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IN BRIEF

Invite for R-day event to honour southern crafts

NEW DELHI
Invitees for the 75th Republic Day 'At Home' reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan will receive a specially curated box of craftwork from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh along with the invitation card. » [Page 4](#)

Badal's decision to quit SAD chief post accepted

CHANDIGARH
The working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Friday accepted the resignation of Sukhbir Singh Badal from the post of party president, a move seen as a course correction aimed at reviving the century-old party. » [Page 9](#)

Trump sentenced in hush money case, not punished

Though the President-elect gets an unconditional discharge, he will become the first President of the U.S. to be sentenced as a felon; Trump calls it a 'setback for the New York court system'

Agence France-Presse
NEW YORK

A judge sentenced Donald Trump to an unconditional discharge on Friday for covering up hush money payments to a porn star despite the U.S. President-elect's efforts to avoid becoming the first felon in the White House.

The judge spared Mr. Trump prison or a fine even though the 34 counts of falsifying business records on which he was convicted in May 2024 carried potential jail time. Instead New York judge Juan Merchan handed down the mildest criminal sanction available, an unconditional discharge — a relatively uncommon measure.

"Never before has this court been presented with



Case closed: Donald Trump and attorney Todd Blanche appear virtually before Judge Juan Merchan for the sentencing hearing. AP

such a unique and remarkable set of circumstances," Mr. Merchan said. "The only lawful sentence that permits entry of a judgment of conviction without encroaching on the highest office of the land is an unconditional discharge."

Mr. Trump attended his

sentencing virtually, with the judge, lawyers and media packed into the scruffy Manhattan courtroom that was the backdrop to the trial's high drama, legal wrangling and vitriolic personal attacks by the divisive Republican.

"This has been a very terrible experience. I think

it's been a tremendous setback for New York and the New York court system," Mr. Trump said before the discharge was passed. "It was done to damage my reputation, so I would lose the election."

The former President appeared on screens in the courtroom with two large U.S. flags behind him, wearing a red tie with white stripes and looking on impatiently as the brief proceeding unfolded.

Ahead of the sentencing, prosecutor Joshua Steinglass said Mr. Trump had been convicted of a "premeditated and continuous deception". "The verdict in this case was unanimous and decisive and it must be respected."

CONTINUED ON
» [PAGE 8](#)

Maintain status quo on well near Sambhal mosque, directs SC



Under watch: Friday prayers happen under tight security at the Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal on Friday. PTI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday directed that status quo be maintained with respect to a well located near the entrance of the Shahi Jama Masjid at Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh.

A Bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar issued directions to private respondents and local authorities at Sambhal on an application filed by the mosque's

management committee.

The court directed the respondents to file their counter-affidavits and status reports within two weeks. It posted the case on February 25.

Senior advocate Huzefa Ahmadi, for the mosque committee, said the well held historical significance and its water has been used since time immemorial.

CONTINUED ON
» [PAGE 8](#)

SC stays GST notices to online gaming companies

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the operation of showcase notices of ₹1.12 lakh crore issued under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) proceedings against online gaming companies.

A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan passed the order on petitions filed by 49 online gaming companies.

Advocate Abhishek A. Rastogi, who represented the companies in court, said a freeze on further action protected his clients from any coercive action and ensured that demands made in the showcase notices were not time-barred.

The court listed the case next on March 18.

The core dispute in the case concerned the interpretation of GST applicability on online gaming.



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CM

M ND-NDE

President’s invite for ‘At Home’ to honour crafts from South

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

A stiff white card embossed with the Lion Capital of Ashoka is the usual format of the invitation card sent out for the customary ‘At Home’ reception held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Republic and Independence Day.

This year, however, to mark 75 years since the formation of the Republic of India, things are different.

Special invite

In a departure from convention, invitees for the ‘At Home’ will receive a specially curated box of craft-work from the five southern States – Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh – along with the card.

The idea of this special box, packed with symbolic meaning, was floated by



Invitees for the ‘At Home’ at Rashtrapati Bhavan will receive a specially curated box of craftwork from the five southern States. FILE PHOTO

President Droupadi Murmu herself, and executed by Rashtrapati Bhavan, with the support of the National Institute of Design (NID), which has campuses in Ahmedabad and Bengaluru (where President Murmu is a Visitor).

“The idea behind the artefacts in the invitation box is the 5,000-year civilisa-

Art in a box

President Droupadi Murmu’s guests are set to receive a gift box containing the best of south India’s GI-tagged crafts. **Here are some products featured in the hamper:**



Pochampally Ikat on a pencil pouch: This Telangana staple is known for its distinct geometric patterns and bold colours



Etikoppaka toys: The soft wood and lacquer toys from the eponymous village in Andhra Pradesh are valued for the use of natural dyes and themes depicting everyday life



Kalamkari on bamboo: These goodies will arrive in a bamboo box decorated with Kalamkari motifs, pen-drawn with natural dyes



Kanchipuram silk as a pouch: The handloom silk, world renown for its richness and elegance, makes its way from Tamil Nadu

tional history of Bharat, with the underlying message of sustainability and colour schemes that invoke the 75 years of the forming of the Indian Republic,” Rashtrapati Bhavan officials told *The Hindu*.

According to NID Ahmedabad director Ashok Mondal, the curation and even the crafting was done in the institute’s Bengaluru campus, with craftsmen from five States still hard at work there.

“It is a matter of pride for us that we were asked to execute this, and the initial discussions were held at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Sustainability, inclusion, and the rich culture of the five southern States are included in the box,” he said.

Bamboo box

The craft elements will be packed in a box made of bamboo weave with Kalamkari paintings on it done by Nimmakalunta artisans.

The elements of the box include an Ikat-Pochampally cover that can be used even after the box has been dismantled, a fridge mag-

net depicting Mysore’s Ganjifa art, usually seen in the famous Ganjifa playing cards, and a handmade pouch of Kanjeevaram silk from Tamil Nadu.

“Etikopakka dolls from Andhra Pradesh, a male and female doll, are included, along with a bookmark made of screwpine leaves woven by artistes from Kerala,” he added.

The artisans who produced this order for Rashtrapati Bhavan were asked to craft their products on the NID Bengaluru campus.

The guest list

The special invitees at the Rashtrapati Bhavan reception will include a contingent of ‘drone didis’, women achievers, agriculturists engaged in natural farming, and achievers who are also people with disabilities.

Stalin brings in Bills to curb sexual crimes

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Friday moved two Bills in the Assembly to enhance punishment for sexual crimes against women and children and prosecute those harassing them on digital and electronic platforms.

The Criminal Laws (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Bill, 2025, seeks to amend the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, in their application to Tamil Nadu.

The second Bill provides for suitably amending the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment of Women Act, 1998.

The Criminal Laws Bill proposes a minimum 14

years of rigorous imprisonment for a rape convict, up from the present 10 years. If the rapist is a member of the police force, it seeks to double the minimum rigorous imprisonment to 20 years.

If the rape victim is a girl aged below 12, it calls for life term as the minimum punishment and death penalty as the maximum.

Increased punishment

Such crimes now attract at least 20 years of rigorous imprisonment that may extend to a life term and with fine or with death penalty. If an injury results in the death of a woman or a persistent vegetative state, it proposes life term, up from 20 years of rigorous imprisonment.

INBRIEF



U.P. CM inaugurates ‘Maa Ki Rasoi’ offering meal for ₹9

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday inaugurated ‘Maa Ki Rasoi,’ a community kitchen initiative offering a full meal for just ₹9, in Prayagraj. The community kitchen will be operated by the Nandi Sewa Sansthan at Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital to serve people from the economically weaker section. Mr. Adityanath expressed appreciation for the initiative and praised the quality of food, hygiene, and the services being offered. The initiative, under which people can enjoy a full meal of dal, four rotis, vegetables, rice, salad, and a dessert for ₹9, has been launched for the Mahakumbh. Several Ministers, Home Department Principal Secretary Sanjay Prasad, and Jagadguru Mahamandal-eshwar Santosh Das were also present.

Underworld don Chhota Rajan taken to AIIMS for nose surgery

Underworld don Chhota Rajan was taken to AIIMS in New Delhi for a surgery, prison officials said on Friday. The officials said he was taken to AIIMS on Thursday for a minor nose operation. The surgery was advised by the doctors and he is likely to be brought back to Tihar Jail after his operation, said a senior prison officer. He will be kept in the prison hospital under doctors’ observation. Security has been tightened in and around the hospital as a precautionary measure. Meanwhile, hospital sources said that he is admitted in an old private ward under the ENT Department. PTI

After stint as Odisha Governor, Raghubar Das returns to BJP

Ex-Jharkhand CM tells party workers not to get disheartened by Assembly poll defeat; his return may challenge Marandi’s supremacy: party insiders

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Raghubar Das, who recently resigned as the Governor of Odisha, returned to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Friday. The former Jharkhand Chief Minister joined the party in the presence of its State unit chief, Babulal Marandi.

Mr. Das is an OBC leader who became the first non-tribal CM of Jharkhand in 2014.

His return to the BJP could challenge the supremacy of Mr. Marandi, who was the first CM of the State, which was founded in 2000 following the bifurcation of Bihar.

As the Jharkhand BJP chief, Mr. Marandi oversaw the party’s campaign for last year’s Assembly election, in which the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-led INDIA bloc won 56 out of 81 seats, with the BJP-led NDA securing 24 seats.

‘Not eyeing any post’

Addressing the press at the party office in Ranchi, Mr. Das said, “I am very happy to have returned to my party. Let me say that I don’t



New beginning: Raghubar Das joined the party on Friday in the presence of its State unit chief, Babulal Marandi. ANI

desire any post in the party. I have only one motive – to awaken people and protect the rich culture and tradition of Jharkhand.”

Party insiders said that Mr. Das is likely to replace Mr. Marandi, and the latter could be appointed the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly to maintain the balance between non-tribal and tribal leadership in the party.

The former CM told the party workers not to be disheartened by the Assembly election defeat.

“In 1984, the party won only two seats. At that time,

people used to make fun of us, and today the BJP-led NDA is in power in 22 States,” he said.

Asked about the cause of the poll, Mr. Das said, “2024 is over. We must learn the lesson and move forward with new energy and enthusiasm.”

Mr. Das represented Jamshepur East in the Assembly five times until 2019, when he was defeated by Saryu Roy.

He was appointed the Governor of Odisha on October 18, 2023 and resigned from the office in December, 2024.

Water recedes at Assam mine where eight are still trapped; mine financier detained

Rahul Karmakar
UMRANGSO

The water level at the flooded rat-hole coal mine in Assam’s Dima Hasao district receded by seven metres on Friday, brightening hopes of locating eight miners trapped inside since the morning of January 6. The body of one miner, a resident of Nepal, was retrieved on January 8.

During the day, the police detained a ‘financier’ of the mining operations from 3 Kilo, the nearest major habitation from the mine at Kalamati about 15 km away. The mine is about 30 km from Umrangso, an industrial town with a cement plant and a hydropower project of a Central public sector company.

Mines abandoned

Dima Hasao District Magistrate Simanta Kumar Das said that the process of ‘dewatering’ or draining three abandoned mines within 500 metres of the ill-fated mine helped lower the water level within it. It is possible that these mines – each with a network of narrow tunnels branching out from the wall of a vertical pit – could be interconnected.

The three mines were believed to have been abandoned before the National Green Tribunal



Residents waiting near a coal mine in Umrangso in Assam where miners got trapped on January 6. FILE PHOTO

banned rat-hole coal mining in April 2014.

“We noticed a significant improvement after five pumps were used on Friday to dewater the mines. The water level of the mine where the miners are trapped went down by about seven metres,” Mr. Das told *The Hindu*. Between Tuesday and Thursday, the water level had remained almost unchanged at around the 28-metre mark in the 90-metre pit, despite constant efforts to drain it.

Mr. Das said the dewatering process is expected to pick up speed once the high-capacity pump flown in from Nagpur by Coal India Limited (CIL) on Thursday begins operations. “It is a complex process but we hope to press this pump into operation by tomorrow [Saturday] evening,” he added. Deep div-

ers from the Indian Navy and other personnel from the Army, the National and State Disaster Response Forces, ONGC, CIL, and the district administration are engaged in the rescue mission, entailing a massive expenditure.

Officials said Hannan Laskar, who allegedly invested in the mining operations and kept the miners under pressure to extract a large volume of coal, was detained.

“We are questioning him to find out more about the illegal operations in the area,” a local police officer said. Opposition political parties have claimed there are about 200 illegal rat-hole mines in the area, about 60 of which are still active.

Meanwhile, the Congress staged a State-wide protest against the incident on Friday.

Abhishek Banerjee’s ‘Diamond Harbour model’ and the churn within Trinamool Congress

NEWS ANALYSIS

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Political scions often appear to be in a hurry to prove themselves. Recently, Abhishek Banerjee, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee’s nephew and Trinamool Congress general secretary, organised free health camps in his Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha constituency under his ‘Sebaashray’ initiative. The push behind the initiative is visible both on the ground and on the social media handles of the Trinamool Congress.

In seven days since its launch, the Trinamool Congress claims that one lakh people have been provided medical services under the initiative.

This is not the first time that Mr. Banerjee, who has

made his mark on the political scene by being considered the party’s de facto number two, has launched his own initiatives for the parliamentary seat’s electorate and promoted the ‘Diamond Harbour model’ of governance.

In January 2024, the Trinamool Congress leader took up an ambitious initiative of enrolling about one lakh senior citizens in his constituency for an old-age pension scheme. During the pandemic, Mr. Banerjee claimed to have achieved a successful model for tracking and treating COVID-19 cases in Diamond Harbour.

West Bengal model

While these initiatives have boosted his popularity and acceptance among the electorate, the ‘Diamond Harbour model’ operating within the larger ‘West Bengal model’ has posed



Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee interacting with people at a health camp in Diamond Harbour in West Bengal. FILE PHOTO

questions for the Trinamool Congress and the State government. The Opposition parties have been quick to point out that if Mr. Banerjee’s model of governance is a success, then there must be some flaws in Mamata Banerjee’s West Bengal government model.

The Chief Minister’s 37-year-old nephew is a three-time MP. In the 2024 Lok Sabha poll, he won the Diamond Harbour seat by a margin of over 7.18 lakh votes, one of the highest victory margins in the State. However, he is not part of the West Bengal go-

vernment and thus has little administrative experience.

Several voices within the Trinamool Congress have been calling for a greater role for the party’s heir apparent in the State government.

The debate on the old guard versus the young Turks has also been the subject of speculation among the party’s rank and file.

Mr. Banerjee had earlier proposed a retirement age in politics, but the Chief Minister, who is also the Trinamool Congress chairperson, did not appear to be in agreement.

‘The final word’

On December 3, 2024, the Trinamool chief tried to put an end to the speculation about the leadership debate by telling party legislators and Ministers in the West Bengal Legislative

Assembly that “I am still there. I am the final word”. Following her remark, the party took disciplinary action against some leaders who had publicly endorsed a larger role for her nephew.

Recently, a section of party leaders, including Ministers, insisted on boycotting artists who were critical of Ms. Banerjee and her government during the protests over the rape and murder of a doctor at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital. While the Diamond Harbour MP took a more liberal approach and said that people have the right to protest, Ms. Banerjee’s loyalists said the disrespect to the party chairperson “could not be taken lightly”.

Some went to the extent of saying that the party general secretary was away during the height of the protests and “may not

have been aware” of the kind of criticism that the party and its chairperson had to face.

New power centre

Trinamool Congress is not a cadre-based party. Its strength derives from the charisma and leadership of the party chairperson. Even though Mr. Banerjee has emerged as a new power centre in the party, the old-timers know that they will thrive as long as they have the Chief Minister on their side.

Compared to many other political parties, the Trinamool Congress is relatively new. On January 1 this year, it turned 28 years old. New ideas and a new style of leadership that threaten to upset the status quo and challenge the party’s inertia are likely to face opposition in any political system, and things are no different in the Trinamool

Congress.

Mr. Banerjee wants a more professional and result-oriented structure for the party, whereas many within the Trinamool benefit from the status quo. Therefore, the Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha constituency has emerged as the laboratory where the party general secretary is testing new ideas and initiatives and trying to give signals that he has what it takes to be the next leader.

So far, the party general secretary’s political initiatives, from engaging political consultants to the State-wide ‘Nabo Jowar’ (New Wave) campaign, have worked for the Trinamool. However, it will take serious efforts and much more time for the three-time Lok Sabha member if he wants to overhaul the Trinamool Congress and fit into the large shoes of Mamata Banerjee.

INBRIEF



Wild elephant captured in Belagavi after farmers' complaints

A team of forest officers used trained elephants from Sakrebyle elephant camp to capture a wild elephant in Karambal forest of Karnataka's Belagavi district. Following complaints by farmers in Karambal, Chapagaon and nearby areas in Khanapur, officers brought the trained elephants from the Sakrebyle camp to Khanapur. The operation was conducted successfully and the elephant was captured, Assistant Conservator of Forests Sunita Nimbargi said.

Kerala HC seeks police's reply on businessman's bail petition

The Kerala High Court on Friday sought the response of the police on a petition filed by businessman Bobby Chemmannur seeking bail in a sexual harassment case registered against him on a complaint by a woman actor. He was remanded in judicial custody on Thursday. The Ernakulam court dismissed his bail plea. He has been charged with the offences under Section 75 (Sexual Harassment) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Section 67 of the IT Act.

Five arrested for contractor's death

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka Criminal Investigation Department (CID), probing the death of contractor Sachin Panchal, who allegedly ended his life in Bidar on December 26 last year, arrested five persons, including the prime accused Rajkumar Kapnoor, a former member of the Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, and reportedly a supporter of

State Minister Priyank Kharge on Friday. The others arrested are Nandkumar Nagabhujange, Gorakhnath Sajjan Chinchansur, Ramangouda Patil, and Satish Ratnakar. Their names figure in the FIR registered against nine accused for abetment to suicide. The deceased had left behind a seven-pagenote. *(Those having suicidal thoughts can call Arogya Sahayavani: 104)*

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Online tenders are invited against "Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Specialized Equipment and Machineries for FSBS-Barapetta" (Tender Id: 2025.AHVD.41988.1).

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Chief Engineer, Bridges, Odisha, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-34174/11/0028/2425

B-832

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RESULTS OF TENDER

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Tripura Power Generation Limited (TPGL) invited on line Open international competitive bids from eligible bidders on 9 January 2023. The received Bids were opened on the e-Tendering portal on 30 Nov 2023 in presence of TPGL officials and representatives of the bidders. Bids were received from two bidders and evaluation of both technical and price bids were carried out as per Bid Document. The result of bidding are indicated below:

Name of Bidder	Bid Price as Read Out at Opening	Evaluated Bid Price
Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) Power Sector, Business Group BHEL House, Siri Fort New Delhi-110049	INR 1265.63,06,100.00	INR 1265.63,06,100.00
Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) S-2, Technocrat Indl. Estate Balanagar, Hyderabad-500037 Telengana, India	USD 500,00,000.00 And INR 706,00,00,000.00	INR 1119,30,15,000.00

The proposal of both the Bidders are responsive. The Award has been decided based on the lowest (L-1) Evaluated Cost per Net kW as per Tender Document. The details of the successful bidder are indicated below.

Name of Successful Bidder:	Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Limited (MEIL)
Address:	S-2, Technocrat Indl. Estate, Balanagar Hyderabad-500037, Telengana, India
Contract Price:	USD 495,00,00.00 + INR 704,64,00,000.00
Duration of Contract:	36 months from the effective date of the Contract.
Scope of the Contract Awarded:	Engineering, Procurement and Construction for Installation of 120 MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant at Rokhia, Tripura, India as per Contract Agreement.

General Manager (Technical)
Tripura Power Generation Limited.

Bidyut Bhawan (Old Building), North Banamalipur
Agartal: Tripura (West) : Pin-799001 Email: gmtptgl@gmail.com

Arlekar stresses Governors' rights in higher education

Governor's responsibility to oversee universities had been consistently clarified by the authorities concerned at various instances, says the new Kerala Governor; State had slammed draft UGC rules

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar has affirmed that Governors hold the final authority over matters concerning higher education in States, a position that has been supported by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the judiciary on several occasions. His remarks come amid strong opposition from the LDF government regarding the UGC regulations of 2025. The controversy pertains particularly to the provisions granting the Chancellor greater powers in the appointment of



Courtesy call: Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar calls on Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

Vice-Chancellors. Mr. Arlekar, interacting with mediapersons in New Delhi on Friday, emphasised that the Governor's responsibility to oversee universities had been consistently clarified by the authorities concerned at various instances. "There are no two ways about it," he asserted, while stressing that the Constitution entrusts the Governors with the duty of managing higher education in respective States. He also expressed the hope that any misunderstandings regarding this is-

Couple, 3 minor daughters found murdered in U.P.

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Five members of a family were found dead inside their rented house at Lisari Gate in Meerut district, the police said on Friday. The victims were identified as Mohammad Moin, 38, his wife Asma, 35, and

their three minor daughters. The police found the bodies of the couple wrapped in sheets on the floor, while the bodies of the minors, stuffed in sacks, were found inside a storage compartment under the bed. "The exact reason for death will be determined after post-mortem. Initial investigations point to murder due to personal enmity," said Meerut Senior Superintendent Police Vipin Tada. All victims had head injuries caused by blows with a heavy object. Two persons were detained for the murders. Several sus-

sue could be addressed and he hoped that all parties would work together for the betterment of Kerala's educational system. The State government, led by CM Pinarayi Vijayan, has strongly criticised the draft University Grants Commission (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment and Promotion of Teachers and Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2025, accusing the Centre of attempting to subvert the authority of State governments in running universities and managing the higher education sector as a whole.

Haryana to bring Bill on illegal immigration in budget session: CM

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Friday said the State government will introduce a Bill in the Assembly aimed at curbing illegal immigration. The proposed legislation will be presented in the upcoming budget session, he said. According to an official statement, Mr. Saini also said his government has set a target to make 70% of the villages drug-free by the end of 2025. Mr. Saini chaired a review meeting in Panchkula with senior police officers

to assess law and order in the State, the statement said. The government will soon unveil a policy to reward police personnel for their exceptional service. This policy will also provide for strict action against any lapses in crime prevention, the CM said. He said police officers have been instructed to take stringent action against criminals, and to be sensitive towards the public. "A target has also been given for the de-addiction campaign, and take strict action against those involved in the illegal drug trade."

TTD to give financial aid to stampede victims

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUMALA/PITHAPURAM

Expressing deep sorrow over the death of six devotees in the Tirupati stampede, the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams Board on Friday announced compensation for the victims. An ex gratia of ₹25 lakh was declared for the families of the deceased, ₹5 lakh for

the critically injured, and ₹2 lakh for those who sustained minor injuries. TTD Chairperson B.R. Naidu said the board would provide employment (outsourced) to a family member of the deceased and bear the educational expenses of their children. He said there were no lapses in the arrangements.

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The opening of re-tender Part-I will be held on **27.01.2025 at 11.30 AM**.

Place : Chennai – 600 035.
Date : 10.01.2025 DIPR/141/Tender/2025 **Administrator**

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, PWD (ROADS), CACHAR CIRCLE, SILCHAR
No.-T/CC/ETN/SIL/2024-25/592(T)

PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(e-Procurement)

The Superintending Engineer, PWD (Roads) Cachar Circle, Silchar on behalf of Governor of Assam, invites bids for 1 (One) No. of package for Construction of RCC Bridge under **Conversion of 1000 nos. Of SPT Bridges to RCC Bridges for the year 2017-18(Balance Work)** within Cachar District of Assam (under Sonai LAC) amounting to approximately Rs.104.388 Lakhs(Rupees One Crore Four Lakh Thirty Eight Thousand Eight Hundred) only including GST etc. within the jurisdiction of P.W.R.D. Dholai and Sonai Territorial Road Division, Dholai from approved and eligible contractors registered with Public Works Department (Roads), Assam.

Details may be seen at website www.assamtenders.gov.in and also in the office of the undersigned during office hours from 17/01/2025, 10:00 hours onwards. Amendment /Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWRD, Assam website www.assamtenders.gov.in.

Note:- (1) N.I.T. Value is inclusive of GST (12%), Labour cess(1%) etc.
(2) Bidders must have to submit site verification report duly countersigned by the Executive Engineer, PWRD Dholai & Sonai Territorial Road Division, Dholai with the bid.

Superintending Engineer, PWD(Roads) Cachar Circle, Silchar.
Janasanyog /C/6472/ 24/11-Jan-25

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (ROADS)
ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-03

No. CE/CW1401/2024-25/1

PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Chief Engineer, P.W.D (Roads), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bid from approved and eligible contractors registered with Assam PWD (Roads) for 1 (One) no. of project under SOPD(G) for the year 2024-25 in Kamrup (Metropolitan) district of Assam.

Scheme is not yet sanctioned by the competent authority. In the event of non- sanction of the schemes, the bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever on this account shall be entertained from the bidders.

Details along with Schemes for the works may be seen at website www.assamtenders.gov.in and also at the office of the undersigned in the "City Works Cell". Amendment / Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor / bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWRD, Assam website www.assamtenders.gov.in.

Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3
Janasanyog /C/6471/ 24/11-Jan-25

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (BUILDING)
ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3

No. CE/TB-VII/98/2024 /05

PRESS NOTICE FOR RE TENDER

The Addl. Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Planning), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam re invites bids from Govt. registered eligible Contractors having experience in similar nature of works for the following work.

Details of bid may be seen at e-procurement portal www.assamtenders.gov.in
The bidders must be enrolled in www.assamtenders.gov.in

Sl. No.	Name of Work	LAC	District	Bid Security drawn in favour of	Approx value of work (Rs.)	Completion Period	Bid Security 2% of Bid value for General category And 1% of Bid value for Reserved category	Cost of Bid
1	Jagannath Community and Skill Centre at Hilara TE under Katigorah LAC (Pkg. No 142)	Katigorah, LAC	Cachar	Executive Engineer, PWD, Lakhimpur, Barkhola & Katigora Territorial Building Division, Silchar	1,40,73,143.00	12 (Twelve Months)	Rs. 2,81,463.00 for General Category and Rs. 1,40,731.00 for reserved Category	Rs. 2900.00

N. B.:- 1. Value of work may vary according to the details NIT.
2. The Press Notice will form a part of the Bidding Document.

Addl. Chief Engineer, P.W.D. (Planning), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3
Janasanyog /C/6480/ 24/11-Jan-25

GOVT. OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (ROADS), ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3.

No. CE/STBR/11/36/2024-25/03

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3, invites Bid on behalf of the Governor of Assam from eligible contractors registered with Assam PWD (Roads) or registered in Central Govt./any State Government/ Semi Govt. Organization / Central or State Public Sector Undertakings for "Construction of ROB in replacement of Railway Level Crossing Gate No. ST-133 (Rly Km-498/7-8) on Namrup-Naharkatiya Road in Dibrugarh District under Construction of ROB on 50:50 Cost Sharing Basis" for an amount of **Rs. 4422.44 Lakh (Rupees forty four crore twenty two lakh forty four thousand) only** (Approx.).

The project is not yet sanctioned by the competent authority. In the event of non-sanction of the project, the bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever on this account shall be entertained from the bidders.

Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in>. Amendment/Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWD, Assam website <http://assamtenders.gov.in>.

Note: NIT value is inclusive of GST (12%), Labour Cess (1%) etc.

Sd/- Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads) Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.

GOVT. OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (ROADS), ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-3.

No. CE/STBR/JII/37/2024-25/03

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads), Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3, invites Bid on behalf of the Governor of Assam from eligible contractors registered with Assam PWD (Roads) or registered in Central Govt./any State Government/ Semi Govt. Organization / Central or State Public Sector Undertakings for "Construction of ROB at Bridge No. 506 at Railway Km-352/7-8 on Road from NH-31 to Yidyanuragi Biswanath Sarma Path at Ghagrapar, Nalbari, Assam under SOPD" for an amount of **Rs. 5691.05 Lakh (Rupees fifty six crore ninety one lakh five thousand) only** (Approx.).

The project is not yet sanctioned by the competent authority. In the event of non-sanction of the project, the bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever on this account shall be entertained from the bidders.

Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in>. Amendment/Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWD, Assam website <http://assamtenders.gov.in>.

Note : NIT value is inclusive of GST (12%), Labour Cess (1%) etc.

Sd/- Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads) Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.
Janasanyog /C/6444/ 24/10-Jan-25

OREDA LIMITED
(Under the Department of Energy Government of Odisha)
(CIN No: U35105OD20245GCC045786)
(ISO 9001:2008 / ISO 14001 : 2004)
S/59, MANCHESWAR INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
BHUBANESWAR-751 010, ODISHA
Website: www.oredaodisha.com E-mail: ceoreda@oredaorissa.com

e-Tender Call Notice

Notice No: 76 **Date: 09.01.2025**

Expressions of Interest (Eoi) are invited from reputed consultancy for engagement of consultants/consultancy agencies for detail survey and preparation of "Feasibility Report for Grid connected Rooftop solar power plants" to be installed on government buildings at different locations across the State.

The Schedule of Events is given below:

Sl. No.	Events	Schedule
1.	Date of publication of EOI on E-procurement Website and OREDA Website	10.01.2025
2.	Due date of submission of pre-bid queries as per the OREDA format	16.01.2025
3.	Date and time of Pre-bid Meeting through virtual mode (link for pre bid meeting: Video call link: https://meet.google.com/grv-roeh-tap)	18.01.2025, Time: 04.00 PM
4.	Due date and time for submission of online copies of Bid.	10.02.2025, Time: 5.30 PM
5.	Due date and time for submission of hard copies of Bid.	13.02.2025, Time: 5.30 PM
6.	Due date and time for the opening of Technical Bid	15.02.2025, Time: 4:00 PM
7.	Due date for physical / online presentation of the response made by the participants	To be intimated later
8.	Due date and time for the opening of Financial Bid	To be intimated later

The EOI providing requisite details about the bidding process shall be made available on the E-procurement Website (<http://www.tenderwizard.com/OREDA>) on or before the due date mentioned above. The EOI will also be made available on the OREDA Website (<http://www.oredaodisha.com>) for viewing purposes only. The Bidders may write to OREDA at the email id ceoreda@oredaorissa.com, for any additional information, if needed.

Note: OREDA reserves all the right to annual the bidding process and invite fresh Bids without liability or obligation for such invitation and without assigning any reasons.

Sd/- Chief Executive Officer
CAD-2154 OIPR-04065/11/0032/2425



GROUND ZERO



A devotee at the Siva Temple in Ernakulam. THE HINDU

In Kerala, a squabble over shirts and seers

A few weeks ago, Swami Sathchidananda, the religious head of Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham Trust, said that men should be allowed to enter Hindu temples in Kerala wearing shirts. The Chief Minister has supported his views. The seer's remarks have sparked a debate, with some contending that the rules should be changed and others arguing that age-old practices should be retained, reports **K.S. Sudhi**

Sugin G. Nair, a 44-year-old interior designer, chants a hymn as he walks down the granite-laid path encircling the Chuttambalam, or outer enclosure, of the Siva temple in Ernakulam. The air is cold and fragrant with the smell of incense.

Nair is dressed in a blue dhoti. His shirt, hung on his right arm, gently flutters in the breeze that wafts in from the backwaters, a network of brackish lagoons and canals lying parallel to the Arabian Sea in Kerala.

A few worshippers, some of them holding flowers and other offerings, follow the chief priest as he carries the idol, adorned with garlands, around the temple in a procession. This daily temple ritual is called Seeveli. Nair stands in prayer as the procession ends before the sanctum sanctorum. He then steps outside the temple and puts on his shirt.

"I won't break the centuries-old practice of entering temples without upper body clothing even if the temple authorities permit me to wear a shirt. It is my choice not to wear a shirt while I submit myself before a deity," he says.

In 2017, the Kerala government decided to permit non-Brahmin priests to perform temple rites. Today, another campaign is ongoing in the State. This time, it is about men's wear in temples.

It began a few weeks ago when Swami Sathchidananda, the religious head of Sree Narayana Dharma Sangham Trust, the organisation leading the spiritual activities of the Ezhavas, who are classified as an Other Backward Class, said that men should be allowed to enter Hindu temples wearing shirts.

His remarks sparked a controversy. Some priests and community leaders got upset, saying temple practices should be left untouched. The call also exposed the deep divide among the major Hindu communities, with the general secretary of the Nair Service Society criticising the suggestion. However, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan supported the call and lauded the campaign. He said it imbibed the spirit of social reformation led by Sree Narayana Guru, the 20th century seer and social reformer.



I will offer my prayers at a temple only when I am allowed to enter wearing a shirt.

MUKKOLI RAVEENDRAN
Social activist and a follower of Sree Narayana Guru

their body," he points out.

Swami Sathchidananda adds that the practice of not wearing a shirt is also "unhygienic". "Skin diseases could be transmitted through contact," he says. "The practice of allowing people to rent dhotis and wear them over trousers and salwar in some temples is also abominable."

The seer contends that the practice of bare-chested men entering temples was introduced to prevent people from 'lower castes' from entering temples at a time when only 'upper castes' were permitted to enter temples.

"Asking devotees to remove their shirts was the easiest way of identifying who was wearing a *poonal* (the sacred thread worn by Brahmins across the body) and prevent the lower castes from entering temples," he argues.

The Jagannatha temple in Thalassery, in the northern district of Kannur, has a special place in the history of the Sree Narayana movement in Kerala, as the idol was consecrated by Sree Narayana Guru himself. Designed to resemble the Puri Jagannatha temple in Puri, Odisha, it was the first place where devotees from all castes were allowed to worship.

K. Sathyan, the president of Jnanodaya Yogam, the managing committee of the Jagannath temple, had tried to implement the committee's decision to permit men to wear shirts inside the temple two years ago. This attempt failed.

"The decision had to be shelved," he recalls. "Some were apprehensive that some sections of society would resist this. We didn't want the temple premises to become a battlefield. So, we decided to keep the decision in abeyance."

Sathyan says only a "mature society" can accept such social changes. He says no one prevents fully clothed devotees, who are mostly from the southern districts, from entering the Jagannatha temple. "We hope that this practice



Visitors outside the premises of the Guruvayoor temple. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

will gather steam following Swami Sathchidananda's call," says Sathyan, who had been heading the temple administration panel for three years.

A mark of respect, a matter of faith

However, some historians and temple priests refuse to buy the argument that the practice of men removing shirts was started with the aim of keeping non-Brahmins out of temples.

Historian Manu S. Pillai says it was a common practice in Kerala society to take off the *thorthu* (the thin long traditional bath towel that is widely used in Kerala) from one's shoulder and tie it around the waist as a mark of respect to elders, landlords, and others who were 'superior' on the social ladder. "It was a way of showing respect. A younger person would never wear a *melmundu* (upper garment) or *thorthu* in front of a family elder. Similarly, a peasant would never keep the *thorthu* on his shoulders while standing before a landlord," he says.

Temple priests, Brahmins, and even kings took off their upper clothing inside temples as a gesture of obeisance, Pillai says. This practice stems from the belief that god is superior to everybody. Removing upper body clothing is an act of obeisance to the idol, he explains. "The erstwhile Kings of Travancore and Kochi never wore anything above their waist, as can be seen from their photographs and portraits," he observes.

He is firm that the practice has nothing to do with identifying Brahmins who wear the sacred thread. "Most people belonging to the so-called upper caste, including those employed in temples, did not wear the sacred thread. So, that cannot be the reason for asking men to remove upper body clothing to enter temples," he reasons.

N. Radhakrishnan Potti, the general secretary of the Akhila Kerala Thanthri Mandalam, the community organisation of Kerala Brahmin priests, defends the practice. He says it has been in vogue for centuries in all the major temples of the State. "It is believed that male devotees absorb the radiance of the idol through their hearts and women through their foreheads. It is a matter of faith for temple worshippers and cannot be tampered with," he says.

Potti explains how men in Kerala used to cover their torso using an *uthareeyam*, a piece of thin cloth draped over the body, which they would remove while paying obeisance to gurus and gods. "Such customs may have trickled into temples over the years. It is unique to Kerala," he says.

Potti cites *Kshethracharangal*, a book on temple rituals and practices written by Kanippayyur Sankaran Namboodiripad, which lists out practices that men must avoid when they visit temples. "It mentions smearing your hair with ghee and oil and wearing clothes on the upper part of your body, as well as headgear," he says.

Potti is also clear that the task of initiating reforms and altering practices should be left to senior priests. "It is not an issue to be deliberated by seers and politicians," he asserts.

Changing with the times

The dress code followed in the temples of Kerala is not uniform. Women were banned from wearing salwars to the Guruvayur temple in the town of Guruvayur; they could only wear sarees. This was until 2013, when the authorities modified the dress code to allow salwars too. They said that this had been a long-pending demand, especially from women who came to the temple from north India, and so they finally agreed to it.

Though no dress code has been prescribed for devotees in most of the temples governed by the Travancore Devaswom Board, men are mandated to remove their upper body garments to enter major temples, namely the Karikkakom temple



Senior priests should initiate reforms. This is not an issue to be deliberated by seers and politicians.

N. RADHAKRISHNAN POTTI
General secretary, Akhila Kerala Thanthri Mandalam

in Thiruvananthapuram and the Ettumanoor temple in Kottayam.

At the Sree Padmanabha temple in Thiruvananthapuram, men are mandated to wear a dhoti and women are expected to wear a sari or the mundu-set. Men who come to the temple in trousers are allowed to rent a dhoti, while women in salwar are allowed to rent a saree, both to be worn over their clothes, from the temple premises before entering the temple.

Vedanta scholar Swami Chidananda Puri has long been campaigning for such restrictions to be lifted. Speaking of how women's attire changed over centuries, he says, "Women in Kerala never wore clothes on the upper part of their body. Then, *Neriyathu* (an upper garment) and *Mulakacha* (cloth worn around the chest) became their attire. Later, blouses were accepted."

Through this point, Puri underscores how only those religions and practices that have changed with time, to keep in step with societal changes, have thrived. "The dress code of devotees needs to be reformed. The insistence that one should enter temples bare-chested is deterring young men from going to temples. The Marga Darshak Mandal (a platform of Hindu seers) held last year at Thrissur had called for modifying the dress code of men. Now, many temple authorities are making changes in this direction," he says.

Lekshmy Rajeev, author and a researcher on temple tantra, says women had to fight for their right to cover their breasts in Kerala, whereas men never protested about wearing clothing. "I believe this practice of not wearing sufficient clothing evolved into a ritual over time," she says.

Rajeev also says not all men may feel comfortable displaying their torsos. "Men are forced to display their bodies publicly, which can make them feel uncomfortable and uneasy," she says.

Arayakkandi Santhosh, the Devaswom Secretary of Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam, a social service organisation representing the Ezhavas, says the Yogam has always stood for reformative practices. "The managing committees of a few temples have recently resolved to abolish the practice and update the dress code. Temple committees stick to customary practices to avoid conflicts. However, men are free to wear shirts at the newly consecrated Guru temples," he says.

The controversies surrounding the dress code have only helped Mukkoli Raveendran, a social activist and a follower of Sree Narayana Guru, strengthen his resolve about temple wear. "I will offer my prayers at a temple only when I am allowed to enter wearing a shirt. It has been five years since I prayed at a temple as a mark of protest against the dress code," says Raveendran, who is also a member of the administrative committee of the Jagannath temple. He also scoffs at the argument that shirts prevent the "transmission of the radiance of the idols to the devotees".

Sajesh Kumar Manalel, the State vice president of the youth movement of the Yogam, echoes his sentiment. "Though I have been to the Sree Krishna Temple at Guruvayur a few times, I stayed outside and offered my prayers. I hope that one day all the temples of the State will welcome men with upper clothing," he says.

Akali Dal accepts Badal's resignation as party president

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH



Sukhbir Singh Badal

The working committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Friday accepted the resignation of Sukhbir Singh Badal from the post of party president, a move seen as a course correction aimed at reviving the century-old party which has been struggling to make a political comeback in Punjab.

Senior party leader Daljit Singh Cheema said it was also decided that the election for the post of a new president would be held on March 1. "The committee on its part recorded the exemplary service extended by the president [Mr. Badal] to the party," he said.

Mr. Badal, who attended the working committee meeting, later expressed his gratitude to party workers who lent their support while fighting for the cause of Punjab and Punjabis. "I am deeply touched by the love and trust they reposed in me," he said, adding he would continue to serve the party and Punjab as a humble worker.

In November last year,

Mr. Badal tendered his resignation from the president's post after he was declared 'tankhaiya' or guilty of religious misconduct by the Akal Takht, the highest Sikh temporal seat. Last month, it directed the working committee to accept Mr. Badal's resignation and constitute a committee for reorganisation of the party. The Akal Takht had awarded religious punishments to Mr. Badal and several other Akali Dal leaders for the "mistakes" committed by the SAD government from 2007 to 2017.

As the SAD has been going through a challenging phase, Mr. Badal's apology for his "mistakes" and his stepping down from the president's post is being seen as an attempt to revive the party.

Indian diaspora's bond with homeland is eternal: Murmu

The President says their entrepreneurship, philanthropy, and knowledge-sharing are crucial in shaping the vision of India; she confers the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards on 27 recipients

Satvasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Describing the bond between the Indian diaspora and the homeland as eternal, President Droupadi Murmu on Friday said their entrepreneurship, philanthropy, and knowledge-sharing were crucial in shaping the vision of a developed India.

"The connection between the Indian diaspora and the motherland is eternal. No matter where you are in the world, Bharat is and will always be your home. This bond is rooted in shared heritage, culture, and values. It is this connection that we celebrate today, and it is this connection that will continue to inspire us as we move forward together," Ms. Murmu said, while addressing the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas convention that came to an end here.

"As we celebrate the achievements of our Pravasi Bharatiya family, let us also look forward to the future with hope and determination. Together, we



Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi welcomes Droupadi Murmu as she arrives at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar. BISWARANJAN ROUT

can build a Viksit Bharat, a nation that stands tall on the global stage and continues to be a beacon of light for the world," she said.

"Our vision for Viksit Bharat aligns with our growing stature on the world stage, particularly as a leading voice for the Global South. It is guided by our timeless philosophy of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, or The World is One Family," she said.

"This vision is about

creating an ecosystem that not only meets our needs but also contributes to global well-being. We seek to be a nation that balances economic progress with social justice and environmental stewardship, ensuring a bright future for generations to come. Each one of you, whether through entrepreneurship, philanthropy, or knowledge-sharing, will play an essential role in achieving this vision," the President said.

Like-minded nations must strive for peace, prosperity: Rajnath

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh poses for a photo at Ambassadors' round-table, at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi, on Friday. PTI

Emerging as a leading voice for the Global South, India advocates for a multi-aligned policy approach that engages multiple stakeholders, which ensures that diverse views are considered in our collective pursuit of prosperity, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday. He stated that India today can boast of having one of the largest defence industrial ecosystems in Asia and the country is committed to further enhancing existing capabilities.

"It is of paramount importance that the like-minded countries should

strive together for collective actions for peace and prosperity. Without these, our future generations will not be able to take advantage of economic growth or technological innova-

tions that we are experiencing in today's era," Mr. Singh said, addressing an Ambassadors round-table ahead of the upcoming Aero India 2025 expo.

"In today's geopolitical

landscape, fostering unity among like-minded nations is essential for ensuring mutual prosperity and peace, while addressing contemporary challenges," he told the Ambassadors and High Commissioners of various countries.

Aero India is an event where nations come together and form bonds beyond boundaries, Mr. Singh said making a pitch about the 15th edition of the biennial air show, Aero India 2025, scheduled to be held at the Air Force Station, Yelahanka, in Bengaluru from February 10 to 14. "Asia's largest air show presents an opportunity for nations to jointly explore strengths and capa-

bilities and address strategic and tactical needs," he said.

The first three days of the event will be business days, and the last two days are open to the public. The event includes both air displays and static exhibitions of a large array of military platforms from the aerospace and defence sectors.

Stating that India has emerged as an attractive destination for investment, Mr. Singh said Aero India 2025 presents an opportunity for friendly nations to jointly explore strengths and capabilities in the defence sector, addressing both strategic needs and tactical requirements. "Aero India 2025 will serve as a

vital forum for exploring partnerships that will form the base for future challenges. Together, we can create pathways for growth that are inclusive and sustainable," he added.

Mr. Singh will host the Defence Ministers' Conclave on the theme "BRIDGE – Building Resilience through International Defence and Global Engagement".

Several bilateral meetings are also planned at various levels. The focus will be on bolstering the defence and aerospace ties with friendly countries by exploring newer avenues to take the partnership to the next level, the Ministry noted.

BJP needs a new leader in West Bengal, says MLA

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Satyendra Nath Roy on Friday said the party needs a new leader in the West Bengal with a robust understanding of the organisation.

"It is time for a new leadership, as should have happened much earlier. There are systems in place which take time, but MLAs and mandal presidents are all anxious about when it will happen," Mr. Roy, who represents Gangarampur, told presspersons.

"I do not think every leader in the party understands this organisation very well. The right leader should have the ability to build the organisation and inspire more people to join. If such a person is appointed, then we can win West Bengal," Mr. Roy said.

The Gangarampur Assembly constituency in Dakshin Dinajpur district falls under the Balurghat parliamentary constituency, which is represented by Union Minister and West Bengal BJP chief Sukanta Majumdar. Mr. Majumdar was appointed chief of the BJP's State unit in 2021.

India's rights have to be protected, says Sonowal on China's new dam

Dinakar Peri
KAZIRANGA

Adding to the concerns expressed by the Chief Ministers of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh over China's proposed new dam over the Brahmaputra in Tibet, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on Friday said that India's rights should be protected.

At the second meeting of the Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC), presided over by Mr. Sonowal here, the Inland Waterways Authority of India announced investments worth more than ₹50,000 crore in the next five years and also revealed a series of new initiatives across 21 inland waterway States worth over ₹1,400 crore.

'Fragile, disastrous'

"Our rights have to be well-guarded and well-protected," Mr. Sonowal replied to a question from *The Hindu* on the issue of China's new dam. Officials in the know said that the exact nature and extent of the impact of the dam on India as a lower riparian nation has to be studied but it is bound to



Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma with Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal during the meeting of IWDC, at Kaziranga on Friday. ANI

have an impact given the scale and size of the project.

If the dam comes up, the Brahmaputra ecosystem will become completely fragile, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had said earlier. "If the dam construction starts in China, the entire ecosystem that thrives on the Brahmaputra will reduce by 60%. This is disastrous for the entire north-eastern region," he said earlier this week.

The External Affairs Ministry had stated that it conveyed its "concerns" to China about the proposed mega hydropower project in the upstream Yarlung Tsangpo, the Tibetan name for the Brahmaputra

that flows through Arunachal Pradesh and Assam. "As a lower riparian State with established user rights to the waters of the river, we have consistently expressed, through expert-level as well as diplomatic channels, our views and concerns to the Chinese side over mega projects on rivers in their territory," Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said last week.

Upgrading waterways

Mr. Sonowal said that over ₹23,000 crore had been earmarked for development of new national waterways and green shipping initiatives in inland waterways.

A major policy initiative

in the form of Riverine Community Development Scheme was mooted at the IWDC to improve the socio-economic well-being of coastal communities by developing infrastructure, promotion of trade and tourism along with riverine ecosystem, providing skill enrichment trainings and upgrading traditional knowledge of river of the communities in an attempt to upgrade the quality of lives of the people living by the banks of the National Waterways.

"IWDC has anchored a new vista for cooperative federalism as both the governments at Union and the States discussed, deliberated, debated and dwelled on multiple aspects for strengthening of inland waterways. Historically, the role of inland waterways has been paramount for civilisations," Mr. Sonowal stated.

He said they were attempting to rejuvenate the support system of inland waterways so that railways and roadways can be decongested while also providing a viable, economic, sustainable and efficient mode of transportation for both passengers and cargo operators.

INBRIEF



Pune court grants bail to Rahul in defamation case

A special court in Pune on Friday granted bail to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a defamation case related to his alleged objectionable remarks on Hindutva ideologue V. D. Savarkar. The court granted bail to the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha on a surety bond of ₹25,000 after he appeared before it through video conferencing. Advocate Milind Pawar, representing Mr. Gandhi, said the court also granted permanent exemption to the Congress leader from appearing before it. "The matter will now be heard on February 18," Mr. Pawar added. The case was filed on a complaint of the grandnephew of Savarkar and stemmed from a speech Mr. Gandhi gave in London in March 2023, where he made certain remarks on the freedom fighter.

Court directs CBI to give three days prior notice to Cong. MP

A special court in Delhi on Friday directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to give three days prior written notice to Karti Chidambaram, Congress MP from Sivaganga of Tamil Nadu, in a fresh corruption case lodged against him. Mr. Chidambaram is accused of allegedly giving relief to an alcoholic beverage company, Diageo Scotland, over a ban on the duty-free sale of its whisky. The order was pronounced on an anticipatory bail application filed by the Congress MP who is travelling abroad. The court also ordered Mr. Chidambaram to join the investigation upon his return to India and cooperate in the process, as and when required in accordance with law.

Uttarakhand Minister's son booked for illegal tree-cutting

The Uttarakhand Forest department lodged a first information report (FIR) against Piyush Aggarwal, son of State Finance Minister Prem Chand Aggarwal, for allegedly cutting trees in a forest area for the construction of a private resort. According to reports, 26 trees have been cut in Khair Khal on Neelkanth Marg of which two trees are of protected species. The villagers in the nearby area said the sub-inspector of the Revenue department reached the spot on three occasions and tried to stop the work, but no action was taken to date. Akash Gangwar, DFO, Kotdwar, said that the matter of illegal tree cutting has come to light and a case has been registered. Mr. Aggarwal, however, said that he took all the necessary permissions for tree-cutting and laying a new road.



आई सी एम आर-राष्ट्रीय पारम्परिक चिकित्साविज्ञान संस्थान

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Sr. No.	Post Name	No. of Vacancies	Last date for submission of filled application
1.	Consultant (Administration/Finance)	02 (Two)	31-01-2025
2.	Project Consultant – Scientific – Non-Medical	01 (One)	Up to 5:00 pm

For detailed advertisement please visit the <https://icmrnitm.res.in/careers/> and www.icmr.nic.in websites.

Date : 09.01.2025

Place: Belagavi

Sd/-
Director

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA

MANGALURU CITY CORPORATION, MANGALURU, KARNATAKA PIN-575003
Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development & Finance Corporation Ltd., (KUIDFC)
Karnataka Integrated Urban Water Management and Investment Programme (KIUWMIP)

NO. MCC/MNG/KUIDFC/KIUWMIP/02MNG05/2024-25/995

DATE: 10.01.2025

INVITATION FOR PRETENDER CONFERENCE

1. The Commissioner, Mangaluru City Corporation, Mangaluru inviting Pretender Conference as per GOK circular No.PWD 1359 SO/FC 2001 (P-2) Dated: 03.12.2002 to discuss tender document related for the below mentioned work.

2. Interested bidders may propose the changes, if any changes to be made in the estimate cost, specification, provisions in the special conditions of contract or packaging for changes in the tender document. Physical presence of bidders are requested or else the bidders may submit their proposal through e-mail to: jalasitranche2eemng@gmail.com on or before 16.01.2025.

3. Pretender conference meeting is scheduled on 16.01.2025 at 11.00 am to explain the qualification criteria, specifications and conditions of contract and clarify any reservations. The reservations if any pointed out by the prospective Tenderers shall be further studied and modifications if any required shall be made in the Tender document.

Sl.No	Name of work	Amount put to tender
1	Construction of Intake well, Jackwell cum Pump house and Bank Protection works near Adyar dam for Mangaluru City" under KIUWMIP Project.	Rs. 1687.22 Lakhs

The meeting shall be convened on 16.01.2025 at 11.00 am at Office of the Executive Engineer, PIU, KIUWMIP - Jalsir, KUIDFC, Second Floor, MCC Commercial Complex, Labagh, Mangaluru – 575003.

Sd/-
Commissioner,
Mangaluru City Corporation,
Mangaluru

DIPR / MNG / 1170/ MPL / 24-25

INBRIEF



SpaDeX satellites are at a distance of 1.5 km, says ISRO

The two SpaDeX satellites that are part of a docking experiment are now at a distance of 1.5 km from each other, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Friday. “Spacecrafts are at a distance of 1.5 km and on hold mode. Further drift to 500 m is planned to be achieved by tomorrow [Saturday] morning,” the ISRO posted on X. This announcement came a day after the space agency shared that the drift between the satellites that had caused the postponement of the docking experiment for the second time had been arrested and they were put in a slow drift course to move closer to each other.

Delhi’s per capita income 3rd highest after Goa, Sikkim

Delhi’s per capita income in 2023-24, at ₹4,61,910, was the third highest in the country after Goa and Sikkim, according to the latest statistical handbook. As per the data, the per capita of the city was more than double the national per capita income of ₹1,84,205. The handbook also noted a 7.4% yearly growth in the per capita income of the city. However, it showed a major decline in the number of vehicles on the national capital’s roads - from 1.22 crore in 2020-21 to 79.45 lakh in 2022-23. In addition, the number of enrolled students rose slightly for both boys and girls in 2023-24. The handbook, issued annually by the Delhi government, details various socio-economic and infrastructure related data of the national capital. PTI

Bharat Biotech co-founder awarded INSA fellowship

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Krishna Ella, co-founder and executive chairman of Bharat Biotech International, was earlier this week conferred the India Fellowship of the Indian National Science Academy for 2025. It is the first time that the INSA has awarded fellowships to representatives from the industry. The other notable scientists and technologists who were conferred an INSA fellowship included Anil Kakodkar, former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India; V.K. Saraswat, former Director-General, DRDO; S. Somnath, Chairman, ISRO; S. Kris Gopalakrishnan, co-founder, Infosys; and Samir V. Kamat, Secretary DDR&D and Chairman, DRDO.

Man held after body of live-in partner recovered from fridge

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

A 44-year-old man has been arrested in Madhya Pradesh’s Dewas for allegedly murdering his live-in partner, after a decomposed body was recovered from a fridge in which it had been kept since March last year, the police said. According to the police, the body was found on Friday at a house in Vrindavan Dham Colony by the current tenant after a foul smell spread in the locality. The saree-clad woman, who was wearing jewellery and whose hands were tied along with a noose around her neck, may have been killed last year, the police said. Dewas Superintendent of Police Puneet Gehlot told *The Hindu* that after questioning in the neigh-

bourhood, the deceased was identified as Pratibha Prajapati, in her 30s, who lived in the house till March last year with her live-in partner, Sanjay Patidar, a resident of Ujjain. “We got Patidar’s address and other details from the landlord Dharendra Shrivastav who lives in Indore and sent a team to Ujjain to detain him. When questioned, he confessed to have killed the woman with the help of his friend, Vinod Dave,” Mr. Gehlot said. The SP said the accused was already married and was in a live-in relationship with Prajapati for about five years and lived in Ujjain for the first three years. “He revealed that he killed her after she started pressurising him for marriage,” the officer said.

2024 was the first year to breach global warming limit, show data

It is the first time that mean temperature crossed the threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, says global body; experts say that given the high rate of carbon emissions, the 2024 temperatures represent a point of no return

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Humanity has stepped into a future that climate scientists for decades have warned about. Temperature data made public on Friday by the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S), an authoritative source on historical trends in climate, show that 2024 was the first year in history when mean global temperature went 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level. Annual climate conferences, or the Conference of Parties convened by the United Nations, are about getting world leaders to agree on measures to curb emissions to keep temperatures from going over 2 degrees Celsius above the temperature in the 1850-1900 pre-industrial period and “as far as possible” keeping it below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Consistent rise The way climatological boundaries are determined, a single year in the red doesn’t by itself spell catastrophe. Only when temperatures consistently



Scorching heat: Each of the past 10 years was one of the 10 warmest years on record. FILE PHOTO

breach the 1.5 degrees Celsius mark for a decade or two would a boundary considered to have been breached. However, experts say that given the high rate of carbon emissions at present, the 2024 temperatures represent a point of no return. “While there may be year to year variability, an El Nino in some years or a major volcanic eruption in others might influence temperatures, this suggests that there is no going back and that we are on a trajectory on exceeding 2 degrees Celsius by 2050,” Roxy Mathew Koll, climate scientist, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, told *The Hindu*.

At an average temperature of 15.1 degrees Celsius, 2024 was the warmest year in global temperature records, which go back till 1850, and was 0.72 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average. It was 0.12 degrees Celsius above the average of 2023, the previous warmest year on record. It was also 1.6 degrees Celsius above an estimate of the 1850-1900 temperature designated to be the ‘pre-industrial’ level. Each of the past 10 years (2015-2024) was one of the 10 warmest years on record. For 11 months in 2024, the monthly global average temperature exceeded 1.5 degrees Celsius above

pre-industrial levels. In 2024, the annual average sea surface temperature (SST) over the extra-polar ocean reached a record high of 20.87 degrees Celsius, 0.51 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average. The average extra-polar SST was at record high levels for the time of year from January to June 2024. From July to December 2024, the SST was the second warmest on record for the time of year, after 2023. Among the reasons for the record-breaking temperatures in 2024 was the El Nino, which is warming of the Central Equatorial Pacific, that began in June 2023 with effects lasting well into 2024. ‘Serious implications’ “A single year with temperatures 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels does not mean we’ve reached 1.5°C of global warming. However, it does mean we’re getting dangerously close. Every fraction of a degree – whether 1.4, 1.5, or 1.6°C – brings more harm to people and ecosystems, underscoring the continued need for ambitious emis-

sions cuts,” Professor Joeri Rogelj, Director of Research at the Grantham Institute - Climate Change and Environment, Imperial College London, said in a statement. Other experts referred to the latest, failed talks at Baku, Azerbaijan, where countries couldn’t bring themselves to agree on a financial package that would realistically account for the costs of mitigating runaway carbon emissions. “The year on year increase in average global temperature has serious implications for developing economies reeling under frequent climate disasters. This, coupled with the failure of COP29 to deliver on meaningful finance, only implies that developing economies will have to allocate more funds to deal with climate impacts and disasters in the future. Mitigation ambition of the developing world would be hit hard, unless fast and meaningful action happens on the carbon markets front,” said Vaibhav Chaturvedi, Senior Fellow, Council of Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).

Centre outlines steps to update gender after surgery abroad

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Transgender citizens who undergo gender affirmation surgery abroad can re-enter India by submitting a sworn affidavit of gender change along with a certificate from the hospital, the Union government has informed the Delhi High Court. These citizens can subsequently apply for a renewed passport with updated details, it said. The Ministry of External Affairs has laid down the specific documents required for the change of gender in passports, from transgender to either male or female, the Centre told the court. It said the person needs to submit a “Certificate of Identity for change of gender (form-4), along with identity card (form-6), issued under the Transgender Person (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 read with Transgender Person (Protection of Rights) Rules 2020 in the desired gender”. Alternatively, the person can submit a “Sworn affidavit regarding change in gender and Supporting Certificate/Surgical Reconstruction certificate from the hospital where the applicant underwent medical treatment for the purpose.”

Centre calls for comprehensive approach to address impact of climate change on agriculture

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The challenges posed by climate change to the agriculture sector was one of the key themes discussed at *The Hindu businessline* Agri and Commodity Summit, 2025 held here on Friday. At the inaugural session, Union Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi said the Centre had adopted a two-pronged approach – adaptation and mitigation – to address these challenges. Ashish Kumar Bhutani, Secretary, Union Cooperation Ministry, said primary agricultural cooperative societies (PACS) can play a vital role in building climate change resilience in rural India. Mr. Chaturvedi said the adaptation strategies include creating drought- and flood-resistant crop



varieties, implementing efficient water management techniques, and providing a cushion through crop insurance in the event of extreme natural calamities. Mitigation efforts He added that the mitigation efforts include promoting natural farming to reduce chemical input use and improve soil health. “The government also



aims to use carbon market incentives to encourage farmers to adopt climate-smart practices. This comprehensive approach seeks to ensure food security and farmer livelihoods in the face of a changing climate,” he said. Mr. Bhutani said climate change was impacting everyone and collective action should be taken. “The crop insurance scheme covers

40% of farmers. We need to get every single farmer covered under the scheme,” he said, adding that his Ministry was in the process of making two lakh multi-purpose PACS so that the traditional role of PACS could be expanded beyond credit and input supply. “We are also planning to set up 70,000 grain storage points across the country, with PACS potentially playing a key role. Besides addressing the critical issue of grain storage in rural areas, this initiative would reduce transportation costs and act as procurement centres,” he said. Four pillars National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Chairman Shaji K.V. said accelerating green lending across sectors, providing access to data, internal green transformation, and resource mobili-

sation to fund climate-resilient activities were the four pillars necessary to address challenges posed by climate change. The summit saw sessions on irregular monsoons, climate change and new seeds, digitisation, bio energy, and price risk management. There was also an interaction with drone *didis* and solar *didis*. The *Hindu businessline* Agri and Commodity Summit, 2025 is presented by NABARD and co-powered by the Federation of Seed Industry of India in association with Yara. The associate partners are NCDEX, Indofil, Bayer, Hindustan Urvarak and Rasayan Ltd., Kribhco Agri, NSE, Aqua Group, and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. The banking partner is State Bank of India and the broadcast partner is NDTV Profit.

THCROSSWORD+14380

(set by Incognito)

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Across

1 Refuse container daughter wrongly bust in school (8)

5 Discipline small political leader at this place (6)

10 Scotsman captures an American soldier showing wizardry (5)

11 Killed by wire, fish decayed (9)

12 Perhaps, Pop or Mom defray cost of tenancy of house, I hear (6)

13 Mistakenly pool pill and sweetener (8)

Down

15 Vessel in-charge's dress (5)

17 Company that once ruled over us arranged Asian diet (4,5)

19 Costly old writing instruments with impeccable violet exteriors, for starters (9)

20 Blood sample contains it... South-eastern drink! (5)

21 Tall trio producing bread (8)

23 Forgive average criminal boss (6)

27 Airbus men may make U-boat (9)

28 Number noticed to have five in the middle (5)

29 Life's changed after old Twitter's series of mysterious occurrences (1,5)

30 Give less importance to own place not having church during day (8)

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

SCAN TO PLAY

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Efficacy of Govinda namam

Srivilliputtur in Tamil Nadu is a hallowed ground since two Vaishnavite azhvars, Periazhwar and Andal, lived there, experienced God and guided devotees on how to attain His feet. Andal in particular, made God more accessible to everyone, made Govinda a household name that one could reach out to in good times and bad, said Damal Perundevi. Waking up the neighbourhood with her verses in the month of Margazhi, she begins with the concept of observing vrat (fasting), she says, “nei unnom, pal unnom” (for-saking ghee and milk), giving up rich clothes, all in the quest to attain Govinda’s feet. Towards the end of the month, she sings, “Koodarai vellum seer Govinda.” She references Krishna’s fete in saving the people by holding aloft the Govardhan hill, brining an egoistic Indra to his knees who then showers Krishna with the waters of the holy Ganga, an occurrence celebrated as Govinda Pattabhishekam. The vrat is over and they are ready to partake together, as a community, of sweet Pongal (akkaravadaisa), prepared with milk and ghee that runs down a devotee’s elbow while eating, along with Govinda. They who gave up everything in the beginning of the month are now ready to bedeck themselves, but to their joy when they look in the mirror to adorn the head piece, the arm band, the bracelet, the waist belt and anklets, they see only Govinda reflected in the mirror; they experience His presence. Andal says He is capable of defeating those who are not virtuous and equally captivated by the faith reposed in Him by devotees and invites everyone to come together and find lasting happiness in Govinda namam.

CMVK

M ND-NDE

INBRIEF



10 grounded SpiceJet aircraft to be back in air by mid-April

SpiceJet on Friday said it will bring 10 grounded aircraft back into service by mid-April. Since raising ₹3,000 crore through a qualified institutional placement in September, the airline has added seven aircraft and ungrounded three of its planes that needed maintenance, allowing the airline to grow its active fleet size to 28 aircraft. The rebuilding of the fleet has allowed the airline to either add or restore a total of 60 flights over the past three months, it said.

Centre releases ₹1.73 lakh cr. in tax devolution to States

The Centre on Friday released tax devolution of ₹1.73 lakh crore to State governments to accelerate capital expenditure and finance welfare activities. The Union government has released tax devolution of ₹1,73,030 crore to state governments on Friday, as against the devolution of ₹89,086 crore in December 2024, the finance ministry said in a statement. Currently, 41% of taxes collected by the Centre is devolved in instalments among states during a fiscal year. PTI

Vodafone exits Indus Towers, sells shares worth ₹2,800 cr.

British telecom firm Vodafone has sold its entire stake in Indus Towers for ₹2,800 crore, the telecom infrastructure firm said on Friday. Vodafone has sold 7.92 crore, or 3% stake in Indus Towers, and used ₹890 crore from the proceeds to clear lenders dues, the company said in a regulatory filing. The company held 3% stake through its indirect wholly-owned subsidiaries, Omega Telecom Holdings Pvt. Ltd. and Usha Martin Telematics Limited. PTI

Lakshmanan, trusted pillar of TVS legacy, passes away at 92

OBITUARY

G. Balachandrar



H. Lakshmanan

H. Lakshmanan (92), former Executive Director of Sundaram-Clayton and a towering figure in the TVS family for almost seven decades, passed away on Friday due to age-related ailments. He is survived by his wife, a son, and two daughters.

Beginning his career at the age of 20 as a typist, Mr. Lakshmanan rose through the ranks to become the most trusted confidant of T. S. Srinivasan, the late patriarch of the TVS Group and founder of TVS Motor, and his son, Venu Srinivasan, chairman emeritus of TVS Motor Company. Mr. Lakshmanan embodied loyalty, trust, integrity and management excellence throughout his journey in the TVS Group.

Role in Padi unit

He played a critical role in the establishment of the Padi manufacturing unit in the 60s. He worked alongside T. S. Srinivasan from 1960 to 1980 and later with Mr. Venu Srinivasan, making significant contributions until 2015.

“His remarkable acumen allowed him to rise rapidly within the organisation. I would describe him as the ‘Chanakya’ of the TVS industrial empire,” recalled Mr. Venu Srinivasan.

Mr. Lakshmanan was pivotal in crafting joint venture agreements with leading global partners such as Dunlop for wheels, Clayton for air brakes, Girling for Brakes India and Lucas for Lucas-TVS. He also

played a critical role in negotiating high-stakes ventures such as the Suzuki joint venture and BMW licensing agreement for TVS Motor.

Labour talks

He was also deeply engaged in labour negotiations, a critical aspect of TVS operations. Starting in the late 70s, he dealt with unions, resolved labour issues and managed key HR and banking concerns. Opposition union leaders, after admitting their mistakes, sought voluntary retirement and expressed their gratitude to him. “His calm yet resolute approach earned him immense respect, even from adversaries,” said Mr. Srinivasan.

INTUC leader R. Kuppusamy hailed him as the “Bhishma Pitamaha” of TVS, acknowledging his relentless efforts in improving workers’ lives and ensuring the company’s growth. He acknowledged Mr. Lakshmanan’s role in resolving labour disputes in Chennai during 1970s and Hosur in the late 80s.

He rose from a humble background to become the ED, leaving a legacy of dedication, sharp insight and strong values, said Mr. Kuppusamy said. (The writer is with The Hindu Businessline)

Rupee sinks 18 paise to close at a record low of 86.04/\$

Surging crude oil prices, negative sentiment in domestic equity markets blamed for the fall; Dollar strengthens on higher demand amid anticipation of trade curbs after U.S. presidency change

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

The rupee declined 18 paise to breach the 86-mark against the U.S. dollar for the first time on Friday as it failed to resist pressure from a stronger American currency and huge outflow of foreign funds. The local unit settled at 86.04 against the U.S. currency.

Surging crude oil prices overseas and negative sentiment in domestic equity markets also weighed on the Indian currency, forex traders said.

Also, dollar streng-



Currency crash: Weak tone in domestic markets and persistent FII outflows may keep putting downside pressure on rupee. FILE PHOTO

thened on increased demand amid the anticipation of restrictive trade measures by the new U.S. administration after Donald Trump takes over as

President on January 20. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 85.88, hit an intra-day peak of 85.85 before breaching the 86-mark

to settle at the lowest-ever level of 86.04.

On Thursday, the rupee gained 5 paise to settle at 85.86 against the U.S. dollar

Anuj Choudhary, research analyst, Mirae Asset Sharekhan, said the rupee hit record low as domestic markets continued to slip and FIIs outflows sustained. Strong U.S. dollar and crude oil price surge also pressured the rupee.

“Weak tone in the domestic markets, a strong greenback and persistent FII outflows may continue to put downside pressure on the rupee,” he said.

Industrial output grew 5.2% in Nov.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

India’s industrial output expanded 5.2% year-on-year in November 2024, marking the highest uptick in six months, although this headline growth was aided by base effects from the previous year and actual production levels were 1.2% lower than October, suggesting industrial activity remains muted in the second half of 2024-25.

While mining and electricity generation picked up pace in November to rise 1.9% and 4.4%, respectively, manufacturing led the way with a 5.8% growth, the highest since

April 2024. On basis of end-use, the manufacturing sector’s growth was led by consumer durables (up 13.1%), infrastructure and construction goods (10% up), and capital goods which rose 9%.

All six end-used based segments of production registered a rise, but the weakest link remained consumption of daily use items, and was reflected in a mere 0.6% growth for consumer non-durables’ output despite a weak base from the previous year.

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) had risen just 2.5% in November 2023. “Supported by the weak base, consumer dur-

ables output grew by 13.1% in November 2024 but consumer non-durables continue to see pressures, growing marginally by 0.6%,” noted Suman Chowdhury, chief economist and executive director at Acuité Ratings. While November gained from weak base effects, economists expect the IIP growth to falter to about 3% in December on account of a high base.

“Electricity demand has grown at a six-month high of 5.3% but petroleum consumption and crude steel output remained subdued at around 2%,” said Paras Jasrai, senior economic analyst at India Ratings and Research.

Domestic investors counteracting global trends

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

The countervailing force of domestic institutions (DIs) have given tremendous resilience to the Indian capital markets in the wake of foreign capital outflow as seen in the December quarter of 2024, Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch said.

“The global trends are sometimes negative and sometimes flat,” the SEBI chief remarked on Friday.

राष्ट्रीय पृथ्वी विज्ञान अध्ययन केन्द्र
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR EARTH SCIENCE STUDIES
पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार
Ministry of Earth Sciences, Govt. of India
Akkulam, Thiruvananthapuram -11
No: NCESS/P&GA/9424/01/2025 Date: 10.01.2025
RECRUITMENT
NCESS conducts walk-in interview on 30.01.2025 at its campus in Thiruvananthapuram, for the posts of Field Assistant (Electrical), Project Associate I (Civil) and Consultant Engineer (Civil) on contract basis. Please visit website for details. Further changes, if any, will be notified through website only. Website: www.ncess.gov.in / Phone No: 0471-2511500.
Sd/ Senior Manager

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
ENERGY DEPARTMENT
Invitation of application for the post of Managing Director in Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Limited (OHPC)
Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Limited (OHPC), incorporated as a hydro power generating company of Odisha in 1995 is functioning under Energy Department, Govt. of Odisha. OHPC beginning with an installed capacity of 1273.53 MW, now has installed capacity of 2099.8 MW. OHPC is an ISO 9001:2008, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 18001 certified Gold rated State Public Sector Undertaking with 6 (six) projects within the State and one inter-State project in operation. OHPC is also promoting investment in renewable energy projects through GEDCOL (a wholly owned subsidiary of OHPC). The Company is also taking up new hydro power projects on its own including the Pumped Storage Projects and Small Hydro Projects.
The Energy Department, Govt. of Odisha is seeking qualified and experienced candidates for the post of Managing Director for Odisha Hydro Power Corporation Limited (OHPC) in its Corporate Office located at Bhubaneswar. The pay will be Cost to Company (CTC) pattern and shall be in line with the industry. Performance based service conditions and Market Based Salary (MBS) structure shall be offered, wherein the CTC ranges between Rs.35 Lakhs to Rs.70 Lakhs per annum. Over and above this, the post carries additional facilities like official vehicle, Company accommodation/HRA, Medical facilities, broadband & telephone facilities, etc as per the rules of the Corporation. The Pay protection will be allowed only to the officers from the Central/State Governments/CPSEs/State PSUs or any other Government Organization.
This position is on full time contract basis for a period of 05 (five) years or up to the age of 63 years, whichever is earlier. The Managing Director being the Chief Executive of the Company shall be accountable to the Chairman, Board of Directors, Government of Odisha.
Detailed requirement for the position along with the application format is available in the Energy Department, Government of Odisha website https://energy.odisha.gov.in
Complete application in the prescribed format with enclosures and a passport size photograph should be sent to the Principal Secretary to Govt., Energy Department, Kharavela Bhawan, Bhubaneswar-751001 by Speed post/Registered Post only so as to reach by 28.02.2025. Envelope containing the application should be super-scribed as “Application for the post of Managing Director, OHPC”. Outstation candidates appearing the interview will be provided Economic Class Air fare for to & fro journey on submission of original documents.
Principal Secretary to Govt. Energy Department, Kharavela Bhawan, Bhubaneswar-751001

CITY UNION BANK LIMITED
Credit Recovery and Management Department
Administrative Office : No. 24-B, Gandhi Nagar, Kumbakonam - 612 001, E-Mail Id : crmd@cityunionbank.in, Ph : 0435-2432322, Fax : 0435-2431746
RE-TENDER-CUM-AUCTION SALE NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT 2002
The following properties mortgaged to City Union Bank Limited will be sold in Re-Tender-cum Public Auction by the Authorised Officer of the Bank, under Rule 8 (b) & 9 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002, under the SARFAESI Act, 2002, for recovery of a sum of Rs.10,94,78,920/- (Rupees Ten Crore Ninety Four Lakh Seventy Eight Thousand Nine Hundred and Twenty only) as on 02-01-2025 together with further interest to be charged from 03-01-2025 onwards and other expenses, any other dues to the Bank by the borrowers / guarantors No.1) M/s. Shree Vimal Sagar Jewellers, 1159, First Floor, Kucha Mahajani, Chandini Chowk, Delhi - 6. Represented by its Proprietor : Manish Jain, Also at, M/s. Shree Vimal Sagar Jewellers, through its Proprietor : Manish Jain, S/o. Vinod Kumar Jain, having its Registered Office at, Shop PVT No.8, On Upper Ground Floor, Part of built up Property bearing MPL, Nos.1158, 1159 and 1160, Kucha Mahajani, Chandini Chowk, Delhi - 110006. No.2) Mr. Manish Jain (also legal heir of late Mr. Vinod Kumar Jain), S/o. Vinod Kumar Jain, D-24, Upper Ground Floor, Block-D, C.C.Colony, Opposite Rana Pratap Bagh, Delhi -110007. Also at, Mr. Manish Jain (also legal heir of late Mr. Vinod Kumar Jain), S/o. Vinod Kumar Jain, Property No.87, Block-E, Displaced Jain Co-operative House Building Society Ltd., Situated at Veer Nagar, Jain Colony, Delhi - 110007. No.3) Mrs. Neha Jain, W/o. Manish Jain, D-24, Upper Ground Floor, Block-D, C.C.Colony, Opposite Rana Pratap Bagh, Delhi - 110007. Also at, Mrs. Neha Jain, W/o. Manish Jain, Property No.87, Block-E, Displaced Jain Co-operative House Building Society Ltd., Situated at Veer Nagar, Jain Colony, Delhi - 110007. No.4) Mrs. Veena Jain (also legal heir of late Mr. Vinod Kumar Jain), W/o. Vinod Kumar Jain, D-24, C.C.Colony, Delhi - 110007. Also at, Mrs. Veena Jain (also legal heir of late Mr. Vinod Kumar Jain), W/o. Vinod Kumar Jain, Property No.87, Block-E, Displaced Jain Co-operative House Building Society Ltd., Situated at Veer Nagar, Jain Colony, Delhi - 110007. No.5) Mrs. Hema Agarwal (legal heir-cum-D/o. Late Shri Vinod Kumar Jain), W/o. Shri Atul Agarwal, Residing at H.No.5A/12, 2nd Floor, Daryaganj, Central Delhi - 110002. No.6) Mrs. Naina Jain (legal Heir-cum-D/o. Late Shri Vinod Kumar Jain), W/o. Shri Mohit Jain, Residing at, H.No.22, Tarun Enclave, Pitam Pura, North-West Delhi, Delhi - 110034. No.7) Mrs. Meenu Jain (Legal Heir-cum-D/o. Late Shri Vinod Kumar Jain), W/o. Shri Kapil Jain, Residing at C-3/76, Ashok Vihar Phase-2, Ashok Vihar, North-West Delhi, Delhi - 110052.
Note: That our 253-Delhi-Chandini Chowk Branch has also extended Financial Assistance (CUB OSL TERM EMI-BR : 501812080031346) dated 20-09-2017 requested by Nos.2, 4 & 6 and Late Vinod Kumar Jain of you for which Nos.2, 4 & 6 and Late Vinod Kumar Jain of you stood as Co-obligants for the facility for a total amount of Rs.3,00,00,000/- at a ROI of 12.4% outstanding balance as on 02-01-2025 is Rs.1,57,69,436/- further interest and penal interest of 2.00% with monthly rests to be charged from 03-01-2025 till the date of realization.
Immovable Properties Mortgaged to our Bank
Schedule - B : (Property Owned by Mrs. Veena Jain, W/o. Vinod Kumar Jain & Mr. Manish Jain, S/o. Vinod Kumar Jain)
Entire Upper Ground Floor of built up Property bearing No.24, in Block-D (known as D-24), built on land measuring 220 Sq.yds or to say 183.94 Sq.mtr., without its full of terrace rights, along with share of silt Parking Floor, Block D, CC Colony, Opposite Rana Pratap Bagh, Delhi -110007. Boundaries: East : House No.D-23, West : House No.D-25, North : Road 30 ft. Wide, South : Service lane 15 ft. wide.
Reserve Price : Rs.2,00,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore only)
RE-AUCTION DETAILS
Date of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale Venue
31-01-2025 City Union Bank Limited, Delhi-Chandini Chowk Branch, 1917-18, 1st Floor, Opp. Gurudwara Ditsag Sahib, Chandini Chowk, Delhi - 110006. Telephone No.011-23929803, Cell No.9350011163.
Terms and Conditions of Re-Tender-cum-Auction Sale:
(1) The intending bidders should be present in person for the auction and participate personally and give a declaration in writing to the effect that he/she is bidding for himself/herself; (2) The intending bidders may obtain the Tender Forms from The Manager, City Union Bank Limited, Delhi-Chandini Chowk Branch, 1917-18, 1st Floor, Opp. Gurudwara Ditsag Sahib, Chandini Chowk, Delhi - 110006. (3) The intending bidders should submit their bids only in the Tender Form prescribed in sealed envelopes addressed to The Authorised Officer, City Union Bank Ltd., together with a Pay Order / Demand Draft for an EMD of 10% of the Reserve Price, drawn in favour of “City Union Bank Ltd.”, on or before 12.00 Noon on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. (4) For inspection of the property and other particulars, the intending purchaser may contact Telephone No.011-23929803, Cell No.9350011163. (5) The properties are sold on “As-is-where-is”, “As-is-what-is” and “whatever there is” basis. (6) The sealed tenders will be opened in the presence of the intending bidders at 01.00 p.m. on the date of Tender-cum-Auction Sale hereby notified. Therein generally the sale will be by way of dosed tenders, the Authorised Officer, may, at his sole discretion, conduct an Open Auction among the interested bidders who desire to quote a bid higher than the one received in the dosed tender process, and in such an event, the sale shall be conferred on the person making highest bid. The sale, however, is subject to confirmation of City Union Bank Limited. (7) The successful bidder shall have to pay 25% (inclusive of EMD paid) of the sale amount immediately on completion of sale and the balance amount of 75% within 15 days from the date of confirmation of sale, failing which the initial deposit of 25% shall be forfeited. (8) The Sale Certificate will be issued by the Authorised Officer in favour of the successful purchaser only after receipt of the entire sale consideration within the time limit stipulated herein. (9) The successful purchaser shall bear the charges/fees payable for conveyance, such as stamp duty, registration fee etc., as applicable under law. (10) The successful bidder should pay the statutory dues (lawful house tax, electricity charges and other dues), TDS, GST if any, due to Government, Government Undertaking and local bodies. (11) The Authorised Officer shall have all the powers to accept or reject the bids or postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reason whatsoever.
Place : Kumbakonam, Date : 09-01-2025 Authorised Officer
Regd. Office : 149, T.S.R. (Big) Street, Kumbakonam, Thanjavur District, Tamil Nadu - 612 001, CIN - L65110TN1904PLC001287, Telephone No. 0435-2402322, Fax : 0435-2431746, Website : www.cityunionbank.com



Bim Bissell

Remembering the ‘tireless patron’ of FabIndia

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Few redefined traditional Indian textile aesthetics in the vocabulary of the modern quite like Bimla ‘Bim’ Bissell, the visionary revivalist and the driving force behind the crafts-rooted ‘everything Indian’ brand FabIndia.

On Friday, her friends, contemporaries and the brand she propelled to greater heights remembered the dynamic woman. Ms. Bissell died here on Thursday. She was 93. “A spirited promoter and patron of Fabindia ever since her husband, John, brought his vision of working with India’s craft-people to life,” Fabindia wrote on Instagram.

Jaya Jaitley, founder of Dastkari Haat Samiti, remembered her friend as the anchor and aesthetic that inspired John Bissell.

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor took to X to mourn the passing of the “doughty, tireless, colourful and sharp-witted Bim Bissell, who did more than anyone to make Fabindia one of India’s best-known brands”.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	FRIDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	77,379	-0.31
US Dollar	86.04	-0.20
Gold	80,550	0.31
Brent oil	78.63	2.30

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter.	2374.40	-103.50
Adani Ports	1112.20	-20.15
Apollo Hosp.	7036.75	-54.80
Asian Paints	2320.75	-29.45
Axis Bank	1040.70	-21.05
Bajaj Auto	8764.00	-71.85
Bajaj Finserv	1701.25	10.95
Bajaj Finance	7288.05	10.60
Bharat Elec.	271.00	-10.25
Bharti Airtel	1615.90	8.85
BPCL	277.65	-2.35
Britannia Ind.	4939.20	12.90
Cipla	1468.80	-19.40
Coal India	368.50	-3.70
Dr Reddys Lab	1354.40	-17.20
Eicher Motors	5058.45	-81.45
Grasim Ind.	2364.10	-46.30
HCL Tech	1995.10	60.30
HDFC Bank	1656.75	-11.05
HDFC Life	608.65	-3.55
Hero MotoCorp	4122.20	-19.05
Hindalco	574.45	-14.80
Hind Unilever	2442.05	6.65
ICI Bank	1249.85	-12.55
Indusind Bank	937.60	-43.30
Infosys	1966.95	49.65
ITC	444.90	-5.20
JSW Steel	900.10	9.15
Kotak Bank	1756.20	-34.00
L&T	3536.15	8.25
M&M	3092.85	-33.65
Maurti Suzuki	11631.10	-109.45
NestleIndia	2247.90	-8.15
NTPC	308.25	-12.10
ONGC	263.02	-0.16
PowerGrid Corp	299.70	-5.55
Reliance Ind.	1241.90	-12.85
SBI Life	1478.30	9.85
State Bank	743.25	-17.20
Shriram Finance Ltd.	532.00	-29.97
Sun Pharma	1784.80	-41.55
TataConsumerProduct	972.80	2.70
Tata Motors	774.65	-5.45
Tata Steel	127.43	-2.50
TCS	4265.65	226.80
Tech Mahindra	1705.60	62.80
Titan	3440.25	-46.80
Trent Ltd.	6584.10	-37.60
UltraTech Cement	10865.20	-394.60
Wipro	300.55	8.25

Sensex, Nifty extend losses

Sensex and Nifty nursed losses for the third consecutive session on Friday, in lockstep with a weak trend in global equities as concerns over economic growth and quarterly earnings sapped risk appetite. Surging crude prices and a strengthening dollar index hit investor sentiment. PTI

भारतीय विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान भोपाल
भोपाल बायपास रोड, भोई, भोपाल-462 066 (मध्य प्रदेश)
Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Bhopal
Bhopal Bypass Road, Bhoari, Bhopal-462 066 (Madhya Pradesh)
e-TENDER NOTICE
For complete details and any corrigendum etc. Please visit www.iiserb.ac.in/Tender and www.eprocure.gov.in. e-Tenders can be submitted only on www.tenderwizard.com/ISERB.
Sr. No. Name of the Item (s)/Work Tender No. Due Date
1. Providing round the clock contractual security services for the campus at Bhauri Bhopal ISERB/SP/2024-25/113 dated 09/01/2025
Stores and Purchase Officer

DEVI AHILYA VISHWAVIDYALAYA
Nalanda Campus, Indore-452001
IT CENTER
No. DAVV/ITC/2025/1 Date : 07.01.2025
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Online tenders are invited under two bid system (Technical and Financial) for (i) Supply and Installation of Internet Lease line connectivity (ii) Purchase of SOPHOS firewall license subscription bundle with UTM upgrade. The tender documents may be downloaded from https://www.mptenders.gov.in M.P. Madhyam/118247/2025 REGISTRAR

GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH.
JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT.
“ Notice Inviting e-Tender”
The Executive Engineer JSV Division Jaisinghpur Invites tenders on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work (S) through e-tendering process:-
Sr. No. Name of work Estimated cost Earnest Money Time Limit Cost of form
1. Providing FHTC under LWSS Bheri Paprola, LWSS Tina Jhamether, LWSS Dal Bhalunder, LWSS Dabi, Occh, Khurd (covered under LWSS Lahru Sadda) LWSS Duhak Dhalayara, LWSS Kona Phiri in Lambagaon Block In Tehsil Palampur & Jaisinghpur Distt. Kangra (H.P.) (Sub. Head :- Construction of VWSC Building at Jaisinghpur)
1.Last date of filling / uploading the tender through e-tendering: - 20.01.2025 upto 05.00 PM. The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be obtained from the website. http://hptenders.gov.in.
HIM SUCHANA Executive Engineer, HP / 4456/24-25 AVAM JAN SAMPARK JSV Division, Jaisinghpur

Karnataka Road Development Corporation Limited
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)
No.8, “Samparka Soudha”, Dr. Rajkumar Road, Rajajinagar 1st Block, Bengaluru-560 010. Telefax : 080-22024000
e-mail : mdkrdcl@gmail.com, cekrdcl@gmail.com Website: http://www.krdcl.in
No. KRDC/IFB/2024-25/19 Dated: 10-01-2025
TENDER NOTIFICATION ON TURNKEY BASIS
Karnataka Road Development Corporation Limited (KRDC) proposes to take up the work of Construction of Bridge across Kaveri River near Kappadi Village in K.R. Nagar Taluk, Mysore District on Turnkey Basis based Tenderer’s own design on two cover system. Interested bidders can participate through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (KPPP) of GoK and documents can be downloaded from website : https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in The last date of receipt of tender is on 05.02.2025 upto 17.30 hours & Technical bids will be opened on 07.02.2025 at 11.30 hours.
*Please note henceforth, any changes in the schedule will not be published through Newspapers and further changes will be updated only on KPP Portal / KRDC website Visit : https://www.krdcl.in
Sd/- Chief Engineer KRDC, Bengaluru
DIPR/CP/NC/4273/2024-25

JERUSALEM

‘Israel Army killed two kibbutz residents during 2023 attack’



The Israeli military said on Friday that an internal inquiry found it likely that it killed two kibbutz residents as it fought Hamas militants during their October 7, 2023 attack. However, it added that “in both cases, it is not possible to determine with absolute certainty what caused the deaths”. AFP

DAMASCUS

Stampede at central Damascus mosque kills four: health official



A stampede at the landmark Umayyad Mosque in Syria’s capital on Friday killed four persons, a Damascus health official told state media. Witnesses at the site of the stampede saw large crowds gathered near the mosque because free meals were being handed out. Sixteen persons were injured in the incident. AFP

CARACAS

Maduro inaugurated for a third term, defying evidence of fraud



Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro was sworn in for a third six-year term on Friday despite international condemnation of his recent re-election as illegitimate.. Aides to opposition leader María Corina Machado said she was briefly detained on Thursday following an anti-government demonstration in Caracas. AP

WASHINGTON

U.S. unveils sweeping sanctions against Russia’s energy sector



The U.S. announced widespread sanctions against Russia’s energy sector on Friday, designating more than 180 ships and two major oil companies just days before outgoing President Joe Biden leaves office. The U.S. Treasury Department added that the U.K. was also announcing sanctions against the country’s oil and gas sector. AFP

Crew makes progress as death count touches 10 in Los Angeles wildfires

The fires have so far destroyed nearly 10,000 structures, with the number only expected to grow; however, a pause in fierce winds have worked to the firefighters’ advantage; forecasters predict that strong gusts could return over the weekend

Reuters
LOS ANGELES

A pause in the fierce winds that super-charged the ring of wildfires that devastated Los Angeles this week helped crews make progress in bringing the infernos under control on Friday but strong gusts could return over the weekend, forecasters said.

The fires, which have devastated Los Angeles neighbourhoods on the east and west sides of the city, have so far killed 10 persons and destroyed nearly 10,000 structures, with those figures only ex-



Killer blaze: A firefighter battles the fire in the Angeles National Forest in Altadena, California, on Thursday. REUTERS

pected to increase.

“It looks like an atomic bomb dropped in these areas. I don’t expect good news, and we’re not look-

ing forward to those numbers,” Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna said at a press conference late on Thursday, referring to Pac-

ific Palisades in the west and Altadena in the east.

Wind conditions in the Los Angeles area will improve on Friday through the weekend to about 20 mph with gusts between 35 mph to 50 mph, according to the National Weather Service, a far cry from days ago when wind gusts blasted at upwards of 80 mph.

Favourable factors

“It’s not as gusty so that should help firefighters, hopefully,” NWS meteorologist Allison Santorelli said, adding that conditions were still critical with low humidity and dry vegetation.

Even as red flag wind conditions were expected until Friday afternoon, any periods of easing would allow crucial support from the air for firefighters on the ground for aircraft can dropping water and fire retardant on the flaming hills. “There’s a bit of good news, if there can be,” Ms. Santorelli said.

Farther south in San Diego, winds will pick up, with sustained winds of 40 mph and gusts up to 70 mph, creating dangerous fire conditions there over the weekend, she added. As of early Friday, three major fires were still burning in Los Angeles.

Three million Sudan children facing acute malnutrition: UN

Agence France-Presse
PORT SUDAN

An estimated 3.2 million children under the age of five are expected to face acute malnutrition this year in war-torn Sudan, according to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

“Of this number, around 7,72,000 children are expected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition,” Eva Hinds, UNICEF Sudan’s Head of Advocacy and Communication, said late on Thursday.

Famine has already gripped five areas across Sudan, according to a report last month by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), a UN-



Dire straits: The UN said that around 7,72,000 children are expected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition. AFP

backed assessment.

Sudan has endured 20 months of war between the Army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), killing tens of thousands and, according to the UN, uprooting 12 million in the world’s largest

displacement crisis.

Meanwhile, Medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said it was forced to suspend activities at a key hospital in the capital of war-ravaged Sudan after months of violent attacks.

Curbing hate speech is ‘not censorship’, says UN rights chief

Agence France-Presse
GENEVA

The UN rights chief insisted on Friday that regulating hate speech and harmful content online “is not censorship”, days after Meta scrapped its fact-checking programme on Facebook and Instagram citing censorship concerns.

“Allowing hate speech and harmful content online has real world consequences. Regulating such content is not censorship,” Volker Turk said on X. “My Office calls for accountability and governance in the digital space.”

Meta chief executive Mark Zuckerberg an-

Volker Turk slams Meta’s move to call off its fact-checking programme on Facebook, Instagram

nounced on Tuesday the group would “get rid of fact-checkers” and replace them with community-based posts, starting in the U.S., complaining the programme had made “too many mistakes and too much censorship”. Instead, Meta platforms including Facebook and Instagram, “would use community notes similar to X, starting in the U.S.,” he added.

Malala Yousafzai to visit native Pakistan for girls’ summit

Agence France-Presse
ISLAMABAD

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai will attend an international summit on girls’ education hosted by her native Pakistan, where she was nearly killed by militants as a schoolgirl.

Ms. Yousafzai was evacuated from the country in 2012 after being shot by the Pakistan Taliban and she has returned to the country only a handful of times since.

“I am excited to join Muslim leaders from around the world for a critical conference on girls’ education,” she said on Friday on X. “On Sunday, I will speak about protecting rights for all girls to go to



Malala Yousafzai

school, and why leaders must hold the Taliban accountable for their crimes against Afghan women & girls.”

Pakistan’s Education Minister Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said the Taliban government in Afghanistan has been invited to attend, although Islamabad has not received a response.

South Korea’s presidential security chief quits post

Associated Press
SEOUL

South Korea’s acting leader on Friday accepted the resignation of the chief of the presidential security service, Park Jong-joon, as he faced police questioning over how his forces blocked efforts of law enforcement officials who tried to detain impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol last week.

The acting leader, Deputy Prime Minister Choi Sang-mok, also expressed regret over the clashes between law enforcement officials and the presidential security service and called for lawmakers to reach a bipartisan agreement to launch an independent investigation.

SRI VENKATESWARA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, TIRUPATI
(A University established by an Act of A.P. State Legislature)
TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS

Separate e-tenders are invited on ap-e procurement platform (Two bid system) for purchase of Medical Equipment and Medical Journals. For details log on to the website <https://tender.aeprocurement.gov.in> & <https://svimstpt.ap.nic.in>.
The Director-cum-VC reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.
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Roc.No.P1/19/eprocurement/PD/SVIMS/10, Dt:07-01-2025 Sd/- DIRECTOR-CUM-VC.

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Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla-171005

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Secretary, IIAS
Shimla

बीकानेर नगर निगम

नगर निगम मार्ग, बीकानेर (राजस्थान) फोन :- 0151-2226902, 0151-2226905
E-Mail Address :- naganigambikaner@gmail.com, Web Site :- www.bikanernm.org
क्रमांक / यंत्रालय / 2025 / 374 दिनांक:- 07.01.2025

ई-बोली सूचना -12

बीकानेर नगर निगम के नगरीय क्षेत्र में सीवर लाईन एवं मशीनहाल के ब्लॉकज को खोलना एवं सीवर लाईन की स्फिंगिंग कर डी-विल्टिंग कार्य हेतु नगर निगम की हाईप्रीचर जेटिंग कम सुपर स्रकर मशीन एवं जेटिंग कम सक्शन मशीनों का बोली शर्ती अनुसाररख-रखाव एवं संचालन कार्य हेतु पंजीकृत फर्मों से ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट प्रक्रिया से ई-बोली आमंत्रित की जाती है। बोली से सम्बन्धित समस्त विवरण www.eproc.rajjasthan.gov.in, www.sppp.rajjasthan.gov.in एवं नगर निगम की वेबसाइट www.bikanernm.org पर देखी जा सकती है।
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2025

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In association with

CHRIST

LITERARY TRIVIA CHALLENGE

1. The 2019 film Asuran was based on the Tamil novel Vekkai. Who was the author?

2. Name the book by Tamil author A. Vennila that is about the construction of the Mullaperiyar dam.

3. Apart from Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, Agatha Christie also created a husband-wife detective pair. Name them.

1. Chemistry | 2. Nissim Ezekiel | 3. David Williams

Yesterday's Winners:
1. C.S.Rogith Raadhakrishnan, Chennai | 2. Pathalapu Manvitha, Hyderabad
3. Vignesh.V, Madurai

Scan QR code or visit newsth.live/LFL2025QZ take the quiz. Top 3 winners* every day win gift vouchers.

Answer to yesterday's quiz:
1. Chemistry | 2. Nissim Ezekiel | 3. David Williams

Yesterday's Winners:
1. C.S.Rogith Raadhakrishnan, Chennai | 2. Pathalapu Manvitha, Hyderabad
3. Vignesh.V, Madurai

CMVK

M ND-NDE

Weekend Sport



Information doesn't lead to transformation. You need to encounter the right information and then you might transform. In order to encounter it, you have to have full buy-in. I'm sure there's going to be a lot of trust immediately. We'll see how the results go

ANDRE AGASSI

When rivals turn allies: unpacking the Djokovic-Murray coaching arrangement

At 37, Djokovic is in the last leg of his career, no longer the dominant force he once was. As tennis gets younger, taller and more powerful, he needs fresh solutions if he wants to break his tie with Margaret Court's tally of 24 Majors. Which is why his latest collaboration, set to debut at the Australian Open, is so mouth-watering

N. Sudarshan

Hiring a coach is not an exact science. There is no single foundational principle that guides athletes through this process and there is no overarching hypothesis against which a coach's worth can be tested. It's more abstract, less quantifiable. In an individual discipline like tennis, it is all the more difficult. There is a need for personalities to match, and cohesion, trust and mutual respect are non-negotiable. If anything, luck often plays an outsized role in zeroing in on the right person.

Anticipated storyline

Against this backdrop, how does one look at the Novak Djokovic-Andy Murray combination? The mouthwatering – at least on paper – player-coach partnership will debut at the Australian Open, the season's first Grand Slam tournament, that gets underway on Sunday, and is already one of the most anticipated storylines going into Melbourne. Born a week apart in May 1987, the Serb and the Brit have known each other since childhood. And for two years in 2015-16, when Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal were off pace, theirs was men's tennis' pre-eminent rivalry, featuring 12 clashes, nine of them in finals, including three at



[Murray] has a unique perspective on my game as one of the greatest rivals I've had. I love talking to him about the nuances... how I can gain an inch. Every percentage counts at the highest level

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

the Major events. Murray is a three-time Slam champion, eight-time runner-up and former World No. 1. In fact, the 37-year-old was an active player – though far diminished from his glory days – until August 2024. It is perhaps this pedigree, champion mentality and intricate knowledge of the ever-shifting sands of modern-day tennis that prompted Djokovic to turn to Murray. At 37, Djokovic is in the last leg of his career. The 24-time Major winner hasn't won a Tour-level title since November 2023 and is in the midst of his worst run at the Slams since 2016-18 when he went eight events without a trophy. He is entering the Australian Open – a title he has acquired a whopping 10 times – ranked No. 7 in the world. Starting 2008, the year of his first triumph Down Under, only once has Djokovic touched down in Melbourne ranked outside the top-five – in 2018 when he lost in the round of 16. Djokovic is also the last man standing from the famed 'Big Three' era, hoping to delay the inevitable takeover of the sport by the scintillating duo of Carlos Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner. As the sport gets younger, taller and more powerful – Djokovic is four years older than the second oldest man in the top-10, Grigor Dimitrov, and doesn't have a height advantage against six of the 10 best players – he needs fresh solutions if he is to overhaul Margaret Court's 24-Slam count.

"He [Murray] has a unique perspective on my game as one of the greatest rivals that I've had," Djokovic told *atptour.com*. "He knows the pros and cons of my game and has also played until recently. So he knows all the other best players, the youngsters, and their weaknesses and strengths. I love talking to him about the nuances, the details, how I can improve, how I can gain an inch, more court positioning, compared to my opponent. And every percentage counts at the highest level."

Picking them right

What gives hope is the Serb's own record in picking coaches. Of course, during his previous slump (2016-18), he flirted with Andre Agassi for roughly a year and sought philosophical answers to his on-court travails from a quasi-spiritual guru Pepe Imaz. But outside of these, his association with coach Marian Vajda has been long-standing, and he struck gold with German legend Boris Becker and Croat Goran Ivanisevic. Becker had a hand in Djokovic securing six Majors while Ivanisevic helped him bag 12. These appointments, when initially announced, seemed to defy conventional logic, for Becker and Ivanisevic were predominantly attacking players and Djokovic a defensive baseliner. However, over time, their imprints were visible in Djokovic's progress. In the presence of Becker, he improved his forecourt skills a great deal, with his low volleys standing out. With Ivanisevic in tow, Djokovic bettered his serve immeasurably and also mastered the art of clutch serving. It was no surprise that from 2011 to 2024, Djokovic reached 10 Wimbledon finals and suc-

ceeded in seven of them. "Andy is a student of the game, both in terms of tactics, and health and fitness," said Australian doubles great Todd Woodbridge. "He is infatuated with tennis. Andy will look at all the data and he'll provide all the statistics to put into the tactics of every match. "Him joining up with Novak is not just fascinating, but a smart decision from Novak, because who else can coach Novak? He has done everything more than any other person. You put Andy in there, who has won Wimbledon, US Open, Olympics and Davis Cup... he understands the stretch, the pressure and what Novak needs now because he has just been through it." But such seemingly straightforward fixes can also fail; Djokovic's own association with Agassi is a prime example. After he won the 2016 French Open and became the first man since Rod Laver to hold all four Majors at once, Djokovic experienced a severe lack of motivation. Agassi couldn't bail him out despite having overcome the feeling of emptiness in his own career after he reached the pinnacle of the world rankings. "In any coach-student relationship you need trust and trust can take time," said Agassi of Djokovic's decision to choose Murray. "It's not about what I [as a coach] know that changes your career. Information doesn't lead to transformation. You need to encounter the right information at work and then you might transform. In order to encounter it, you have to have full buy-in. I'm sure there's going to be a lot of trust immediately. We'll see how the results go."

Wanted: a reassuring presence

It is also worth remembering that Djokovic, arguably, has the most technically sound game in the history of men's tennis. So he will not require a father figure who radically reshapes his courtcraft but a friend who can put a casual arm around the shoulder and help pick the right piece to finish a complex jigsaw. More a reassuring presence like how Stefan Edberg was to Federer in 2014 when he nudged the Swiss great to embrace a larger racquet head (switching from 90 square inches to 97) to great success. "Andy won't have any secrets, but there are a lot of small details that he will know that maybe Novak doesn't think about," Swedish great Mats Wilander told *Eurosport*. "We always talk about peaking, and Murray knows how to peak. If you win the Olympic Games twice, Wimbledon twice and you are from Great Britain, you understand how to be at your best at the most crucial times. "Murray and Djokovic also had similar behaviour towards their coaching boxes. It looked like it was a little bit of complaining or it could have just been about explaining how they were feeling. It will be interesting to see how Murray will react when Djokovic throws his arms up and says 'what am I supposed to be doing now?' It is going to be one of the most entertaining and interesting relationships."

STACKING UP



ATP Men's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Jannik Sinner	23	11,830	17
2	Alexander Zverev	27	7,635	21
3	Carlos Alcaraz	21	7,010	18
4	Taylor Fritz	27	5,350	22
5	Daniil Medvedev	28	5,030	17
6	Casper Ruud	26	4,210	25
7	Novak Djokovic	37	3,900	18
8	Alex de Minaur	25	3,535	23
9	Andrey Rublev	27	3,520	27
10	Grigor Dimitrov	33	3,200	19
11	Stefanos Tsitsipas	26	3,195	22
12	Tommy Paul	27	3,145	21
13	Holger Rune	21	2,910	23
14	Ugo Humbert	26	2,765	26
15	Jack Draper	23	2,685	22



English Premier League Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Liverpool	19	14	4	1	47	19	28	46
2	Arsenal	20	11	7	2	39	18	21	40
3	N. Forest	20	12	4	4	29	19	10	40
4	Chelsea	20	10	6	4	39	24	15	36
5	Newcastle	20	10	5	5	34	22	12	35
6	Man. City	20	10	4	6	36	27	9	34
7	Bournemouth	20	9	6	5	30	23	7	33
8	Aston Villa	20	9	5	6	30	32	-2	32
9	Fulham	20	7	9	4	30	27	3	30
10	Brighton	20	6	10	4	30	29	1	28
11	Brentford	20	8	3	9	38	35	3	27
12	Tottenham	20	7	3	10	42	30	12	24
13	Man. United	20	6	5	9	23	28	-5	23
14	West Ham	20	6	5	9	24	39	-15	23
15	Crystal Palace	20	4	9	7	21	28	-7	21
16	Everton	19	3	8	8	15	25	-10	17
17	Wolves	20	4	4	12	31	45	-14	16
18	Ipswich Town	20	3	7	10	20	35	-15	16
19	Leicester City	20	3	5	12	23	44	-21	14
20	Southampton	20	1	3	16	12	44	-32	6

Italian Serie A Standings

Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1 Napoli	19	14	2	3	30	12	18	44
2 Atalanta	18	13	2	3	43	20	23	41
3 Inter Milan	17	12	4	1	45	15	30	40
4 Lazio	19	11	2	6	33	27	6	35
5 Juventus	18	7	11	0	30	15	15	32
6 Fiorentina	18	9	5	4	31	18	13	32
7 Bologna	17	7	7	3	25	21	4	28
8 AC Milan	17	7	6	4	26	17	9	27
9 Udinese	19	7	4	8	23	28	-5	25
10 Roma	19	6	5	8	26	24	2	23
11 Torino	19	5	6	8	19	24	-5	21
12 Empoli	19	4	8	7	18	22	-4	20
13 Genoa	19	4	8	7	16	27	-11	20
14 Parma	19	4	7	8	25	34	-9	19
15 Verona	19	6	1	12	24	42	-18	19
16 Como	18	4	6	8	20	30	-10	18
17 Cagliari	19	4	5	10	18	32	-14	17
18 Lecce	19	4	5	10	11	31	-20	17
19 Venezia	19	3	5	11	18	32	-14	14
20 Monza	19	1	7	11	17	27	-10	10

Spanish LaLiga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Real Madrid	19	13	4	2	43	19	24	43
2	Atletico Madrid	18	12	5	1	33	12	21	41
3	Barcelona	19	12	2	5	51	22	29	38
4	Athletic Bilbao	19	10	6	3	29	17	12	36
5	Villarreal	18	8	6	4	34	30	4	30
6	Real Mallorca	19	9	3	7	19	21	-2	30
7	Real Sociedad	18	7	4	7	16	13	3	25
8	Girona	18	7	4	7	26	25	1	25
9	Real Betis	18	6	7	5	21	22	-1	25
10	Osasuna	18	6	7	5	23	27	-4	25
11	Celta Vigo	18	7	3	8	27	28	-1	24
12	Rayo Vallecano	18	5	7	6	20	21	-1	22
13	Las Palmas	18	6	4	8	23	27	-4	22
14	Sevilla	18	6	4	8	20	27	-7	22
15	Leganes	18	4	6	8	17	28	-11	18
16	Alaves	18	4	5	9	21	30	-9	17
17	Getafe	18	3	7	8	11	15	-4	16
18	Espanyol	18	4	3	11	16	30	-14	15
19	Valencia	18	2	6	10	17	28	-11	12
20	Real Valladolid	18	3	3	12	12	37	-25	12



Test Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Joe Root	895	932
2	Harry Brook	876	898
3	Kane Williamson	867	919
4	Yashasvi Jaiswal	847	854
5	Travis Head	772	884
6	Temba Bavuma	769	769
7	Kamindu Mendis	759	759
8	Steve Smith	746	947
9	Rishabh Pant	739	801
10	Daryl Mitchell	725	804

Test Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Jasprit Bumrah	908	908
2	Pat Cummins	841	914
3	Kagiso Rabada	837	902
4	Josh Hazlewood	835	864
5	Marco Jansen	785	803
6	Matt Henry	782	782
7	Nathan Lyon	774	801
8	Prabath Jayasuriya	768	801
9	Ravindra Jadeja	745	899
9	Scott Boland	745	745

ODI Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Babar Azam	795	898
2	Rohit Sharma	765	882
3	Shubman Gill	763	847
4	Virat Kohli	746	909
5	Heinrich Klaasen	743	757
6	Harry Tector	737	767
7	Daryl Mitchell	707	750
8	Rahmanullah Gurbaz	672	693
8	Shai Hope	672	728
10	Pathum Nissanka	671	728

ODI Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Rashid Khan	669	799
2	Kuldeep Yadav	665	760
3	Shaheen Afridi	662	696
4	Keshav Maharaj	654	741
4	Bernard Scholtz	654	659
6	Jasprit Bumrah	645	838
7	Maheesh Theekshana	644	650
8	Mohammed Siraj	643	736
9	Adam Zampa	635	698
10	Josh Hazlewood	634	727

T20I Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Travis Head	855	884
2	Philip Salt	829	860
3	Tilak Varma	806	806
4	Suryakumar Yadav	788	910
5	Jos Buttler	717	726
6	Babar Azam	712	896
7	Pathum Nissanka	707	715
8	Yashasvi Jaiswal	706	779
9	Mohammad Rizwan	704	875
10	Kusal Perera	675	752

T20I Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Akeal Hosein	707	708
2	Adil Rashid	701	746
3	Wanindu Hasaranga	698	797
4	Adam Zampa	694	743
5	Ravi Bishnoi	666	699
6	Maheesh Theekshana	665	684
7	Rashid Khan	664	816
8	Arshdeep Singh	656	656
9	Gudakesh Motie	643	707
10	Mitchell Santner	639	724

Want to second a World champion? ‘Put aside your personal preferences and get into the player’s shoes,’ says Harikrishna

The Indian Grandmaster, once ranked as high as World No. 10, has played a significant role in D. Gukesh and Ju Wenjun rising to the top of the chess world. In this interview, he offers an insight into the life of a second and also talks about how it felt to finally win gold at the Olympiad

INTERVIEW

P. Harikrishna

P.K. Ajith Kumar

There is a common factor between the men’s and women’s reigning World chess champions: P. Harikrishna worked as a second to both D. Gukesh and Ju Wenjun. Ju retained the women’s title back in 2023, while Gukesh became the youngest World champion in history, at 18, dethroning Ding Liren last month in Singapore. Harikrishna, who played a significant role in the Chennai youngster’s triumph, is looking forward to their meeting in the Dutch village of Wijk aan Zee, where they will come face to face across a chessboard, at the Tata Steel tournament, one of the most prestigious events in the chess calendar. It kicks off on January 17. One of the most prodigious chess talents to have come out of India, Harikrishna was once the World No. 10. He was also a part of India’s gold-medal-winning Olympiad team. The 38-year-old was preparing for Wijk aan Zee at his Prague home when *The Hindu* caught up with him over the phone for an interview. Excerpts:

At Wijk aan Zee, Gukesh will be playing two of his seconds – you and Vincent Keymer.

Yes, we could not meet Gukesh after he won the World Championship. So it will be nice to meet him, looking forward to it very much.

There is such a strong field at Wijk aan Zee...

The field is very strong actually, with many strong young players and experienced ones as well. Apart from Gukesh, there are players like Fabiano Caruana, Arjun Erigaisi, Nodirbek Abdusattorov, R. Praggnanandhaa, Anish Giri, Wei Yi... I have been preparing for the tournament, I want to give my best. The last time I played was in 2021. And I had played a couple of times earlier as well.

Wei and you worked together as seconds for Ju for her last World title match...

Yes, for her match against Lei Tingjie, but unfortunately in 2023, there was not much time. We had only three months to prepare. But generally, the preparation should be around six months.

With Gukesh, it was more than that, wasn’t it?

Yes. I began working with him actually for the Candidates tournament [held in April in Toronto]. Once he was sure of qualifying for the Candi-

For us seconds, it is not the best opening the player remembers, but the one which he feels good about. Right from the beginning we decided to have some human touch, because the computer can suggest many, many things

dates, which was after the World Rapid and Blitz Championships, the last event in the FIDE circuit, he messaged me and asked if I could help. So we started preparing for the Candidates. And naturally, after he won the Candidates, he wanted to have the team that helped him. He also wanted Vincent, who joined us for the match.

Gukesh’s team was headed by Grzegorz

Gajewski and it also included Radosław Wojtaszek, Jan-Krzysztof Duda and Jan Klimkowski. How did the team function?

We were analysing in the best possible way so we could give the ideas to Gukesh. While the match was on, only Gajewski was with Gukesh in Singapore, we were based in Spain. That worked perfectly for us time-zone-wise. When they go to

sleep we could prepare. Gajewski would, in their evenings, ask us to check something. And then he gave a lot of valuable inputs. And along the lines, we developed which idea could be interesting for Gukesh to play the next day. And to make that idea as clean as possible was our task. Sometimes we could come up with a better idea, sometimes maybe not convincing. So we had a lot of discussions, a lot of analyses. We did it together. Apart from the work we did in the openings, Gukesh played a lot of blitz games as training.

Yes, Gajewski told me that Gukesh was very well prepared for the tie-breaks if required, by playing hundreds of blitz games.

But, openings are the main part of the preparation. And, you know, with so many strong players in the team, many ideas come up. I also had another role, which was to analyse some main games and some positions. And we used to have this during camps also.

The deep preparation in the opening seems to have paid off for Gukesh, as he looked so sure, making his opening moves quickly in most of the games, which gave him the clear advantage in time over Ding. You must be happy with the way the openings went for Gukesh.

Absolutely. For us seconds, it is not the best opening that he remembers, but the one which he feels good about. That is the most important. He played well in the openings which we discussed. Right from the beginning we decided to have some human touch, because the computer can suggest many, many things. So, we made sure that we equalised not just with the help of engines, but that also we should take some risks. I think that really worked. And we looked at some ideas from games played at the lower levels, so they were not novelties but they helped. The first game, which Gukesh lost, was a little bit of a setback, I have to say. But, after that, you could see that whatever openings we were choosing, he was feeling good, except Game 12. In that game, Ding also played quite well, I have to add.

He did, almost flawless he was. And that was possibly the best game Ding has played in recent times.

Yes. And credit to Gukesh for being able to recover from that.

How did you find this process of being a second? Is it tiring and how is it different from being a player?

As a player, you have your own choices, but as a second, you need to put aside your personal preferences and go into the shoes of the player and look at what is best. At the same time, you should not lose your strength because you look into what the player wants. You should also use your own strength, to understand the opening or choice of ideas. Yes, it is definitely quite tiring.

How important was the Olympiad gold for you as a player? You have been playing at the Olympiads for a long, long time.

Yes. My first Olympiad was in 2000 when I was 14. And I played all the Olympiads after that except the one in 2014. Two times we finished fourth when I was a member, once in Baku in 2016. And the second time was in Chennai in 2022. Thankfully, the B team won the bronze in Chennai, but the A team, which I was part of, finished fourth. The Olympiad had been the only team competition in which I didn’t win a medal. I have won medals at the Asian Games and Asian Team Championships. So I am glad that now I have an Olympiad medal.

GAME THEORY



MARGARET COURT



SERENA WILLIAMS



NANCY WYNNE



DAPHNE AKHURST

Trophy collectors Down Under: women’s edition

With the Australian Open starting on Sunday, we take a look at the most successful women’s singles champions at the event. The tournament began as the Australasian Championships in 1905, with the women’s singles first contested in 1922. It became the Australian Championships in 1927 and took its final form as the Australian Open when the Open Era commenced in 1969

MOST SINGLES TITLES

Player	Titles	Editions won
Margaret Court	11	1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1973
Serena Williams	7	2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2015, 2017
Nancy Wynne	6	1937, 1940, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1951
Daphne Akhurst	5	1925, 1926, 1928, 1929, 1930
Evonne Goolagong	4	1974, 1975, 1976, 1977(Dec)
Steffi Graf	4	1988, 1989, 1990, 1994
Monica Seles	4	1991, 1992, 1993, 1996
Joan Hartigan	3	1933, 1934, 1936
Martina Navratilova	3	1981, 1983, 1985
Martina Hingis	3	1997, 1998, 1999
Margaret Molesworth	2	1922, 1923
Coral Buttsworth	2	1931, 1932
Thelma Coyne	2	1952, 1954
Mary Carter	2	1956, 1959
Chris Evert	2	1982, 1984
Hana Mandlikova	2	1980, 1987
Jennifer Capriati	2	2001, 2002
Victoria Azarenka	2	2012, 2013
Naomi Osaka	2	2019, 2021
Aryna Sabalenka	2	2023, 2024

SOURCE: AUSTRALIAN OPEN

PICTURE THIS



GETTY IMAGES

Pretend play

One sign you had switched from football fan to football addict — in the days before the FIFA video game series — was when you began flicking miniature figures with your fingers on tabletops. Among the many versions of tabletop football, a memorable

variant is Subbuteo, a game invented in the 1940s in Royal Tunbridge Wells, England. The game’s name comes from the Latin name ‘Falcao subbuteo’ for the bird of prey known as the Eurasian hobby, a small falcon. The game’s creator, Peter Adolph, wasn’t able to trademark ‘Hobby’,

which prompted the avian origin of the name. Not all games of Subbuteo, however, are played on theatrical handmade pitches, such as the one in this photograph from Essex. In the game, players maintain possession as long as the figure they flick touches the

ball and the ball does not subsequently hit an opposing figure; shots on goal can only be taken after the ball crosses the ‘shooting line’, which is equidistant between the half-way line and the goal line. The goalkeeper figure is manoeuvred with a rod that fits underneath the goal.

GAMEPLAN

I contributed in the team’s win, that matters the most: Tejal



X@BCCIWOMEN

▶ Middle-order batter Tejal Hasabnis made a memorable comeback, scoring her maiden fifty as she finished off the chase with an unbeaten 53 in the first ODI against Ireland. “I feel great, happy that I contributed in team’s win, that matters the most. My gameplan was simple, I love chasing.”

LANDMARK

Smriti becomes second Indian woman to cross 4,000-run mark



FILE PHOTO: VIJAY SONEJI

▶ India skipper Smriti Mandhana, during her 29-ball 41 in the first ODI against Ireland, crossed the 4,000-run landmark. She became the second Indian after former captain Mithali Raj (7,805) to achieve the feat. Smriti (95 innings) is the third fastest to reach 4,000 runs after Australia’s Belinda Clark (86) and Meg Lanning (89).

SERIOUS CHARGE

Djokovic claims he was ‘poisoned’ before 2022 AO deportation



AP

▶ Novak Djokovic has claimed that he was “poisoned” by lead and mercury in his food while he was briefly held in Melbourne in 2022 before being deported on the eve of the Australian Open. “I had some discoveries when I came back to Serbia. I never told this to anybody publicly, but I had a really high level of lead and mercury.”

TOP HONOUR

Neeraj named best male javelin thrower by *Track and Field News*



FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

▶ Neeraj Chopra has been named the best male javelin thrower in the world in 2024 by ‘*Track and Field News*’. Neeraj, who was beaten by Pakistan’s Arshad Nadeem for the Olympic gold medal in August last year, pipped two-time world champion Anderson Peters of Grenada for the top spot in the 2024 rankings published by the magazine.

Defence holds firm as Dragons pip Bengal Tigers

Goals from Karthi, Uttam help the Southern team emerge victorious and climb to the top of the pile; the opposition pays a heavy price for making a hash of as many as 12 penalty corners

HIL

Y.B. Sarangi
ROURKELA

Tamil Nadu Dragons’ solid defence helped it register a 2-1 win over Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers in a captivating contest of the Hockey India League at the Birsamunda Hockey Stadium here on Friday.

Dragons’ third win enabled it to leapfrog Tigers and take the top spot. Tigers suffered their second straight loss. In the goalless first quarter, Dragons raised the tempo and got two short corners but could not utilise them.

Dragons did not have to wait for long, though. Inside a crowded ‘D’, Uttam Singh skillfully supplied the ball from the goalline on the left with a reverse hit and Karthi Selvam touched in to provide the breakthrough.

In the last six minutes, Dragons was down to nine and even conceded a penalty corner, but a calm backline withstood the



Opening salvo: Karthi drew first blood for Dragons in the 16th minute. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

pressure. The composure and alertness of captain Amit Rohidas, Chandan Yadav and David Harte saw off some nerve-wracking moments close to half-time.

Tigers replied strongly, securing two consecutive short corners and eventually a penalty stroke. Rupinder Pal Singh deceived Harte to shoot home to the Irishman’s left.

Dragons, which had a close shave as Tim Cross’s hit finding the crossbar, regained its lead as Uttam

slotted in a Moritz Ludwig cross that came through Nathan Ephraums’ deflection.

Tigers constantly pushed to get three more short corners, but Dragons’ formidable defence, studded with world-class first rusher Rohidas and seasoned goalkeeper Harte, did not give up.

Tigers had a golden opportunity to draw parity when they were awarded a penalty stroke in the 44th minute following a successful referral, but Rupinder

hit wide. The keen tussle continued as Dragons forward Abharan Sudev’s goal was disallowed in the final quarter.

Tigers, who paid the price for wasting 12 penalty corners, entered the circle several times, but could not get the desired result even though Dragons played the two minutes with nine players.

The result: Tamil Nadu Dragons 2 (Karthi 16, Uttam 37) bt Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers 1 (Rupinder 35).

Satwik-Chirag duo through to semifinals



Staying focused: Chirag and Satwik had a battle on their hands.

Press Trust of India
KUALA LUMPUR

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty advanced to the semifinals of the Malaysia Open with a gritty victory here on Friday.

The seventh-seeded Indians battled for 49 minutes to secure a 26-24, 21-15 win over the Malaysian duo of Yew Sin Ong and Ee Yi Teo in the quarterfinals of the Super 1000 tournament.

The opening game was a nail-biter, with both pairs keeping the contest evenly poised. The Indians held a narrow 11-9 lead at the in-

terval and extended it to 18-16, but the Malaysians rallied, earning three consecutive points to level at 19-19 and even snatched a 20-19 lead.

Undeterred, Satwik and Chirag displayed remarkable composure, saving four consecutive game points before closing out the first game 26-24.

In the second game, the Malaysian pair started strong, leading for most of the game up to the interval with an 11-8 advantage.

However, Satwik and Chirag won 13 of the next 17 points to seal the match and book their third consecutive semifinal berth.

National Tennis Centre shuts shop, talent pipeline left high and dry

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Exactly four years after it was launched with the aim of producing a pipeline of talent to replenish the barren terrain of singles tennis in India, the National Tennis Centre (NTC) in New Delhi has ceased operations as on December 31, 2024.

The programme was headed by Zeeshan Ali who had moved from Bengaluru lock, stock and barrel. Zeeshan was India’s Davis Cup coach from 2013 and had resigned in August last year.

Shockwaves

Sources told *The Hindu* that the move to close the NTC came as a shock and it was conveyed to those working there, Zeeshan included, via a terse email, without specifying any reasons.

Calls to Anil Dhupar, the then secretary-general of the AITA, went unanswered.

It is to be noted that the administration of the AITA is currently in limbo, with the elections held on September 28 yet to be ratified by the Delhi High Court.

A petition filed by former players Somdev Devvarman and Purav Raja alleging violation of the Sports



Sunrise to sunset: Players and coaches during good times at the National Tennis Centre in New Delhi. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Code by the AITA is pending.

The decision to close the NTC was taken at the Annual General Meeting held on September 28.

The NTC was set up to give the talented players, who would have otherwise found costs prohibitive, a chance to excel.

It provided accommodation, coaches, fitness trainers and other services to athletes from around the country.

There was also a pay-and-play component, but at subsidised rates.

Digvijay Pratap Singh, who made his Davis Cup debut against Morocco in Lucknow in 2023, and 21-year-old Karan Singh, who

has been named for the tie against Togo in February, came through the NTC.

But, in the last year, it is understood that the overall standards had gone down, so much so that the centre didn’t even have a physio.

“At one point, we had close to 45 to 50 of India’s best junior and senior players, leaving aside the top-five like Sasikumar Mukund and Sumit Nagal,” said the source.

“We had the best players in the country training together, a system that has worked wonders in countries like the United States, China and many European nations.

“We produced 10 National champions in diffe-

rent age groups in the first three years.

“But that vision became distorted. As players graduated out of the juniors, they needed more support. But what we promised them, things like a travelling coach, expenses for trips abroad, never materialised and players started leaving.”

Midway, the AITA decided that the NTC should have U-12 and U-14 players, and to accommodate them, some of the senior players were asked to leave.

Towards the end, the NTC had solely become a pay-and-play academy, militating against its founding principles.

Punjab FC rallies to hold NorthEast United



Late strike: Punjab FC players celebrate the equaliser. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ISL

Sports Bureau
GUWAHATI

Punjab FC rallied to hold NorthEast United FC 1-1 in the Indian Super League at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium here on Friday.

Punjab had only two shots on target, but an 82nd-minute equaliser by Khaiminhang Lhungdim proved enough for it to end a four-game losing streak and snatch a point.

The Highlanders were on the offensive from the start. The breakthrough came in the 24th minute through Alaaeddine Ajarai who evaded being caught offside and tapped the ball into the bottom right corner.

Punjab reaped the rewards of fresh legs as the game entered the final stages. F. Muhammad Suhail was introduced in the

classy 92 to lift her team to a respectable 238 for seven.

Opting to bat, Ireland was in deep trouble at 56 for four in the 14th over, but Lewis and Leah Paul (59 off 73 balls) added 117 runs for the fifth wicket to steer its team to safety.

Lewis scored her runs in 129 balls, lacing the knock with 15 boundaries.

Aided by at least three clear dropped catches and a few misfields, the duo of Lewis and Paul went about their job in a calculated manner and brought a semblance of stability to the Ireland innings while putting together the team’s first-ever century partnership against India.

Medium-pacer Titas Sadhu effected the first breakthrough for India when she induced an outside edge from Sarah Forbes (9) after the batter tried to play away from her body, and Deepthi Sharma did the rest in the slip cordon.

The scores: Ireland 238 for seven in 50 overs (Gaby Lewis 92, Leah Paul 59) lost to India 241 for four in 34.3 overs (Smriti Mandhana 41, Pratika Rawal 89, Tejal Hasabnis 53 n.o., Aimee Maguire 3/57). **Toss:** Ireland. **PoM:** Pratika.

