



**Sweet victory:** People celebrating the Supreme Court verdict on jallikattu at Tamukkam in Madurai on Thursday. R. ASHOK

## T.N.'s amended law on jallikattu valid: SC

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday termed jallikattu a "type of bovine sport" existing in Tamil Nadu for at least a century, and did not interfere with the State legislature's finding that the bull-taming event is part of the cultural heritage and tradition of the people.

A Constitution Bench headed by Justice K.M. Joseph upheld the validity of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Tamil Nadu

Amendment) Act of 2017 and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Conduct of Jallikattu) Rules of 2017. "The Amendment Act has received the Presidential assent. We do not think there is any flaw in the State action," the judgment held.

The court also found similar laws passed by Karnataka and Maharashtra, allowing bullock cart races and buffalo racing 'kambala', valid.

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## **T.N.'s amended law on jallikattu valid, says SC**

The Constitution Bench held that the jallikattu law "substantially minimises" the pain and suffering of the animals participating in the event. The judgment, authored by Justice Aniruddha Bose, however directed that the district administrations and competent authorities in Tamil Nadu would be responsible to ensure that jallikattu events are conducted in strict compliance of the safeguards laid out in the 2017 Amendment Act and Rules.

"Jallikattu is a type of bovine sport and we are satisfied that it has been present in Tamil Nadu for at least a century," Justice Bose observed. The court described jallikattu as an event during which "a bull is set free in an arena and human participants are made to grab its hump to score in the game". Justice Bose said jallikattu was banned in 2014 by the top court in the A. Nagaraja case and called "cruel". But that was before the State passed the Amendment Act in 2017, introducing several measures to prevent any abuse to the participating bulls or loss of human life. "The Amendment Act overcomes the defects pointed out in the A. Nagaraja judgment," the court concluded.

The Bench held that the State was empowered to enact the 2017 law. The court dismissed the arguments made by petitioners, who included animal welfare activists and organisations, that jallikattu harmed bulls as they were not built to run and be grabbed at. They had argued that the sport was against the fundamental nature of bovine animals. The Constitution Bench found that the Division Bench of the court in the A. Nagaraja judgment had erred in concluding that jallikattu was not part of the cultural tradition of Tamil Nadu without sufficient material to back its finding.

For itself, the Bench refrained from delving into the issue. "Whether jallikattu has become an integral part of Tamil culture or not requires religious, cultural and social analysis in greater detail, which in our opinion is an exercise which cannot be undertaken by the judiciary," Justice Bose said.

However, the court added a rider that any culture and tradition, if it offended the law, would suffer penal consequences.

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# CM Stalin lays foundation for museum in Tirunelveli to showcase Porunai artefacts

It will come up at Kulavanigarpuram in Tirunelveli district at a cost of ₹33.02 crore. It will have separate blocks for Adichanallur, Korkai and Sivakalai, besides an administrative building

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

**T**amil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday laid the foundation, through videoconference, for the Porunai museum, which will come up in Tirunelveli district at a cost of ₹33.02 crore.

Mr. Stalin announced the construction of the museum in the Assembly in September 2021. The announcement followed a carbon-dating analysis dated the paddy found in a burial urn at Sivakalai to 1155 BCE, indicating that the Porunai (Thamirabarani) civilisation could be 3,200 years old.

According to an official press release, the museum will showcase the artefacts unearthed during the archaeological excavations at Adichanallur, considered the cradle of Tamil civilisation; Korkai, which was the port of the Pandya kings during the Sangam era; and Sivakalai, which belonged to the Iron Age.



Chief Minister M.K. Stalin laying the foundation, through videoconference, for the Porunai museum on Thursday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The land for the museum, measuring 13.02 acres, was identified at the Melapalayam-Reddiarpatti hills at Kulavanigarpuram in the Palayamkottai taluk. The museum will span 55,000 square feet and have separate blocks for Adichanallur, Korkai and Sivakalai, besides an administrative building. The buildings will reflect the architectural style of the region.

The press release recalled how the excavations established that Korkai had

flourished even before the 8th Century CE and the bronze and gold artefacts found at Sivakalai and Adichanallur highlighted the economic and social status of people who had lived there.

Mr. Stalin also released a book, *Tamilnaatu Panpatu Marabugal-Pudukkottai Region* (Tamil Nadu's Cultural Traditions-Pudukkottai Region). It was authored by K. Rajan, V.P. Yathees Kumar, Muthukumar and Paul Durai. The book, brought out in two

volumes by the Department of Archaeology, is based on archaeological evidence.

Minister for Finance and Human Resources Management Thangam Thennarasu, who also handles the Department of Archaeology; Chief Secretary V. Irai Anbu; K. Manivasan, Principal Secretary, Tourism, Culture and Religious Endowments; and S.R. Gandhi, Director (full additional charge), Department of Archaeology, were present at the event.



## Warming warning

India must invest in infrastructure that boosts defence against disasters

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has issued its annual update on its projections for temperature trends in the next decade. The prognosis, expectedly, is worrying. The annual mean global near-surface temperature for each year between 2023 and 2027 is likely to be 1.1°-1.8°C higher than the average from 1850-1900. There is a 66% chance that the global near-surface temperature will exceed 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, in at least one year before 2027 though it is unlikely that the five-year mean will exceed this threshold. The 1.5°C threshold, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has repeatedly said, is one that is best left unbreached to avoid the disastrous consequences of global warming. While world leaders at climate summits are in agreement, few of their actions are consistent with keeping temperature-rise within this rubicon, with current climate policies poised to heat the globe beyond 2°C by the end of the century.

At least one of the years, the WMO adds, from 2023 to 2027 will be the hottest on record – exceeding the 14.84°C reported in 2016 (it was about 0.07°C warmer than the previous record set in 2015). The five-year mean for 2023-2027 was very likely to be higher than that in the last five years (2018-2022). The oceans too are on fire. The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is likely to be positive in December to February 2023-24, meaning that the Central Equatorial Pacific Ocean is likely to be at least half a degree, more likely over a degree above what is normal. India is bracing for this El Niño during the monsoon, with the India Meteorological Department already indicating that monsoon rainfall will be on the lower side of 'normal'. The El Niño "will combine with human-induced climate change to push global temperatures into uncharted territory", WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said in a press statement in the context of the update. Hotter oceans also mean stronger cyclones. Cyclone Mocha, which barrelled through Myanmar this week and claimed at least 60 lives and wrought severe damage, ended up being stronger than what was initially estimated. The WMO update does not have specific inputs for India; however, the overall trend in indicators suggests that India, dependent as it is on rain-fed agriculture and with its long coastline, will be severely tested due to changes in the global climate. India's abilities at forecasting cyclones and weather anomalies have improved but developing resilience is far more challenging. Greater investments in bolstering disaster-related infrastructure are the need of the hour.

CM

## V. Palanikumar reappointed State Election Commissioner

The State government has reappointed retired IAS officer V. Palanikumar as the State Election Commissioner. A notification issued by the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department state that he has been reappointed in the post "for a successive term up to March 9, 2024."

# Centre pushes vaccination as lumpy skin ravages cattle

About 10,000 cases reported in country in May; 128 cattle deaths in Uttarakhand alone; officials say severity of infection has been curbed by vaccinations, cattle developing herd immunity

A.M. Jigeeesh  
NEW DELHI

**W**ith Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Karnataka and Sikkim reporting fresh cases of lumpy skin disease in May, the Union Ministry of Animal Husbandry on Thursday reviewed the situation and concluded that it was under control despite 10,000 cases being reported in the past two weeks. Noting that there was no need to panic, it suggested that vaccination be increased.

After a meeting with the States, Ministry officials and scientists said that the infection was not as contagious as it was last year. "The incidence of cases is low because of the protection given by the vaccination done last year," Animal Husbandry



**Stepping up:** About nine crore cattle have been vaccinated against the disease so far, and the recovery rate is above 94%. PTI

Commissioner Abhijit Mitra told *The Hindu*. In Uttarakhand, almost all the cases are new, but in Karnataka and Maharashtra, some of the cases had been reported before May.

In the meeting, the Ministry urged the States to ensure that the vaccination drive is stepped up. About nine crore cattle have been

vaccinated so far, and the recovery rate is above 94%. Dr. Mitra said without vaccination, the infection would have been much more contagious.

Regional Animal Husbandry Director Vijay Teotia said that more than 10,000 cattle have been infected in this wave of the epidemic, which began

about three weeks ago.

He said that the gravity of the infection was lower than last year's as cattle have now developed herd immunity. "We have informed all States about the measures to be taken. A Central team has visited Maharashtra and another team will visit Uttarakhand and Karnataka soon to monitor the situation," he added. The Centre has also asked States to take precautions during the monsoon. Apart from vaccination, the Centre has asked the States to do fogging and disinfection drives in risky areas.



**Watch our explainer |**  
What is Lumpy skin disease?  
[bit.ly/lumpyskinth](https://bit.ly/lumpyskinth)

## What is Lumpy Skin Disease

### Causes:

- LSD is caused by infection with the Lumpy Skin Disease Virus (LSDV) in cattle or water buffalo.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that its mortality rate is less than 10%.
- The first reported outbreak of LSD occurred in Zambia in 1929, and it was initially believed to be caused by poisoning or an allergic reaction to insect bites.

### Transmission:

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12/24, Muthurangan Muthali St, West Tambaram, Chennai - 600045

<https://www.evastalinasacademy.in/>

Contact Number - +91-8678969915, +91-9940332851

- LSD is primarily spread between animals through the bite of vectors, such as mosquitoes and flies.
- **Symptoms:**
  - The primary symptoms of LSD include fever, discharge from the eyes and nose, drooling, and blisters on the skin.
  - Also, affected animals may also lose their appetite and have difficulty in eating, leading to reduced milk production.
- **Prevention and Treatment:**
  - Currently, India is administering the goat pox vaccine and sheep pox virus vaccines for LSD.
    - It's a heterologous vaccine that offers cross-protection for cattle against the disease.
    - Goat pox, sheep pox and LSD belong to the same capripoxvirus genus.
  - Lumpi-ProVacInd is a live attenuated vaccine developed jointly by ICAR's National Research Centre on Equines and the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, which is targeted to protect cattle against the LSD virus, and provides 100% protection.
    - It is expected to be commercially launched in a few months.
  - There are no specific antiviral drugs for treating LSD, and treatment primarily involves supportive care for the affected animals.
    - This may include treating skin lesions with wound care sprays,
    - using antibiotics to prevent secondary infections,
    - administering anti-inflammatory painkillers to increase appetite.

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# Govt. clears appointment; Mishra, Viswanathan to be sworn in as SC judges today

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud on Friday will swear in Prashant Kumar Mishra and K.V. Viswanathan as Supreme Court judges on Friday. Mr. Viswanathan is a direct appointment from the Supreme Court Bar.

Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal tweeted their appointments late on Thursday. Within minutes, the Supreme Court announced the swearing on May 19, the last working day before the court goes into summer recess. The official notifications of their appointments were published in the next half hour.

The government's clearance of their names is one of the quickest in recent history. It coincides with Mr. Meghwal's first day in office as Law Minister. The Collegium had recommended the names of Jus-



Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra (left) and K.V. Viswanathan

tice Mishra and senior advocate Mr. Viswanathan to the government for appointment as Supreme Court judges on May 16. Hardly 48 hours have passed before the government's green signal.

Mr. Viswanathan would be in line to be the 58th Chief Justice of India in 2030, succeeding Justice J.B. Pardiwala as top judge. He is also only the ninth lawyer to be elevated directly to the Supreme Court Bench. Mr. Viswanathan is also the fourth direct appointee from the Bar who

would become CJI. Justice Mishra was the Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court. With his appointment, Chhattisgarh would win a representation on the Supreme Court Bench.

The two appointments replace Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and M.R. Shah, who retired recently. Justices K.M. Joseph and Ajay Rastogi, both members of the present collegium, are set to retire along with Justice V. Ramasubramanian in June during the summer holidays.

## TB testing stuck in the previous century, and waiting for change

In Nature, the authors recommend using molecular tests with non sputum samples in a decentralised facility that can test for multiple conditions

Ramya Kannan

The frenetic pace of activity in some areas of science is only matched by lethargy in others. A classic case, as Madhukar Pai, renowned researcher on Tuberculosis and Associate Director, McGill International TB Centre, McGill University, Canada, put it in a tweet as a pithy foreword to his article in Nature: "Billions of molecular (PCR) tests were done for COVID-19. Why are we still using century-old microscopy for tuberculosis? We can and must do better!" Accompanied with a messy, unhygienic kitchen sink with racks of slides (presumably for sputum testing, requiring the patient to violently cough up phlegm from the lungs), there could not have been a more convincing argument to change the way testing is being done for Tuberculosis, pronto.

But why has time stood still for TB at what might conveniently be called ancient smear microscopy? "The simple answer," Dr. Pai says, "is that few people care about TB, and the investment in R&D has been so little over the past century. The fact that we are still using a century-old BCG vaccine today speaks volumes about the scale of neglect. Investment in COVID-19 vaccines was probably 1000-fold higher! So, it is deeply frustrating that many high burden countries, including India, are still so heavily reliant on microscopy, when nearly every country, including India, scaled up PCR (molecular) testing for COVID-19."

Dr. Pai co-authored with Soumya Swaminathan and Puneet K. Dewan an article arguing fiercely for "Transforming

tuberculosis diagnosis' in the May 1 issue of Nature Microbiology. In terms of sheer numbers, TB was the #1 infectious killer of humans until SARS-CoV2 emerged, Dr. Pai says, and as such would have demanded the bulk of the world's resources. But that did not happen since TB primarily affects poor people and impacts low and middle income countries. So, unlike infectious diseases like HIV or COVID-19 that also impacted high income countries, TB gets little attention or investment, Dr. Pai explains.

"Interestingly, even when investments were made and good products like CB-NAAT [tests] were developed, many high burden countries have limited their use only to certain special risk groups (people with HIV, people at high risk of drug-resistance, children), instead of replacing microscopy with molecular testing," Dr. Pai adds.

In the Nature article, the authors go on to describe diagnosis as the weakest aspect of TB care and control, but do not stop there. They further list out seven



TB primarily impacts low and middle income countries. So, unlike infectious diseases, TB gets little investment.

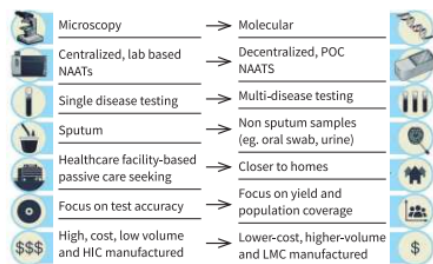
critical transitions (in a map that has been shared widely since) to close the massive TB diagnostic gap and enable TB programmes worldwide to recover from the pandemic setbacks.

In Nature, the authors recommend using molecular tests with non sputum samples in a decentralised testing facility that can test for multiple conditions, and testing that would focus on yield and population covered, cost lower but have high volumes and possibly manufactured in low and middle income countries. Even if seems like a test is 'less sensitive', it can nonetheless be very useful if it can reach a much larger population.

### Seven steps to managing TB diagnosis

Seven critical transitions have been listed out to close the diagnostic gap and enable TB programmes to recover

Source: Nature Microbiology. The Seven interventions indicated in the article Transforming Tuberculosis Diagnosis



"COVID RATs and syphilis rapid tests are both good examples. Right now, we do not have a simple, RAT-like rapid test for TB, but efforts are being made to develop such rapid, simpler options.

I see the need for scaling up Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing right away, while we wait for a RAT for TB. When it becomes available, we will need to scale it up, since it can reach more people than regular tests," Dr. Pai says, speaking to The Hindu.

Not entirely a co-incidence, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has released for the first-time - its standard for Universal access to rapid tuberculosis diagnostics, setting benchmarks to: achieve universal access to WHO-recommended rapid diagnostics; increase bacteriologically-confirmed TB; detect drug resistance; and reduce the time to diagnosis. WHO-recommended rapid diagnostics are highly accurate, cost-effective, reduce the time to treatment initiation, and impact patient-important outcomes.

In another related editorial in a recent issue of the Indian Journal of Medical Research, Dr. Pai and Dr. Swaminathan discuss how India is still too reliant on smear microscopy, but is perfectly poised to lead innovations in the area.

"TB is a priority for the government and the budget has increased in the past few years. Also, India now has its own CB-NAAT, and India also worked hard on manufacturing PCR reagents and buying more molecular systems during this pandemic. So, there is no reason why India cannot replace microscopy with molecular testing in 2023...

The intent is there, and execution and scale up are urgently needed," he says.



### **Period poverty leaves 500 million people in menstrual oblivion**

Menstruation is a natural biological process experienced by 24% -26% of the global population aged 15-49.

With an average menstrual span of 35 years, individuals require approximately 15,000-20,000 disposable sanitary pads or vaginal tampons during their lifetime.

This means approximately 300 million women and transgender, nonbinary individuals menstruate daily, amounting to a staggering 1.8 billion monthly.

Unfortunately, period poverty affects nearly 500 million individuals, particularly those in lowmiddleincome and lowincome groups, due to limited access to safe menstrual products. Addressing period poverty

Various factors, including lack of access to clean water, sanitation facilities, and inadequate sexual health education, perpetuate period poverty. The

consequences of period poverty extend beyond health and become a complex public health, social, and environmental issue. To ensure equitable development,

period poverty must be addressed alongside other health indicators such as maternal, neonatal, and infant health. Menstrual stigma

Menstruation is often shrouded in myths, taboos, and patriarchal norms, leading to a negative perception in many societies. However, menstrual health is intrinsically

linked to six of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals: No

poverty, good health and wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, all to be achieved by 2030. Recognising menstrual health as a

significant population health indicator is essential to achieving these goals. Impacts on education and health Limited access to water and sanitation

facilities hampers education, with nearly 25% of girls unable to attend school due to menstrualrelated challenges. Additionally, approximately 50% of

menstruating women in economically disadvantaged countries cannot afford safe menstrual products. Poor menstrual hygiene can lead to reproductive and

urinary tract infections, resulting in infertility and complications during

pregnancy. Educating communities about menstrual hygiene and providing free

products by community health workers and nurses can alleviate these issues. Environmental consequences Disposable sanitary pads significantly

contribute to environmental pollution, as each pad takes 500 to 800 years to degrade or must be incinerated, releasing toxic chemicals. With its limited land space and rising non-

communicable diseases, advocating for reusable menstrual

products has become imperative in India Menstrual health as a rights issue

Gender inequality continues to persist as a challenge throughout the evolution of

human civilisation. While progress has been made in areas such as voting rights,

education, property ownership, work opportunities, and equal pay,

menstruation remains an overlooked aspect in the fight for gender equality. It is

crucial to recognise that menstrual health is not merely a health or environmental issue but a fundamental rights issue.