Outpaces Verstappen To Seize Sixth Pole Position

Carlos Sainz may be leaving Ferrari this year, but he showed on Saturday that he remains one of the fastest drivers in Formula One and a loyal and dedicated competitor.

Set to be replaced at Maranello by Mercedes seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton next season, Sainz dominated qualifying to seize his sixth career pole position with two near-perfect laps at the Mexico City Grand Prix.

Many paddock observers find it difficult to understand how such an elite driver has been rejected by Red Bull, Ferrari and Mercedes.

He outpaced Red Bull's three-time champion Max Verstappen by two-tenths of a second in a tense and intriguing session that gives him a perfect opportunity to secure a fourth victory for Ferrari before he moves on to Williams next year.

"I am so very happy," said Sainz. "I had a great couple of laps -- and a lot of time here, in Mexico, you have a feeling that you cannot put a lap together as it is so extremely difficult with all the sliding."

"Today my two laps in Q3 were pretty much identical and almost perfect. That's a great feeling because it is so tricky here."

Sainz added that he had never lost his feeling of being part of the team at Ferrari, despite knowing since January that he was on the way out -- and faced months of trying to find a seat for 2025.

"It has not been easy when I was talking to other teams in between the races, but once I reached my decision, I was able to stay focused as always -- it is Ferrari and we want to win."

"It's our number one priority,



FRONTRUNNERS: Carlos Sainz (centre) with second-placed Max Verstappen (left) and Lando Norris, who was third, in Mexico City

of course, to bring both cars home, especially if you win the race. The extra seven or eight points that you can win are important for the team in the constructors' so I will be looking forward to taking that P1 into Turn One and hopefully our race pace will be good enough to win it."

"We are going in the right direction and I am looking forward to finishing the job."

Sainz will have Verstappen alongside him on the front row with McLaren's Lando Norris third and his Ferrari team-mate Charles Leclerc fourth.

A good result by the Ferrari duo could see them overhaul Red Bull for second place in the constructors' championship, which

McLaren lead with 544 ahead of Red Bull on 504. Ferrari have 496.

In the drivers' title race, Verstappen leads with 354, 57 ahead of Norris on 297 with Leclerc third on 275. Another victory for the Monegasque driver, who won last Sunday in Austin, could see him challenge Norris for second place, keeping alive Ferrari's hopes in both title contests.

"We are not thinking about these things, but we are just staying under the radar," said team boss Fred Vasseur, who recruited Hamilton and has restored order and reliability to Ferrari.

With five races remaining, the 'scarlet scuderia' appear to be a team on the rise with Sainz setting the pace. AFP

Overnight rain ruins K'taka's day

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Bad weather and poor infrastructure seem to be following Karnataka's Ranji Trophy team this season. Day 2 of their league fixture against hosts Bihar was called off without a ball being bowled due to a wet outfield.

Moin-ul-Haq Stadium in Patna has been criticised regularly for its poor facilities, to the extent that spectators are not being allowed for the match. However, on Sunday, the



DAMP SQUIB: Groundstaff at the Moin-ul-Haq stadium in Patna resorted to burning dung cakes to dry the outfield

RANJI TROPHY

stadium was back in focus. Overnight rain left the outfield soggy, and the limited ground staff worked in vain to get the facility match-ready. They even resorted to burning dung cakes to dry the surface. While the Bihar team made it to the stadium, the Karnataka players stayed put at their hotel.

The previous two matches Karnataka played -- against

Madhya Pradesh and Kerala -- ended without the first innings being completed due to rain. With two points from as many points, Karnataka needs to win this match to shore up their chance of making the knockouts. Karnataka, who bowled out Bihar for 143, were 16 for no loss at stumps on Saturday.

BRIEF SCORES

Group C: In Patna: Bihar 143 vs Karnataka 16-0. (No play on Day 2 due to wet outfield). In Kolkata: Kerala 51-4 in 15.1 overs vs Bengal. In Mohali: Punjab 210 vs Uttar Pradesh 293-3 in 81 overs (Madhav 128 n.o., Nitish 66). In Indore: Madhya Pradesh 308 in 115 overs (Mantri 97, Jayant 5-84) vs Haryana 185-3 in 60 overs (Himanshu 90, Dalal 60).

Karnataka let Maha off the hook

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: For the first two sessions, Karnataka were in control of their CK Nayudu Trophy U-23 contest against Maharashtra at the KSCA Alur-1 ground here on Sunday. At tea, the visitors were precariously placed at 160/6.

CK NAYUDU TROPHY

Two deliveries into tea, Maharashtra were again in trouble. Abhishek Pawar, on 14, was caught behind by Kruthik Krishna off medium pacer Yashovardhan Parantap.

On an umpire's review, the ball was deemed a no-ball. It gave Maharashtra the opening they were looking for as Pawar's seventh wicket partnership with Vicky Ostwal yielded 94 runs. The association was incidentally broken by the same pair of Kruthik and Parantap soon after the new ball was taken.

At close, Maharashtra were 255/8 in 87 overs. Earlier, electing to bat, the away team

lost opener Siddhant Doshi in the fifth over.

Skipper Aniket Nalavade (42) and Digvijay Patil (39) stabilised the innings with their 60-run stand.

Skipper Dhanush Gowda (2/38) and spinner Shashi Kumar K (3/69) picked up some quick wickets to put Maharashtra in a spot of bother before the latter recovered.

Brief scores: Maharashtra (1 innings): 255/8 in 87 overs (Aniket Nalavade 42, Digvijay Patil 39, Kushal Tambe 32, Aditya Pawar 47, Vicky Ostwal 58 batting, Dhanush Gowda 2-38, Yashovardhan Parantap 2-48, Shashi Kumar K 3-69) vs Karnataka.

Red-hot Mandarino clinches Derby riches

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mysuru: Irfan Ghatala-trained Mandarino (Alex Rozario up) won the Cubic Mysore Derby, the feature event on the concluding day of the races here on Sunday.



Royal Calcutta Turf Club Trophy (Div-I) - 1000M: The Grey Geranium 1, Baltimore 2, Rising Sun 3, D Golden Cup 4, 1/21, 21, 3-3/41, T: 1.04.96. Tote: Rs 17 (W), 10, 15, 21 (P). Fc: Rs 35. Q: Rs 26. Shp: Rs 28. Thp: Rs 33. Trinalia: Rs 168. Exacta: Rs 1,330.

Royal Western India Turf Club Ltd Trophy - 1200M: Southern Force (Arum Raghavan) 1, Heroism 2, Blue Origin 3, Golden Time 4, 2-1/21, Hd, 11, T: 1.10.74. Tote: Rs 20 (W), 10, 17, 50 (P). Fc: Rs 115.0. Exacta: Rs 2,965.

Mysore Race Club Anniversary Cup - 1400M: Shamrock 1, O Hansini 2, Shubankar 3, The Protector 4, 1-1/21, Lnk, 4-1/21, T: 1.22.54. Tote: Rs 13 (W), 10, 12 (P). Fc: Rs 29. Q: Rs 20. Shp: Rs 21. Thp: Rs 21. Trinalia: Rs 34. Exacta: Rs 106.

Cubic Mysore Derby - 2000M: Mandarino 1, Bourbonaire 2, The Leader 3, John Wick 4, Lnk, 3/41, 4-1/21, T: 2.03.75. Tote: Rs 130 (W), 44, 13 (P). Fc: Rs 537. Q: Rs 179. Shp: Rs 27. Thp: Rs 39. Trinalia: Rs 2,067. Exacta: Rs 4,077.

Hyderabad Race Club Trophy - 1400M: Free To Play 1, Dynamic Force 2, Natural One 3, LG's Star 4, 2-1/21, 3-1/21, Snk, T: 1.23.93. Tote: Rs 85 (W), 22, 11, 21 (P). Fc: Rs 210. Q: Rs 96. Shp: Rs 28. Thp: Rs 48. Trinalia: Rs 1,177. Exacta: Rs 2,833.

Bangalore Turf Club Trophy - 1200M: Czar 1, Vijaya Falcon 2, Brave Trooper 3, Polished Girl 4, Not Run: Gold Kite, Nk, 11, 3-3/41, T: 1.09.98. Tote: Rs 18 (W), 11, 22, 16 (P). Fc: Rs 192. Q: Rs 119. Shp: Rs 89. Thp: Rs 37. Trinalia: Rs 1,150. Exacta: Rs 2,965.

Madras Race Club Trophy - 1600M: Mystikos 1, Tigerking 2, Force Of Nature 3, Aircraft 4, Not Run: Hidden Pleasure, 2-3/41, 1-1/21, T: 1.36.55. Tote: Rs 21 (W), 13, 16, 28 (P). Fc: Rs 64. Q: Rs 47. Shp: Rs 43. Thp: Rs 66. Trinalia: Rs 326. Exacta: Rs 1,183.

Royal Calcutta Turf Club Trophy (Div-I) - 1100M: Silver Days Again 1, Chisoc 2, Extraordinary 3, Country's Light 4, 2-1/21, 5-1/41, Nk, T: 1.05.08. Tote: Rs 37 (W), 13, 14, 27 (P). Fc: Rs 122. Q: Rs 40. Shp: Rs 33. Thp: Rs 76. Trinalia: Rs 739. Exacta: Rs 2,609.

Jackpot: Rs 12,804. **Runner-up:** Rs 472. **First Treble:** Rs 598; **Second Treble:** Rs 528; **Third Treble:** Rs 8,380.

Dyf best for main event

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hyderabad: AS Jodha-trained Dyf (P Trevor up) is expected to win the JSKI Golconda St Leger, the star attraction of the races to be held here on Monday. First race starts at 12.50 pm.

HYDERABAD RACES

SELECTIONS
1. Shamshad Plate (Div I) 1200M: Lifes Journey 1, Bellingham 2, Shadow Baby 3
2. DR Harish Chandra Memorial Cup (Div II) 1200M: Red Snapper 1, Mark My Day 2, Sweet Dancer 3

3. Shamshad Plate (Div II) 1200M: The Pious 1, Glimmer Of Hope 2, Star Medal 3
4. JSKI Kuntala Water Falls Trophy 2200M: Sugar 1, Trishul 2, Desert Hero 3
5. Shaphir Plate 1400M: Quality Warrior 1, MR Perfect 2, Raining Queen 3
6. DR Harish Chandra Memorial Cup (Div I) 1200M: Amrya 1, Juramento 2, Sopranos 3
7. JSKI Golconda St Leger 2800M: Dyf 1, High Command 2, Champions Way 3
8. Blue Max Plate 1400M: 1 Exclusive Spark, Char Ek Char 2, Battle On 3
Day's best: Dyf
1st Jackpot: 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8
2nd Jackpot: 5, 6, 7 & 8, 1st
Treble: 1, 2, & 3, 2nd Treble: 3, 4, & 5.

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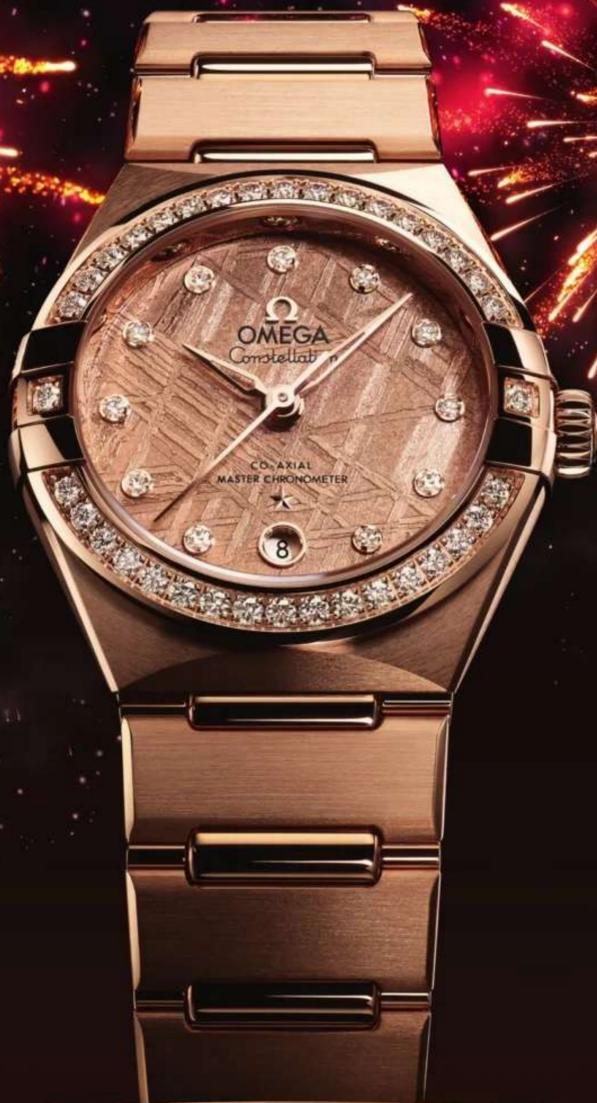
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