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A good plan implemented today is  
better than a perfect plan  
implemented tomorrow.

George Patton



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**Vice-Admiral Tripathi to be next Navy chief**  
NEW DELHI  
Vice-Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi has been appointed the next Chief of the Naval Staff. He is currently the Vice-Chief of the Navy and will take over on superannuation of the current Chief, Admiral R. Hari Kumar on April 30. > PAGE 4

**Ukraine military says it hit Russian airfield in Crimea**  
KYIV  
A Ukrainian attack on a Russian airfield in the occupied Crimean peninsula damaged four missile launchers. Ukraine's military spy agency said on Thursday, it added that the number of aircraft damaged or destroyed was being clarified. > PAGE 14

**One Indian crew member of ship seized by Iran returns home**  
KATHOL BHATTACHERJEE  
NEW DELHI  
One of the 17 Indian sailors aboard the Portuguese-flagged MSC Aries that was detained by the Iranian authorities last weekend has returned home in Kerala, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has announced. Anu Tessa Joseph, a resident of Thrissur, was welcomed at the Cochin International Airport by government officials when she arrived from Iran on Thursday. "The Indian Mission in Tehran remains seized of the matter and is in touch with the remaining 16 Indian crew members of the container vessel. The crew members are in good health and in contact with their family members in India," said the MEA in a press release saying that it

## India votes from today; 102 LS seats in contention

Voting will be held for all 39 Lok Sabha seats in T.N. as well as several in Rajasthan, U.P., M.P.

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**  
NEW DELHI  
Over 16 crore voters will exercise their franchise on Friday as the 2024 general election, the world's biggest exercise in democracy, kicks off with 102 Lok Sabha constituencies going to the polls in the first phase. All 39 Lok Sabha seats of Tamil Nadu and five seats of Uttar Pradesh, 12 seats in Rajasthan, eight crackle seats in western Uttar Pradesh, and six seats in Madhya Pradesh are among those going to the polls on Friday. A total of 1,525 candidates - 1,491 men and 134 women - are in the fray. Voting will also be held in ethnic violence-hit Manipur and Nagaland-affected Bastar in Chhattisgarh. In the inner Manipur seat, polling will be held on Friday as well as on April 26, during the second phase. Polling will also be held



The first laps: Polling officials carrying EVMs and other election material across the Brahmaputra by a country boat at Baghmora village in Majuli district of Assam on Thursday. **STUTI RAU/KOENIG**

for 92 Assembly seats in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, where Assembly elections are being held simultaneously. Gadkari Bhupender Yadav, and Sanjeev Bajan, and Uttar Pradesh leader Jitin Prasad. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's A. Raja, Dayanidhi Maran and K. Kanimozhi, and Gaurav Gogoi of the Congress are other heavyweights in the fray. The counting of votes

## NDA looks for a third straight term, while INDIA bloc is hoping to upstage the ruling alliance

Overall, 16.63 crore voters would exercise their franchise in phase 1; vote counting on June 4

who are above 85 years of age and 13.89 lakh voters with disabilities have been provided the option to vote from the comfort of their homes. **Final preparations** The Election Commission (EC) said that 1.87 lakh polling stations have been set up and 41 helicopters, 84 special trains, and nearly 1 lakh vehicles have been deployed to ferry polling and security personnel. Voting will begin at 7 a.m. and end at 6 p.m. though the closure of poll timings differs in some states, the EC said. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu reviewed election preparations at a meeting on Thursday. Around the eye of the election voters are registered to cast their votes. Over 14.14 lakh voters

## 'Sugar content high in Nestlé baby food sold in India'

**Bindu Shajan Perappanadan**  
NEW DELHI  
Nestlé's baby food products sold in India, as well as in African and Latin American countries, have higher sugar content, in comparison to the same products in European markets, according to a report released recently by a Swiss NGO, the Public Eye and International Baby Food Action Network. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, which establishes standards to ensure food safety, said it is looking into the report. **FULL REPORT > PAGE 6**

## Scare in Indonesia



Lava and smoke erupt from Indonesia's Mount Ruang on Wednesday, forcing evacuation of thousands of people. **AFP REPORT ON PAGE 14**

## Impossible to tamper with EVMs at 'any stage', EC says in SC

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI  
The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday said it is impossible to tamper with electronic voting machines (EVMs) "at any stage" even as the Supreme Court reserved its judgment on plea that 97 crore registered voters in the country have a right to a more transparent electoral system, with or without EVMs. The assurance from the top poll body that EVMs were "perfect" came on the eve of the first phase of Lok Sabha election. A Bench of Justices Sanjay Khanna and Dipankar Datta chided petitioners, including the Association for Democratic Reforms, that "it was not good to be over-suspicious about everything". The two days of marathon hearing saw ideas ranging from returning to paper ballots to bar codes for individual candidates and having more transparent peepholes on Voter Verifiable Paper - Audit Trail (VVPATs) swirl through in the courtroom. Advocate Prasant Bhushan and senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for petitioners, highlighted the fundamental right of citizens to a transparent election process. Her vote has been cast right. The court was hearing petitions seeking cross-verification of 100% EVM slips. Currently, cross-verification of VVPAT happens only in five randomly selected polling booths in a constituency. The EC said there have been 41,629 instances of random verification till date. Over four crore

## One Indian crew member of ship seized by Iran returns home

**Kathol Bhattacharjee**  
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Ann Tessa Joseph, a deck cadet who was onboard the seized vessel, on her arrival at the Kochi airport in Nedumbassery on Thursday. **PTI**

elled down from a helicopter on the ship and steered it towards an Iranian base. Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz had described the move as a "pirate operation" saying, "I am sure that the Iranian nation and the free world would need a second ship to help them come ashore. In addition, the Aries cannot be left unmanned, and therefore, some crew members would need to remain. After a strong request, including External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's intervention, the Iranian government made an exception for the female cadet and has ensured that other crew members can speak to their families in India. The MEA swung into action after news spread that at least 17 Indian sailors were among the crew of the MSC Aries. The MEA had started the dialogue with the Iranian authorities through the Indian embassy in Tehran as well as the return of the other 16 Indians is more complex. The ship has been impounded, and the crew would need a second ship

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## **Vice-Admiral Tripathi to be next Navy chief**

### **NEW DELHI**

Vice-Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi has been appointed the next Chief of the Naval Staff. He is currently the Vice-Chief of the Navy and will take over on superannuation of the current Chief, Admiral R. Hari Kumar on April 30. » **PAGE 4**



## *Scare in Indonesia*



Lava and smoke erupt from Indonesia's Mount Ruang on Wednesday, forcing evacuation of thousands of people. AFP (REPORT ON PAGE 14)

## Labourer who threw stone at Jagan booked for attempt to murder

The Hindu Bureau  
VIJAYAWADA

The NTR Commissionerate police on Thursday arrested a daily wage labourer who allegedly hurled a stone at Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The police are trying to find out whether any other person was involved in the incident.

A resident of Vaddera Colony, the labourer, Vemula Satish, hurled the stone at the Chief Minister while he was participating in a 'Memartha Siddham' election campaign in Ajjitsingh Nagar on April 13.

Mr. Reddy was former Minister and MLA Vellampalli Srinivas suffered injuries in the attack. The Chief Minister was seen with a bleeding injury on his forehead after the incident. Both he and Mr. Srinivas underwent treatment at Government General Hospital, Vijayawada, on the same night.

Based on the complaint lodged by the MLA, the Ajjitsingh Nagar police registered a case under Section 307 of the IPC (attempt to murder) and took up the investigation.

The police, who questioned about 70 suspects in the case, zeroed in on Satish and arrested him.

"The accused who attacked the Chief Minister has been arrested. We will produce him in court. We are trying to find out the motive behind the attack," the police said.

## Reports of EVM error during mock poll in Kerala are false, EC tells SC

SC Bench says petitioners have gone solely by media reports and have not verified the issue personally; Kerala Chief Electoral Officer says misunderstanding was caused by an additional slip released by VVPAT machine during the mock poll

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday told the Supreme Court that statements about four electronic voting machines (EVMs) erroneously logged in votes in favour of the BJP during mock polls held in Kerala were plainly false.

The attention of a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta was drawn to the reports by advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioners Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). Mr. Bhushan said the four EVMs had reportedly malfunctioned in the mock polls held in Kasargod district of Kerala on April 17.

The Bench had asked senior advocate Maninder



Clearing the air: Election officials checking the electronic voting machines. REUTERS

Singh, appearing for the EC, to "check it up". When the court re-assembled at 2 p.m., a senior EC official, Nitesh Kumar Vyas, informed the court that the "news reports were false".

"We have verified the allegation from the District Collector and it appears

that they are false. We will submit a detailed report to the court," he submitted.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for another petitioner, Arun Kumar Agarwal, said they had merely alerted the court to the media reports. Their intention was not adversarial.

Justice Khanna said the petitioners had gone solely by the media reports and had not verified the issue personally.

The Bench is hearing petitions seeking 100% cross-verification of EVM votes with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips. The petitioners, including Association for Democratic Reforms, have urged the court to allow voters physical access to the VVPAT slips to confirm the votes they have cast before putting the slips into the sealed ballot boxes. They have contended that the voters have a fundamental right to be confident about the accuracy of the votes they have cast.

The petitioners have voiced their apprehensions that EVMs could malfunction or malicious soft-

ware could be uploaded, favouring the registration of votes in favour of a party, possibly the ruling one.

Meanwhile, Chief Electoral Officer Kerala Sanjay Kaul has termed baseless the complaint that EVMs had registered extra votes for the BJP. According to him, the "misunderstanding" was caused by an additional slip released by the VVPAT machine during the mock poll. This slip is longer than the normal VVPAT slips and is used for an initial inspection ahead of the mock poll, he said. The VVPAT slip that was not put in the box for initial examination had been released during the mock poll but has not been counted mentioned on it. In addition to "Standardisation of VVPAT serial number.

## IN BRIEF

### Over 21,000 birds to be culled in Alappuzha today

The Animal Husbandry Department will carry out bird culling operations in the avian flu-hit regions of Kuttanad in Kerala on Friday. Around 21,000 ducks will be culled at Edathua and Cheruthana, the bird flu hotspots. Besides, all domesticated birds within a 1-km radius of the hotspots will be culled. "The Centre has notified the outbreak of disease. We have constituted 8 rapid response teams to cull birds," said Sajeef Kumar K.R., District Animal Husbandry Officer.

### Karnataka High Court stays FIR against B.Y. Raghavendra

The Karnataka High Court has stayed a FIR registered against B.Y. Raghavendra, a BJP candidate contesting from the Shivamogga Lok Sabha constituency, for allegedly creating enmity through his speech and misusing a religious institution for campaigning in violation of the mode code of conduct. Justice Krishna S. Dicit passed the interim order on a petition filed by Mr. Raghavendra, who has questioned the legality of the FIR registered on a complaint by an official attached to an election flying squad.

### IMD warns of isolated heavy rain in 3 Kerala districts today

North Kerala is likely to receive a respite from the summer heat on Friday with rain clouds looming over some parts of the State. The India Meteorological department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert warning of isolated heavy rain in Kozhikode, Kannur and Wayanad districts today. Rain within the range of 64.5 mm to 115.5 mm is likely in a span of 24 hours in these districts.

## Rahul asks why no action taken against Pinarayi

The Hindu Bureau  
KANNUR

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has expressed astonishment at the BJP and Central agencies in an alleged targeting him while ignoring "serious allegations" against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

"We are trying to find out the motive behind the attack," the police said.

Lok Sabha election campaign on Thursday. Mr. Gandhi recounted his own experiences of facing backlash for opposing the BJP, including "being subjected to media abuse, losing his Lok Sabha membership, enduring 55 hours of interrogation by the ED and being evicted from his official residence at a public meeting organised by the United Democratic Front in Kannur as part of the

protest corruption allegations and other issues. He highlighted the "imprisonment of two Chief Ministers"

from other States, contrasting it with Mr. Vijayan's immunity.

Mr. Gandhi suggested that why he has been vigorously opposing the BJP, for media goons to be "untouched" by Central agencies, despite his claims of fighting an ideological battle against the BJP. Asserting the importance of Constitutional institutions such as the Election Commission,

judiciary, investigative agencies such as the ED and the CBI in "safeguarding democracy," Mr. Gandhi accused the BJP of weaponising these institutions for political gains.

He criticised the BJP's attempts to impose "a singular history, language, and ideology on the diverse people of India," which, he argued, undermines its essence and creates disharmony.



Rahul Gandhi

## Polling team treks five hours in deep forest in Idukki to record a home vote

Sandeep Vellaram  
IDUKKI

To record a single home vote, a special polling team, including three women officials, has trekked 18 kilometres inside the deep forest under the Idukki Lok Sabha constituency in Kerala.

The team trekked to the Nooradi tribal settlement under the Munnar forest division on Wednesday as part of the vote-from-home exercise meant for senior citizens aged above 85 and differently abled voters.

Sivalingam, a 92-year-old bedridden man in the Nooradi settlement, had filed an application for home voting, said Devikulam Subcollector V.M. Jayakrishnan. Nooradi is a



Each vote counts: A special polling team on its way to a tribal settlement in Edamalakkudy in Idukki district. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

remote settlement in Edamalakkudy, the first tribal banchayat in the State.

Officials said the special team travelled from Munnar to Edamalakkudy by jeep in the morning. The team reached Koppakkad,

the last point accessible to vehicles, around 8 a.m. They began trekking around 8 a.m. and, after a five-hour journey, reached Sivalingam's house around 1.15 p.m. and set up a voting compartment. Mr. Siv-

alingam then cast his vote with the assistance of his grandson.

Officials said the special team was led by a post-graduate Engineering College assistant professor Jisha Merin Jose. Other members were Munnar Vocational Higher Secondary School teacher M. Asha; Munnar Divisional Forest Officer clerk A.V. Edamalakkudy village officer Syam G. Narth; beat forest officer Abhishek S. and Shubindas C.L.; civil police officer Aravind K. and forest protection watchers K. Raman. Sivasaran; and forest guard officer Jayakumar.

Mr. Jayakrishnan said the special team would be honoured soon for the effort put in by them.

## BJP will get just above 10 seats in South India in LS polls: Revanth

The Hindu Bureau  
HYDERABAD

Accusing the BJP of meeting out a stepmotherly treatment to South India, Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy said it will get similar treatment from the people in the Lok Sabha election with the BJP getting just above 10 seats.

Mr. Reddy was confident that INDIA bloc will win at least 115 seats out of the 130 seats in the southern States, and the BJP and its allies have to be satisfied with the remaining seats. In Telangana, the Congress will win a minimum of 12 seats, and there is hardly any space left for the BJP, he said. In Kerala, he

hoped the INDIA bloc will win all the 20 seats.

Mr. Reddy expressed these views while campaigning in Kerala in support of the United Democratic Front (UDF) headed by the Congress.

He asked the Prime Minister to reveal the funds allocated to southern States in his 10-year rule. The BJP government members southern States only during the election, he said.

Mr. Reddy said Kerala can boast of sending the country's next Prime Minister as Mr. Rahul Gandhi would win with a huge majority given the tremendous support he was receiving across the country.

## NGT shows concern over chemicals in Chennai waterbodies

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

The Southern Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has expressed concerns about the presence of "forever chemicals" in the waterbodies in Chennai.

Taking suo motu cognisance of the chemical contamination of the Buckingham canal, Adyar river, and Chambarambakkam lake based on news reports about a study carried out by the Indian Institute of Technology - Madras, the bench noted the presence of polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) - synthetic chemicals that do not degrade in the environment.

In surface level waters, groundwater, and even treated water near the lake.

Adverse health effects PFAS are known to cause adverse health effects such as liver damage, hormonal imbalance, immune system issues, and even

cancer. According to the study, groundwater near the Perungudi dumpyard contained 2.72 nanograms per litre (ng/L) of perfluoro octane sulfonic acid (PFOS), significantly exceeding the EPA's safe level of 0.02ng/L. Interestingly, it was observed that the concentration of all eight target PFAS increased in the treated water of the water treatment plant when compared to raw water.

Advanced treatment The study called for an advanced polishing treatment system that can remove PFAS from water as the conventional water treatment only makes them more prevalent.

"It is a matter of concern. You should take action," the bench said and directed the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, the Water Resources Department, and the secretary to Environment, Climate Change departments to file reports on the issue.

## Wild tusker 'Karadi' captured with help of tamed elephants

The Hindu Bureau  
SHIVAMOGGA

The Karnataka Forest Department officials, with the help of a team of eight tamed elephants, captured a wild tusker, which had been causing trouble to local people on a coffee estate at Yeshuballi in Belur taluk of Hassan district on Thursday.

A team of guards and watchers tracked the animal identified by the locals as 'Karadi', and sedated it with tranquilizer.

The wild tusker, aged around 45, had been roaming the village of Belur and Sakleshpur taluks.

Locals said the animal was responsible for the death of an agricultural la-



The tusker captured by Forest Department officials on Thursday.

bourer at Mattavara in Belur taluk on January 4.

Famed elephants Abhimanyu, Karnataka Bhima, Harsha, Prashantha, Sugreeva, Dhananjaya, Ashwathama and Mahindra were involved in the exercise. The officials said the tusker would be shifted to

the Dubare elephant camp.

The operation to capture a few other rogue elephants would continue in Hassan district. The department has sought the cooperation of the farmers and local people during the operation.

## Bengaluru's KIA named best regional airport in South Asia

The Hindu Bureau  
BENGALURU

The Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has been awarded the best regional airport in India and South Asia for the 2024 Skytrax World Airport Awards.

Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) airport operator, said that the award is based on a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey.

KIA's Terminal 2 also secured second position as the World's Best New Airport Terminal for terminals opened in the 18 months prior to the 2024 World Airport Awards.

BIAL said that this award covers new airport terminals that have



Fast for eyes: The Terminal 2 of Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport. FILE PHOTO

opened in the previous 18 months, and covers the full range of airport facilities, staff services and customer experience evaluation.

Since opening in 2023, Terminal 2 has also re-

ceived a UNESCO Prix Versailles World's Most Beautiful Airport facilities along with a Special Prize for its interior. LEED platinum certification, and more, it said.

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**Feast for eyes:** The Terminal 2 of Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport. FILE PHOTO

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ceived a UNESCO Prix Versailles World's Most Beautiful Airport award along with a Special Prize for its interiors, LEED platinum certification, and more, it said.

IN BRIEF

Indigenously built cruise missile successfully tested

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted a successful flight test of a "long range subsonic integrated developed cruise missile" from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur off the coast of Odisha, the DRDO announced on Thursday. "The missile followed the desired path using waypoint navigation and demonstrated very low altitude sea-skimming flight. During the test, all subsystems performed as per expectation," the DRDO said in a statement. The details or the specifications of the missile were not mentioned but the missile looked a lot similar to the Nirbhay subsonic cruise missile.

ED attaches properties worth ₹98 crore of Raj Kundra

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Mumbai Zonal Office has provisionally attached immovable and moveable properties worth ₹97.79 crore belonging to Raju Sudan Kundra, also known as Raj Kundra, under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. The attached properties include a residential flat in Juhu in the name of his wife, actor Shilpa Shetty, a bungalow in Pune and equity shares in the name of Raj Kundra. The ED initiated a probe on the basis of multiple First Information Reports registered against Varadach Tech Pte Ltd, the late Amit Bhardwaj, Ajay Bhardwaj, Vivek Bhardwaj, Simpy Bhardwaj, Mahender Bhardwaj and a number of MLM agents, an ED media statement said on Thursday.

Srinagar likely to be tagged as World Craft City from India

The World Crafts Council International (WCCI), a Kuwait-based organisation working on recognition and preservation of traditional crafts, has picked Srinagar for mapping its craft clusters before its final nomination as the World Craft City (WCC) from India this year. A three-member team of the WCCI is in the city to inspect craft clusters, processes involved, and the status of artisans. The final announcement about the city's inclusion is likely in the next two months. "The craft work we witnessed so far in Srinagar is flawless. The world needs to know about it," a WCCI member, told *The Hindu*.

WHO defines pathogens that transmit through air

Pathogens that transmit through the air will be described by the term 'infectious respiratory particles' or IRPs, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The world health body has thus ended the lack of a common terminology to describe the transmission of these pathogens, which was particularly challenging during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The announcement on Thursday came following wide-ranging consultations across multiple steps in 2023-2023. "Many different terminologies have been used in public communication and efforts to curb the transmission of the pathogen," the WHO noted.

Activity-based curriculum drawn up for anganwadis

NEP-based framework document says learning begins at birth; staff in 14 lakh anganwadis to be trained and parents encouraged to engage toddlers in activities to reach key milestones

Maintri Porecha  
NEW DELHI

A child's learning begins at month zero, and emphasises the National Framework of Early Childhood Stimulation, 2024, which lays down month-by-month activities to be conducted by parents, anganwadi staff and ASHA workers for children from birth to the age of three.

The framework document has been finalised by an internal committee comprising representatives from the Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare and Education, the Department of School Education and Literacy, the National Council of Educational Research and Training, the Ministry of Home Economics, the University of Delhi and civil society organisations.

Continuous learning titled 'Navchetana', the activity-based curriculum follows the National Education Policy, 2020 that calls for a minimum of 100 hours of training. Staff in 14 lakh anganwadis will be given training in the importance of brain development in the first



New approach: The new curriculum involves talking, playing and listening to music, etc. (Photo)

talking, playing, moving, listening to music and sounds, and stimulation of all the senses — particularly sight and touch in order to reach developmental milestones across domains and develop "early language, and emergent literacy and numeracy".

As much as 75% of the brain develops in the first three years of a child's life, says Namya Mahajan, a member of the internal committee and founder of Rocket Learning. The national framework provides detailed information on the importance of brain development in the first

three years, and step by step instructions for caregivers and frontline workers on conducting early stimulation activities, she said.

This involves getting the child's attention, communicating with a new task and responding to the child, introducing age and skill appropriate activities for play, and following the child's lead during the activities. It also involves helping the child with a new task and praising the child for her efforts. The document entails 36 sets of activities for chil-

dren from months 0 to 36. It encourages the use of household objects such as cups, bottles or leftover pieces of fabric. Activities involve reaching for objects, spinning bangles, putting objects in and out of a jar and playing with knots in a handkerchief in the first year.

After a year, the activities include encouraging children to feed themselves and explore the house, involving them in the kitchen, playing with dough and introducing them to a mirror.

By the age of 18 months, children are encouraged to scribble with a crayon and at 24 months, the recommended activities include drawing a circle and cutting. By the age of three, children are encouraged to do a cycle, asked to say their names and identify colours.

The framework says the activities will help identify children with developmental delays. In such a situation, the anganwadi worker or parent can adapt by picking up activities relevant to the child's age a few months younger.

DD News sports new saffron logo before polo

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Drawing criticism on social media, Doordarshan has launched a new saffron-coloured logo by announcing that it is now available in a refurbished avatar.

The logo's colour has been changed from ruby red to saffron before the Lok Sabha polls. "Get ready for a news journey like never before... We have the courage to print. Accuracy over speed. Facts over claims. Truth over sensationalism. Because if it is on DD News, it is the truth," the state-run news channel posted on X.

Saffron also the top band of the national tricolour, while the colour is also used predominantly in the ruling BJP's party flag.

Plea in SC seeks access to reports on Manipur riots, arrest of 'radical' elements

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Manipur Tribals Forum, Delhi (MTFD) has approached the Supreme Court with an interwoven application, seeking that the two committees constituted by the court — one headed by former Director General of Police Dattatray Lok Sahaigkar and the other by Justice Gita Mittal (retired) — be directed to supply copies of their reports to them.

The MTFD, representing interests of the Kuki-Zo people, has also sought for an order directing the arrest of Korounganga Khuman and Pramot Singh, leaders of armed radical Meitei outfits Aaramba Tenggot and Meitei Leseup, respectively. It also sought that

the Manipur government be directed to give information on the progress of the investigation into the deaths of over 170 Kuki-Zo people killed in the ethnic conflict.

The State has been seeing an ethnic conflict between the valley-based Meitei people and the hills-based Scheduled Tribe Kuki-Zo people since May 3 last year. Over 220 people have been killed in the violence since then, thousands more have been injured, and tens of thousands have been internally displaced.

In the plea filed by the MTFD, the petitioners said that since the arrest of Aaramba Tenggot and Meitei Leseup, "preparing for a new onslaught" on the tribal com-

munity after the Lok Sabha elections. "We are coming before the court to seek the court's hands to take the urgent measures that are necessary to bring an end to this conflict. If it happens may be even more extensive than the first rounds of attacks," they said.

They added that they have sent as many as five notes to the committee headed by DGP Padsaigkar, who has told them that the information had been sent to the local police.

Despite the notes and the time that has passed since, no action seems to have been taken in the case of atrocities against Kuki-Zo people. The MTFD said, adding that a similar situation prevailed with respect to the rehabilitation of the Kuki-Zo victims.

'Nestlé baby food sold in India has higher sugar content'

Hindu Shilpa Perappadan  
NEW DELHI



Nestlé's baby food products sold in India, as well as in African and Latin American countries, have higher sugar content, in comparison to the same products sold in European markets, according to a report released recently by a Swiss NGO, the Public Eye and International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN).

Around 150 baby products manufactured by the global food and beverage giant were tested in different countries were tested in a Belgian laboratory, according to the report.

It was found that all 15 Cerelec products for six-month-old babies, which are sold without any added sugar in the United Kingdom and Germany, contained 2.7 grams of added sugar per serving in India. Products sold in Ethiopia contained nearly 6 grams, the report said.

Despite World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations against added sugar in baby food for children under the age of three, Indian regulators do not have a limit on sucrose and fructose in baby food.

However, a Nestlé India spokesperson responded to the allegations on Thursday, saying that the reduction of added sugars is a priority for the company. Over the last five years, added sugars have been reduced by up to 30% in its infant cereal products, the company said.

These products are manufactured to ensure the appropriate delivery of nutritional requirements such as protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and iron for early childhood in India.

"We never compromise and will never compromise on the nutritional quality of our products. We constantly leverage our extensive Global Research and Development network to enhance the nutritional profile of our products. Compliance is an essential characteristic of Nestlé India and we will never compromise on this," the company also said.

Full compliance with CODEX standards for infant formulae established by WHO and the Food and Agriculture Or-

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India is looking into the Swiss NGO report.

organisation] and local specifications (as required) pertaining to the requirements of all nutrients including added sugars," it said.

The company also admitted to regularly review our portfolio and continue to innovate and reformulate our products to further reduce the level of added sugars without compromising on nutrition, quality, safety, and taste."

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, which regulates the manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import of food articles, while also establishing standards to ensure food safety, said that it is looking into the IBFAN report.

Arun Gupta from the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) said that children below the age of two should not be given any additional sugar or salt in their diet, to the allegations on Thursday, saying that the reduction of added sugars is a priority for the company. Over the last five years, added sugars have been reduced by up to 30% in its infant cereal products, the company said.

The WHO has warned that the introduction of added sugar in baby foods can lead to the development of addictive eating habits, obesity, diabetes, vitamins, minerals, and iron for early childhood in India.

"Double standards" Hepatologist Cyrus Abby Phillips, who denounces medical misinformation on social media, said the moniker The Liver Doc, accused Nestlé of "double standards" on X.

"Nestlé baby food — Cerelec has global retail value of above one billion U.S. dollars. The highest figures are in low-income countries, with 40% of sales just in Brazil and India," he said. "Nestlé has double standards for its marketing strategy compared to the Asian market," he added.

TH CROSSWORD 14153 (Set by Afterdark)
15 Certainly betrayer was beheaded and butchered in the recent past (10)
17 Ohio writer met Frank, perhaps (4,5)
18 Criminals are working in computer science (4)
19 Considerately US agent withdrew English partner without discussion at interim (1,5)
25 Japanese cartoon cinema shot without opening credits (5)
26 Colleague claim let loose on leading entrepreneur by customers (9)
27 Skipper moves to the end, close to win (4)
28 Conceptually, sailor's essay, lacking substance (10)
Down
1 Dismissal of evidence... (10)
2 ...breaks law between Michigan and UK taking two drugs to a US city (9)
3 Breakfast meal beyond £ (6)
4 Spell at the far end at Britsbaner's nasty? Yes, almost (4,3)
5 Newton's odd, eighty in heart this evening (7)
6 Assemble in Indian state when morning arrives earlier (5)
7 Austin takes storage for grains from Saint Louis (4)
8 One who provides colour (6)
13 Group of church elders almost urge bishop to add territory within 2 years (10)
16 Lee & Milton partying with Salve (9)
17 Fused on nothing, two females engaged heartlessly (6)
18 Care of maize taken by sailors in two companies at Britain (7)
19 Doctor's study? It's shabby leading to tension (7)
22 Struggle to get accommodation, finally not available in capital (6)
23 Cudgel of doctor that is razor-sharp at the end (5)
24 Save broken container (4)

To solve this puzzle online, get access to our crossword site at <https://www.thehindu.com/crossword>
SUDOKU
6 3 2 3 9 3 2
1 8 1 9 3 2
4 8 1 9 3 2
1 6 4 5 2 5
6 3 5 2 5
9 7 6 3 9 8 7
6 3 9 5 1
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★
Solution to previous puzzle
Solution to yesterday's Sudoku
9 5 6 7 1 8 2 4 6
7 6 8 3 4 9 5 1 2
3 2 4 1 6 7 8 9 5
4 8 9 3 2 5 7 6 1
1 5 6 7 8 9 4 3 2
2 7 3 6 8 4 9 1 5
1 5 3 6 8 4 9 2 7
8 9 4 5 9 7 1 6 2 3

FAITH
Krishna turns messenger
Human beings are repeatedly born based on their karma or deeds. God is not influenced by karma, but He also takes various births.
Lord Krishna declares in Sri Bhagavad Gita that many births of His have passed (Bhavad mya vyasthitham - Chapter IV sloka 5).
Ved also say He takes various births and manifestations (Ajayarnano Bahudha Vijayathe). God assigns a valid reason to be born, and the most important is to protect good and virtuous people and to establish dharma (Parithiraya Sadhanam - Chapter IV sloka 8).
Sri Bharathani Swamy said in a discourse that Lord Krishna, transcending His supremacy, donned the role of an emissary on behalf of the Pandavas. To instil confidence in Sri Sita's mind, Hanuman, degrading his status, told her in Asokavanam that he himself, though the last and least of the monkey legions, crossed the ocean.
Lord Krishna, to boost the confidence of the Pandavas, lowered Himself to the position of a messenger.
The word 'Sri' refers to the divine blessings of Goddess Mahalakshmi. It denotes wealth, happiness, prosperity, and great deeds.
The word is prefixed to God as Sri Krishna and Sri Rama, as She is ever with Him. Instead of 'Sri Krishnan Thoodhu' (Sri Krishna as an emissary), which is so to be the standard usage, why is it called 'Krishnan Sri Thoodhu'? Acharyas like Manavala Mamunigal and Pillal Lokachariar say that the deed of Krishna acting as an emissary is unique and indeed a great one, and hence, it is befitting the title.

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24 Save broken container (4)



## Indigenously built cruise missile successfully tested

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted a successful flight test of a “long range subsonic indigenously developed cruise missile” from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur off the coast of Odisha, the DRDO announced on Thursday. “The missile followed the desired path using waypoint navigation and demonstrated very low altitude sea-skimming flight. During the test, all subsystems performed as per expectation,” the DRDO said in a statement. The details or the specifications of the missile were not mentioned but the missile looked a lot similar to the Nirbhay subsonic cruise missile.

## Srinagar likely to be tagged as World Craft City from India

+ The World Crafts Council International (WCCI), a Kuwait-based organisation working on recognition and preservation of traditional crafts, has picked Srinagar for mapping its craft clusters before its final nomination as the World Craft City (WCC) from India this year. A three-member team of the WCCI is in the city to inspect craft clusters, processes involved, and the status of artisans. The final announcement about the city's inclusion is likely in the next two months. "The craft work we witnessed so far in Srinagar is flawless. The world needs to know about it," a WCCI member, told *The Hindu*.

# Activity-based curriculum drawn up for anganwadis

NEP-based framework document says learning begins at birth; staff in 14 lakh anganwadis to be trained and parents encouraged to engage toddlers in activities to reach key milestones

**Maitri Porecha**  
NEW DELHI

**A** child's learning begins at month zero, emphasises the National Framework of Early Childhood Stimulation, 2024, which lays down month-by-month activities to be conducted by parents, anganwadi staff and ASHA workers for children from birth to the age of three.

The framework document has been finalised by an internal committee comprising representatives from the Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare and Education, the Department of School Education and Literacy, the National Council of Educational Research and Training, the Institute of Home Economics, the University of Delhi and civil society organisations.

## Continuous learning

Titled 'Navchetana', the activity-based curriculum follows the National Education Policy, 2020 that calls for a continuum of learning. Staff in 14 lakh anganwadis will be given training in the curriculum.

The curriculum involves



**New approach:** The new curriculum involves talking, playing and listening to music. FILE PHOTO

talking, playing, moving, listening to music and sounds, and stimulation of all the senses – particularly sight and touch in order to reach developmental milestones across domains, and develop “early language, and emergent literacy and numeracy”.

As much as 75% of the brain develops in the first three years of a child's life, says Namya Mahajan, a member of the internal committee and founder of Rocket Learning. The national framework provides detailed information on the importance of brain development in the first

three years, and step by step instructions for caregivers and frontline workers on conducting early stimulation activities, she said.

This involves getting the child's attention, communicating with and responding to the child, introducing age and skill appropriate activities for play, and following the child's lead during the activities.

It also involves helping the child with a new task, and praising the child for her efforts.

The document entails 36 sets of activities for chil-

dren from months 0 to 36. It encourages the use of household objects such as cups, bottles or leftover pieces of fabric. Activities involve reaching for objects, imitating sounds, spinning bangles, putting objects in and out of a jar and removing knots in a handkerchief in the first year.

## Step by step

After a year, the activities include encouraging children to feed themselves and explore the house, involving them in the kitchen, playing with dough and introducing them to a mirror.

At the age of 18 months, children are encouraged to scribble with a crayon and at 24 months, the recommended activities include shoe sorting and matching. By the age of three, children are introduced to a cycle, asked to say their names and identify colours.

The framework says the activities will help identify children with developmental delays. In such a situation, the anganwadi worker or parent can adapt by picking up activities recommended for children a few months younger.

## U.S. weekly jobless claims stay at low level



**Fed's dilemma:** Labour-market resilience may lead the Fed to delay cutting interest rates until September. AFP

### Reserve

WASHINGTON

The number of Americans filing new claims for unemployment benefits was unchanged at a low level last week, pointing to continued labour-market strength.

Labor market resilience, which is driving the economy, together with elevated inflation have led financial markets and some economists to expect the Federal Reserve could delay cutting interest rates until September. A few economists doubt that the U.S. central bank will lower borrowing costs this year.

Overall, layoffs remain low. We expect a continuation of the current trend, with a further adjustment in the labor market coming from a moderation in hiring rather than a surge in firings," said Ruben Feroqli, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics.

Initial claims for State unemployment benefits were unchanged at a seasonally-adjusted 2.12,000 for the week ended April 13, the U.S. Labor Department said on Thursday.

Economies polled by Reuters had forecast 2,15,000 claims in the latest week. Claims have been bouncing around in a 1,94,000-2,25,000 range this year.

Unadjusted claims declined 6,756 to 2,08,509 last week. Filings in California hit 3,062.

There were also notable increases in claims in Connecticut, Georgia and Oregon. Fed Chair Jerome Powell backed away on Tuesday from providing any guidance on when rates might be cut, saying instead that the monetary policy needed to be restrictive for longer.

# Carbon price fall deprives Europe's green funds of billions of euros

Around €4.1 bn in potential EU carbon revenues lost, green start-ups worry price dip slims financing chances; carbon prices forecast to stay relatively low in 2024; the EU Innovation Fund is the bloc's main fund for nascent technologies which the bloc is banking on to meet climate-change goals

### NEWS ANALYSIS

Reuters  
FLORENCE/BERLIN

A drop in the European Union's (EU) carbon price this year could mean a fund intended to be among the world's biggest schemes for new green technologies will be smaller than budgeted for and potentially jeopardise some low-carbon projects in the EU.

After soaring above €100 per tonne of CO2 last year, the cost of EU carbon permits had nearly halved by February, as emissions covered by the market plunged as a result of lower power demand and higher renewable power generation.

The fall has wiped out €4.1 billion (\$4.36 billion) in potential revenues for Europe's budget for low-carbon investments so far this year, an analysis of market data shared with Reuters by consultancy Veyt showed.

While the dip in emissions pushed the carbon market is helping the bloc meet its climate goals, it also means the scheme is raising less than expected for EU green transition funds and to pay for the climate efforts of member States.

The EU Innovation Fund is the bloc's main fund for nascent technologies such as hydrogen and carbon capture, which the 27-nation bloc is banking on to meet climate change goals. By the EU's own estimates, the fund should raise €40 billion this decade, if CO2 prices averaged €75/t in that period.

The benchmark EU carbon price has remained below this level for more than three months. It was trading at around €70/t on Wednesday.



**Market dynamics:** Prices are being dampened by short-term factors, says Veyt's Sorhus. REUTERS

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### Lower revenue

As a result, EU carbon revenues so far in 2024 are 30% less than if carbon auctions had achieved the average 2023 price, which was €83.6/t, the data from Veyt shows.

If there is less money it will affect the number of projects the funds can support," LSEG carbon analyst Yan Qin said. The carbon market also feeds a Modernisation Fund to help the poorest EU countries shift away from fossil fuels.

Less cash for the energy transition would be a blow to European industries struggling to go green while staying competitive internationally

### Less cash for the energy transition

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### Competitive internationally

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Analysts say the EU carbon price dip is likely temporary and prices are set to rise this decade since the market is designed to gradually cut the supply of permits each year, while a special "reserve" will also soak up some excess supply. Still, some have lowered their forecasts.

A Reuters survey of analysts in 2022 gave an average price forecast for the benchmark contract of €94 /t in 2024. That had dropped to €74/t in a poll in January. "The market has turned more bearish than anyone expected," said LSEG's Yan Qin.

### Short-term factors

Veyt carbon analyst Ingrid Sorhus said prices are being dampened by short-term factors, including a recent EU move to sell millions of extra carbon permits to raise money to help countries quit Russian gas.

A European Commission spokesperson said it has not changed the €75/t carbon price it uses to estimate the size of the Innovation Fund. It does not comment on the carbon market price.

### Funding uncertainty

The Innovation Fund supports low-carbon technologies which developers said lack funding as they are deemed too risky for investors, and national governments' budgets are stretched.

"Without that (the EU fund), the projects are not really bankable," said David Strittmatter, CEO of German start-up ICODOS, which launched a pilot plant last year for low-carbon methanol fuel.

"It's really one of the very few instruments that can help us to get to that scale," he said, adding that a squeeze on Germany's national budget has prompted other local climate projects to target the EU fund instead.

The Innovation Fund is heavily oversubscribed. Its latest funding call for large-scale projects last year awarded €2.6 billion to 41 projects, after 239 applied.

A call for smaller projects also received bids for nearly three times the €100-million budget.

German start-up Heatrix is considering bidding for support for its first commercial plant, to convert renewable electricity into high-temperature industrial heat.

### 'Delay investments'

Co-founder Wei Wu said the dip in carbon prices should not prompt companies to abandon decarbonisation plans, but could delay investments in emissions-saving technologies that a higher EU carbon price would help make economical.

"I hope it's just a temporary state... And it's going to rise again," she said.

## Resisting the dragon



**Pulling the plug:** The BYD EV Dolphin Mini, a low-cost EV, being unveiled in Mexico City. Mexico's federal government, under pressure from the U.S., is keeping Chinese automakers at arm's length by refusing to offer incentives such as low-cost public land or tax cuts for investment in EV production, three Mexican officials familiar with the matter said. REUTERS

## Xiaomi says sales of its electric car 3-5 times higher than expected

Reuters  
BEIJING

Sales of Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi's first electric car have been 3-5 times higher than expected, CEO Lei Jun said on Thursday, as the company began delivering standard versions of the so-called SU7 to buyers ahead of schedule.

Mr. Lei, Xiaomi's founder, commented during a two-hour livestream on Douyin, the Chinese equivalent of TikTok, that garnered more than 34 million viewers. Xiaomi introduced its car, which draws styling cues from Porsche, late last month, entering a crowded China EV market with



**Deep pockets:** Cit estimates the SU7 could generate a net loss of 4.1 billion yuan, or an average of 68,000 yuan per car. REUTERS

an attention-grabbing price tag — under \$30,000 for the base model, which is \$4,000 cheaper than the base model of Tesla's Model 3 in China.

Xiaomi has deep pockets and expects to lose money on the SU7.

Mr. Lei said Xiaomi had brought forward deliveries of its standard version by 12 days. Asked by online users about future development plans, he said Xiaomi had no plans to build off-road vehicles and would primarily focus on the SU7.

While the world's largest auto market is challenging for newcomers due to a cut-throat EV price war and slowing demand, analysts have said Xiaomi has deeper pockets than most EV start-ups and its smartphone expertise gives it an edge in smart dashboards — a feature prized by Chinese consumers.

Analysts predict that losses on the SU7 could be substantial. Based on a projected volume of 60,000 units this year, Cit estimates the SU7 could generate a net loss of 4.1 billion yuan, or an average of 68,000 yuan per car.

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## What's the correlation between price of gold and U.S. dollar?

R. Bhargavan Das

Global price of gold (24 carat) on April 10 was \$2,349.88 per ounce. In India it was ₹7,174 per gram. In recent weeks gold has witnessed a phenomenal price increase, with expectations to rise further. I did an economic study of the major influences on the international price of gold, taking historical data of more than 30 years and arrived at the following results:

There was a direct relationship between global price of crude oil and the international price of gold (positive correlation) and an inverse relationship between the external value of the U.S. dollar and the international price of gold (negative correlation).

Simply put, whenever global oil prices shot up, the price of gold also rose. Similarly, whenever the U.S. dollar declined in value against the currencies of its major trading partners, gold appreciated in price. The explanation is quite simple. Rise in international crude oil prices signalled the spectre of global inflation, which led to an increase in the demand for gold as a hedge against inflation, gold being a real asset unlike financial assets and hence not subject to loss of value. Similarly since the global price of gold is expressed in U.S. dollars, its depreciation against the currencies of its major trading partners had to rise.

However, gold's price is determined by supply and demand factors. The pro-



**What's in store:** The current positive correlation between gold, USD prices may get corrected. REUTERS

duction of gold by producing countries and the cost of mining gold are factors to be considered on the supply side. Since most of the available gold in the world has already been

mined, new production will involve digging deeper into the bowels of the earth, which is expensive, as goldmining is both an energy and labour intensive. So when the prices of

crude oil and natural gas rise, it contributes to the rise in the price of gold. However more than gold's supply, its demand contributes to periodic spikes in its price. The de-

mand for gold can be broken up into institutional, investor, consumer and industrial demand. It is institutional demand in the form of central banks' demand for gold that drives its price up to record levels each day.

Central banks buy gold to boost their reserve assets, as it is a store of value and forms the basis for the issue of new currency. It also contributes to periodic inflation against the backdrop of the current increase in crude oil prices (Brent crude touching \$90 a barrel) and geopolitical uncertainty in the wake of the wars in West Asia and Eastern Europe, central banks worldwide, especially the Central Bank of China, are stocking up on gold. Foreign currency re-

serves in central banks under the current situation are subject to risk and loss of value.

Investor demand comes from individuals as well as institutional investors, who would like to invest in physical gold or their financial derivatives and exchange traded funds (ETFs) as a component of their investment portfolio. Return on investment is an investor's primary concern, but diversification of risk and safety of investment under uncertain geopolitical and economic conditions is driving demand from this group.

Consumer demand arises from individuals as well as jewellers. In both China and India, the largest consumers and importers of gold, it is bought as a tradi-

tional store of wealth and as ornaments for special occasions. So, consumer demand is mostly seasonal.

Industrial demand is fuelled by technology. Gold is a metal preferred by industry for its intrinsic properties like malleability and conductivity.

The current positive correlation between the price and the price of the U.S. dollar (exchange rate) is a short term aberration, which is likely to get corrected. Both are being demanded as reserve assets and safe havens of investment in current uncertain times.

The writer teaches Economics at Asian College of Journalism and is former HoD, Economics, Loyola College, Chennai)



# What's the correlation between price of gold and U.S. dollar?

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crude oil and natural gas rise, it contributes to the rise in the price of gold.

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Central banks buy gold to boost their reserve assets, as it is a store of value and forms the basis for the issue of new currency. Faced with the threat of inflation against the backdrop of the current increase in crude oil prices (Brent crude touching \$90 a barrel) and geopolitical uncertainty in the wake of the wars in West Asia and Eastern Europe, central banks worldwide, especially the Central Bank of China, are stocking up on gold. Foreign currency re-

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Investor demand comes from individuals as well as institutional investors, who would like to invest in physical gold or their financial derivatives and exchange traded funds (ETFs) as a component of their investment portfolio. Return on investment is an investor's primary concern, but diversification of risk and safety of investment, under uncertain geopolitical and economic conditions is driving demand from this group.

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*(The writer teaches Economics at Asian College of Journalism and is former HoD, Economics, Loyola College, Chennai)*

## ENTIRE TN, UTTARAKHAND (44 SEATS); REMAINING 58 SEATS ACROSS 19 STATES/UTS Decision 2024 begins today

### THE DECISION 2024

PHASE 1

Total seats	Candidates
102	1,625

Total electors  
**16.6 cr (17.2%)**

Share (% of voters in total)

Male	8.4 cr
Female	8.2 cr
Transgender	11,311

First time voters: 35 lakh

#### VOTE SHARE IN 2019

BJP	28.76%
Cong	23.59%

#### STATE-WISE SEATS GOING TO POLLS

Full States	44
Tamil Nadu	39
Uttarakhand	5
19 states/UTs	58

#### ASSEMBLY POLLS

##### ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Total Seats: 60

Party	Seats won
BJP	41 (50.00%)
JCU	7 (9.80%)
NPP	5 (14.56%)
Cong	4 (16.85%)

##### SIKKIM

Total Seats: 32

Party	Seats won
SKM	17 (47.03%)
SDF	15 (47.63%)

Compiled by Anjali/Dina Das



### LAKSHADWEEP GETS READY TO VOTE

Polling teams with EVMs and voting material leave for Kiltan Island, Lakshadweep, on Thursday. Voting in Lakshadweep will be held on Friday.

### SC reserves order, says rising turnout shows people's faith

**ANANTHAKRISHNAN G**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

RESERVING ITS decision on a batch of petitions seeking complete cross-verification of votes polled on Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips, the Supreme Court on Thursday said the rising voter turnout is a 'strong indicator of the people's faith in the electoral process.'

As some petitioners said "the anxiety is that there has to be a faith in the system," Justice Sanjiv Khanna responded: "Every year, the percentage of people who have been voting has grown. 60 per cent or 66 per cent or even higher is an indication of the faith the people have."

The two-judge bench, which included Justice Dipankar Datta, rejected an argument that "far more technologically advanced countries had abandoned EVMs for ballot papers. That's not correct," the judges said.

"We have our own system. It's working well, it's doing well, why should we disparage? And knowing what has happened in the past, you know the ballot box," Justice Khanna remarked.

Hearing the petitions on April 16, Justice Khanna had dismissed suggestions to return to the ballot paper. "Fortunately, we are now in our sixties. We have seen what used to happen earlier. Have you forgotten that? I am sorry, I have not forgotten," he had said.

### My people not allowed in temples... if I went to Ayodhya, would they have tolerated it: Kharge

Says Murmu, Kovind not called for temple, new Parliament events as they are SC, ST

**MANOJ C G**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

SAYING THAT Scheduled Castes (SCs) still face discrimination across the country, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday accused the BJP government of "humiliating" President Droupadi Murmu and her predecessor Ram Nath Kovind because they are Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe. He said Murmu was not invited to the Ram Temple consecration in Ayodhya and the inauguration of the new Parliament building, while Kovind was not allowed to lay the foundation stone of the new Parliament building.

Participating in **IDEA EXCHANGE** The Indian Express programme, Kharge countered Prime Minister Narendra Modi's charge that the Congress stayed away from the Ram Temple consecration because of political compulsions. Arguing that Scheduled Castes are still not allowed entry in many temples, he said "Would



Mallikarjun Kharge

### BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNAY

More resumes to be any VVPAT or the BJP would be the only VVPAT.

### In Uttarakhand, home of past & present CDS, worry over Agnipath — but not BJP

**AVANEESH MISHRA**  
PAURI GARHWAL, APRIL 18

IN THESE parts of Uttarakhand, native son General Brijan Rawat, the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) who died in a helicopter crash, finds constant mention. As does the state's "contribution" to the defence force.

On Tuesday, addressing a rally in the carnival Lok Sabha constituency, Union Home Minister Amit Shah raised both the issues, saying Uttarakhand was filled with "the families of Army jawans and retired Army personnel", and accusing the Congress of not giving Rawat due respect.

The current CDS, General Anil Chauhan, also belongs to the area, specifically to Gawanra in Pauri Garhwal, about 120 kms from Rawat's native village.

### Kejriwal eating mangoes to raise sugar levels, create case for bail, ED tells court

**NIREHAY THAKUR**  
KARNATAKA SUPR  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

DELHI CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is lodged in Tihar jail after being arrested in the excise policy case, was deliberately eating mangoes and other foods to raise his blood sugar levels and



Arvind Kejriwal eating mangoes.

### ED ATTACHES RAJ KUNDRA'S ASSETS WORTH ₹17 CR

**KARNATAKA CONG COUNCILLOR'S DAUGHTER IN TROUBLE**

**CM denied insulin: AAP facilities as per court, need: jail officials**

create grounds for bail, the ED alleged in Delhi court on Thursday.

## Chorus on Goyal's debut campaign: 'Mumbai upgrade, voice in Delhi'

**PAGE 1 ANCHOR**

**PRATIP ACHARYA**  
MUMBAI, APRIL 18

THIS IS his first Lok Sabha election but he's already got a headstart. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal has kicked off his debut campaign while the main Opposition is yet to name its rival. And, there's a growing buzz on the ground that a vote for him will mean the local voice heard at the national level, in corridors of

power in Delhi.

"It will be a definite advantage for our constituency if it is represented by a person who is bound to be a Union Minister in the Central Government," said Deepak Joshi, a local resident of the Mumbai North West of the Mumbai North constituency, echoing many residents here.

On Wednesday, Goyal took the first big step in his debut campaign by holding a public gathering in Borivli, about 10-15 km from the constituency, to announce his victory margin of over 4.65 lakh votes. This time, the 70-year-old two-time BJP MP is also part of Goyal's campaign trail.

Moving on from the first stop, meanwhile, Goyal took part in an "aarti" at the 75-year-old Ram Temple in Bhadranagar where he reaffirmed his commitment to transform "Uttam Mumbai" (North Mumbai) to "Uttam Mumbai" (Ideal Mumbai).

Goyal has been engaged in a voter outreach for the past three weeks flagging how quality of life is a key priority — he has been assisting voters that would make the constituency slum-free and free from perennial traffic jams.

Following the "aarti", Goyal invited the local leader of the BJP, Minister Narendra Modi to link



Union minister Piyush Goyal, BJP's candidate for Mumbai North, interacts with supporters, Sunday, Mumbai.

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### FIRST OUTREACH BY NEW PAK GOVT

## Maryam quotes father Nawaz: 'Don't fight with neighbours, open doors of friendship'



Punjab (Pakistan) Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz with Sikh devotees at Kartarpur Sahib on Thursday.

**SHUBHAJIT ROY & KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

IN WHAT is being seen as the first major outreach by the new government in Islamabad, Pakistan's Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz quoted her father, the late Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, as saying: "don't fight wars with neighbours... open the doors of friendship... open the doors of your hearts."

Speaking to about 3,000 Indian Sikh pilgrims at Kartarpur Sahib, Maryam, seen as the

**INDIA to wait and watch**

WITH the new civilian government of PM-N and PPP backed by the Pakistan Army, in place, Islamabad is exploring a "low-key and low-risk" engagement with New Delhi, and Prime Minister Nawaz's statement is the first expression of interest. India is likely to watch the Pakistan government till June, when the outcome of the US polls becomes clear.

### Urge India to maintain its active role to help stop war in Gaza: Iran

One of crew onboard seized ship back home, envoy says others free to return

**SHUBHAJIT ROY**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

AT THE heart of the Iran-Israel crisis is the war in Gaza and Iran has urged India to "maintain its active role through international bodies," including the United Nations Security Council, to halt the war in Gaza, Iran's Ambassador to New Delhi Iraj Elahi told **THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW** Thursday.

His remarks come the day Ann Tessa Joseph, a female cadet who was among the 17 Indians onboard container vessel MCV Arriet that was seized by Iranian military due to its alleged links with Israel over the weekend, re-



Iraj Elahi, Iran's Ambassador to India, returned to Kochi.

The Ministry of External Affairs said that the Indian embassy in Tehran is in touch with the remaining 16 Indian crew members who were freed, returned to Kochi.

For many in the gathering, especially daily commuters or Mumbai's crowded suburban trains, Goyal's candidature carries a strong local resonance. "When Piyush won the Railway Minister, he frequented the Malad Kandivli and Borivli stations and gave them a much-needed facility. Being a Mumbaiite, he knows the suburban part of the

low-income households belonging to the minority community from northern India. Once again the debut candidate arrived to a colourful welcome with blowers mounted on minivans spraying flower petals.

For many in the gathering, especially daily commuters or Mumbai's crowded suburban trains, Goyal's candidature carries a strong local resonance. "When Piyush won the Railway Minister, he frequented the Malad Kandivli and Borivli stations and gave them a much-needed facility. Being a Mumbaiite, he knows the suburban part of the

# Norway's wealth fund posts \$109-bn Q1 profit

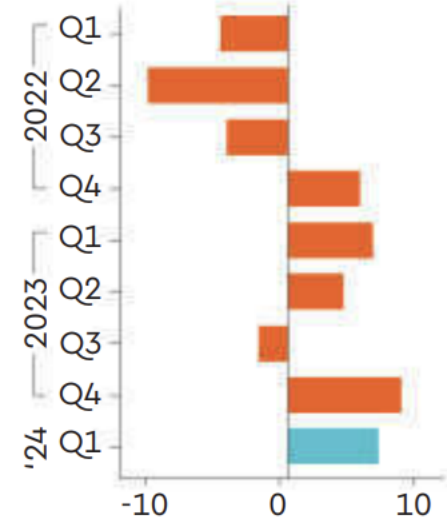
**GWLADYS FOUCHE**  
Oslo, April 18

**NORWAY'S \$1.6 TRILLION** wealth fund, the world's largest, posted a record profit of 1.2 trillion crowns (\$109 billion) on Thursday for the first quarter of 2024, boosted by strong tech stocks and a continuing boom in artificial intelligence.

It was the fund's highest quarterly return in absolute terms since its creation in 1996 and compared with a profit of 893 billion crowns at the same time a year ago. The fund's relative total return was 9.1% in the January-March period.

"It is a remarkably strong quarter," deputy CEO Trond Grande told *Reuters*, adding that the return was driven by the world's top tech companies, dubbed "the Magnificent Seven", in particular NVIDIA and Microsoft.

Wealth fund quarterly returns



Source: Norges bank investment management/Bloomberg

"For NVIDIA, it is making the hardware for AI," he said.

"(And for) other companies that are far ahead in looking at how they can apply this new technology, and of course monetise it, like Microsoft in the enterprise space and Meta Plat-

forms in the social media space".

The fund invests the proceeds of the Norwegian state's oil and gas production into stocks, bonds, unlisted property and renewable projects abroad.

Its size is equivalent to \$283,000 for every Norwegian man, woman and child.

Since the end of the first quarter, markets have been "a little bit more jittery", Grande said, given delayed expectations that the .S Federal Reserve and other central banks would cut interest rates. The fund expected inflation to remain "a little bit more sticky than perhaps was anticipated".

"As long as you don't see the inflation moving closer to the banks' targets, rates are going to stay where they are—the short-term rates," Grande said.

—REUTERS

# POEM-3 Mission and Space Debris

The image features three large satellite dishes positioned on a dark, rocky terrain under a night sky filled with stars and the Milky Way galaxy. The dishes are arranged in a row, each mounted on a complex metal structure. The sky is a deep blue and black, with the Milky Way appearing as a bright, glowing band of stars across the upper portion of the frame. The overall scene conveys a sense of advanced technology and space exploration.

- Recently, ISRO's PSLV-C58/XPoSat mission achieved near-zero debris in Earth's orbit by converting the final stage into the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module-3 (POEM-3), which then safely re-entered the atmosphere rather than remaining in orbit after completing its mission.

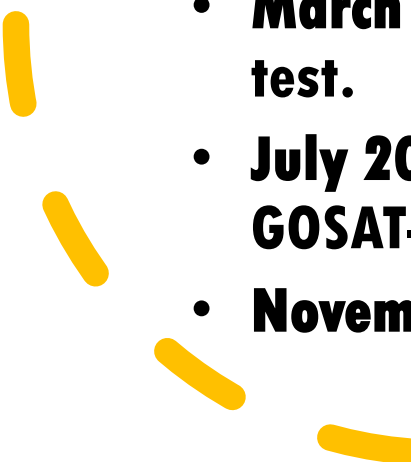
- What is POEM?
- POEM is an innovative space platform developed by the **Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)**.
  - **It repurposes the fourth stage of a PSLV rocket into a stable orbital station for conducting in-space scientific experiments with diverse payloads.**
  - **Its inaugural use occurred during the PSLV-C53 mission in June 2022.**
    - **Normally, the fourth stage of the PSLV becomes space debris after deploying satellites, but in the PSLV-C53 mission, it served as a stabilised platform for experiments.**
-

- POEM-3 Mission: I
- It was launched as part of the PSLV C-58 mission on 1st January 2024. After deploying the XpoSat satellite, the fourth stage was transformed into POEM-3 and lowered to a 350-km orbit, significantly reducing the risk of space debris generation.



- **Current Status:**

- **According to ISRO's Space Situational Assessment Report 2022, the world placed 2,533 objects in space in 179 launches in 2022 alone. In 2022, three major on-orbit break-up events occurred, contributing to most of the debris created that year:**

- 
- **March 2022:** Intentional destruction of **Russia's Cosmos 1048** in an anti-satellite test.
  - **July 2022:** Break-up of the upper stage of **Japanese H-2A** while deploying the **GOSAT-2** satellite.
  - **November 2022:** Accidental explosion of the upper stage of **China's Yunhai-3**.



# THE GROWING PROBLEM OF SPACE DEBRIS

EARTH

## Debris in Low Earth Orbit

- 10 cm and Larger = 20,000+ objects
- 1-10 cm = 500,000 objects
- Under 1 cm = over 10 million untrackable objects

## Tracking and Speed

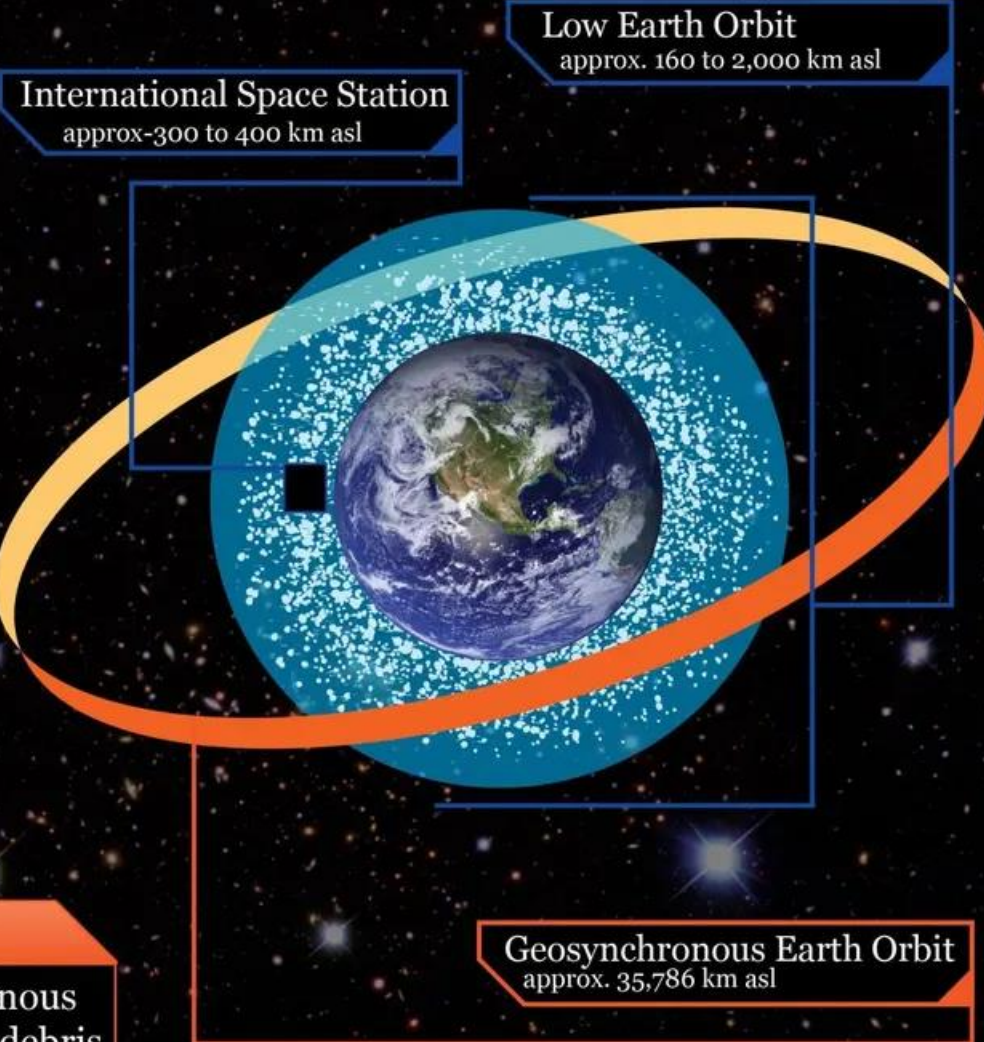
- Most debris is tracked using radar by the US Department of Defense.
- Orbiting debris moving over 28,000 kph. (23 times the speed of sound)

## Potential Damage

At high speeds, even paint flecks can cause serious damage to satellites, spacecraft and the ISS. Every collision creates more debris, producing a cascading problem.

## GEO and the larger problem

The world depends on satellites in geosynchronous Earth orbit for communications and GPS. But debris is largely untrackable at this orbit, meaning that cascading collisions could make it unusable.



**Surya Tilak Project Ram Lalla**  
**Source: PIB**

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- What is the Surya Tilak Project?

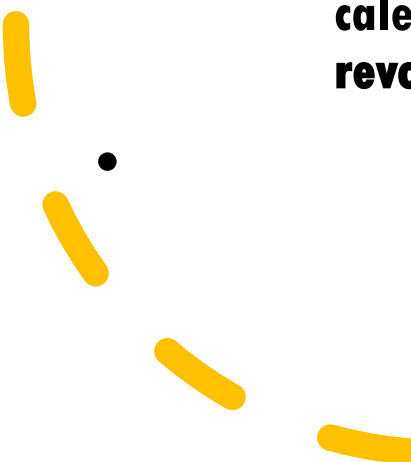
- **About:**

- **The Surya Tilak Project represents a unique fusion of technology and tradition, meticulously engineered to illuminate the forehead of Lord Ram's idol with a precise beam of sunlight during the revered festival of Ram Navami.**
- **The Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) under the Department of Science and Technology was crucial in the Surya Tilak Project at Ayodhya.**

-



## • **Calculation and Positioning**

- **The IIA team carried out the calculation of the sun's position, design, and optimisation of the optical system for the Surya Tilak Project.**
  - **The Ram Navami date varies each year following the Gregorian calendar due to its solar nature, while the Hindu calendar is lunar-based.**
    - **The Gregorian calendar is based on Earth's revolution around the Sun, making it a solar calendar with roughly 365 days in a year, whereas the Hindu calendar is based on the Moon's revolution around Earth, making it a lunar calendar with roughly 354 days in a year.**
- 

A world map where the landmasses are filled with a dense collection of small, multi-colored human figures, representing global diversity and population. The figures are in various colors including blue, green, orange, purple, and red. The map is centered on the Atlantic Ocean.

# UNFPA State of World Population Report

- The United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) State of World Population - 2024 report revealed that India's population is estimated to double in 77 years.
- Key Highlights: India leads globally with an estimated population of 1.44 billion, followed by China at 1.425 billion.
- India's population was recorded at 1.21 billion during the last census, conducted in 2011.

- 
- **The report revealed that 24% were aged 0-14, 17% aged 10-19, and 26% aged 10-24. 68% aged 15-64, and 7% aged 65 and above.**
  - **Men have a life expectancy of 71 years and women 74 years.**
  - **The report also highlighted that 30 years of India's progress in sexual and reproductive health has largely ignored the most marginalised communities globally. It noted that the percentage of child marriage in India was at 23% between 2006-2023.**
  -



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A group of people are clapping in a dimly lit room. The focus is on the hands and forearms of several individuals, with some wearing watches. The background is blurred, showing more people clapping. The overall mood is celebratory and appreciative.

Thank you  
guys.

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