



THE WORLD



RUSSIA POUNDS UKRAINE WITH MORE THAN 300 DRONES

34 DEAD AS BOAT CAPSIZES IN VIETNAM PAGE 12

GOVT & POLITICS



YSRCP MP MIDHUN REDDY HELD IN LIQUOR POLICY CASE

'APPEASUREMENT POLITICS': HIMANTA SLAMS MAMATA PAGE 6

China begins construction of dam over Brahmaputra in Tibet

KJM VARMA
BEIJING, JULY 19

CHINA ON Saturday formally started the construction of a USD 167.8 billion dam over the Brahmaputra River in Tibet, close to the Indian border in Arunachal Pradesh.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang announced the start of the construction of the dam at a groundbreaking ceremony in the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra river, locally known as Yarlung Zangbo, at Nyingchi City, official media reported. The groundbreaking ceremony took place at the dam site of Nyingchi's Mainling hydropower station in Tibet Autonomous Region, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The hydropower project, regarded as the biggest infrastructure project in the world, raised concerns in the lower riparian countries, India and Bangladesh.

The project will consist of five cascade hydropower stations, with a total investment estimated at around 1.2 trillion Yuan (about USD 167.8 billion), the report said. According to a 2023 report, the hydropower station is expected to generate more than 300 billion kWh of electricity each year – enough to meet the annual needs of over 300 million people. It will primarily deliver electricity for external consumption while also addressing local demand in Tibet, which China officially refers to as Xizang.

The project was approved in December last year.

The dam is to be built at a huge gorge in the Himalayan reaches where the Brahmaputra river makes a huge U-turn to flow into Arunachal Pradesh and then to Bangladesh.

According to earlier reports, the size of the project would dwarf any other single infrastructure project on the planet, including China's own Three Gorges.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

KEY QUESTION: DID ELECTRIC FIRE IN TAIL OCCUR DUE TO COMPONENT FAULT

AI crash: Probe looks for vital clues of electric malfunction in tail wreckage

Auxiliary Power Unit in tail intact, while the rear black box suffered extensive damage

ADITI RAJA
VADODARA, JULY 19

INVESTIGATORS PROBING the June 12 Air India AI-171 disaster are closely examining the Boeing Dreamliner wreckage which hold "vital clues" to what could have gone wrong in the 26 seconds the flight was airborne after lift-off from Runway 23 of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel



The June 12 crash in Ahmedabad killed 260 people. File

International Airport in Ahmedabad.

Officials aware of the probe said the wreckage of the empennage or tail assembly of the aircraft showed signs of a "con-

tained electric fire" but restricted to only a few components located in the rear. The tail had disengaged and remained largely unaffected by the post-crash

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

US regulator backs India probe, flags 'premature and speculative' reports

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

US NATIONAL Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) chief Jennifer Homendy has termed recent media reports on the probable cause of the crash of Air India flight AI 171 as "premature and speculative", and supported the recent public appeal issued by India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) against speculation around the



NTSB chief Jennifer Homendy

ongoing air crash investigation.

Homendy's comments come close on the heels of reports by a few US-based publications suggesting that deliberate action by one of the pilots was most likely

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

'WE STOPPED LOT OF WARS... SERIOUS WARS'

5 jets shot down... was getting bigger: Trump's latest on India-Pak conflict

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

AFTER REPEATEDLY claiming that he brokered peace between India and Pakistan during the military confrontation in May – a claim contradicted by the Indian government – US President Donald Trump has now said "five jets were shot down" during the conflict.

He did not specify which of the two countries lost the aircraft or whether he was referring to the combined losses of both sides.

Speaking at the White House during a dinner he hosted for Republican senators Friday, Trump said: "You had India, Pakistan, that was going... In fact, planes were being shot out of the air... four or five. But I think five jets were shot down actually... That was getting worse and worse, wasn't it? That was looking like it was going to go... These are two serious nuclear countries. And they were hitting each other."

"But India and Pakistan were going at it, and they were back and forth, and it was getting bigger and bigger. And we got it solved through trade. We said



Trump said he 'helped settle' India-Pak tensions, a claim he has made at least 20 times. PTI

GOVT & POLITICS

CEASEFIRE REACHED AS BOTH GOVT HAD COMMON SENSE, SAYS KASURI PAGE 6

'You guys want to make a trade deal. We are not making a trade deal if you are going to be throwing around weapons and may be nuclear weapons. Both very powerful nuclear states,' he said.

He said his administration achieved more in six months than almost any other administration could accomplish in eight years.

"Something I am very proud of, we stopped a lot of wars, a lot

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Amid Trump claims, V-P says no power can dictate to India



OPP LINES UP ISSUES TO TARGET GOVT

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, party leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi during an online meeting with other INDIA bloc leaders ahead of the Monsoon Session. PTI

PAGE 6

CBSE plans to extend 2-tier STEM curriculum for Classes 11 and 12

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

AFTER DECIDING to offer Science and Social Science at two levels – basic and advanced – at the secondary stage, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) plans to extend the model to STEM subjects at the higher secondary level, starting with Class 11, The Sunday Express has learnt.

The CBSE currently offers Mathematics at two levels in

Class 10 – standard and basic. The examination for the basic level is easier than that for the standard one, but the question papers for both levels are based on the same syllabus.

In December last year, its governing body, the Board's highest decision-making authority, approved a proposal to extend this model to Science and Social Science in Classes 9 and 10, paving the way for all three subjects to be offered in basic

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BRS chief K Chandrashekhar Rao; Cong's Revanth Reddy replaced him as CM in 2023

APPLIES TO F, M AND J VISAS

Embassy: Students to US should keep social media public for visa duration

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

WITH THE new academic season in the US starting next month, all international students applying to study in the country will need to keep their social media profiles public not only while applying for a visa but also during its validity period – in effect, during their entire study course.

"Security vetting runs from

the time of each application, through adjudication of the visa, and afterwards during the validity period of every issued visa, to ensure the individual remains eligible to travel to the United States," the spokesperson said.

Last month, the Embassy had cited "public safety and national security" in the visa process while mandating those applying to study in the US to make their

7 kanwarias booked for assaulting CRPF jawan at railway station in UP

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, JULY 19

SEVEN KANWARIAS, including four minors, were booked for allegedly assaulting a 50-year-old Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan at Uttar Pradesh's Mirzapur railway station on Saturday morning.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



The jawan was returning to duty in Manipur. Videograb

2024 batch of officers from the Indian Defence Estates Service at V-P Enclave, Dhankhar said: "Don't be guided by narratives outside. All decisions in this country, a sovereign nation, are taken by its leadership. There is no power on the planet to dictate India how to handle its affairs. We do live in a nation and nations that are a comity. We work in togetherness, we work in tandem. We have mutual respect,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 19

AMID REPEATED claims from US President Donald Trump that he had brokered the ceasefire between India and Pakistan in May, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar Saturday said there was no power in the world that could dictate to India on how to handle its affairs.

Addressing a gathering of the 2024 batch of officers from the Indian Defence Estates Service at V-P Enclave, Dhankhar said: "Don't be guided by narratives outside. All decisions in this country, a sovereign nation, are taken by its leadership. There is no power on the planet to dictate India how to handle its affairs. We do live in a nation and nations that are a comity. We work in togetherness, we work in tandem. We have mutual respect,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPRESS NETWORK

PATNA HOSPITAL MURDER: 10 PICKED UP IN WEST BENGAL

15-YEAR-OLD SET ABLAZE IN ODISHA, IS CRITICAL PAGES 8, 9

Meet artist behind Sachin portrait at Lord's: 'Extraordinary... never seen him play'



EXPRESS IN ENGLAND

SANDEEP DWIVEDI
LONDON, JULY 19

WHEN CELEBRATED painter Stuart Pearson Wright first met Sachin Tendulkar in 2007 at his home in Mumbai, he had neither seen him play nor was he aware of his stardom. A rare Britisher

with no interest in cricket, Stuart blames his aloofness towards sports to his PE teacher at school who ignored kids who were not good at football.

Commissioned by the MCC to draw a portrait of the Indian batting legend, which now hangs at the Lord's museum and will later be relocated permanently to the pavilion, Stuart says his ignorance about Sachin wasn't a deterrent as he wasn't sketching his biography. His work was an effort to "capture the sense of the individual" and his art was a response to the "person's humanity". "A lot of

The Sachin portrait drew long queues during the Lord's



Stuart Pearson Wright (left) with Sachin Tendulkar during the unveiling of the latter's portrait at Lord's. MCC

Test between India and England. It's from the time Sachin was in his early 30s, still six years away from retirement. "People call him a god... it's extraordinary... but for me, he was just another guy I was drawing. When I met him in 2007 to take his picture for the portrait, I got on very well with him. I found him very quiet and humble. I've never seen him play but someone told me that off the pitch he is quiet but when you see him bat he becomes like a tiger," says Stuart.

The face has those steely eyes and that fierce focus that was visible when he took on a Glenn McGrath or a Wasim Akram. Stuart captures what he always looks for -- the sense of individuality. In Sachin's case, it's that feline alertness when batting, the tiger inside a soft-spoken man. "My portraits aren't always a photographic as this one, but Lord's specified in the contract that they wanted this particular painting to be a very photographic style of likeness. If you look at my other paintings, you'll see I often elongate or distort facial features of it," he says.

Meeting his subject after 2007 at the unveiling, Stuart says Sachin has changed. "He's got a

good skincare routine. He is eating the right things. He is disciplined in his life as he is in his cricket. So, I think it really shows in his face," says the artist, who took 5-6 weeks to complete his work, an oil painting on an aluminum surface. "He was happy with my work, it was first approved by him," he says.

The "work" started with the artist drawing a sketch with a charcoal stick. "I started with the head first. And then did the shirt... A lot of people have commented on the ear. The ear seems to be a very popular ear. CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

• Five jets shot down: Trump

of wars. And these were serious wars," he said.

Delhi has maintained that the two sides halted their military actions following direct talks between their militaries without any mediation by the US.

On June 18, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during a phone conversation with Trump from Kanaknaskis in Canada where he was attending the G7 Summit, told him: "At no point... was there any discussion, at any level, on an India-US trade deal, or any proposal for a mediation by the US between India and Pakistan. The discussion to cease military action took place directly between India and Pakistan through the existing channels of communication between the two armed forces, and it was initiated at Pakistan's request... India does not and will never accept mediation. There is complete political consensus in India on this matter."

Since May 10, Trump has repeated his claim at least 20 times on various occasions that he "helped settle" the tensions between India and Pakistan and that he told the nuclear-armed neighbours that the US will do a "lot of trade" with them if they stopped the conflict.

India launched Operation Sindo on May 7, targeting terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir in response to the Pahalgam terror attack. The military confrontation that followed ended May 10 with an understanding on cessation of hostilities.

On May 31, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, in interviews to news agencies Reuters and Bloomberg on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue security forum in Singapore, shed new light on combat operations during Operation Sindo, going beyond the media briefings by the Indian Armed Forces during the hostilities.

General Chauhan, while acknowledging Indian losses in the air, underlined that what was more important was why these losses (of aircraft) occurred, and what India did after that.

He spoke of how "we rectified tactics and then went back... in large numbers" to "hit air bases deep inside Pakistan, penetrated all their air defences with impunity, carried out precision

• V-P

diplomatic dialogues. But at the end of the day, we are sovereign, we take our own decisions."

Dhankhar did not name Trump but his statement comes a day after the US president reiterated the ceasefire claim and said that five jets had been shot down during the hostilities between the two countries. On Saturday, the Congress demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi make a statement in Parliament clarifying the issue.

Taking an apparent swipe at the Opposition in this context, the V-P said: "Is it required to play every bad ball? Is it required to have wrestling sessions as to who said what? One who scores good runs on the cricket pitch always leaves bad balls. They are tempting, but not attempted. And those who attempt, you have safe gloves of the wicket keeper and some in the gully."

Dhankhar said there would be

• China dam over Brahmaputra

dam, regarded as the largest in the world, China has already operationalised the USD 1.5 billion Zam Hydropower Station, the largest in Tibet, in 2015, which raised concerns in India.

Concerns arose in India as the dam besides empowering China to control the water flow, the size and scale of it could also enable Beijing to release large amounts of water flooding border areas in times of hostilities.

India too is building a dam over Brahmaputra in Arunachal Pradesh.

PTI

Students to US

social media profiles public.

The F category visa in the US refers to the F-1 student visa, meant for international students who wish to pursue academic studies at a US institution, while the M visa (M-1) is a non-immigrant visa for individuals pursuing vocational or other nonacademic studies. The J-1 enables foreign nationals to come to the US to teach, study, conduct research, or receive on the job training for periods ranging from a few weeks to several years.

In 2023-24, Indian students formed the largest cohort of international students in the US, with 3.31 lakh enrolments. In the Financial Year 2024, the US issued 4,00,737 F-1, 6,322 M-1 and

strikes".

He told Reuters that the IAF "flew all types of aircraft with all types of ordnances on the 10th of May, the day India struck air bases deep inside Pakistan, including the Nur Khan air base in Rawalpindi."

He spoke on similar lines to Bloomberg: "What is important is not the jet being down, but why they were being (downed)," General Chauhan said. "The good part is that we were able to understand the tactical mistake which we made, remedy it, rectify it and then implement it again after two days... flew all our jets again, targeting at long range," he said.

General Chauhan's remark about initial losses in the air, without going into details or giving a count of aircraft lost, was the first official admission of fighter jets being downed in combat operations. Asked by Bloomberg if the Pakistani claim of downing six Indian jets was correct, the CDS said: "Absolutely incorrect."

The remarks came exactly three weeks after India and Pakistan agreed on cessation of military strikes against each other. To be clear, at no point, during and after the hostilities, did the IAF ever deny losing any aircraft.

On May 11, a day after the two militaries reached a truce, Air Marshal AK Bharti, Director of Air Operations, responding to a question at a media briefing, said he would not like to comment on whether India lost any aircraft and cited the prevailing combat situation. He said losses were part of any combat, and the Indian military had achieved all its selected objectives and all IAF pilots were back home.

Air Marshal Bharti said the Pakistan Air Force lost "a few" aircraft, apart from suffering massive damage to assets and air bases during retaliatory high-precision strikes by Indian Armed Forces during the operation.

Trump's comments Friday came a day after the US designated The Resistance Front, a Lashkar-e-Taiba proxy that had owned up the Pahalgam terror attack, as a foreign terrorist organisation.

India welcomed the US move and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar described it as a "strong affirmation of India-US counter-terrorism cooperation".

challenging times that could create divisions, and drew a contrast between Israel and Palestine, and Russia and Ukraine, on one side and Operation Sindo, India's response to the Pahalgam terror attack in April, on the other.

"For example, we have seen global conflagrations -- two of them in particular you know them. These have become opened. Look at the devastation of property, human lives and their misery. And look at our calibration. We taught a lesson -- taught it well. We chose Bahawalpur and Muridke, and then brought it to a temporary conclusion. 'Operation Sindo' is not over, it continues. Some people ask the question -- why was it stopped? We are a nation that believes in peace, non-violence, a land of Buddha, Mahavira, and Gandhi. We do not wish to kill even living beings -- how can we target human beings? The idea was to generate sanity, to generate a sense of humanity in the others," he said.

The allegations of phone tapping first surfaced in March 2024, when an Additional Superintendent of Police of the SIB lodged a complaint at Hyderabad's Punjagutta police station, accusing DSP Praneeth Rao of using illegal means to gather intelligence.

The Punjagutta police have named six accused in the case, including former SIB chief T Prabhakar Rao, Praneeth Rao, additional superintendents of police M Thirupathanna and N

FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

AI crash: Probe looks for vital clues of electric malfunction in tail wreckage

explosion and fuel fire which had charred the rest of the aircraft body.

The officials said components located in the tail have been identified and safely stored at a location in Ahmedabad. "They hold the key for a detailed analysis of a possible malfunction in the electric supply of the aircraft during lift off," an official told *The Indian Express*.

The two black boxes, the clues they hold

The aft Enhanced Airborne Flight Recorders (EAFR) or the rear black box found from the rooftop of the BJ Medical College hostel mess building on June 13 had suffered extensive internal thermal damage, the officials said.

The July 12 preliminary report of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, an office under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, pointed to this and said data from this "could not be downloaded through conventional means".

When it was opened to inspect the memory card, the "damage was extensive".

In contrast, the forward EAFR or the front black box, was found "burnt and covered in soot" from the charred wreckage debris on June 16, and the AAIB was able to retrieve data from this, the report said.

According to the officials, both the black boxes are housed inside robust, anti-corrosion material casing to withstand high temperatures or impact. While the rear black box relies on the aircraft's main electrical system for power, the front black box has an independent battery to ensure it continues recording even in case of power shut down.

Flight data downloaded from the front black box contained "approximately 49 hours of flight data and 6 flights, including the event flight", the preliminary re-

port said. The audio recovered from this, including the crash event, was two hours long.

The officials said the aircraft's tail suffered the expected crash impact when it made contact with the hostel mess building. But this was not the rare kind of damage where the aft EAFR (rear black box) should have been damaged beyond salvage, they said.

"It needs to be probed if the electric fire in the tail was due to a fault that originated in one of the flight components when it began rolling for take-off, or was it purely a fire following the impact... The fire was contained in the tail section, which, despite being embedded in Building A (hostel mess), did not spread to the structure or its electrical framework," the official said.

Finding a key in the tail

Besides the rear black box, the Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) located in the tail as well as the transducers and rudders of the plane are being examined, the officials said. The investigators have recovered the APU from its compartment in an "intact condition", the preliminary report had said. It is critical to investigate the electrical fire, especially since the crew of the previous flight AI-423 from Delhi to Ahmedabad had logged a Pilot Defect Report for a status message "STAB POS XDCR" (Stabilizer Position Transducer - a sensor located in the tail) in the technical log. This was troubleshooted by the Aircraft Maintenance Engineer in Ahmedabad before clearing the flight for AI-171 at 12.15 pm on June 12.

"Any malfunction of the electrical system that originated before the flight became airborne could have led to disruption of interconnected flight sensors and, in a cascading effect, trig-

gered incorrect data to the ECU (Engine Control Unit) of the flight to cut off fuel supply... The APU also made an auto logic start after fuel supply transitioned back to 'Run' from 'Cut-off', which indicates it had been on during the take-off to have more thrust during take-off on a hot day in Ahmedabad..." the official said.

It is "pertinent" that the rear black box, along with the Stabilizer Position Transducer, is located in the tail, along with the APU. "When the aircraft is on the ground, APU batteries start the APU generators. The APU generator powers the two generators on each of the two engines to start the engines. Once in flight, APU's two generators are secondary power for the flight or used for in-cabin power," the official said.

Recalling that APU malfunctions had led to a brief grounding of the 787 series Dreamliner fleet in 2013, the officials said, the fleet was pressed back into service when the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) approved the new design of APU battery. "The component is among the significant parts being examined now. This aircraft was pressed into service the same year after the FAA approved the new design," the official said.

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Engine Control Unit (the brain of the aircraft) to trigger "uncommanded" actions. "Both engines of the flight were starved of fuel within seconds of being airborne and quickly began to decelerate.. The electrical signal of transition to fuel cut-off mode, recorded in the flight data, is at the centre of the probe, which is why FADEC actions are crucial. By design, FADEC reacts to cascading malfunction in data input by triggering fuel cut off to protect engines in compromised system conditions," the official said.

What caused the death of flight attendant in the rear

The state of the body of the flight attendant found 72 hours from the BJ Medical College building after the crash in the crew deck area of the rear fuselage also points to the cause of her death. "It was not caused by the explosion and fire like the other passengers whose bodies were charred beyond recognition. She did have some burns, which were from the fire from the aircraft's electrical system that was brought under control when the fire-tenders arrived. But she was identified through her clothes..." he said.

An official of the Gujarat government, who was involved in the post-crash response, told this newspaper that the body was found in a highly decomposed state with post-mortem burn injuries. "The flight attendant in the rear of the plane likely died due to impact injuries. She would have been seated in the brace position and was partially affected by the fire in that section. Her body was highly decomposed due to lapse of time and the extinguishing agents used to put out the fire after the crash. Fragments of her uniform saree, made of a synthetic blend, were visible for identification."

On July 17, *The Indian Express* had reported that the investigators were examining the history of technical snags and the possibility of system malfunction that can impact the FADEC's (Full Authority Digital Engine Control)

• Phones of 600 tapped ahead of 2023 polls in Telangana

tapped by the SIB, the officer said.

According to sources, most of those who were allegedly surveilled were from the opposition.

Among those summoned by the Hyderabad police to depose so far are Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president Mahesh Kumar Goud and BJP leader and Union Minister for State Bandi Sanjay Kumar, indicating that their phones may have been under surveillance.

The allegations of phone tapping first surfaced in March 2024, when an Additional Superintendent of Police of the SIB lodged a complaint at Hyderabad's Punjagutta police station, accusing DSP Praneeth Rao of using illegal means to gather intelligence.

The Punjagutta police have named six accused in the case, including former SIB chief T Prabhakar Rao, Praneeth Rao, additional superintendents of police M Thirupathanna and N

Bhujanga Rao, former deputy commissioner of police T Radha Kishan Rao, and television channel owner N Shravan Kumar.

While the Supreme Court has given reprieve to Prabhakar Rao from being arrested until August, D Praneeth Rao, Bhujanga Rao, M Thirupathanna and T Radha Kishan Rao were arrested and later released on bail. N Shravan Kumar is currently lodged in Chanchalguda prison in connection with a separate case. He, too, has been granted a reprieve from arrest in the phone tapping case by the Supreme Court. The ex-SIB chief has been questioned several times, including most recently on June 16.

When contacted for a comment, Sravan Kumar Dasoju, BRS MLC and spokesperson, said, "The Congress government under Revanth Reddy is using the so-called phone tapping case as a political weapon to tarnish the image of the BRS leadership." "The interception of phones,

if at all it was done, would have been sanctioned by the police and intelligence departments with the permission of the Apex Committee consisting of the Chief Secretary, the DGP and the Home Secretary, as per law. The BRS party had nothing to do with it," he said. "Besides, there is no legitimacy of the SIT and no transparency in the investigation being done by it. It is playing out like a Netflix saga, to mudsling on the BRS and deflect the people's attention from the failures of the government."

A key challenge for investigators, sources said, is the fact that every six months, the SIB's Special Operations Team allegedly destroyed surveillance records. "The SIB's mandate is to look into Left Wing Extremism. They place only those connected with Maoists under surveillance. In this case, the SIB is alleged to have placed unconnected individuals under surveillance for political reasons," the officer said.

The legal expert of the Hyderabad police explained, "The rules, however, give a relaxation that in the case of emergency or unavoidable circumstances, such order may be made by an officer, not below the rank of a Joint Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs in the case of the Home Department in the case of a State Government."

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To replace old pipelines, govt to come up with Water Master Plan: Minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

WITH AN aim to upgrade the aging water supply infrastructure in Delhi and replace all pipelines that are 40 to 80 years old, the BJP government is planning a new 'Water Master Plan', Water and Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh said on Saturday.

During a visit to various areas in New Delhi, the constituency he represents in the Assembly, Singh made the announcement and also highlighted the ongoing water crisis and deteriorating conditions of water infrastructure in the city.

One of the root causes of the city's water problems, he underlined, is the extremely old pipeline system, which has not been upgraded in decades. "There are a lot of places in Delhi where people face issues of polluted water. It is because water pipelines are 40 to 80 years old," the Minister said.

He also took aim at the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, saying, "The previous government did not lay even a single new pipeline. They neglected one of the most basic needs of the people — clean and safe drinking water."

Singh said that the current government has already taken concrete steps to overhaul the water and sewerage infrastructure across the Capital. "We are preparing a new Master Plan for Delhi. New pipelines will be placed... the budget is passed and further sanctioned, tenders are passed, and work at some places has already started," he asserted.

HUMILIATED, MENTALLY HARASSED, SAYS 'SUICIDE NOTE'

Sharda University student dies by suicide, 2 faculty members arrested

NEETIKA JHA
NOIDA, JULY 19

A SECOND-YEAR Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) student of Sharda University in Greater Noida allegedly hanged herself in her hostel room on Friday, leading to the arrest of two faculty members whom she accused of "harassment" in a purported suicide note, police said.

While Greater Noida Police arrested Dr Shairy Vashist and Dr Mahinder Singh Chauhan, it also booked four other faculty members, including the dean, and one unidentified staff on the charge of abetment of suicide.

In the purported suicide note, which named six accused, the 21-year-old student, Jyoti, has written that she was humiliated and mentally harassed.

"We have sympathy for the girl's family and we will ensure that whoever is at fault is strictly



Parents of Jyoti (above) at the university on Saturday. Gajendra Yadav

Maintaining that she had been feeling stressed for a long time, she added: "I am sorry. I cannot live like this anymore. I can't."

The Public Relation Officer of Sharda University, Dr Ajit Kumar, said the two arrested faculty members have been suspended.

"We have sympathy for the girl's family and we will ensure that whoever is at fault is strictly

punished... We have suspended the two teachers and a high-level committee has been formed to probe the matter. On the basis of the report, whoever is at fault, strict action will be taken against them," he added.

The FIR was lodged under sections 108 (abettment of suicide), 238 (disappearance of evidence), 79 (insult) the modesty of a

woman), 352 (breach of peace), and 351(2) (criminal intimidation) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

Greater Noida Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Sudhir Kumar said, "We have arrested two college professors after a complaint was filed by the father of the girl. Further investigation is underway."

The police were informed of the incident around 9.30 pm by the college administration, he added.

In his complaint filed with the Knowledge Park police station, the father, Ramesh Jangra, has said, "The university's administrative officials and workers brought the body down from the noose and took it to Sharda Hospital without informing the police or the family." "My daughter was instigated to die by suicide... was tortured," he added.

He alleged that one of the accused "tortured" his daughter in class by saying "since you make too many complaints, you will be punished".

On Thursday, he added the arrested faculty members, along with another, had again threatened her by not approving her work and not allowing her to appear in the exam.

Ramesh said he had visited the college on Monday to meet the dean and others.

"They assured me... But even after that, they together harassed my daughter," he wrote in the complaint.

On Saturday morning, the girl's mother joined a group of protesting students, demanding justice for the 21-year-old. "I want justice for my daughter... The teachers have tortured her," she claimed.

Claims of forging teacher's signature, taunts led to suicide

NEETIKA JHA
NOIDA, JULY 19

AN EERIE silence prevailed at Mandela Girls Hostel, home to Jyoti, a 21-year-old Bachelor of Dental Surgery student at Sharda University, for the last two years.

Room 1209, part of a four-room apartment located on the 12th floor, stood locked on Saturday, hours after Jyoti was found hanging inside.

The incident would later lead to the arrest of faculty members Dr Mahinder Singh Chauhan and Dr Shairy Vashist on the charge of abetment of suicide.

Jyoti's batchmates remembered her as intelligent and bright. "I have her notes that we prepared for the last semester," said a student.

Another student said, "It all began a week ago. What happened to her, happens to all of us here almost every day, she just could not take it."

According to her batchmates, the "humiliation" began last Friday when Jyoti went to obtain the signature of Dr Chauhan on her practical file. "Our second-year exams will begin from Tuesday. Before that we have to finish all lab work and complete our files for all six subjects," said one student.



At Sharda University on Saturday. Gajendra Yadav

"We were all waiting in line for Dr Chauhan. She was just ahead of me. When her turn came, she handed over her file to him.

Moments before the professor would sign, he flipped the pages and looked at the signature on her last practical work. He then claimed, "These are not my signature... you have forged it," the student added.

"As she denied his claims, the professor asked her to leave immediately. She left in tears. Her file was confiscated and a call was made to her parents," another student said.

On Monday, Jyoti's father visited the university and requested the professors to not mistreat her, the students said.

"But yesterday, when she went to collect her file, she was

taunted for complaining about the teachers to her parents. "Both (Dr Chauhan and Dr Vashist) were looking at our practical files. When her turn came, they started to taunt her. She was in tears again..." a student said.

Once classes were over on Friday, the 21-year-old was seen returning to her room.

"She was found dead around 8.45 pm by her friend, who had gone to check on her after her parents called to say that Jyoti was not answering their calls," the student added.

On Monday, Jyoti's father visited the university and requested the professors to not mistreat her, the students said.

"But yesterday, when she went to collect her file, she was

Stir against Gaza violence met with counter-protest

AAKASH JOSHI
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

FOR ABOUT half an hour on Saturday afternoon, the Nehru Place market – the go-to destination for repair and purchase of computers, phones and practically every other gadget – was taken over by the spectacle of a protest and a spontaneous counter-demonstration to raise questions on the protesters' "nationalism".

At 12.30 pm, several protesters held up placards condemning the violence in Gaza, expressing solidarity with Palestinians, condemning the Indian government's "cooperation with Israel" and its abstention on United Nations' resolutions against



Protesters in Nehru Place. Express

the violence.

Organisers, including civil society activists, artists and academics, chose to hold a silent gathering of about 30 people. They said that they did not seek either police permission or "bandobast".

"The fact is that we are denied permission to gather outside the Israeli Embassy or the External Affairs Ministry. It is more feasible and creates an impact to do smaller gatherings like this one," said economist Jean Dreze, who was among those leading the protest.

Former IAS officer and Karwan-e-Mohabbat founder Harsh Mandavia said "the need for such a protest, not just to criticise the governments of Israel and India but to raise the issue of the suffering in Gaza for the public at large".

However, within minutes of the Palestinian flags and posters being displayed, a group of men, mostly local shopkeepers and workers, took umbrage at the expression of solidarity. They began shouting slogans such as

"Jai Shri Ram" and "Bharat Mata ki Jai". "Ye log Bangladesh mein Hindun ke paksh mein kabhi kyon nahi bolte? Israel mein jo atankwadi hamla hua tha, woh bhookh gaye?" (Why don't these people ever speak about Hindus being killed in Bangladesh? Have they forgotten about the terrorist attack on Israel?), said Anshul, who refused to give a last name. He repairs and sells mobile phones at one of the many kiosks in the market.

Two constables tried to get the protesters to disperse.

"All we are asking is that they get permission and come. Kalkaji police station isn't far... I got to know only because one of the shopkeepers called and informed me of the suspicious activity," one of them said.

Couple pose as brokers to sell SUVs, dupe buyers, arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, JULY 19

A MAN and a woman have been arrested for allegedly defrauding people of around Rs 2 crore by posing as "brokers" selling Toyota Fortuners and other sports utility vehicles (SUVs), said the Gurugram Police.

They were presented in a court on Friday, and sent to police custody for two days.

The accused have been identified as Jagmeet Singh alias Suraj Lamba (40), and Amrita Kaur (38). They were held by a team from the Cyber Crime (West) police station.

According to the police, on April 1, a complainant had reported that he received a call from someone offering to sell a Fortuner. The caller provided a location, showed the vehicle, and demanded an advance of Rs 50,000, which the complainant transferred. The accused then allegedly extorted more money under the pretext of finalising the sale, but did not deliver the vehicle, thus defrauding the victim. A case was registered under relevant provisions.

Led by Priyanshu Dewan, Assistant Commissioner of Police, Cyber Crime, a team under Sandeep Kumar, Inspector, nabbed the two. "Investigations have revealed that Jagmeet Singh and Amrita Kaur, who live together in a flat with a monthly rent of Rs 50,000, funded a lavish lifestyle with the illicit proceeds. They targeted luxury car listings on OLX, contacted the owners, paid a small advance to book the vehicle, and had the original ad removed," a police spokesperson said.

Govt plans 145 new routes for DEVI buses, pilot project in Yamuna Vihar

GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

TO ENCOURAGE more people to travel by the newly-launched Delhi EV Connector (DEVI) buses, the Transport department is planning to start 145 new routes for these 9-m long buses, along with dedicated bus stops to provide last mile connectivity.

According to a senior department official, currently, these buses are running on routes meant for the 12-m-long Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and cluster buses, covering long distances. The DEVI buses, however, are meant to ensure last mile connectivity and ply in areas where the 12-m buses cannot enter.

"We observed that the ridership in the small buses are less compared to the 12-m long buses, limiting their effectiveness. To address this, the government has collaborated with IIT Delhi to design a comprehensive new route plan," said an official.

The key aim behind this plan is to improve bus connectivity in underserved localities and ensure better integration with Metro services, the official added. "As many as 145 new routes have been identified for DEVI buses.. These routes have been made keeping in mind the last mile connectivity, proximity to Metro stations.. While Metro is a lifeline for many in Delhi, there is lack of transport facilities available for last mile connectivity."

Officials said a pilot project will be started from Yamuna Vihar, following which the model will be implemented across the city.

Officials further said they plan to develop new bus stops for DEVI buses. "Unlike the existing stops,

THE PLAN
4,800
E-buses
600
DEVI buses
145
New routes
for DEVI buses
Pilot project to start in Yamuna Vihar

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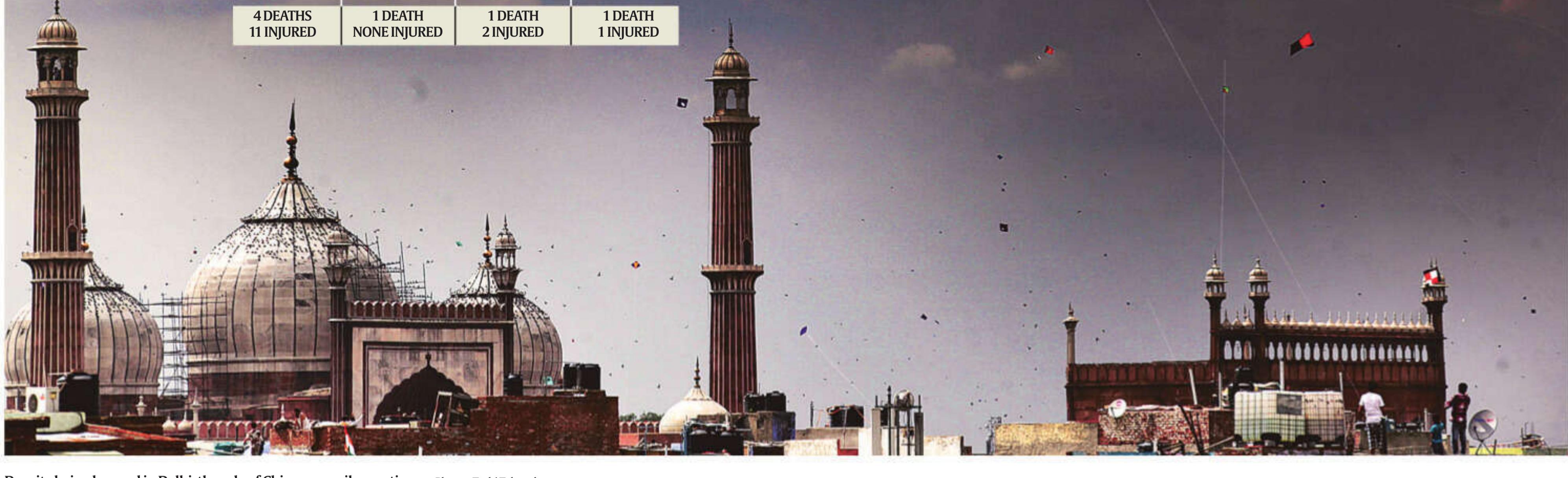
UNAUDITED STANDALONE & CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED JUNE 30, 2025
(₹ in Lakh)

SI no	Particulars	Standalone			Consolidated				
		30.06.2025 Unaudited	31.03.2025 Audited	30.06.2024 Unaudited	31.03.2025 Audited	30.06.2025 Unaudited	31.03.2025 Audited	30.06.2024 Unaudited	31.03.2025 Audited
1	Total Income from Operations	10,37,412	10,43,256	9,49,992	39,52,044	10,41,011	10,47,605	9,53,337	39,66,795
2	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	1,78,287	1,15,847	80,226	4,93,427	1,81,446	1,23,314	86,755	5,09,448
3	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary items)	1,78,287	1,15,847	80,226	4,93,427	1,89,931	1,23,314	86,755	5,09,448
4	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after Tax (after Exceptional and/ or Extraordinary items)	1,16,869	1,03,355	87,994	3,78,526	1,28,198	1,10,458	94,242	3,93,421
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the Period [Comprising Profit/ (Loss) for the Period (after Tax) and other comprehensive Income (after Tax)]				REFER NOTE 3				REFER NOTE 3
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital (Face value of ₹ 10/- per share)	9,05,140	9,05,140	8					

SILENT KILLER ON THE LOOSE

DEATHS, INJURIES BY MANJHA

2022	2023	2024	2025
4 DEATHS 11 INJURED	1 DEATH NONE INJURED	1 DEATH 2 INJURED	1 DEATH 1 INJURED



Despite being banned in Delhi, the sale of Chinese manjha continues. Photos: Tashi Tobgyal

Chinese manjha is back in the news again. The synthetic, glass-coated kite string has led to the death of a man and injured another this year — and has claimed many lives over the past few years. Delhi Police has intensified its crackdown on those selling the banned thread, but its sale continues under the radar. *Pragynesh* reports

IT'S A humid July afternoon. In Southeast Delhi's Sangam Vihar, a 14-year-old has just come back from school.

The scrawny teenager quickly changes into brown shorts and a black T-shirt and heads out again. He has to buy a packet of toned milk from a grocery store in the Sangam Vihar market, a small cluster of shops across the road from the main Wazirabad market.

But the milk is only part of the errand. The boy, his friends claim, is the contact in the area to get the infamous 'Chinese manjha' (kite string).

"Kam se kam 200 ka loge? (Will you buy at least Rs 200 worth of manjha?)" — he's often heard asking prospective customers. Once assured the buyer is serious, the boy gestures for them to follow him inside the market.

"Goswami suffered a deep cut on his neck, causing him to collapse on the spot. He was rushed to the hospital by passersby, where he was declared dead on arrival," a police officer had said.

In another incident on July 2, the string did not take the life of Axis Bank employee Prakash but slashed his face while he was passing by the Shastri Park flyover at the time.

"Kam se kam 200 ka loge? (Will you buy at least Rs 200 worth of manjha?)" — he's often heard asking prospective customers. Once assured the buyer is serious, the boy gestures for them to follow him inside the market.

"In route is a shabby one-room kite shop, with children queuing up outside. But he passes by without a glance.

"Yahan kuch nai milega. Abhi (police) raid ka season hai. (You won't find anything here. This is the season of raids)," he says, referring to a recent raid by the Delhi Police Crime Branch in Wazirabad on July 5.

After passing through a narrow alley, the boy reaches a small medical shop. He steps up and murmurs into the ear of an 18-year-old youth sitting at the counter.

"Rs 220 ek reel manjha ke liye. Ek dum dhaardhaar hai. Bareilly se laya hai mere chacha ka ladka. Bolo toh mangwaunga (Rs 220 for one reel of manjha. It's very sharp. My cousin got it from Bareilly. Say the word and I will bring it)," the boy at the counter says.

Despite being banned in Delhi, the sale of Chinese manjha continues. The string, made of nylon, is coated with crushed pieces of glass, giving it razor-sharp edges that easily cut through other kite

strings in the air — but it is capable of doing far worse on the ground. In recent years, it has been linked to multiple deaths and injuries, particularly among two-wheeler riders whose necks get caught in stray strings hanging across roads.

This year, it has already led to the death of one person and injured another.

On June 27, Yash Goswami (22) died after his throat was slit by a Chinese manjha on Rani Jhansi flyover in North Delhi. The Karawali Nagar resident was on his way home at the time.

"Goswami suffered a deep cut on his neck, causing him to collapse on the spot. He was rushed to the hospital by passersby, where he was declared dead on arrival," a police officer had said.

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ROLLS SEIZED

2025: OVER 1,500

2024: OVER 13,000

2022: OVER 15,000

Day, the Crime Branch has already seized over 1,200 rolls of the banned thread from three locations in the city.

The first seizure was done at Central Delhi's Kamla Market on June 26. Running the illegal manjha operation here was Areeb Khan (22) a former textile store worker. "He had 248 rolls of banned string and was caught near Kamla Market. Areeb used to work at a clothing store but moved to kite-string selling for more profit," DCP(Crime) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav had said.

The second operation happened in West Delhi's Uttam Nagar on June 27. Raju Chaurasia (51) was arrested in the case.

Meanwhile, the university has clarified that performance-based allocations will be carried out in the third round for programmes such as BA (Hons) Hindustani Music, BA (Hons) Karnataka Music, BA (Hons) Percussion Music, BS in Physical Education, Health Education and Sports, and Bachelor of Fine Art. The aspirants have been advised to refer to the trial schedules and requirements available on the respective college

The third operation took place in Sangam Vihar, Wazirabad on July 5. The raid led to the arrest of Danish Khan (28) and the recovery of 56 rolls of manjha. He used to make kites but started selling manjha to earn more money, police had said.

In all, 1,226 rolls of Chinese manjha have been found, and police registered three FIRs against the people involved.

On Friday itself, brothers Samir (22) and Shakir (18) were arrested from a jhuggi cluster at Nand Nagri with 325 reels of the banned Chinese manjha. They allegedly told the police that they were stocking up for the Independence Day.

This round is specifically for candidates who had registered earlier but were not admitted to any programme in the previous allocation rounds.

Those wishing to be considered must now opt for the Spot Admission process by selecting it through their CSAS(PG) dashboards, said the varsity.

The university has emphasised that only those who explicitly opt in will be considered for this round.

The hub

Kamla Market in Daryaganj, in the Lal Kuan area, is known as the hub for kite shops.

Sitting at his family's kite shop is a 13-year-old bespectacled boy, handling customers as the adults have stepped out. Behind him, kites of all shapes and colours are pinned to the wall.

The news of Areeb's arrest has spread like wildfire, with shopkeepers now vehemently denying ever possessing the Chinese Manjha.

"Chinese manjha ab nahi milta yaha. Jo bechte the unko bhi pakad fiya police ne (Chinese manjha is not available here, the police have

caught those who sold them)," says the boy.

"Par uski takkar ka mil jaayega (But you can get something of the same quality at the main shop)," he adds.

He goes down a damp lane and, after about 250 m, enters a house with a green curtain serving as its entrance. Inside is a room with high-ceiling, with kites all around.

Sitting on the floor, on a ragged, torn maroon carpet, are two teenage boys and an elderly man clad in a white kurta pyjama — all sewing kites.

The man owns the kite shop. The 13-year-old asks the man, who is holding a purple kite in his

hand, for manjha. The man shouts, "Indian reel le aa ek (Bring me a reel of cotton manjha)."

Hearing him, the other two boys, a couple of years older than their bespectacled peer, rush together inside a storeroom. They come out with a reel of thread.

"Cotton hai, par masala chadha hua hai. Wahi glass wala jo hota hai. (It's a cotton thread, but it's coated with glass)," says the man on being asked if the thread has the same sharpness as the 'Chinese one'.

According to police officers, the ban applies both to the nylon thread and its deadly glass coating (Bareilly manjha). "The nylon threads are sometimes replaced by cotton ones at these shops. But they have options. You can buy a sada (plain cotton reel) or the glass-coated one (glass-coated cotton reel)," an officer said.

"The scooter has been parked for the last six years in front of our building. No one in our family touched it," Monika says.

The death of Manav, who was the sole breadwinner for a family of five — including his parents and his two sisters — devastated the family. "We were returning after celebrating Raksha Bandhan. My cousins had come from Punjab. Manav was riding the scooter, and I and my sister were riding pillion. He suddenly stopped and we saw blood gushing from his throat," Monika says.

Monika is now the sole breadwinner of the family of three — her father had died in 2023. "I work for a private firm... Since he (Manav) left us, I haven't been able to ride a two-wheeler. Every year, I hear about manjhas causing deaths. I don't know about the ban, but how come such a thing that can kill people this easily is still available in the market," she asks.

As Independence Day nears, raids on manjha godowns are expected to be stepped up, senior police officers said. "Most suppliers get stock 48 hours before August 14, when the demand is at peak. They look to quickly sell and finish off the stock before they can be caught," an officer added.

UG ADMISSIONS UNDER CSAS
DU first list out: Over 93,000 seats allocated


through their CSAS dashboards, the university stated.

The minimum allocation scores for various programmes and categories will also be published on the admission portal for wider reference.

Meanwhile, the university has clarified that performance-based allocations will be carried out in the third round for programmes such as BA (Hons) Hindustani Music, BA (Hons) Karnataka Music, BA (Hons) Percussion Music, BS in Physical Education, Health Education and Sports, and Bachelor of Fine Art. The aspirants have been advised to refer to the trial schedules and requirements available on the respective college

or department websites.

For candidates applying for postgraduate courses, the university has opened applications for Spot Round I under CSAS(PG)-2025.

This round is specifically for candidates who had registered earlier but were not admitted to any programme in the previous allocation rounds.

Those wishing to be considered must now opt for the Spot Admission process by selecting it through their CSAS(PG) dashboards, said the varsity.

The university has emphasised that only those who explicitly opt in will be considered for this round.

'Desperate cry for children's future': Parents demonstrate at Jantar Mantar
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 19

"PARENTS Are Not ATMs", "Don't Sell Education, Serve It", and "Education, Not Exploitation" were among the slogans on placards as hundreds of parents of students from private schools across Delhi gathered at Jantar Mantar on Saturday morning. Alleging arbitrary fee hikes, opaque school finances, and harassment of students over unpaid dues, a memorandum was submitted to top Delhi officials with 10 key demands, said protesters.

CAG audits, scrapping of the

Delhi government's Fee Regulation Ordinance 2025, and monthly fee collection — instead of advance payment — were included in the key demands raised in the memorandum. Parents alleged that their demands have not been addressed despite holding meetings and writing to the authorities. Saturday's demonstration was held under the banner of United Parents' Voice (UPV).

Other key demands highlighted in the memorandum are "putting an end to harassment and discrimination against children in schools, fair and transparent elections to Parent-Teacher Associations, formal tenders for vendor services and school infrastructure, revocation of CA licences in fraudulent school audits, mandatory online display of fees," said a protesting parent at the venue. "This isn't just a protest... it is a desperate cry for our children's dignity, rights and future," said a protester, adding that the parents were forced to take to the streets after "trying everything".

The Delhi Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, approved the Delhi School Education (Transparency in Fixation and Regulation of Fees) Ordinance, 2025, on June 10 amid concerns over arbitrary fee hikes by the private schools.

2 members of Irani gang held after shootout

New Delhi: Following a brief exchange of fire, two alleged members of the Irani Gang — Murtaza Ali and Siraj Ali — were nabbed on Saturday, said police.

Known for their alleged involvement in a series of violent crimes across multiple states, the two accused sustained bullet injuries on their left legs during the encounter, officers said, adding that they are undergoing treatment at Safdarjung Hospital.

During questioning, both men allegedly admitted that they had traveled to Delhi with the intent of committing a series of robberies in Delhi-NCR. ENS

INDIA-COLOMBIA



YEARS OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

India and Colombia at 65: A Growing Strategic Partnership

In 2024, India and Colombia marked 65 years of diplomatic relations, a milestone reflecting the steady evolution of a once-limited engagement into a broad-based and strategic partnership. What began with the opening of embassies in New Delhi and Bogotá in the 1970s has expanded into cooperation spanning trade, technology, science, and global diplomacy.

Bilateral trade between the two nations reached \$4 billion in the 2022–2023 fiscal year, driven in part by a surge in Colombia's non-mining exports to India—an increase of 80 percent over the previous year. Sectors like auto components, flowers, chemicals, plastics, and furniture are gaining traction in India's growing industrial economy. This shift highlights Colombia's role in supporting India's manufacturing and supply chain diversification efforts.

Indian investment in Colombia has also grown significantly. More than 30 Indian companies now operate in the country across a range of sectors, including pharmaceuticals, automobiles, BPO, mining, and telecommunications. Tata Consultancy Services recently expanded its Latin American operations by opening a new service center in Bogotá, signaling confidence in Colombia's tech talent and business environment. The center, which builds on TCS's earlier presence in

Medellín, was recently recognized as a "Top Employer 2024."

Colombia has become a hub for Indian two-wheeler manufacturers. Companies such as Hero MotoCorp, Bajaj, and Royal Enfield have established assembly operations in the country, using it as a gateway to Latin American markets. While Colombia's overall automotive



sector experienced a downturn in 2023, the market is expected to rebound, with rising interest in electric vehicles and sustainable mobility providing new opportunities for Indian firms.

Beyond trade and business, the India–Colombia relationship is also growing in the fields of science, technology, and health. A 2021 agreement between Colombia's Ministry of Science and India's ISRO is paving the way for cooperation in the peaceful use of space, particularly in disaster management, agriculture, and infrastructure

planning. The upcoming third Joint Working Group meeting will review progress and set new goals.

Health cooperation is another priority. India's expertise in pharmaceuticals and biotechnology has drawn Colombian interest in joint production of vaccines and medical research. India's Ministry of AYUSH has also engaged with Colombian universities to introduce Ayurvedic studies, following a visit to Bogotá in 2023.

Digital innovation is quickly becoming a pillar of this partnership. In February 2024, Colombia's ICT Minister Mauricio Lizcano visited India and signed an MoU on digital transformation. The agreement enables Colombia to adopt elements of India Stack—India's open-source digital infrastructure used for financial inclusion and public service delivery. This marks a critical step in Colombia's efforts to

Beyond trade and business, the India–Colombia relationship is also growing in the fields of science, technology, and health.

modernize government systems and reduce the digital divide.

Agriculture remains a promising area for collaboration, with both countries recognizing the need for food security in the face of climate

change. Technical exchanges between India's Plant Protection authorities and Colombia's ICA are helping to align regulatory standards and promote trade in agricultural goods. Despite challenges, including rural underdevelopment and infrastructure gaps in Colombia, both nations see potential in joint efforts to improve productivity and reduce inequality in rural areas.

Politically, the relationship is marked by frequent high-level exchanges and growing alignment in multilateral forums. The 10th round of Foreign Office Consultations took place in New Delhi in October 2024, resulting in the signing of an audio-visual co-production agreement to promote cultural exchange. Colombia's participation in India's Voice of the Global South Summit and India's engagement in COP-16 in Cali reflect their shared global priorities.

Looking ahead, India and Colombia appear poised to deepen their cooperation further. As both nations navigate an increasingly interconnected and multipolar world, their relationship stands as a model for South-South partnership—practical, inclusive, and future-focused.

Partners in Food Security and Agriculture

India and Colombia have always been and are agrarian economies which are supported by their diverse climatic zones. The commonalities in the ingredients of the diets of their people manifest in an immense potential to collaborate in strengthening food security and modernizing agriculture.



Both countries need to focus on guaranteeing food security to their citizens and inculcate practices in agriculture that are sustainable and help in mitigating climate change. An amalgamation of India's innovations in agricultural technology and

Colombia's rich biodiversity can result in a symbiotic relationship. India has an expertise in smallholder farming, crop diversification, and low-cost technology. This aligns with Colombia's aim to increase productivity among small and medium farmers. Agricultural research institutions in both countries could partner with to develop pest-resistant and climate-resilient crop varieties. India has also successfully scaled low-cost, small-scale farm machinery suitable for fragmented landholdings. Exporting this technology to Colombia would help the country to empower local farmers by keeping labour costs low and improving yields.

This collaboration could also extend

to digital agriculture. The Agri-tech startups have brought specialised apps to provide weather forecasts, precision farming, soil health data, and sale of the crops. If co-opted by Colombia, such solutions could bridge the gaps that exist in information, farming, and sales. These technologies could also be made linguistically relevant which would help the local populations adopt these technologies without seeming alien.

Technological and policy exchange in addition to capacity building are all equally important. Colombia could capitalise on India's experience with large scale food distribution systems as well as stock management. These are necessary to stabilize prices and ensure accessibility. Colombia on the other hand has great experience in leading exports of high value agricultural exports like coffee and cut flowers which could help India build that capacity. Capacity building through scholarships, training programs, and farmer exchange visits would promote mutual growth in the sector.

India and Colombia could potentially build agricultural frameworks that combat climate change, improve livelihoods, and ensure food security for millions, demonstrating how cross-continental partnerships can yield tangible benefits.

A Joint Digital Future

India's IT sector has global recognition, and Colombia is also experiencing growth in their digital economy, which serves as a great background for both countries to collaborate and capitalise on joint ventures. Colombia is on its way to becoming the digital and tech hub of the Andes in Latin America.

As the country explores digital ventures in finance and education as well as rapidly adopts cashless online payment; the Indian IT sector could offer solutions from its own experience.

A problem that is often pointed out in such ventures is that while India is predominantly an English-speaking country, most of Latin America including Colombia have a predominantly Spanish speaking population. However, it has been made clear in the past experience of trade and collaboration between India and Latin America that this obstacle can easily be overcome especially in the digital sector.

Collaborative opportunities also exist not just in the private sector, but also in the government sector in Colombia. National initiatives from India like the Aadhaar which is a unique identification software and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) have been hailed as resounding success and can be replicated in Colombia as well. It would facilitate people's access to government facilities. Cybersecurity is another sector where joint opportunities can be explored. Joint research initiatives and information-sharing agreements could help both India and Colombia in their quest for a safer cyber space.

Capacity building in the field of education and upskilling of the workforce could be stimulated by this collaboration. Indian and Colombian institutions could collaborate to design courses in coding, AI, and data science, addressing local skill gaps and fostering youth employment. This would also give both the countries to build an economic eco-system that encourages startups and digital innovation in various sectors. A proliferation of such collaboration in private, government, and educational sectors would allow the benefits of this collaboration to spread far and wide and transform the workforce and the economy as well.

Collaborative opportunities also exist not just in the private sector, but also in the government sector in Colombia.

A Growing Energy Partnership for Sustainable Security

India's quest for diversified and sustainable energy sources has led it to explore unconventional partnerships beyond its traditional suppliers. One such emerging energy partner is Colombia from the Andean region that, while not historically central to India's energy strategy, is rapidly gaining relevance.

ONGC Videsh has important investments in oil fields in Colombia and an increasing collaboration with Ecopetrol.

According to Dr. Aparajita Pandey, a scholar from the Centre for Latin American Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, "Colombia is not a traditional partner for India when it comes to energy security. However, India has signed a deal with Colombian oil company Ecopetrol for a long-term refining contract, which goes to show that India is trying to diversify its energy partners." She further notes that Colombia also exports coal to India, contributing to a broader and more balanced energy mix.

The strategic importance of Colombia is also underscored by its participation in the International Solar Alliance (ISA), a joint initiative led by India to promote

solar energy deployment globally. Dr. Pandey stresses that Colombia's involvement in ISA is "a great step forward towards a shift to renewable energy," and points to the country's modernizing infrastructure—particularly its ports—as key enablers of a more reliable and sustained supply of crude oil to India.

India is Colombia's third-largest market for oil, and ONGC Videsh has important investments in oil fields in Colombia and an increasing collaboration with Ecopetrol. These developments signify a maturing relationship based on mutual energy interests.

Trade data supports this trajectory. In 2023, despite a global downturn, Colombia's oil and coal exports to India remained substantial. Crude oil exports to India were valued at approximately \$15.6 billion—though down 17% from the previous year, they still positioned India among Colombia's top export destinations. Coal exports, while slightly lower at 27 million tons (a 2.6% decrease), further reinforce India's growing reliance on Colombian energy resources.

As India continues its search for stable and diversified energy partnerships, Colombia emerges as a promising partner from Latin America—offering both traditional fossil fuels and opportunities for renewable collaboration.

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Uddhav: Delay in seat-sharing talks, infighting affected MVA in 2024 elections

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JULY 19

SHIV SENA (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray said that delayed seat talks and "ego-driven politics" affected the MVA in last year's Maharashtra Assembly polls and warned that continued internal discord may render coalition meaningless ahead of civic polls.

In an interview to his party mouthpiece *Saamana*, Uddhav spoke about the infighting and delayed seat-sharing talks within the MVA, comprising the Sena (UBT), Congress, and NCP (SP) led by Sharad Pawar. "If mistakes like these are repeated, there is no point in staying together. Seat-sharing discussions dragged on until the very last minute, and candidate selection was left unresolved in several constituencies. The public received the wrong message," the Sena UBT chief said.

Uddhav said that despite MVA's stellar performance in the 2024 LS elections – alliance bagged 30 out of 48 seats in Maharashtra – the momentum was squandered in the Assembly polls due to a shift from collective strategy to individual party ambitions. "The enthusiasm turned into ego-driven politics," he said. Uddhav suggested that populist schemes announced by Mahayut ahead of polls, such as Ladki Bahin scheme, and allegations of manipulation in electoral processes dented MVA's prospects. "These issues need to be investigated. But it's equally important to accept our own mistakes," he said.

Pakistan extends airspace closure for Indian flights till August 24

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

PAKISTAN HAS extended the closure of its airspace for Indian aircraft and aircraft operated by Indian airlines by a month, until August 24 early morning, according to a fresh notice to airmen (NOTAM) by Pakistan's aviation authorities.

India is also likely to extend its airspace closure to Pakistani airlines and aircraft beyond July 24, when the Indian NOTAM is also set to expire.

The new NOTAM by Pakistan came a few days before the earlier closure notice was set to expire on July 24. Except for the effective duration of airspace closure, the new NOTAM is similar to the previous notices. Pakistani airspace will be closed till 5.29 India time on August 24.

Following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack as tensions escalated, Pakistan on April 24 shut its airspace to Indian aircraft and Indian airlines for at least a month, banning them from overflying its airspace. India closed its airspace to Pakistani aircraft and airlines on April 30. Both countries have been extending their airspace closures by issuing NOTAMs on a monthly basis.

MONSOON SESSION STARTS TOMORROW; OPP CONSENSUS ON 8 ISSUES

Pahalgam, ceasefire, SIR: INDIA bloc lines up issues to target Govt, projects unity

ASAD REHMAN
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

SHOWCASING UNITY on the eve of the Parliament's Monsoon Session, the INDIA bloc Saturday held a virtual meeting of 24 of its constituents, reaching a consensus on eight major issues that they plan to raise during the month-long session, which include the Pahalgam terror attack, Operation Sindo, ceasefire announcement by US President Donald Trump, India's foreign policy, and the EC's ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar.

These issues will be "raised in one voice" by the Opposition parties in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, the bloc said, hoping that when the Pahalgam attack, Operation Sindo and related issues are discussed, PM Narendra Modi will be in Parliament to answer various questions.

The Opposition alliance also said it would soon hold a physical meeting of its leaders.

The virtual meeting was attended by Sonia Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi, K C

Venugopal and Jairam Ramesh of Congress; Samajwadi Party's Ram Gopal Yadav; TMC's Abhishek Banerjee; Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Uddhav Thackeray and Sanjay Raut; NCP (SP)'s Sharad Pawar and Jayant Patil; NC's Omar Abdullah; JMM's Hemant Soren; RJD's Tejashwi Yadav; and DMK's Tiruchi N Siva. The CPI, CPI(M) and CPI(ML) Liberation were represented by D Raja, M A Baby, and Dipankar Bhattacharya, respectively.

Kerala Congress (M) MP Jose K Mani, RSP's N K Premachandran, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi's Thirumavalavan and IUML's K M Kader Mohideen also attended the meeting.

Addressing the media after the meeting, the Congress's deputy leader in RS, Pramod Tiwari, said, "Injustices and failures of this government have affected 140 crore Indians. At the meeting, we strayed to raise these issues during the Monsoon Session. I am happy to say that almost all 24 parties, their leaders took part in the meeting. We have received several suggestions. There are eight issues which were discussed prominently. This doesn't mean that these are our only issues;

other issues would also be raised."

He said "all parties are on the same page" that the Pahalgam attack is one issue the bloc would focus on since it "directly affects the self-respect of 140 crore Indians". "It is an issue which saw maximum worry. That despite so much time having passed, those who left our sisters widowed, the terrorists have disappeared. Now, there has been a confession that it was an intelligence failure, and that the government couldn't give security there."

Tiwari said when "Operation Sindo" is discussed, the ceasefire also has to be discussed and then Mr Trump's claims regarding it 24 times – that he brokered the ceasefire between India and Pakistan by using trade. And our PM has still remained silent".

Congress leader said another issue of major concern that the Opposition will raise strongly during the session is the SIR. "Under SIR, democracy is being murdered with 'votebandi' done after 'notebandi'... Names are being struck off from the rolls and added based on BJP's preferences by the EC," he alleged. "There is a threat to voting rights under this

undeclared emergency."

Another issue flagged by the alliance was the government's "foreign policy failures", with Tiwari saying that "The government's foreign policy towards Pakistan and China are worrying". He added that "the atrocities in Gaza would also be raised".

"Some members also raised the issue of delimitation, which we will include in our agenda during the session. The issue of atrocities on SCs, STs, women, minorities is also an important one," he said, adding that the Ahmedabad plane crash would also be taken up by the Opposition members.

Tiwari side-stepped the question about the AAP skipping the meeting, with AAP leader Sanjay Singh having already said Friday that his party was no longer part of the INDIA bloc.

"We want Parliament to run and the government to answer our questions, reflecting democracy," said Tiwari. Sources said during the meeting D Raja objected to Rahul Gandhi's remarks in Kottayam Friday that he was "fighting both the RSS and the CPI(M) ideologically". Raja was said to have commented that the

bloc's leaders should "have a limit" while criticising each other.

Another source said that Pawar, Uddhav and Ram Gopal Yadav suggested that the bloc's meetings be held periodically and not after such long gaps.

Saturday's meeting was the bloc's first meet outside Parliament in over a year. Its last formal meeting was on June 5 last year – a day after LS election results were announced. At that meeting, 21 parties were in attendance, including the AAP.

The Monsoon Session, starting on July 21, will conclude on August 21. This will be the first session since Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 people were killed.

Subsequently, Operation Sindo was launched. Top Opposition leaders, including Kharge and Rahul, have then demanded a special session of Parliament to discuss these developments. A source said Omar Abdullah appealed to the alliance's leaders to raise the issue of restoration of J&K statehood in both Houses. "The meeting decided that along with Pahalgam security lapses, J&K statehood could also be raised," the source added.

Had ceasefire due to common sense of both govt: Pak ex-foreign minister

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, JULY 19



Ex-Pak foreign minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri

are not acceptable, anybody who has the confidence in the two governments, the two Prime Ministers should be (holding talks)... with the sole purpose of preventing the next war," he said.

Tanvir Sadiq, NC MLA from J&K, among the speakers from the Indian side, said there is stalemate right now in the ties, with the two countries just coming back from the brink of war. However, he said, "Do you think this is an appropriate time for India and Pakistan to talk? Sadly, no. But do India and Pakistan have to talk? Definitely yes."

However, without naming any third country, Sadiq batted for "friends" of both countries to bring them together for talks. "If you think India and Pakistan will sit on the table and discuss things that won't be possible. We will have to get friends of both India and Pakistan to make sure the two neighbours sit on the table," added the legislator from Srinagar's Zadibal.

Former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, T C A Raghavan, said that the present crisis comes from a problem of a structural nature. "Across the political spectrum in both countries, every shade of political opinion at some point of time or the other has been in government, and during those times, there has been an India-Pakistan problem," he said, adding that it is not something which has happened only now.

For 35 years, the nature of the structural problem has focussed itself on terrorism, he said. "No formula can resolve it; you can live with it or work around it... There was a greater understanding of that problem in Pakistan 20 years ago than it is now," he said, referring to ex-President Musharraf assuring India of not using terrorism to advance his political aims.

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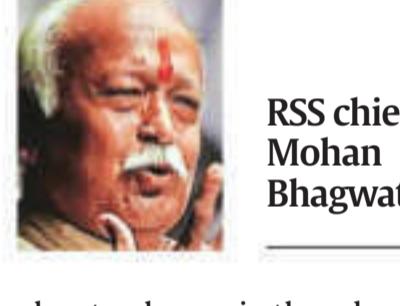


DELHI MEETING

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in New Delhi, Saturday. Express

Bhagwat likely to talk on Indianisation in education at Kerala conference

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 19



RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat

about a change in the education system, to bring in Indianisation in the system. And we believe this cannot be done by one organisation or institution. That's why we are gathering representatives from the government, academia and social organisations. We are trying to connect with whoever is doing good work in the field of education. During the conference we will discuss what kind of changes are required in the education system and how we can achieve the same," Kothari said to *The Indian Express*.

The four-day conference from July 25-28 titled 'Gyan Sabha' will focus on the theme 'Education for a Developed India'. A key highlight will be an address by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on July 27. He is expected to speak on the theme of Indianisation in education and the broader implementation of the NEP.

Some of the dignitaries include AICTE chairman, UGC vice-chairman, senior office-bearers of institutes like NITIs and IIITs. VCs of around 70-80 universities across India are expected to participate, Nyas General Secretary Atul Kothari said.

"Our principal job is to bring

about a change in the education system, to bring in Indianisation in the system. And we believe this cannot be done by one organisation or institution. That's why we are gathering representatives from the government, academia and social organisations. We are trying to connect with whoever is doing good work in the field of education. During the conference we will discuss what kind of changes are required in the education system and how we can achieve the same," Kothari said to *The Indian Express*.

Announcing the event in Delhi Friday, Kothari had said the purpose of the conference is to explore how education in India can become more value-based, India-centric and knowledge-oriented. "The aim is not to oppose Western knowledge systems but to ensure Indian students remain rooted in their traditions, culture and knowledge," Kothari had said.

The first two days of the conference (July 25-26) will see a closed-door 'Chintan Baithak'. On July 28, an open session will be held focussing on policy discussions and collaboration.

Accusing BJP-led governments of branding Bengalis as illegal Bangladeshi or Rohingya, Banerjee had recently led a protest march in Kolkata in the backdrop of large-scale evictions in Assam, mostly affecting Bengali-

speaking people. Salma had said the decision was aimed at "protecting demographic change".

Banerjee said on X Saturday, "The second most spoken language in the country, Bangla, is also the second most spoken language of Assam. To threaten citizens, who want to coexist peacefully respecting all languages and religions, with persecution for upholding their own mother tongue is discriminatory and unconstitutional."

"This divisive agenda of BJP in Assam has crossed all limits and people of Assam will fight back." Salma launched a counterattack and in a post on X accused

the Bengal CM of indulging in appeasement politics at the cost of national integrity. He said that the government is not fighting "our own people" but instead opposing "ongoing, unchecked Muslim infiltration from across the border, which has already caused an alarming demographic shift".

"In several districts, Hindus are now on the verge of becoming a minority in their own land. This is not a political narrative – it's a reality. Even the Supreme Court of India has termed such infiltration as external aggression. And yet, when we rise to defend our land, culture, and identity, you choose

to politicise it. We do not divide people by language or religion. Assamese, Bangla, Bodo, Hindi – all languages and communities have coexisted here. But no civilisation can survive if it refuses to protect its borders and its cultural foundation," he said.

"While we are acting decisively to preserve Assam's identity, you, Didi, have compromised Bengal's future – encouraging illegal encroachment by a particular community, appealing one religious community for vote banks, and remaining silent as border infiltration eats away at national integrity – all just to stay in power."

RJD MP Sudhakar Singh said the people would not believe in the NDA's promises. "They (NDA) have delivered nothing on the job front in the past 20 years. The RJD can make jobs an election issue, the NDA cannot," he claimed.

JDU spokesperson Rajiv Ranjan Prasad, however, said people's trust in Nitish is based on his track record. "Even though between 2005 and 2014 we had an adversary (UPA government) at the Centre, we created eight lakh jobs. In the past five years we have given 12 lakh jobs and created 39 lakh employment opportunities. Now we are promising 1 crore jobs. These are not announcements made out of thin air. Nitish Kumar never makes an announcement without a robust plan behind it. We are doing whatever it takes to make Bihar a developed state," Prasad said, claiming how Nitish has "delivered on all his promises – from law and order to

women empowerment".

The RJD's Mahagathbandhan ally Congress has also sought to echo the RJD's plank. Through its "Naukri Do Ya Satta Chhodo" yatra, the Congress has flagged five lakh pending vacancies and demanded "same-pay-for-same-work" guarantees. Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi and Kanhaiya Kumar, have tried to connect unemployment with the larger issues of inequality, caste injustice, and migration.

The BJP has kept the focus on the NDA's delivery record, casting doubt on the Opposition for promising "impossible freebies". RJD leaders have dismissed the RJD's claims as "populist jumbals", citing "10 lakh jobs already provided by the NDA government".

With every major contender amplifying their job narratives, the issue, which has always remained an undercurrent in the Bihar polls, has clearly taken centre stage this time.

Nitish to Tejashwi, BJP to Cong, why jobs have become Bihar poll theme song

While Tejashwi pledges that nobody will need to migrate for jobs under RJD rule, Nitish claims his govt has given 12 lakh govt jobs, promising 1 crore more

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

IN MARCH 2024, just on the eve of the Lok Sabha polls, standing before a large gathering in Patna's Gandhi Maidan, RJD leader and Leader of the Opposition in Bihar Assembly, Tejashwi Yadav, set the tone for not only the parliamentary polls but also the next electoral show-down – the 2025 Assembly polls.

"BJP is a factory of lies... RJD stands for Rights, Jobs and Development," Tejashwi thundered at the Jan Vishwas Maha Rally, putting unemployment and migration at the heart of his party's campaign. This pitch has only grown sharper in the run-up to the Assembly polls slated for October-November this year. The party has since, in each public meeting, social media post or press statement, sent out its message to the people of the state: "Give us 20 months, and

we'll deliver what the NDA couldn't in 20 years."

Rising in response, CM and JDU chief Nitish Kumar has rolled out a slew of policy measures and employment drives.

In Bihar, unemployment is no longer a statistical matter. For it seems to have now become a key issue of public discourse, a rallying cry in campaigns, a prism through which both performances and promises of various parties are seen.

The RJD's messaging has remained consistent. The party's social media posts have been centred on Tejashwi's pitch for "work, jobs, employment, policy, and development". The RJD has made a raft of poll pledges: 10 lakh government jobs, an unemployment allowance, a Youth Commission, and a domicile-based job policy for the Bihar youth. Beneath these big promises lies a clear strategy: to frame the state's long-standing job and migration crisis and lack

of industrialisation as a "direct consequence of NDA misrule" – and position the RJD as the force that would "stem migration by generating jobs at home". "Our youth will no more migrate in search of jobs," Tejashwi said last month. "No Bihar will need to leave the state for employment under the RJD rule."

Nitish has sought to counter the Opposition's campaign through various moves. In June alone, he has unveiled various programmes for youth empowerment. On July 2, he launched the CM-PRAATYAY scheme, offering stipends ranging from Rs 4,000 to Rs 6,000 to 1 lakh interns across Bihar. A week later, the Nitish-led NDA Cabinet approved the creation of the Bihar Youth Commission, which is tasked with prioritising local hiring, suggesting employment reforms, and combating substance abuse.

Nitish has also ramped up his

campaign icon and ex-CM. The JD(U) is trying to build a narrative that the party has not only been generating government jobs but also creating "an ecosystem for both public and private sector employment opportunities".

Also, the Nitish government is trying to attract investments through Bihar's Industrial Investment Promotion Policy. Since its announcement in 2016, the policy has resulted in getting over 3,800 investment proposals, of which over 3000 are at various stages of approval and operation, government sources said. As of December 2024, 780 industrial units were operational, employing about 34,000 people. The state has a land bank of over 3,000 acres and is acquiring more land. Plug-and-play industrial sheds cover 2.4 million square feet, ready for immediate use. Nitish has also been busy inaugurating new industrial units ahead of the polls. While several observers argue

that the Nitish government's industrial policy has fallen short of its promise for transformation, cutting modest job numbers, Bihar's Industry secretary Mihir Kumar Singh said the state has received proposals worth ₹1.81 lakh crore of which ₹84,000 crore worth of investments have been "committed". Big investors like Adani, Ambuja Cements and Coca-Cola are also investing in the state.

Earlier this month, the Nitish government unveiled its Renewable Energy Policy

Tirupati temple board suspends 4 employees on allegation of practising other religious faiths

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, JULY 19

THE TIRUMALA Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) which manages Andhra Pradesh's Sri Venkateswara temple has suspended four of its employees based on allegations that they are non-Hindus and practising other religious faiths.

The suspended employees are B Elizar, deputy executive engineer (quality control); S Rosi, staff nurse, BIRR hospital; M Premavati, grade-1 pharmacist, BIRR hospital, and Dr G Asuntha of SV Ayurveda Pharmacy.

These employees are believed to have violated the institution's code of conduct and acted irresponsibly in their duties while representing and working for a Hindu religious organisation, the TTD said in a statement.

After examining a report submitted by the TTD Vigilance Department and other evidence, departmental action was taken against them as per the rules and the four employees were immediately suspended, it said.

The suspensions are the latest in a wider effort to transfer or suspend officials belonging to other faiths from the TTD.

On July 8, the TTD had suspended assistant executive officer A Rajasekhar Babu stating that he attends local church prayers every Sunday in his hometown Puttur in Tirupati district.

TTD sources said that the board has taken a decision not to allow any non-Hindu to work in the TTD, especially in the temples it governs and managed by it.

After the Telugu Desam Party-led NDA government came to power in June last year, the TTD had transferred several non-Hindu employees working in various positions in the TTD. In February this year, the TTD transferred 18 employees for allegedly practicing and participating in non-Hindu religious activities.

The transferred employees include six teachers at various TTD educational institutes, a deputy executive officer (welfare), an assistant executive officer, an assistant technical officer (electrical), a hostel worker, two electricians and two nurses.

On November 18, in its maiden meeting of the TTD under new chairman BR Naidu, the board had decided to transfer non-Hindus and ban political speeches on its premises.

From 'PDA' banners to Mulayam and Akhilesh photos, SP stepping up to mark Kanwar Yatra

SP's strategy is aimed at countering allegations of 'minority appeasement' made by BJP, with an Akhilesh-headed trust also building a Shiva temple in Etawah

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

The Samajwadi Party (SP) has been going all out to take on the ruling BJP in Uttar Pradesh in the run-up to the 2027 Assembly polls. While a trust headed by SP president Akhilesh Yadav is engaged in the construction of the Kedareshwar Mahadev Temple in Etawah district – with several similarities to the Ram Temple in Ayodhya – party workers are now also taking part in Kanwar Yatra.

The SP has sought to give its own touch to the Kanwar Yatra, which is one of the main religious events in North India every year, involving many devotees from UP. The SP workers have got pictures of Akhilesh and party founder late Mulayam Singh Yadav as well as slogans pasted on kanwars – the containers with holy water from Ganga that the devotees carry back home after undertaking the yatra.

On July 16, a group of 15 SP workers started the Kanwar Yatra from Haridwar in Uttarakhand. They will be travelling to a Shiva temple in Noida in a vehicle with a music system and large banners stating: "Samajwadi PDA dwara vishal Kanwar Yatra (SP PDA's majestic Kanwar Yatra)".

On Friday, Akhilesh posted a video of the SP workers' Kanwar journey, with a message that the party has been praying for public welfare. This messaging is in line with his PDA (Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak) outreach,

2025-26 MBBS COUNSELLING TO START ON MONDAY

'What you can and can't do?' Some questions in NMC guidelines for students with disabilities

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

THE NATIONAL Medical Commission (NMC) has released interim guidelines for the admission of students with disabilities, focussing on "functional competency" instead of their disability percentage.

The interim guidelines, meant only for the 2025-26 batch of MBBS students, were released by the apex medical education regulator just ahead of the counselling process set to begin on Monday.

The new set of guidelines adds one step in the process for the students with disability – they will now have to submit a self-certified affidavit on the activities they can and cannot perform.

This is in addition to the government's Unique Disability ID that mentions the extent of a student's disability and undergoing a certification by one of the 16 designated medical boards in the country. (The government was earlier asked by the courts to increase the number of these medical boards to ensure that students with disabilities do not have

to travel far, sometimes out of their states, to get the certificate.)

"The previously mandated arithmetic threshold shall no longer be applicable. Instead, emphasis will be placed on assessing a candidate's functional ability to meet the academic and clinical demands of the MBBS course," the document said.

For this newly added process, the students with disability will have to submit two self-declaration certificates – one which states the type of disability the student has and whether they can communicate clearly, hear in quiet and noisy environments, write and hold instruments with their dominant hand, comprehend medical terminologies and maintain social interaction, and whether they can perform all tasks with the help of low vision aid and their vision improves to qualify for less than 40% disability with it.

The second affidavit is disability specific and asks the students to answer a bunch of questions. For people with hearing impairment, the questions include whether they can communicate effectively with a hearing aid or cochlear implant, engage in a conversation in quiet and noisy environments, understand and respond to verbal instructions, and have conversations on the phone. For those with disability in their hand, the students are asked whether they can lift objects over their head and place it back, whether they can touch the tip of the nose with the tip of the hand, whether they can eat by themselves, groom and comb by themselves, put on their own clothes, button/unbutton or zip/unzip, clean themselves after going to the toilet, drink water holding a glass, and hold a pen or pencil and write.

For disability of the legs, students are asked whether they can bear weight and stand on both their legs, bear weight and stand on the affected leg, walk on plain surfaces, sit on a chair by themselves, climb up or go down the stairs on their own, and turn to their left and right.

For students with mental illnesses, speech disorders, or learning disorders, the questionnaire asks whether they can communicate clearly and empathetically with people, listen and respond to speech in quiet and

noisy environments, follow instructions and comprehend required medical terminologies, understand and respond to verbal instructions.

For visual impairment, students have to answer whether their vision can be corrected with an aid to less than 40%, the field of vision is more than 40 degrees with the aid, and the aid is hands-free and suitable for daily use. The document says: "If the candidate while self-declaring the essential competencies mentions one or more competencies in negative or is not able to demonstrate one or more of the listed essential competencies, the board shall see if he/she is able to compensate such deficits, by other alternative functionalities; and may take a holistic view regarding his capability to pursue MBBS course."

Criticism

Dr Satendra Singh from the Doctors With Disabilities, who himself had polio and uses crutches to aid his affected leg, criticised the NMC guidelines.

"These guidelines essentially imply that a wheelchair-bound person can never become a doc-

tor. How is climbing up a staircase a necessity for a doctor? How does it matter if a person drinks their water using a straw instead of picking up the tumbler? Instead, shouldn't we be ensuring that hospitals have elevators to accommodate people with disabilities?" Dr Singh asked.

These new guidelines have been under development for some time. In fact, a draft developed in 2023 was never finalised after it came under a lot of criticism for including some extremely restrictive guidelines such as not allowing wheelchair-bound persons or those using two crutches to study medicine. It also had some progressive outlook such as suggesting that anyone who can complete all course requirements should be allowed to study medicine despite any mental illness.

"Recycling the same committee members whose previous ableist policies were struck down by the apex court reeks of bureaucratic arrogance. Worse, it reflects an entrenched unwillingness to engage with the persons with disabilities through a rights-based, inclusive lens," says Dr Singh.

The arrest came after Reddy was questioned twice for long hours by the SIT. The Supreme Court had earlier refused to give Reddy interim protection from arrest. He was arrested on Saturday under charges including criminal breach of trust, cheating and criminal conspiracy, joint liability, and cooperation in committing an offence. The arrest was made in Vijayawada.

Reddy is accused No. 4 in the case, which, according to the SIT, pertains to the liquor policy of the previous YSRCP government in Andhra Pradesh that was allegedly tailor-made to benefit some local liquor brands. Police have accused YSRCP leaders and bureaucrats of replacing popular liquor brands with lesser-known brands in exchange for bribes to the tune of Rs 3,200 crore.

Officials said that as per Reddy's arrest notice, he is a "core conspirator from inception to execution, orchestrating policy changes and coordinating with co-accused to secure kickbacks from distilleries and suppliers".

The notice also says that the "transaction trail (between var-

YSRCP MP Midhun Reddy held in liquor policy case

Opposition party alleges political vendetta by Andhra Pradesh CM

NIKHILA HENRY
HYDERABAD, JULY 19

THE SPECIAL Investigation Team (SIT) of the Andhra Pradesh Police arrested YSRCP Congress Party's Lok Sabha floor leader and Rajamet MP, P V Midhun Reddy, in connection with a

ious entities embroiled in the case) indicates the use of front or shell companies for laundering kickbacks, warranting further investigation into potential quid pro quo.

Further, the SIT has alleged that the "ill-gotten money was spent during General Elections 2024 within several constituencies in the state for obtaining undue political advantage".

Meanwhile, YSRCP "strongly condemned the arrest" of Reddy, calling it a "clear case of political vendetta" by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu". In a press statement, former ministers Botsa Satyanarayana, Perni Venkatramaiyah (Nani), Ambati Rambabu, Merugu Nagarjuna, and party general secretary G Srikanth Reddy expressed "serious concerns over the misuse of power to target Opposition leaders".

The statement called it a political conspiracy and an attempt to suppress dissent. The YSRCP said that during its tenure in government, the liquor policy was transparent and handled directly by the state.

The number of liquor shops was reduced and belt shops and permit rooms were removed, it claimed. The statement also said that the current government led by Naidu "committed several irregularities in liquor sales".



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami in Rudrapur on Saturday. PTI

latter in the day, Shah said the Congress is involved in negative politics at a time when Uttarakhand is developing, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Saturday, adding that the party should desist from the habit if it wished to survive.

The Union Minister was speaking at the Investment Festival event held at Manoj Sircar Sports Stadium, Rudrapur, in Udhampur district.

"Congress is always doing

negative politics, especially when development is taking place in Uttarakhand," the minister said.

"It is the collective responsibility of all political parties to rise above their differences and stand unitedly in support of development," Shah said, advising the party to stop putting hurdles on the path of progress.

Shah also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of projects worth ₹1,271 crore before addressing the gathering.

While slamming a social media post by a Congress leader ear-

lier in the day, Shah said the Congress government gave ₹53,000 crore to Uttarakhand in ten years between 2004 and 2014. Drawing a comparison, the minister said that the Modi government gave ₹1,86,000 crore to the state between 2014 and 2024 – 3.5 times more than what the Congress government gave. Apart from this, the Modi government also gave ₹31,000 crore to the state

for roads, ₹40,000 crore for railway tracks and ₹100 crore for airports. He said that when Atal Bihari Vajpayee demitted office, India was the 11th largest economy in the world.

"From that position, Narendra Modi has led the country to the fourth position and I assure you, it is all set to become the third largest economy in the world by 2027."

On Friday night, Jadav and Dileep Dangachiya were at their

Gujarat: CRPF jawan kills live-in partner, surrenders

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, JULY 19

A WOMAN police officer in Kutch district of Gujarat was allegedly murdered by her live-in partner, a CRPF constable, on Friday night. The matter came to light Saturday morning after the man walked into the police station where the victim was posted and surrendered.

The deceased, Aruna Natu Jadav, was posted as an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) at Anjar Police Station in Anjar Division of Kutch (East) police.

On Friday night, Jadav and Dileep Dangachiya were at their

home in Anjar when they allegedly had a fight following which the latter strangled the woman to death.

In a statement on Saturday, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) of Anjar Division, Mukesh Chaudhary, said, "Aruna and Dileep came in contact in 2021 through Instagram. They were in a live-in relationship. They had a fight at 10 pm on Friday night. He strangled her to death."

Chaudhary confirmed that Dangachiya walked into Anjar Police station, the same place where Jadav was posted, on Saturday and surrendered himself to the officer of duty. Police are now investigating the matter.

The notice also says that the "transaction trail (between var-

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A conversation with

VINAI KUMAR SAXENA

Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Delhi

Moderated by: Vandita Mishra, National Opinion Editor, The Indian Express

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Hear better. Live better.

ASI's son arrested for mowing down 2 persons in Gujarat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, JULY 19

THE POLICE Control Room in Bhavnagar received a call by an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI), posted at the Local Crime Branch in the city, Thursday. The alleged crime that he had called to report, though, pertained to his own son.

The ASI told the officer at the control room that his son (20) had called and informed him that his car had rammed into a few pedestrians and a two-wheeler. The ASI also shared the information with the Deputy SP and the inspector stationed at the police station concerned.

A police team was rushed to the spot and an ambulance was pressed into service.

According to the police, Bhargav Bhatti, 30, who works at a private company, was standing on the roadside when the car hit him and he died. Three others, including two women, were admitted to Sir T General Hospital. One of them, Champa Vachhani (45) died during treatment.

The accused, Harshraj Singh Gohil, was arrested and remains in police custody. Officers said Harshraj Singh is the son of Aniruddhsinh Gohil, an ASI.

Cops stopped march demanding J&K statehood restoration: Cong

NAVEED IQBAL
SRINAGAR, JULY 19

A PROTEST march organised by the Congress's J&K unit, pressing the demand for restoration of statehood to the Union Territory, was prevented by police from continuing outside the gates of the party headquarters, the Congress said Saturday.

Led by J&K Congress president Tariq Hameed Karra, alongside other leaders such as AICC general secretary Ghulam Ahmad Mir, the party scheduled a march from the party headquarters at MA Road to the Divisional Commissioner's Office to submit a memorandum to the Prime Minister through the Lieutenant Governor calling for the restoration of complete statehood to J&K.

However, "a heavy contingent of police prevented the peaceful march at the gates of the party headquarters," a statement from the party said.

Accusing the police of using "brute force" to prevent the march, the Karra said, "We want to take the aspirations of the

Police said he was allegedly speeding at the time of the accident. The incident occurred around 4.30 pm in the city's Kalyanpur area, the police said.

In a video statement, R R Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Bhavnagar City, said, "Eyewitnesses said the driver of the car drove recklessly... The inspector of Nilambaug police station has spoken to the family members of the deceased and will be taking their complaint in the matter."

Deputy SP Singhal told *The Indian Express*, "The driver of the vehicle called his father, who works with the Bhavnagar police, and informed him of the accident. It was only due to this early information by his father to the control room, to myself and to the Nilambaug police inspector that an ambulance was alerted at the earliest and the injured people received treatment immediately."

The DSP said the Nilambaug police initially filed a case under BNS 106(a) (causing death by negligence). "However, after obtaining CCTV footage, we asked the court to include additional sections including 106 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), which is a non-bailable offence and entails a minimum punishment of 7 years," he said.

According to the police, Mishra had been serving a life sentence in businessman Rajen-

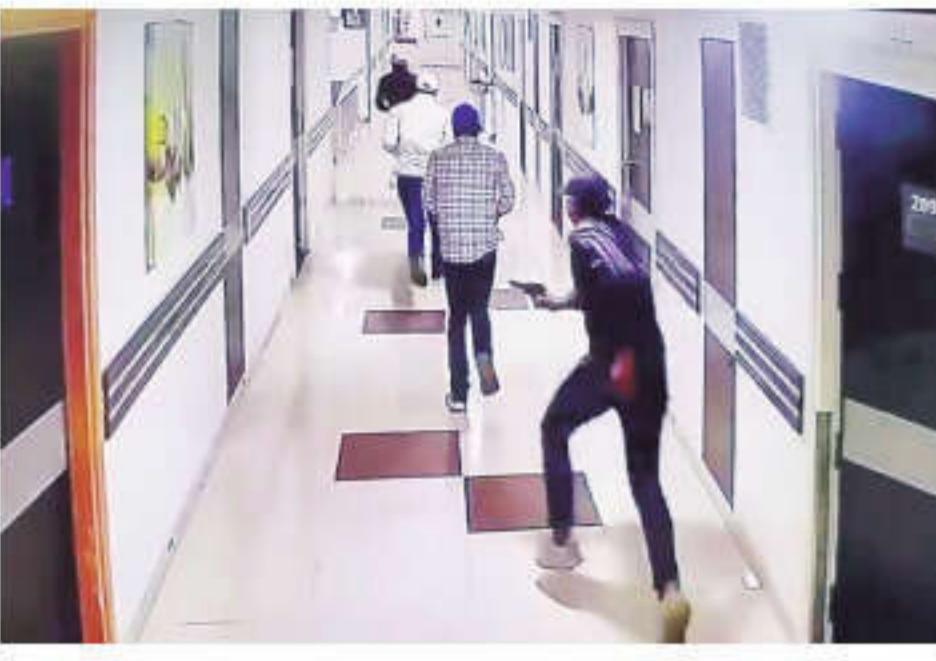
TANUSREE BOSE
KOLKATA, JULY 19

IDENTIFIED BUT still elusive, the police had cast a wider net to nab the assailants who shot dead a convict inside a hospital in Patna. On Saturday morning, five persons were picked up for questioning, after two flats were raided in the New Town area in the outskirts of Kolkata during a joint operation conducted by the Bihar Police and the West Bengal Police, sources said.

While the police were questioning the five persons, they got a tip-off about five more persons staying at a guest house in Anandapur. They were also taken in for questioning at Lalbazar, the Kolkata Police headquarters. According to a police source, a car has also been seized.

On July 17, in the high-security Paras Hospital in Patna, where security protocols are in place that involves frisking of visitors, five men, all carrying guns, shot dead 36-year-old Chandan Mishra, a notorious criminal out on parole, in his hospital room at 7.15 am and vanished on their motorcycles.

According to the police, Mishra had been serving a life sentence in businessman Rajen-



Screengrab of the assailants carrying guns fleeing after shooting inside Patna's Paras Hospital

dra Kumar murder case. He had over 24 criminal cases registered against him, including charges of murder, conspiracy, extortion, arms violations, and offences under the Prisoners Act and IT Act, spanning multiple police stations across Buxar, Dumraon, and Arrah districts of Bihar.

According to police sources, the five persons, who were picked up from the New Town area, had been reportedly staying on rent in two separate flats for the past six to seven months. The police have found that the five had spoken on the phone to the prime accused, and that is

why they are being questioned, sources said.

Bihar Police were scrutinising CCTV footage when they saw the accused entering Bengal and extended their search to the neighbouring state. Sources said they are now going through the CCTV footage of the National Highways and of the building complex to find any clue about the movement of the prime accused.

Chandan, a resident of Buxar district, was arrested by the STF in Kolkata in 2014 and shifted to Buxar Central Jail.

From there, he was shifted to Bhagalpur Central Jail.

Fishers' body slam Govt for allowing deep-sea vessels

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
JULY 19

THE ALL India Deep Sea Fishers' Association has come out against the Union Fisheries Ministry's decision to allow large vessels to operate in deep-sea areas beyond India's sovereign maritime zone.

In a letter to Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Panchayati Raj Rajeev Ranjan Singh, the association said the decision will impact the fortunes of small-scale traditional fishing vessels.

Association chief Charles George said the decision to allow Indian-owned vessels in deep sea was part of the Blue economy policy of the Union Government unveiled in 2020. "We request the Union government... revitalise small-scale and traditional fisherman through modernisation, cooperative strengthening and fair subsidies."

Urging the government to reject the push for industrial deep-sea vessels, the association said

such a move will only worsen ecological and economic crises.

George said as per Central government data, 3,14,677 fishing vessels operate within India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). "However, sustainable fishing practices require only 93,287 vessels... Yet, we cannot outright claim that we have crossed sustainability thresholds because we have predominantly small-scale and traditional vessels."

The body rejected the government stand that allowing large vessels for deep-sea fishing will help tap the hitherto untapped resources.

"Only 4 per cent of India's fish wealth lies in deep waters... due to scarcity in deep waters, these vessels eventually encroach into near-shore zones. Now, with 1.5 to 4 lakh-watt LED lights at the huge vessels attracting fish from coastal waters, the pressure on already strained near-shore ecosystems will intensify... devastate thousands of small-scale boats operating in deep waters, where 64,000 fishermen are working," said the association chief.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P.C

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Tushar, S/o. Sh. Deepak, R/o: I-1049, Mangol Puri, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in a case vide FIR No.150/2021 U/S 25/54/59 Arms Act registered at P.S Mangol Puri, District Outer, Delhi and it has been returned on a warrant of arrest thereupon issued stating that the said accused Tushar could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that accused Tushar is absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said Tushar, accused of FIR No.150/2021 U/S 25/54/59 Arms Act, P.S Mangol Puri, District Outer, Delhi is required to appear before the court to answer the said complaint on or before 20.08.2025.

By Order Ms. Reetika Jain
Judicial Magistrate First Class
North West, Court No.105
(Court Matter)

सार्वजनिक सूचना

कार्यदारी संस्था मैसर्स जेपी इन्फ्राटेक लिमिटेड द्वारा मुप हाऊसिंग पॉकेट संख्या बी-35, व बी-37 (Kosmos) सेक्टर-134 की स्टोर्कृति दिनांक 01 / 11 / 2011 को प्राप्त की गई एवं भवन मानचित्र का पुनर्विकरण दिनांक 24 / 01 / 2020 व 14 / 12 / 2022 को हुआ है। जिसके क्रम में युप हाऊसिंग पॉकेट संख्या - बी-35 व बी-37 (Kosmos) के अन्तर्गत नियोजित टॉवर संख्या KM-24 & KM-25 की Deed of Possession (DoP) दिनांक 26 / 08 / 2015 को नोएडा प्राधिकरण में जमा करायी गयी थी। वर्तमान में कार्यदारी संस्था मैप जेपी इन्फ्राटेक लिमिटेड द्वारा उक्त पॉकेट के टॉवर संख्या KM-24 & KM-25 के अधिभोग प्रमाण पत्र (Completion Certificate) हेतु Online Portal के माध्यम से आवेदन किया गया है। इसके सावधान में सूचित करना है कि सार्वजनिक सूचना प्रसारित होने के 15 दिन के अन्दर किसी भी कार्य दिवस में सुबह 9.30 बजे से दोपहर 12.30 बजे तक एपार्टमेंट स्वामियों / रेजिस्टरेट वेलफेर एसोसिएशन तथा उनके संघ से लिखित आपत्तियाँ आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।

उपरोक्त के निहितर्थ अपनी आपत्तियाँ लिखित रूप में अथवा ऑनलाइन ईमेल आईडी captponida@gmail.com पर अपने आवंटन पत्र, नाम, पता, एवं दूरभाष नम्बर के साथ कार्यालय समय व कार्य दिवस में निर्धारित अवधि अर्थात् सूचना प्रसारित होने के 15 कार्य दिवसों में प्राप्त कारीग जा सकती हैं। नियोजित अवधि के उपरान्त प्राप्त आपत्ति / सुआव पर कोई विचार नहीं किया जायेगा।।

महाप्रबन्धक (नियोजन) नोएडा

IWT pause befitting response to Pak, will benefit J&K, says L-G

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JULY 19

DESCRIBING THE termination of Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan as marking of a new beginning, Jammu and Kashmir L-G Manoj Sinha on Saturday said the decision was a befitting response to Pakistan and will immensely benefit J&K which will be able to harness its real hydro-power potential.

At an event, Sinha said India will create infrastructure, including construction of power plants, reservoirs, and divert riverwaters for proper infrastructure to utilise it.

"India will now create infrastructure, power plants and diversion to new areas with proper infrastructure to use the water and it will enable construction of new reservoirs," he said. "Termination of the IWT is a befitting response to Pakistan and it will have far-reaching consequences since it is dependent on the Indus River system," he said.

L-G Sinha also cited a November 1960 debate in Parliament and the statements of prominent leaders in the House observing that the IWT was "a historical mistake, unfair, one-sided" and hampered infrastructure development in J&K.

Sinha also paid tribute to the civilians, who were martyred in the Pulwama terror attack and reiterated his resolve to deliver justice to the victims.

"It is being ensured that family members who were waiting for justice for decades, will receive jobs, financial assistance... Their culprits will not be spared and the properties of terror victims which were encroached by terrorists... will be vacated soon."

Top court to hear on July 22 President's reference to it on timeline for assent to Bills

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

THE SUPREME Court will take up on July 22 the reference made by the President under Article 143 of the Constitution, following the apex court's verdict fixing timelines for the President and Governors to act on Bills passed by state Assemblies. A Constitution bench of CJI B R Gavai and Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, P S Narasimha and A S Chandrasekhar will consider the matter.

In the Presidential reference made under Article 143(1) of the Constitution, President Murmu has posed 14 questions over the SC's April 8 verdict. The President sought to know whether the actions of the Governors and Presidents are justiciable and whether such timelines can be imposed on them in the absence of any such provision in the Constitution.

The reference pointed out that "there are conflicting judgments of the SC as to whether the assent of the President of India under Article 201 of the Constitution of India is justiciable or not". Under Article 145(3), when the President makes a reference for the court's opinion, it is placed before a five-judge bench.

On April 8, the SC had set a timeline for Governors to act on pending Bills, and for the first time, prescribed that the President should take a decision on the Bills, reserved for consideration by the Governor, within three months from the date on which such reference is received. Under Article 201 of the Constitution, no time-frame has been set for a President's decision. The SC had said that "in case of any delay beyond this period, appropriate reasons would have to be recorded and conveyed" to the state concerned.

The April 8 ruling by a two-judge bench set aside Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi's decision to withhold assent to 10 Bills for consideration of the President in November 2023 after they had already been reconsidered by the Assembly, and said that the action was illegal and erroneous.

In her reference to the SC, President Murmu sought to

know: "Is the exercise of constitutional discretion by the President under Article 201 of the Constitution of India justiciable? In the absence of a constitutionally prescribed timeline... can timelines be imposed and the manner of exercise to be prescribed through judicial orders... by the President under Article 201 of the Constitution of India?"

Article 201 prescribes the powers of the President and the procedure to be followed while assenting to Bills or withholding assent therefrom, but "does not stipulate any time frame or procedure to be followed by the President for the exercise of constitutional options under it".

President Murmu pointed out Article 200 of the Constitution, which prescribes the powers of the Governor and the procedure to be followed while assenting to Bills or withholding assent to Bills, with the Governor having the right to veto bills introduced by the legislature.

On Wednesday, the Supreme Court deferred the matter over the movie to July 21 and asked the filmmakers to await the decision of the Centre-appointed panel to hear objections.

At an event, Patel said, "The Kanhaiya Lal murder case is one of the biggest failures of the previous Congress government. Just

to stay in the headlines, former CM Ashok Gehlot recently claimed that the trial in this case is not taking place."

The minister said the incident happened during Gehlot's tenure. "The chargesheet has already been filed and the trial is underway... The government is pursuing the case effectively and we are fully confident that the trial will conclude soon and the culprits will be awarded capital punishment," he said.

Patel also said, "I can only say that this day this film is released, it will shake the ground beneath many people."

www.indianexpress.com

Minister slams Cong, says release of 'Udaipur Files' will leave many shaken



Minister
Jogaram
Patel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR, JULY 19

LAUNCHING A scathing attack on the previous Congress government over the murder of Udaipur-based tailor Kanhaiya Lal in 2022, Rajasthan Minister Jogaram Patel on Saturday called it "one of the biggest failures" of the former regime.

His remarks came amid the continuing legal battle over the release of the film *Udaipur Files - Kanhaiya Lal Tailor Murder*, which is based on the high-profile killing.

At an event, Patel said, "The Kanhaiya Lal murder case is one of the biggest failures of the previous Congress government. Just

to stay in the headlines, former CM Ashok Gehlot recently claimed that the trial in this case is not taking place."

The minister said the incident happened during Gehlot's tenure. "The chargesheet has already been filed and the trial is underway... The government is pursuing the case effectively and we are fully confident that the trial will conclude soon and the culprits will be awarded capital punishment," he said.

On January 16, the Bandra police registered an FIR against an unknown intruder who entered the residence of Khan and his wife Kapoor.

The Mumbai police had arrested Islam from Thane on January 19 after tracking him using CCTV footage and other technical evidence.

Saif attack accused files new bail plea as trial yet to begin

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JULY 19

OVER SIX months after an attack on actor Saif Ali Khan at his Bandra residence, the alleged attacker has sought bail stating that he has been in jail since January and there is no likelihood of the trial against him starting soon.

UP Police arrests 10 from 6 states for running 'religious conversion racket'

Probe suggests group's link with PFI, SDPI and some groups in Pak: Police



Sabroz and Shahbuddin are among the 10 arrests made by the police. ANI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

LUCKNOW, JULY 19

THE UTTAR Pradesh Police on Saturday claimed to have busted a network allegedly indulging in illegal religious conversions with the arrest of 10 people from six states in connection with its probe into abduction of two sisters from Agra in March this year.

Police said during the investigation into the abduction of the sisters, aged 33 and 18, they found evidence indicating the involvement of a group operating across multiple states.

Uttar Pradesh DGP Rajeev Krishna confirmed the arrest of 10 people.

The police traced the Agra sisters to a house in Kolkata on Friday and they were rescued in presence of their family members, said a police officer.

Police said the accused would allegedly lure young women, particularly minors, across states through deceitful means for religious conversion and were receiving funds from Canada and other countries to run their operations.

Police said preliminary investigations suggest the group's link with organisations like PFI, SDPI and some extremist groups in Pakistan.

In the process of tracing the sisters, the Agra police detected the network of a group and secured non-bailable warrants against the accused. Eleven teams were dispatched to different states, including West Bengal, Goa, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Rajasthan, to make the arrests, police said.

Those arrested – all aged between 18 years and 35 years – have been identified as Ayesha alias S B Krishna from Goa; Ali Hasan alias Shekhar Roy, Ritwanik and Osama from Kolkata; Rahman Qureshi from Agra; Abu Talib from Muzaffarnagar; Abdur Rahman alias Rupendra Singh from Dehradun; Mohammad Ali and Junaid Qureshi from Rajasthan;

DGP Krishna said the fresh arrests were part of the 'Mission Asmita', under which two persons, named Mohammad Umar Gautam and Jahangir Alam Qasmi, were arrested earlier for their involvement in religious conversions. Recently, Jamaluddin alias Chhangur Baba and his associates were arrested for running an illegal conversion racket in Balampur district.

Given the gravity of these incidents, specialized units of the UP Police, including the Special Task Force (STF) and the Anti-Terror Squad (ATS), have been roped in to assist with the ongoing investigation, Director General of Police Rajeev Krishna said.

Chhattisgarh: 6 Maoists killed in encounter carried ₹48L bounty

JAYPRAKASH Naidu
RAIPUR, JULY 19

SIX MAOISTS killed in an encounter in Chhattisgarh on Friday were identified as cadres of the Maoist armed wing People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) platoon 1 and had a collective bounty of ₹48 lakh, police said. Police also said they were responsible for ensuring safe passage of other senior Maoist leaders.

One of the Maoists was identified as Rahul Punem (38) alias Lachhu Punem from Dalla village in Sukma. He was a Divisional Committee member and commander of platoon 1. Among the Maoists killed were four women.

Inspector General of Police for Bastar Range Sundarraj P said, "One AK-47 rifle, one SLR rifle, one 12-bore rifle, and 11 BGL launchers among other weapons were recovered."

Narayanpur SP Robinson Guria said there were multiple challenges during the operation.



Weapons recovered from the Maoists. Express

"We had to cross a river and several nullahs that were swollen and deep due to the rainy season. The nearest police camp too was around 20-25 kms away."

The encounter took place in the Pariya-Kakur forest area in the Abujhmar region near the Maharashtra-Kanker and Narayanpur trijunction. The spot is about 50 kms away from Narayanpur district headquarters. Abujhmar is larger than

Goa in size and 90% of it remains unsurveyed.

The operation was undertaken by a joint team comprising District Reserve Guard (DRG) personnel from Narayanpur, Kanker, Bastar, and Kondagaon districts, Special Task Force (STF) units of Chhattisgarh, and battalions of the BSF. So far this year, 221 Maoists have been killed in Chhattisgarh while 219 Maoists were killed in the state last year.

2 Himachal brothers adopt Hatti tradition of polyandry, marry same woman

In Badhana village in Trans-Giri area of Sirmour district, five such marriages have taken place in the past six years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NAHAN/SHIMLA, JULY 19

TWO BROTHERS of the Hatti tribe tied the knot to a woman in Shillai village of Himachal Pradesh, with hundreds of people witnessing the marriage solemnised under the anachronistic tradition of polyandry.

Bride Sunita Chauhan and grooms Pradeep and Kapil Negi said they took the decision without any pressure.

Local folk songs and dances added colour to the ceremony that began on July 12 and lasted for three days in the Trans-Giri

area of Sirmour district.

Videos of the wedding ceremony have gone viral on the internet.

Revenue laws of Himachal Pradesh recognise this tradition and named it "Jodidara".

In Badhana village in Trans-Giri, five such marriages have taken place in the past six years.

Sunita, who hails from Kunhat village, said that she was aware of the tradition and made her decision without any pressure, adding she respects the bond they have formed.

Pradeep, from Shillai village, works in a government department while his younger brother



Bride Sunita Chauhan with grooms Pradeep and Kapil Negi

JHARKHAND

Minister son's 'hospital inspection' kicks up row, father defends 'humanitarian act'

SHUBHAM TIGGA
RANCHI, JULY 19

A VIDEO clip of Jharkhand Health Minister Irfan Ansari's son asking people if there were any issues in a hospital in Ranchi went viral on social media, sparking a political controversy and prompting Ansari to claim that his son's "purely humanitarian" act was being twisted for political gains.

In the video, which was posted on the Instagram handle of Irfan Ansari's son Krish Ansari, Krish is seen inspecting hospital rooms along with his friends. He can be heard asking, "Koi tagleef hai aapko? Agar haai to details share kar dijiye (Is anyone facing any issues? If yes, please share the details.)"

The video, which was posted with background music, also showed one of Krish's friends saying, "Koi tagleef hai to batayiye, mantri ji ke bete aaye hue hain, bade bade (If there's any issue, please speak up. The minister's son is here, the elder son.)"

The video sparked a controversy, with Opposition parties in the state questioning the authority of the minister's son to conduct such inspections in hospitals.

BJP spokesperson Ajay Sah



A screen grab of the viral video

said that instead of focusing on health infrastructure, the son of Jharkhand's Health Minister was more concerned with shooting a reel.

"Are we now to believe that the children of health ministers will conduct hospital inspections? Will the children of finance ministers start reviewing government files? Will the children of home ministers begin registering FIRs at police stations?" he asked.

Sah said that rather than reprimanding his son or showing him the right path, the minister has chosen to justify the incident, and

that this allegedly showed that his son acted with the full approval of the minister.

"As for the Congress party, it appears that Irfan Ansari is following in the footsteps of Rahul Gandhi, working to settle his entire family into politics from an early stage," Sah said.

Minister Ansari issued a detailed statement, defending his son and calling the allegations against him "baseless, misleading, and politically motivated".

"Understand the truth. My son, Krish, is being wrongly dragged into this," the minister said, claiming that Krish had not visited the hospital for official inspection or political visibility.

"He had gone to see the ailing father of his teacher, Aditya Kumar Jha, who is admitted at RIMS (Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, Ranchi). Around the same time, some Adivasi families approached us at our residence, distressed about the treatment of their relatives at the hospital. Krish accompanied them out of concern, not for any political purpose," Ansari said.

During the visit, Ansari said Krish also extended help to a relative of a senior journalist admitted to the hospital. "He acted

purely on humanitarian grounds. The way this incident is now being twisted to suit a political narrative is extremely unfortunate and worrying," the minister said.

Calling Krish "an educated and sensitive young student currently on vacation", the minister said public service runs in the family. "He is the grandson of former MP Furkan Ansari, who contributed to the Jharkhand statehood movement. It should not surprise anyone that he would be naturally inclined to help others," Ansari said.

"Krish keeps asking me, 'Papa, is it a crime to help people?' This question breaks me from within. My son has not committed any crime, nor has he acted out of arrogance or power. He saw someone in distress and tried to help," the minister said.

He appealed for sensitivity in public discourse and urged people to "remove the lens of politics" when assessing the situation.

"This is an insult to a young man's empathy. If we start vilifying every hand raised in help, what direction are we taking our society in?"

Despite the controversy, Ansari said Krish remains undeterred. "He may be heartbroken, but his resolve to serve others remains strong," he said.

Locals rushed to the spot after hearing her screams for help and took her to the nearest hospital.

According to the preliminary probe, three motorcycle-borne assailants intercepted her at an isolated place, tied a handkerchief around her face, doused her with a flammable substance and set her ablaze before fleeing the scene.

Police sources said the motive behind the attack is not yet clear.

A scientific team has already collected evidence from the crime scene and a probe has been launched, officials said.

Puri SP Pinak Mishra said a

special team has been formed to investigate the case. "It's a very sensitive case and a thorough investigation is being conducted from all angles. We will record the victim's statement once her con-

15-year-old girl set ablaze by three men in Odisha, critical

SUJIT BISOYI

BHUBANESWAR, JULY 19

A 15-YEAR-OLD girl sustained critical injuries after she was set on fire by three unidentified assailants in Odisha's Puri district on Saturday morning while she was on her way to a friend's house.

She was initially rushed to the Pipili hospital in Puri and has subsequently been moved to AIIMS, Bhubaneswar. According to a statement by the hospital, she was admitted with approximately 70% "total body surface area (TBSA)" burns.

According to local residents, the incident took place at around 8.30 am at a location that comes under the jurisdiction of Balanga police station.

Locals rushed to the spot after hearing her screams for help and took her to the nearest hospital.

Former chief minister and Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik condemned the incident and said repeated occurrences of such incidents show how "Odisha is becoming highly unsafe for women due to government inaction and political patronage..."

On his X profile, Patnaik wrote: "Such unthinkable incidents against women are now being reported almost daily across Odisha. These are not stray cases of violence. These incidents occurring with shocking regularity point to a deep systemic failure of governance. It shows that criminals have become emboldened under the present government and are not worried about being punished."

According to the preliminary probe, three motorcycle-borne assailants intercepted her at an isolated place, tied a handkerchief around her face, doused her with a flammable substance and set her ablaze before fleeing the scene.

Police sources said the motive behind the attack is not yet clear. A scientific team has already collected evidence from the crime scene and a probe has been launched, officials said.

Puri SP Pinak Mishra said a special team has been formed to investigate the case. "It's a very sensitive case and a thorough investigation is being conducted from all angles. We will record the victim's statement once her con-

cerns on various aspects of digital safety," said Chief Minister Majhi.

A mobile app will also be launched to help women students raise their complaints with internal complaint committees and connect to mental health experts in case of stress and anxiety. It will also have facilities like an SOS button in case of emergency.

The state government has also decided to come up with a code of conduct for university and college professors. Professors will now have to take an online training module with focus on women's safety, gender equality and professional ethics, officials said.

A campaign, called SAFE (Shaktishtree Actions for Female Empowerment), will be launched in colleges, under which self-defence training will be organised twice a year. It will also include workshops on women's safety and rights. State-run colleges and universities will have to submit a campus safety report.

Under the Shaktishtree initiative, the Chief Minister said an adequate number of CCTV cameras will also be installed in all colleges and universities, and that a control room would be set up for monitoring.

Under fire over death of student, Odisha brings campus safety initiative for girls

App with SOS button, training for professors

SUJIT BISOYI

BHUBANESWAR, JULY 19

IN THE wake of a student's death in Balasore after she accused a professor of sexual harassment, the Odisha government on Saturday announced a new initiative called Shaktishtree, which aims to ensure a safe academic environment in colleges and universities in case of emergency.

The state government has also

decided to come up with a code of conduct for university and college professors. Professors will now have to take an online training module with focus on women's safety, gender equality and professional ethics, officials said.

A campaign, called SAFE (Shaktishtree Actions for Female Empowerment), will be launched in colleges, under which self-defence training will be organised twice a year. It will also include workshops on women's safety and rights. State-run colleges and universities will have to submit a campus safety report.

Under the Shaktishtree initiative, the Chief Minister said an adequate number of CCTV cameras will also be installed in all colleges and universities, and that a control room would be set up for monitoring.

These requirements of tribal families have kept the polyandry system for thousands of years, in practice, though these traditions are slowly dying, Shastri added.

In this unique tribal tradition of marriage known as "jajda", the bride comes to the village of the groom in a procession and the ritual known as "Seenji" is performed at the residence of the groom.

The pandit chant mantras in local language with sprinkling holy water on the bride and groom and offer them jaggery in the end, with blessings that their Kul Devta may bring sweetness in their married life.

Jaunsar Babar, tribal area of Uttarakhand and Kinnaur, a tribal district of Himachal Pradesh.

Kundan Singh Shastri, general secretary of Kendriya Hatti Samiti, the prime body of the Hatti community, said this tradition was invented thousands of years ago to save a family's agricultural land from further division.

Another reason is to promote brotherhood and mutual understanding in a joint family by marrying even two or more brothers born from different mothers with a single bride, he told PTI.

The third reason is a feeling of security "if you have bigger family, more men, you are more secure in a tribal society", he said, adding it also helps in managing

Amid differences with his party, Tharoor stands his ground: 'Nation comes first'

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 19

CONGRESS MP Shashi Tharoor on Saturday said that for him, the nation comes first and that there was a need to "cooperate with other parties in the interest of national security".

Tharoor's remarks during an event in Kochi came at a time of "differences of opinion" between him and sections of the Congress after he led an all-party delegation to foreign countries to explain Operation Sindoora. He has faced flak from within his party for defending the government's stance on the issue. At the Kochi event on Saturday, Tharoor said, "We respect our parties, and certain values and convictions keep us in our parties. But we need to cooperate with other parties in the interest of national security... Which is your first loyalty? To my mind, the nation comes first. Parties are a means of making the nation bet-

ter. To my mind, to whichever party you belong to, the objective of that party is to create a better India, in its own way. Parties have every right to disagree with the best way of doing that."

He said a lot of people have been critical of him because of the stand he took in supporting the armed forces and the government regarding "what happened in the country and on our borders".

"But I will stand my ground because I believe this is the right thing for the country. When I speak of India, I speak for all Indians, not just those who may like my party."

SOUTH EASTERN COALFIELDS LIMITED
 "A MINI RATNA COMPANY"
NOTICE

All the tenders issued by SECL for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of SECL <http://www.secl-cil.in>, CIL e-procurement portal <http://coalindiatenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <http://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <http://gem.gov.in>. SECL's mining services tenders are also now available on GeM portal <http://gem.gov.in>.

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
 OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER: P.W.D. (Roads): ASSAM
 CHANDMARI: GUWAHATI-3

No.CEM/03/2025/4

PRESS NOTICE

The Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads), Assam on behalf of the Governor of Assam invites bids for the works "Procurement of 5(five) units of (one unit each) (i) 140 ft TSR (ii) 130 ft TSR (iii) 80 ft DSR (iv) 100 ft DSR and (v) 100 ft DSR 2 Transom per bay Standard Width Steel Deck Bailey bridge (Galvanised)" from the manufacturer/authorized dealer having experience in supplying of Bailey Bridge Units. Details may be seen at website: www.assamtenders.gov.in. The last date of submission of bid is 25/08/2025 up to 2 p.m. Bidders must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWD, Assam; website www.assamtenders.gov.in for participating in the bidding process.

 Sd/-
 Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads)
 DIPR/CF/IXP/1104/20-JUL-25 Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3.
PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**(See Section 82 Cr.P.C.)**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Prince, S/o Dharam Pal Mathur R/o I-703, Jahanpur, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 383/2019 u/s 307 IPC, P.S. Mahendra Park, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Prince cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Prince has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Prince of FIR No. 383/2019 u/s 307 IPC, P.S. Mahendra Park, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 20.08.2025.

 By Order,
 Sh. Jagmohan Singh
 Additional Sessions Judge (North)-03
 Room No.312, Rohini Courts, Delhi

DP/8983/NW/2025

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**(SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.)**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) **Akbar S/o Sultan Saifi R/o H. No. 886, Pramukh Goli, Sanjay Colony, Mohan Nagar, Ghaziabad, U.P. Also at H. No. 116, Arya Colony, Gore East, Mumbai Also at H. No. 178, Durga Colony, Gali No. 3, Majupur Also At Janta Flat, Nyay Khan, Indrapura, Ghaziabad, U.P.** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 109/2018 U/s 380/454/34 IPC PS Patel Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) Akbar can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) Akbar has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) Akbar of case FIR No. 109/2018 U/s 380/454/34 IPC PS Patel Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before dated 04.09.2025

 By Order
 Akriti Mahendru
 LD. Addl. Chief Judicial Magistrate
 West, Room No. 145
 Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi
DP/9163/CD/2025
(Court Matter)**GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA**
 OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES**MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH
(DME), MEGHALAYA****PASTEUR HILLS, SHILLONG**Email ID: pasteurinstitutesh@gmail.com Tel No. 0364-2591510/94851 06663**CORIGENDUM**

In partial modification of NIT No. DHSMER/SMC/TENDER/180/2025/547 dated 20.06.2025 (Anatomy Department), NIT No. DHSMER/SMC/TENDER/127/2025/543 dated 20.06.2025 (Physiology Department), and NIT No. DHSMER/SMC/TENDER/61/2025/539 dated 20.06.2025 (Biochemistry Department), issued by the Directorate of Health Services - Medical Education & Research (DME), Meghalaya, for the Supply and Installation of Equipment/Items at Shillong Medical College, Shillong, respective corrigendum has been issued to incorporate certain modifications and clarifications.

All interested bidders are advised to refer to the said corrigendum, which is available on the official departmental: meghealth.gov.in and nhmmeghalaya.nic.in.

All other terms and conditions of the respective Notes Inviting Bids shall remain unchanged unless otherwise specified in the corrigendum.

 (Sd/-)
 Director of Health Services
 M.I.P.R. No. 1148
 Date: - 18/07/25

 Medical Education & Research (DME)
 Meghalaya, Pasteur Hills, Shillong
PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**(See Section 82 Cr.P.C.)**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Mahender Kaur, W/o: Sh. Paramjeet Singh, R/o: H. No. RZB-233, Nihal Vihar, Delhi-41** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Case FIR No. 443/2019 U/s 279/337 IPC & 3/181 M.V. Act, P.S.: Nihal Vihar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Mahender Kaur cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Mahender Kaur has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said Mahender Kaur accused of Case FIR No. 443/2019 U/s 279/337 IPC & 3/181 M.V. Act, P.S.: Nihal Vihar, Delhi and is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 21.08.2025.

 By Order
 Ms. Komal Garg
 Judicial Magistrate, First Class-03
DP/9531/OD/2025
(Court Matter)

Room No. 292, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

KANPUR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, KANPUR
 Moti Jheel, Kanpur-208002**Appointment Of Consultant For Preparation Of ToD Zonal Development Plans**

Kanpur Development Authority intends to appoint a Consultant for preparation of Zonal Development Plans of Transit Oriented Development corridors for 500m on either sides of the IIT Kanpur to Naubasta and CSA to Barra 8 Metro Corridors. Request of Proposal (RFP) document can be downloaded from e-tender and KDA website www.kdaindia.co.in and the Technical and Financial bids can be submitted on e-tender website by 20.08.2025, 15:00 Hrs. along with the necessary documents as mentioned in the RFP Document.

MADAN SINGH GARBYAL
 Vice Chairman
PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**See Section 82 Cr.P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that the accused persons Namely **Jitender@Jeetu S/o Purshotam R/o H. No. A-160, Vikas Kunj, Pal Vihar, Noida Ghaziabad U.P. has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in e-FIR No. 31796/16, U/s 379/411 IPC, PS: Gokalpuri, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Jitender@Jeetu** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Jitender@Jeetu** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Jitender@Jeetu** accused of e-FIR No. 31796/16, U/s 379/411 IPC, PS: Gokalpuri, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 28.08.2025.

 DP/9481/NE/2025
(Court Matter)

 By Order
 Ms. Kanika Aggarwal
 JMFC-03, Room No.-22
 Karkardooma Court Delhi
POWER CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT
E-Tender Notice No.: TSK/Elect/199 Dated: 17-07-2025.

E-Tenders are invited by the

undersigned for the following works:

Tender No. LV-T-14-TSK-893-R.

Brief Description of Item: Power

Capacity enhancement by Provision

of 3.15 MVA 33/11KV Power

Transformer & Improvement of 11KV

Power Supply system at Tinsukia

33/11KV Power House and at Marian

Jn. power house. Improvement of

Power supply with shifting of

 11KV switch yard. **Tender Value:**
₹2,63,69,059.43/-, Earnest Money:
₹2,81,900/-, Date & Time of closing of tender:
13:00 hrs. of 08-08-2025 & opening at 15:00 hrs. of 08-08-2025.

The complete information

with the tender document of above

e-tender will be available upto

13:00 hrs. of 08-08-2025 in website
www.ireps.gov.in
DRM (Elect), Tinsukia
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile
CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS**E-OPEN TENDER NOTICE**

E-Open Tenders are invited for and on behalf of

the President of India for the

following work: Sl. No. [1]; Tender No.: NDTLAB-CMC-X-RAY-25-01, Name of Work: Non

Comprehensive Annual Maintenance

Contract of X-Ray machine (1 no.), Balaspur

Cram 35 & Hand X (Tube Sino. 2120787/01) for 2 years,

 Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, Chittaranjan - Tender Value (Rupees): ₹2,59,600/-Cost of Tender Document (Rupees): Nil, Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees): ₹5,200/- Period of Completion: 02 years, Note: (i) Date of Closing of tender: 20.08.2025 at 15:00 hrs. (ii) Complete details can be seen in the Railway website www.ireps.gov.in (iii) Contact No: 91 6 3 3 4 0 3 2 0. (iv) E-mail Id: dpncc@clw.railnet.gov.in (v) CMT/Lab./CLW Like us on: www.facebook.com/chrrailways

Annexure-A

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender Notice No.: 93-SNT-Proj-Tender-2025 Date: 11.07.2025

On the behalf of President of India e-Tenders are invited by the Sr.

DMM/DSID/NWR, Jodhpur. 1. Name of item: 1. Stainless Steel Bench - 4

SEATER (Supply, and Fixing) 2.

Approximate Cost of Items: RS.

3,07,20,000.00(Rs Three Crore

Seven Lacks Twenty Thousand

Rupees Only) 3. Earnest Money to be deposited: Rs. 614400.00 (Rs.

Six Lacks Fourteen Thousand Four

 Hundred Rupees Only); 4. Last date and time for Submission of E-Tender and Opening of E-Tender: 08- Aug-2025, 14:25; 5. Web site from E-Tender forms can be obtained: www.ireps.gov.in; 6. Address of the NIT issuing Office: Officer of the Sr. DMM/DSID, NWR, Jodhpur-342001 (Rajasthan); Note: 1. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be summarily rejected. 2. Cost of tender document & EMD online through e-transfers i.e. through payment gateway facility on the IREPS website

873-AN/25

 Please join us on: www.facebook.com/NWRailways

 01. Pratinidhi निवादा की गाँधी रुपये 189.77 लाख है।
 02. प्रति कार्य अनुमति राशि रुपये 1,424 लाख है।
 03. प्रति कार्य निवादा प्रति कार्य रुपये 3000.00 है।
 04. प्रति कार्य रूपयोगी निवादा 12 माह (वर्षा काल सहित) निर्धारित है।
 05. पंचीनक वार्षा से उत्तर श्रेणी संवृद्धि निवादा में शामिल हो सकते हैं।
 06. यात्रियों पर अनलाइन डाक्ट्रेलेट करने की अंतिम तिथि-08-08-2025

 उपरोक्त निम्न कार्यों की निवादा की सामाज्य शरी, प्रयोगराशि, निवादा विवरण, निवादा रस्तावेदी व अन्य जारीकरण तथा बनाने की ई-प्रोक्यूर्सेमेंट वेबसाइट- <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>

पर में देखे जा सकते हैं।

अधिकारी विवाद, जगदलपुर

RO No. 252602287-5

कार्यालय कलेक्टर, जिला-बसर, जगदलपुर

(आदिवासी विकास शाखा)

Phone/Fax No. 07782-22250

!! ई-प्रोक्यूर्सेमेंट निवादा अमंत्रवाच स्वरूप !!

 eProcurement Portal: <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>

(द्व

Across THE AISLE



P CHIDAMBARAM

Website: pchidambaram.in

Twitter: @Pchidambaram_IN

The inevitable conclusion is that SIR is not an exercise to enable eligible citizens to enroll and vote. It is a dark, sinister plot to *disenfranchise* millions of poor, marginalized or migrant citizens. Over to the Supreme Court on July 28

IF A popular vote had been taken between 1991 and 1996, the Election Commission of India (ECI) would have been certainly voted as the best and most effective institution of India – even higher than the Constitutional Courts. Thanks to T N Seshan, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), the ECI's independence, integrity and impartiality (the three 'I's) were universally acclaimed. After Seshan, the CECs who stoutly defended the three 'I's were M S Gill, Mr J M Lyngdoh, Mr T S Krishnamurthy, Navin Chawla and Mr S Y Quraishi. Other CECs drifted in and drifted out, sometimes bending and sometimes appearing to be unbending. CECs appointed in the last 12 years were, viewed through the prism of the Constitution, disasters.

INDEPENDENCE

ECI is an autonomous institution. In the early years, the conduct of elections was not considered a great challenge. People voted according to the wishes of local satraps, some sections were not allowed to vote but they were too poor and powerless to complain, and there was no political challenge to the Congress. Elections became challenging after 1967. The governments between 1965 and 2014 did not interfere with the functioning of the ECI, nor do I recall any accusation of interference. Some elections to the state assemblies were alleged to have been rigged but

'Mischief thou art afoot'

the allegation was not against the political party ruling at the Centre but against the incompetence of the ECI.

The Lok Sabha election of 2014 was a free and fair election. Since then, most of the elections to the Lok Sabha or the State Assemblies have been subject to widespread criticism of incompetence, rigging, fraud and worse. Since 2014, ECI has faced numerous challenges and it has emerged with its reputation severely scathed.

Apropos the election to the Maharashtra Assembly in November 2024, the electoral rolls became a subject of controversy. The allegations are that (i) an unusually large number of new – and perhaps ghost – names were added to the lists of voters and that (ii) an unusually large number of persons were allowed to vote long after polling hours had ended. ECI has attempted to defend itself against both charges but the jury is out.

INTEGRITY

Another bitterly contested state election is in the offing – in Bihar – and, next year, more are due. Bihar is a test case. Barely four months before the state will go to the polls, ECI has started a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls. This is unusual and unprecedented. An electoral roll is usually updated on January 1 of the year and a summary revision is done on the eve of the polls. The summary revision will include names of

new and unenrolled voters and exclude dead or permanently migrated voters from the current electoral rolls. The bulk of the current electoral rolls will be intact and untouched. Besides, the inclusion and exclusion will be done with the full knowledge and participation of the political parties. Each case for inclusion will be carefully scrutinised and each case for exclusion will be decided after a full contest and hearing.

SIR is different. It effectively scraps the current electoral rolls. Despite the claim that SIR is based on the 2003 electoral rolls, it effectively starts from a zero base and constructs new electoral rolls for each constituency. Besides, the onus is shifted to the voter: despite his/her name being in the current electoral rolls and despite having had a right to vote (and in most cases having voted) in the Bihar Assembly elections of 2020 or the Lok Sabha elections of 2024, he/she must apply for inclusion with documents to prove his/her citizenship. And all this is expected to be done between June 25 and July 26.

IMPARTIALITY

The fine print of the exercise is not to enable enrollment but to place insurmountable hurdles in the path to enroll and vote. The ECI has prescribed 11 documents as 'proof' of citizenship: four of them do not contain information on

place of birth and two of them have not been issued to any person in Bihar. So, effectively, there are only five documents (including caste certificate issued by revenue officers) to prove one's citizenship. Passport, birth certificate or government employee ID are available to only 2.4 to 5 per cent of the population of Bihar. Conspicuous by their absence are (1) Aadhaar, (2) EPIC or voter-identity card issued by the ECI and (3) ration card. When the Supreme Court asked ECI why the three missing documents cannot be included for the purpose of SIR, the ECI had no ready answer. The irony is residency and caste certificates are issued by revenue officers based on Aadhaar; while the residency or caste certificate is valid for SIR, the Aadhaar is invalid!

The only rational part of SIR is that dead persons and double-entry names must be removed. ECI has estimated that 17.5 lakh voters have migrated but that does not mean they are no longer domiciled in Bihar or will not return to vote. The CEO, Bihar uploaded a form for enrollment of out-of-state voters on July 15 and expects to complete the exercise by July 26!

The inevitable conclusion is that SIR is not an exercise to enable eligible citizens to enroll and vote. It is a dark, sinister plot to *disenfranchise* millions of poor, marginalized or migrant citizens. Over to the Supreme Court on July 28.

Fifth COLUMN
TAVLEEN SINGH
Twitter: @tavleen_singh

Time to get beyond history books

LET ME begin with an admission. I am not averse to school history books being revisited or revised by historians from the RSS school of history. For far too long, they were written by dogmatic leftists who chose in the name of secularism to exalt the 'great Moghuls', and diminish Hindu rulers and their often-magnificent achievements. The books they wrote were mostly so boring that people like me, who now read history books with fascination, ended up asleep in history class. In the moments that I was awake, I did notice that there were three periods of history that were taught: ancient India, Moghul and British.

What I learned about pre-Islamic India was so little that it was not until I was an adult that I heard of the mighty south Indian dynasties and discovered the wonders of Hindu civilisation. It was on holidays of Indonesia and Cambodia that I saw the extent to which India's civilisation had influenced language, culture and religion across the east. Angkor Wat and Borobudur left me stunned by their beauty and scale. So, if there is a bit of revisionist history being introduced into school textbooks, I have no problem at all. The Moghuls did tear down temples and impose taxes on us idol-worshippers, and the truth about these things should never have been concealed. Not from Hindu children or Muslim.

My problem is that I wish some of those leading this new history movement would spare time to examine the current state of our schools and the abysmal quality of teaching. I have said before in this column that when I travel to a village, almost the first thing I try to see is the local school. And the truth is that not the best of these schools would be considered a real school by modern international standards.

In the best government schools, there are at least classrooms with desks and teachers, but you need only spend 10 minutes in one of these classes to discover that teaching methods are primitive. Children are taught not to think or develop a love of learning, but to learn by rote. Just enough to pass their examinations. They usually leave school with basic literacy instead of a real education, so they cannot compete with children who go to good private schools. They are, nevertheless, the lucky ones.

In the worst schools, especially those that have been built for Dalit and Adivasi children, there are no classrooms, no desks, no textbooks and often only a token teacher who teaches all the subjects they are meant to study. These teachers are very well paid by rural standards, but they usually live outside the village and are rarely available after school hours. Children who might not have fully understood what they were taught can turn to nobody for help because often, their parents are illiterate.

My point is that instead of wallowing eternally in the glories of our glorious past, it is time to address the problems of today. What difference will the new history textbooks make, if most schoolchildren are unable to read them? Another problem I have with the current exercise in rewriting history books is that they seem mostly to draw attention to the evils perpetuated by the Moghuls and other Muslim rulers. Is this just another deliberate attempt to make Hindu children hate Muslims? The British Raj did many bad things that were whitewashed in school textbooks, why is this not also being reviewed?

We now have a new Nalanda University to remind us of the legendary Buddhist institution that once existed here and was destroyed by a barbaric Muslim invader. But why is it that nobody has noticed the decay that infects most other universities? Anyone who has visited the great universities in the West knows that we do not have a single great university in India. This is why some of our best teachers have become academic refugees in countries that have real universities. This is why Indian students who can afford it go abroad for higher studies. Why is it that in the higher echelons of the RSS nobody has noticed yet that instead of wallowing in our 'glorious past' we should be trying to create a glorious present?

When Narendra Modi put Smriti Irani in charge of education in his first term as prime minister, I was a loyal Modi Bhakt. So, although I was taken aback by this startling choice, I tried to go and talk to the minister to persuade her that one reason why higher education was in the doldrums was because of too much interference by politicians and high officials. I told her that a bold and important move would be to disband the University Grants Commission. She paid no attention, and this obsolete institution continues to micromanage the affairs of universities to their detriment. A Higher Education Commission of India is meant to replace it soon, but universities do not need more control but less. Why do we need officials poking their noses into the realms of academia at all?

Speaking of political interference in education, may I say that the Home Minister is completely wrong in trying to discourage Indians from learning English. It is the lingua franca of today and Indians must continue to learn it because the advantages that they have when they venture out into the world are beyond measure.

As a single father, it took a community to raise my child

How to

RAISE A BOY

R S NANDA



TWENTY YEARS ago, after an amicable separation, I became my son's legal custodian. Despite having primary custody, often when I would tell a stranger that I am a divorced father, the first question would be, "Oh, do you still (get to) see him?" That question captured, in a nutshell, the experience of being a single father in the 1990s. In cases of children of divorce, the assumption was always that they have an absentee father and a can't-help-but-be-nurturing mother.

In the two decades that have passed, I have become an empty nester, and society's notions of parenthood have evolved. So, this is a vintage tale that can perhaps help map the distance we have covered as a society.

At the time that I was raising my son, there were many "single mothers" meetings and groups around. Not so much for single fathers. It was an intimidating experience. Through it all, I had several pillars to lean on. For him, my and my ex-wife's philosophy followed that of Bob Dylan's: "Husband and wife failed, but mother and father didn't." That was the goal. His mother, her family and mine, all came together to give him a childhood where he was not left wanting for anything.

I had no structured parenting philosophy. The idea was simple: "Keep him honest and ensure he enjoys himself." A normal childhood, filled with adventure and love. In that spirit, growing up, I encouraged him to dabble in a bit of everything: He did drama, played sports, read books and fought me on the many ideas he found in them. For us, music and two cats, Thunder and Lightning, became the points of connection. I introduced him to songs of my generation and over the years, as he grew up, our conversations on music spanned far and wide. Today, as he teaches music in New York, our connection stretches over thousands of miles.

I always ensured that I was open with him – totally, completely honest. Hopefully, that encouraged him to strive to be an honest man himself. His mother and I had no strict legal guidelines on the number of visits; the rule was simple: He should have access to all members of his family, at all times. Through it all, what anchored him, and me, was community.

At eight, while figuring out a new, atypical family setup and his place in it, he was surrounded by a group of five-six friends who made sure love, joy and companionship were part of the equation. To this date, he keeps them close. For me, their parents were a saving grace. They never let my son or me feel out of place – the ways in which that allowed me to parent well and allowed my son to flourish are innumerable. They became, in a way, a shield against a world that could sometimes not be understanding or kind. This community – these friends and the family, both mine and my ex-wife's – ensured that my child was raised to become a well-rounded man.

In the last two decades, at least in upper-middle-class homes, the needle has moved. While my son was growing up, only parents were allowed at school functions. Recently, speaking to a school administrator about how crowds at these events have inflated, I was met with a joking, "Arrey, nowadays every child has two fathers, two mothers." The stigma around divorce and single fatherhood seems like it's abating. Opportunities for building community have expanded, as has the definition of "family".

In having raised my son as a single father, I do not have much to offer by way of lessons learnt. But a surefire way of ensuring healthier, happier children and families to me is to address the misogyny. Women still get blamed for divorces while having higher expectations of parenting placed on them and men are still, in many circles, expected to be the ones having washed their hands off of the duty. But ultimately, it was my wife and community's support and generosity that made sure my son and I stayed afloat.

The writer is a retired professor, University of Delhi (How to Raise a Boy is a fortnightly column)

History HEADLINE

NIKHILA HENRY



ANDHRA PRADESH Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu recently waded into the language row, stating that former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, a scholar, knew 17 languages. Without mentioning any of the states that have been alleging Hindi imposition by the Centre, Naidu said on July 15 in Delhi, "Now we are asking – why should we learn Hindi?"

The governments of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala have in the past called the three-language formula proposed by the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, a covert move to impose Hindi on the southern states. They allege that the Centre's Hindi push goes against the idea of a federal polity.

While the debate goes on, with the southern states often pitted as anti-Hindi, away from the noise of political debates, the language and its speakers have had a long history in the region.

Scholars say Hindi actively began to make its presence felt in the South around the Independence movement, with Mahatma Gandhi establishing the first Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in Madras (now Chennai) in 1918. The objective was to teach Hindi to a non-Hindi-speaking populace as a link language for the freedom movement.

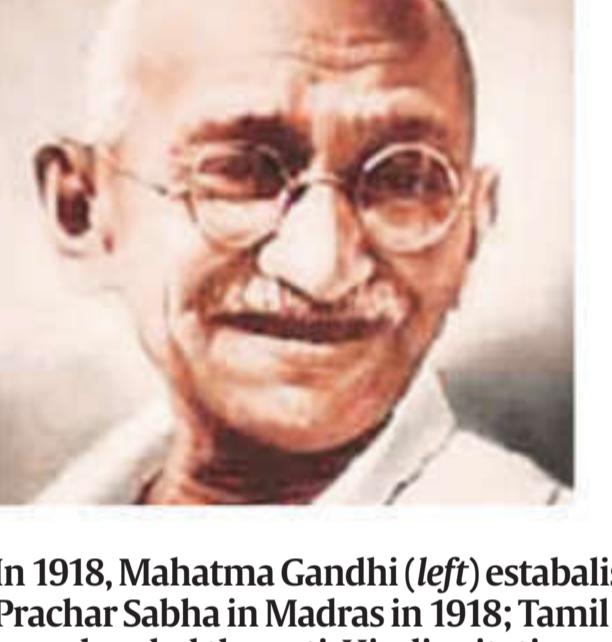
"Learning Hindi was one way of feeling that one is participating in the Indian national freedom movement," says Prof J Atmaram of the University of Hyderabad's Hindi Department.

In 1922, the Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha conducted its first preliminary exam to test basic Hindi proficiency. The first undergraduate examination, Rashtrabhasha Visharad, was conducted in 1931. In the other southern states where the Sabha had its regional centres – Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Kochi and Gulbarga – Hindi learning gained in popularity. "For example, Andhra Pradesh acted as a corridor between Hindi and other southern languages. The state welcomed Hindi learning, be it in Hyderabad or Vijayawada," says Atmaram.

In Karnataka and Kerala too, there wasn't much opposition to Hindi. "Tucked away in Ernakulam south stands the Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, active since the 1930s," he said.

Hindi grew more organically with the advent of mass media – radio and TV. "At radio stations in Madras and Trichy, Hindi

Far from politics, journey of Hindi in southern states



In 1918, Mahatma Gandhi (left) established the first Dakshin Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in Madras in 1918; Tamil Nadu social reformer E V Ramasamy spearheaded the anti-Hindi agitations of the 1930s



programming, along with regional languages, continued in independent India," said Atmaram.

By the 1970s, Doordarshan had reached homes in the South with its Satellite Instruction Television Experiment (SITE). The experiment, which began in 1975, focused on Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, where instructional programming with shows dedicated to agriculture and education would have one visual component and two language components. For instance, a person in Andhra watching one of these programmes could opt to do so in Telugu. "But while instructional programming had a language option, mass media programming, including news and entertainment which were aired through SITE, were mainly in Hindi," says Prof B P Sanjay, who worked on SITE and was former director of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication.

The popularity of Doordarshan's blockbuster TV shows – *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Chitrahaar*, etc – meant that while few spoke Hindi, the language wafted uninterrupted into their homes and hearts. In the 1970s and '80s, another phenomenon contributed to the spread of Hindi – magazines published in Hindi. For instance, Dakshinanchal Hindi Samiti translated Bhakti literature into southern languages and vice versa.

"Also, there were famous Hindi language magazines, *Kalpana* and *Golconda Darpan*, which were being published from

Hyderabad. These magazines were popular even in the North," says Atmaram.

These magazines gave writing in Hindi a push. The focus was on schooling students in Hindi and the NEP of 1968 paved the way with its recommendation of a three-language policy which foregrounded Hindi and English along with the regional languages. Except for Tamil Nadu, which followed the two-language (English and Tamil) policy in government- and aided-schools, all other southern Indian states had adopted the three-language policy.

In recent times, with migration, the language and its dialects spread faster. In certain Kerala districts, there are bus boards displayed in Hindi to cater to migrants from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal.

Operating out of Erode's Periyar Nagar – a neighbourhood named after Tamil Nadu's social reformer E V Ramasamy, who spearheaded the anti-Hindi agitations of the 1930s – is the Tamil Nadu Hindi Prachara Sabha, an NGO run by M Krishnamurthy, 60, which conducts spoken Hindi classes. "In Tamil Nadu, no one will stop you from teaching or learning Hindi. We have been running the institution from 2009 onwards," he said.

His institution caters not just to school students and civil service aspirants but also to Erode's turmeric traders. "They need to converse in Hindi for their business interests and we help them," he says.

The writer is Assistant Editor, The Indian Express

She SAID

PRIYANKA BORANA



INTHE legal profession, networking often decides who gets noticed and who gets left behind. It's not just about knowing the rules – it's about knowing the right people. But as a woman in this profession, I've seen how different the networking experience is for us. While male lawyers casually connect over late dinners, golf games, or firm events, women often find themselves on the outside, looking in. It's not just about being invited; it's about feeling like you truly belong.

I've been lucky to have seniors who supported me, gave me chances, and respected my work. Their trust helped me grow. But I also know many women who still feel like outsiders in this profession – not because they lack skills, but because the environment doesn't always feel open and welcoming.

Women lawyers, network and reach out

Let's be honest, legal networking doesn't always happen on official platforms. Real connections are often built in informal settings – chamber talks, birthday parties, or weekend cricket matches. These moments might seem casual, but they often lead to case referrals, important insights, or strategic alliances. And yet, many women miss out – not by choice, but because they are not invited or don't feel comfortable being there.

The exclusion may not always be deliberate. Sometimes it's just old habits or comfort zones. But when women aren't present in these spaces, they are also missing out on key opportunities.

Then there's the unconscious bias. A male junior who chats freely with seniors might be called dynamic. A female junior doing the same? She might be labelled over-confident. Clients sometimes assume men are more aggressive or suited for tough cases. That's not always fair, and definitely not always true.

Women also walk a tightrope in terms of how they are perceived. If you speak too much, you are an attention seeker. Stay quiet and you lack initiative. It's a no-win. Juggling professional and family life adds another layer of difficulty. Late-night calls, weekend events – these are often not practical for women managing home responsibilities.

But here's the good news – things are changing, and we can help make that change faster. There are ways women lawyers can network on their own terms.

Start with women-centric groups – WhatsApp groups, book clubs, or just regular coffee catch-ups. These may seem small, but they create a space where you can talk freely, support each other, and even share referrals and advice.</p



South Korea's former President Yoon Suk Yeol. Reuters

SOUTH KOREA
Ex-President Yoon indicted on more charges

Seoul: South Korea's jailed ex-President Yoon Suk Yeol was indicted on additional charges on Saturday as a special prosecutor continues investigating him for his short-lived declaration of martial law in December. The new charges include obstruction of the exercise of others' rights by abuse of authority, ordering the deletion of records and blocking the execution of arrest warrants, the prosecutor's office said in a briefing. Yoon has been on trial on charges of insurrection, which is punishable by death or life imprisonment, facing additional charges since the special prosecutor was appointed in June to take over the cases.

REUTERS

UNITED STATES

Los Angeles: Car rams into crowd, at least 30 injured

Los Angeles: At least 30 people were injured early Saturday morning when a vehicle drove into a crowd outside a club on Santa Monica Boulevard in Los Angeles, the city's fire department and local media reports said. At least seven people were in critical condition and six others were seriously injured, the fire department said in an online statement. The incident occurred just before 2 a.m. local time, the fire department said. Captain Adam VanGerpen, a fire department spokesman, said that a paramedic assessing one of the injured found a gunshot wound.

AP

IRAN

At least 21 killed, 34 injured in bus accident

Tehran: At least 21 people were killed after a bus overturned in the south of Iran, state media reported Saturday. Masoud Abed, the head of Fars province's emergency organization, said that 34 other people were injured in the accident to the south of Shiraz, the province's capital. Abed said that rescue operations are ongoing and that additional information and final figures will be announced after the operation is complete and a probe has been done. The cause of the incident is under investigation.

AP

MOSCOW LEAVES UKRAINIANS STRANDED AT GEORGIAN BORDER: KYIV

Hope for peace fades as Russia pounds Ukraine with over 300 drones overnight

Last few days have seen a surge in Russian drone attacks on Ukraine

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KYIV, JULY 19

Russia LAUNCHED a massive attack on Ukraine overnight into Saturday with hundreds of drones, killing at least one person, part of a stepped-up bombing campaign that has dashed hopes for a breakthrough in efforts to end the more than 3-year-old war.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy posted on X, saying Russia fired over 300 drones, along with more than 30 cruise missiles.

One person died when Russian forces attacked the Black Sea port city of Odesa with more than 20 drones and a missile, the city's mayor, Hennadii Trukhanov, said Saturday on Telegram, while five people were rescued when a fire broke out in a residential high-rise building.

According to Zelenskyy, six other people were wounded in the attack on Odesa, including a child, and critical infrastructure was damaged in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region.



A residential building burns after a Russian air attack in Odesa, in which one person was killed, on Saturday. AP

The Ukrainian president also thanked international leaders "who understand how important it is to promptly implement our agreements" aimed at boosting Ukraine's defense capabilities, including joint weapons production, drone manufacturing, and the supply of air defense systems.

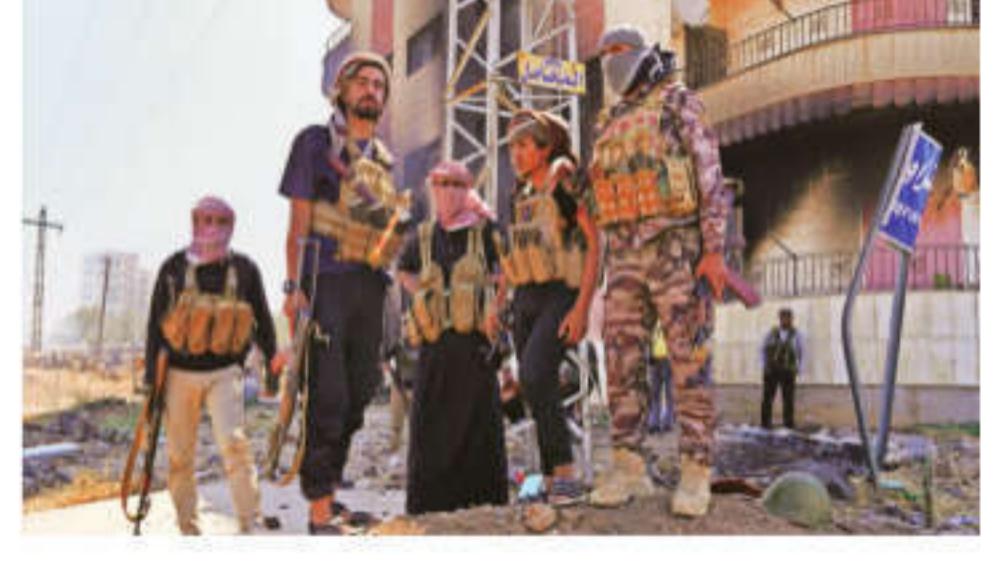
Russia has been intensifying

its long-range attacks on Ukrainian cities. It now often batteries Ukraine with more drones in a single night than it did during some entire months in 2024. On July 8, Russia unleashed more than 700 drones – a record.

Reuters adds: Ukraine's foreign minister accused Russia on Saturday of deporting

Ukrainians into Georgia and leaving them stranded there without proper documents hundreds of miles from their home. Andrii Sybiba said Russia was stepping up the expulsions of Ukrainians – many of them former prisoners – over the southern frontier, rather than sending them directly over its border with Ukraine.

That amounted to Russia "weaponizing the deportation of Ukrainian citizens," he added on X. There was no immediate response from Moscow, which has denied accusations of mistreating or targeting civilians since its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.



Bedouin fighters in Sweida after the Syrian presidency's announcement of a ceasefire on Saturday. Reuters

Clashes rage in Druze region as Syria struggles to enforce ceasefire

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DAMASCUS, JULY 19

SECTARIAN CLASHES escalated in Syria's predominantly Druze region of Sweida on Saturday, with machinegun fire and mortar shelling ringing out after days of bloodshed as the Islamist-led government struggled to implement a ceasefire.

Reuters reporters heard gunfire from inside the city of Sweida and saw shells land in nearby villages. There were no immediate confirmed reports of casualties.

The government had said security forces were deploying in the southern region to try to keep peace, and urged all parties to stop fighting after nearly a week of factional bloodshed in which hundreds have been killed.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based monitoring group, said clashes since last week around Sweida had killed at least 940 people.

Reuters could not independently verify the toll.

Interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa said "Arab and American" mediation had helped restore calm, before the clashes escalated. He criticised Israel for airstrikes during the week.

The fighting is the latest challenge to the control of Sharaa's Islamist-dominated government, which took over after rebels toppled autocratic president Bashar al-Assad in December.

It started last week as clashes between the Druze – a religious minority native to southern Syria, the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and parts of Lebanon and Jordan and Syrian Bedouin tribes.

Government forces then arrived to try to quell tensions, clashing with Druze gunmen and attacking the Druze community.

Saturday's violence once again pitted Druze against Bedouin, witnesses said.

Representatives of both sides signed a declaration of principles laying out the new timeline, a copy of which was obtained by Reuters, at the ceremony that followed months of Qatari mediation after talks began in April.

The US, which has hosted separate talks between the governments of Congo and Rwanda, has exerted pressure to finalise a durable peace deal in Congo. President Donald Trump has made clear he hopes that would spur Western investment into a

country rich in tantalum, gold, cobalt, copper, lithium and other minerals.

Last month, the Rwandan and Congolese foreign ministers signed a peace deal and met with US President Donald Trump at the White House.

Trump at the time invited Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame to Washington to sign a package of agreements potentially includ-

Trump sues Wall Street Journal over Epstein report, seeks \$10 billion

REUTERS
WASHINGTON, NEW YORK, JULY 19

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump sued the Wall Street Journal and its owners including Rupert Murdoch for at least \$10 billion on Friday, over the newspaper's report that his name was on a 2003 birthday greeting for Jeffrey Epstein that included a sexually suggestive drawing and a reference to secrets they shared.

The lawsuit filed in Miami federal court names Murdoch, Dow Jones, News Corp (NWSA), opens new tab and its Chief Executive Robert Thomson, and two Wall Street Journal reporters as defendants, saying they defamed Trump and caused him to suffer "overwhelming" financial and reputational harm.

Epstein, the disgraced financier and sex offender, died by suicide in a New York jail cell in 2019.

His case has generated conspiracy theories that became popular among Trump's base of supporters who believed the government was covering up Epstein's ties to the rich and powerful.

Trump has said he parted ways with Epstein before the financier's legal troubles became public in 2006.



US President Donald Trump

The president has vehemently denied the Journal report, which Reuters has not verified, and had warned Murdoch that he planned to sue. Dow Jones, the parent of the newspaper, is a division of News Corp.

"We have just filed a POWER-HOUSE Lawsuit against everyone involved in publishing the false, malicious, defamatory, FAKE NEWS 'article' in the useless 'rag' that is, The Wall Street Journal," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

"I hope Rupert and his friends' are looking forward to the many hours of depositions and testimonies they will have to provide in this case," Trump added.

A spokesperson for Dow Jones said in a statement: "We have full confidence in the rigor and accuracy of our reporting, and will vigorously defend against any lawsuit."

34 dead as boat capsizes during storm in Vietnam

ASSOCIATED PRESS
HA LONG BAY, JULY 19

A BOAT carrying tourists capsized during a sudden thunderstorm in Vietnam on Saturday afternoon during a sightseeing excursion, killing 34 people, state media reported. Eight others remain missing.

The boat turned upside down because of strong winds, it said. A 14-year-old boy was among the survivors, and he was rescued four hours after being trapped in the overturned hull.

Most of the passengers were tourists, including about 20 children, from Hanoi. A tropical storm is also moving toward the area. A national weather forecast said that Storm Wipha is expected to hit Vietnam's northern region, including Ha Long Bay's coast next week.

Brazil: Lula blasts US over visa sanctions tied to Bolsonaro trial

Brasilia: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva called a US decision to impose visa bans on officials involved in former President Jair Bolsonaro's trial "arbitrary" and "baseless," and said foreign interference in the judiciary was "unacceptable."

In a statement on Saturday, the leftist leader said the action violated fundamental principles of respect and sovereignty between nations.

"I am certain that no form of intimidation or threat, from anyone, will compromise the most important mission of Brazil's powers and institutions, which is to permanently defend and uphold the democratic rule of law," said Lula.

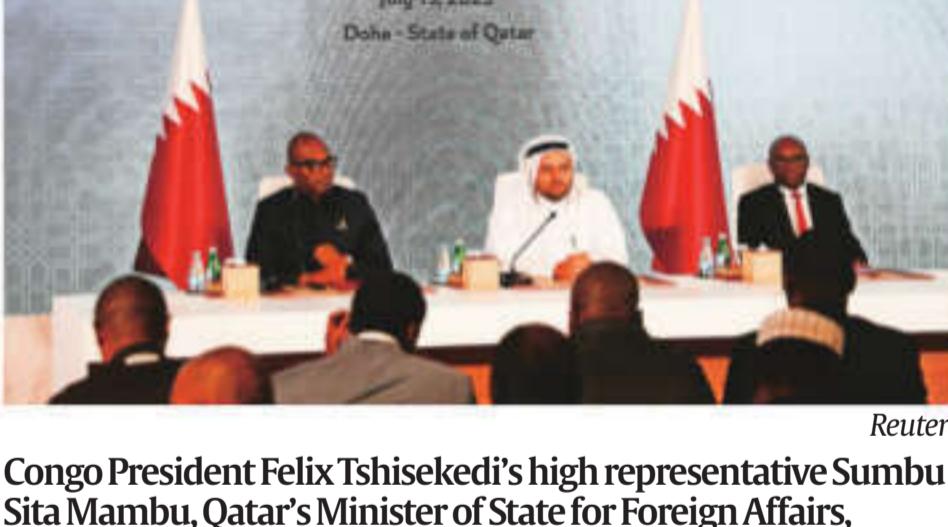
REUTERS

Congo, M23 rebels pledge to sign peace deal

IMAD CREIDI
DOHA, JULY 19

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC of Congo and the M23 rebel group pledged to sign a peace agreement by August 18, at a ceremony in Doha on Saturday, a sign of progress even as outstanding details need to be negotiated.

Representatives of both sides



Congo President Felix Tshisekedi's high representative Sumbu Sita Mambu, Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khalifa and Benjamin Mbonimpa, who heads the M23 delegation, in Doha, Saturday.

can get aid, suddenly (I) saw the jeeps coming from one side, and the tanks from the other and started shooting at us," he said.

The Gaza Humanitarian Fund, a US-backed group which runs the aid site, said there were no incidents or fatalities there on Saturday and that it has repeatedly warned people not to travel to its distribution points at dark. "The reported IDF (Israel Defense Forces) activity resulting in fatalities occurred hours before our sites opened and our understanding is most of the casualties occurred several kilometres away from the nearest GHF site," it said.

The Wonder Sea boat was carrying 48 passengers and five crew members – all Vietnamese – during the tour of Ha Long Bay, a popular destination for visitors, reports said. Rescue workers saved 11 people, and recovered the dead near the site of the capsizing.

Twenty-three people remain missing. Authorities had earlier reported that 12 people had been rescued, but later revised the figure to 11.

The boat turned upside down because of strong winds, it said. A 14-year-old boy was among the survivors, and he was rescued four hours after being trapped in the overturned hull.

Most of the passengers were tourists, including about 20 children, from Hanoi. A tropical storm is also moving toward the area. A national weather forecast said that Storm Wipha is expected to hit Vietnam's northern region, including Ha Long Bay's coast next week.

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The boat turned upside down because of strong winds

DESPITE 100 BPS OF REPO RATE CUTS SINCE FEBRUARY

RBI's record banking system fund infusion is not boosting loan growth

SIDDHARTH UPASANI
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

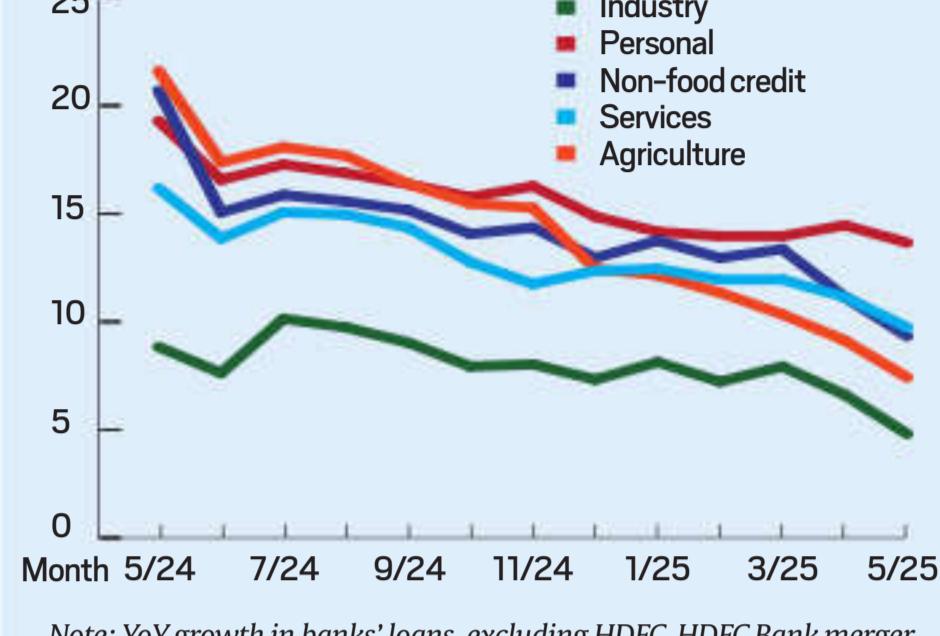
THE RESERVE Bank of India (RBI) began pumping money into the banking system in December 2024, while the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) started cutting interest rates in February. However, the MPC's 100 basis points (bps) of rate cuts and the lakhs of crores of money provided by the RBI to the banking system has had little impact on demand for loans. In fact, credit growth has almost halved from the middle of 2024. And economists think loan growth may fall further in the coming months.

According to data released on June 30 by the RBI, non-food credit extended by Indian banks was up 9.8 per cent year-on-year (YoY) as at the end of May, down from 11.2 per cent in April and 16.2 per cent a year ago, after excluding for the impact of the merger of HDFC Bank with Housing Development Finance Corporation in July 2023.

The sector-wise breakdown makes for similar reading. Take loans to industry, for instance, which showed a growth of just 4.9 per cent YoY at the end of May, down from 6.7 per cent in April and 8.9 per cent a year ago.

At the same time, the amount of money the RBI has pushed into the banking system has ballooned. It first cut banks' Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) by 50 bps in December 2024, after which – through a variety of instruments, such as purchases of government bonds – the Indian central bank added nearly Rs 10 lakh crore into a system that was tight on cash starting the second half of 2024 due to tax outflows and the RBI's own operations in the foreign exchange market.

LOAN GROWTH FALLING ACROSS SECTORS



And while the rupee stabilised before the RBI loosened its grip to some extent in 2025, demand for bank loans has continued to weaken even as borrowing costs have fallen. According to RBI data, new bank loans were around 20 bps cheaper in May on a year-on-year basis.

Wasted liquidity surplus?

According to J.P. Morgan economists, the continued addition of liquidity into the banking system by the RBI is a futile attempt to bring down lending rates of banks – beyond a point.

In a note published earlier this month, the investment bank's economists said "there is no evidence that liquidity 'causes' credit or deposit growth.

If anything, the causality is reversed, with credit driving liquidity growth, through the deposit and Cash Reserve Ratio channel." As per its analysis, J.P. Morgan found that the entire

impact on banks' lending rates from changes in banking system liquidity is because of movements in the interest rate at which banks lend to each other – the 'call rate'. As such, once the call rate declines to a certain level, there is no incremental benefit in terms of a further decline in banks' lending rates from the provision of additional liquidity by the RBI.

The central bank, seemingly, has taken note of this too, and in recent days looked to suck out the excess money it has pumped into the banking system. Since June 27, the central bank has removed almost Rs 7 lakh crore. However, given the temporary nature of these operations, much of these removed funds are already back with banks.

But even before the RBI began conducting these temporary operations – called variable rate reverse repos – to drain out excess money, banks were already keeping them at a central bank facility in return for a fixed rate

EXPLAINED Why loan demand is not rising

ACCORDING TO J.P. Morgan, the continued addition of liquidity into the banking system by the RBI is a futile attempt to bring down lending rates of banks – beyond a point. Nomura sees credit growth falling to 7-8% by March 2026.

of interest of 5.25 per cent. However, the amount banks were choosing to keep at this so-called Standing Deposit Facility has more than quadrupled in the last one year – from a daily average of Rs 58,817 crore in June 2024 to Rs 2.59 lakh crore in June 2025. Clearly, there are few takers for loans from banks.

Weak loan growth to continue?

Weakness in demand for loans has been a concern for the MPC, which cut the policy repo rate by a larger-than-expected 50 bps to 5.5 per cent on June 6 to push banks to cut their lending rates faster. However, this 'transmission' of policy rate cuts to lending rates of banks – which can take up to one year, although the RBI has tried to make this process faster over the years – depends on a variety of factors.

According to Nomura economists Sonal Varma and Aurodeep Nandi, a faster and more complete transmission of changes to the policy repo rate requires not just excess money in the banking system but also a lower credit-deposit (CD) ratio, which is an indicator of the pro-

portion of a bank's deposits sent out as loans.

"The periods of maximum pass-through of policy rate cuts have typically happened in periods when the credit-deposit ratio was much lower in the 70-74 per cent range," Varma and Nandi said in a report on July 8, adding that the ratio was currently just below 80 per cent. According to them, the RBI's latest bank lending survey is indicative of moderating demand for loans, especially for retail and personal loans, while the global trade uncertainty coupled with rising imports from China is keeping industrial capacity utilisation subdued. As a result, Varma and Nandi see credit growth falling even further to 7-8 per cent by March 2026.

Need for demand

As RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra noted on June 6, for banks to lower their lending rates, there needs to be demand for loans, which depends on the macroeconomic conditions and appetite for credit. Clearly, the fact that the RBI has felt the need to inject so much money into the banking system and reduce the policy repo rate by 100 bps in a matter of months is a sign of weakness in macroeconomic conditions – even if the annual GDP growth rate is seen stable around 6.5 per cent.

"...credit demand follows the momentum in economic activity and often continues to rise despite a rise in interest rates. The reverse is also empirically observed. If credit demand is moderate, a reduced interest rate may not boost it over the next 12-24 months. For any impact, it is critical to hold the rate steady for 18-24 months," the Boston Consulting Group said in a report this month.

India-US wrap up extended round of negotiations aimed at interim trade deal

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

INDIA AND the US have concluded a week-long round of trade negotiations aimed at finalising an interim trade deal seen as crucial for India to avoid reciprocal tariffs and gain an edge over its Asian peers, *The Indian Express* has learned.

This round of talks assumes significance since the US has set a fresh deadline of August 1 to implement reciprocal tariffs. While US President Donald Trump reiterated that a deal with India is close, New Delhi could face tariffs of up to 26 per cent if both countries fail to reach an agreement.

Government officials have maintained that India is aiming to sign a bilateral trade agreement (BTA) by the end of the year, which would provide market access in labour-intensive sectors and ensure a significant tariff differential compared to its Asian peers.

Talks have encountered complications over agriculture, with the US seeking market access for genetically modified (GM) products such as soya and corn, along with broad-based access across sectors. However, the farmers'



interests of Indian farmers.

Government officials have said that, as of now, only US baseline tariffs of 10 per cent and sectoral tariffs on steel and aluminium – along with fentanyl-related tariffs on China – have come into effect.

"These have resulted in higher duty collections for the US, and their imports from China and specific sectors have gone down," an official said.

While sectoral tariffs – such as 50 per cent on steel, aluminium and copper – are already disrupting India's exports to the US, Trump has also threatened steep tariffs on BRICS countries over their challenge to the US dollar and has warned of duties on buyers of Russian oil.

Notably, India is a top importer of Russian oil.

HDFC Bank's board clears bonus issue, dividend of ₹5 per share

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JULY 19

HDFC BANK on Saturday announced a 1:1 bonus issue and has also announced a special interim dividend of Rs 5 per equity share. This will be the first bonus issue from the leading private bank.

The bank posted a 12.24 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 18,155.21 crore for the quarter ended June 2025 as against Rs 16,174.75 crore in the same period a year ago.

The record date for the HDFC Bank bonus issue has been set at August 27, 2025. The estimated date by which the bonus will be credited is "within two months from the date of approval by the Board of Directors i.e., on or before September 18, 2025," as per the exchange filing by HDFC Bank.

A bonus issue, or bonus shares, implies when a company distributes additional shares to existing shareholders free of cost, usually in proportion to the shares they already own. For instance, in a 1:1 bonus, shareholders receive one additional free share for every one scrip they hold.

Although the number of shares increases after the bonus issue, the total value of a shareholder's holding remains the same, which results in a lower share price – making the stock more accessible to smaller investors. Moreover, bonus shares are not taxed at the time of issuance in many jurisdictions; tax is usually applicable only when they are sold.

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The special dividend will be paid to the eligible members on August 11.

closed 1.47 per cent lower at Rs 1,957.40 on the BSE on Friday. It has a market capitalisation of Rs 15 lakh crore.

HDB Financial IPO boosts income

Non-interest income of HDFC Bank surged to Rs 21,729.83 crore in the June quarter, largely driven by Rs 9,128 crore in transaction gains from HDB Financial Services' offer for sale. The bank had offloaded part of its stake in the IPO at Rs 740 per share, reducing its holding in the NBFC to 74.19 per cent from 94.32 per cent.

The bank has set aside Rs 14,442 crore in provisions, a sharp jump from Rs 2,602 crore in Q1FY25. This includes Rs 9,000 crore in floating provisions and Rs 1,700 crore in contingent provisions.

Gross non-performing assets were at Rs 26,57,600 crore for the June 2025 quarter, a growth of 16.4 per cent over Rs 22,83,100 crore for the June 2024 quarter, and 5.1 per cent over Rs 25,28,000 crore for the March 2025 quarter.

Gross advances were at Rs 26,53,200 crore as of June 30, 2025, an increase of 6.7 per cent over June 30, 2024. Advances under management grew by 8.0 per cent over June 30, 2024. Retail loans grew by 8.1 per cent, small and mid-market enterprises loans grew by 17.1 per cent and corporate and other wholesale loans grew by 1.7 per cent.

Overseas advances constituted 1.7 per cent of total advances, according to the earnings report.

The bank's net revenue was Rs 53,170 crore (including transaction gains of Rs 9,130 crore from a partial divestment through an offer for sale in the recent IPO of its subsidiary HDB Financial Services Ltd) for the quarter ended June 30, 2025, as against Rs 40,510 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2024.

per cent as on June 30, 2024 (1.16 per cent excluding NPAs in the agricultural segment).

The bank's average deposits were at Rs 26,57,600 crore for the June 2025 quarter, a growth of 16.4 per cent over Rs 22,83,100 crore for the June 2024 quarter, and 5.1 per cent over Rs 25,28,000 crore for the March 2025 quarter.

Gross advances were at Rs 26,53,200 crore as of June 30, 2025, an increase of 6.7 per cent over June 30, 2024. Advances under management grew by 8.0 per cent over June 30, 2024. Retail loans grew by 8.1 per cent, small and mid-market enterprises loans grew by 17.1 per cent and corporate and other wholesale loans grew by 1.7 per cent, according to the earnings report.

The bank's net revenue was Rs 53,170 crore (including transaction gains of Rs 9,130 crore from a partial divestment through an offer for sale in the recent IPO of its subsidiary HDB Financial Services Ltd) for the quarter ended June 30, 2025, as against Rs 40,510 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2024.

were Rs 3,211 crore as against Rs 3,292 crore in the year-ago period. The bank wrote-off gross NPAs amounting to Rs 2,359 crore in the reporting quarter. The provisioning coverage ratio on non-performing loans was 75.3 per cent at June 30, 2025.

Its total advances increased by 11.5 per cent year-on-year to Rs 13,64 lakh crore at June 30, 2025. The net domestic advances grew by 12 per cent year-on-year. The retail loan portfolio grew by 6.9 per cent year-on-year, and comprised 52.2 per cent of the total loan portfolio at June 30, 2025.

The bank's total period-end deposits increased by 12.8 per cent year-on-year to Rs 16,08 lakh crore.

Its total capital adequacy ratio at June 30, 2025 was 16.97 per cent and common equity tier 1 ratio was 16.31 per cent.

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The bank's total period-end deposits increased by 12.8 per cent year-on-year to Rs 16,08 lakh crore.

Its total capital adequacy ratio at June 30, 2025 was 16.97 per cent and common equity tier 1 ratio was 16.31 per cent.

India-EU free trade talks: Why resolution of differences in services is a major step forward

RAVIDUTTA MISHRA
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

INDIA AND the European Union, during the 12th round of negotiations that concluded earlier this month, managed to close the digital trade chapter "in principle" and made substantial progress on the text dealing with "services and investment", marking a significant step forward in concluding the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that both sides aim to sign by the end of the year.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

It is for general information that, Iqbal Singh S/O Pritam Singh R/H.O.No.1900, Near Badkhal Chowk, Sector-28, Faridabad, Sector-29, P.O. Faridabad, Sector-29, Dist- Faridabad, Haryana - 121008, declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as Sardar Pritpal Singh in Passport No AD-204419. The actual name of my father is Pritam Singh, which may be amended accordingly.

0040800565-1

I, DEEPAK KUMAR S/O MAHENDER SINGH R/O PLOT NO. 60, KH. NO. 12/7, POLE NO. 0958, LOKESH PARK, NAJAFGARH, DELHI-110043 declare that name of mine and my minor son has been wrongly written as DEEPAK and DIMPY in my minor son DIMPY KUMAR aged 12 years in his school records. The actual name of mine and my minor son are DEEPAK KUMAR and DIMPY KUMAR

0070979320-1

It is for general information that I, ARVIND KUMAR S/O YOGENDRA PAL SAXENA R/O A-201 Stellar Park, Apartments C-58/24, Near Fortis Hospital, Sector-62, Noida Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as ARVIND KUMAR SAXENA in my Minor daughter AASHNA SAXENA AGED 17 years in her 10th & 12th Class Educational Documents. The actual name of mine is ARVIND KUMAR which may be amended accordingly.

0040800593-6

It is for general information that I, Usha Khanna, D/o-Bal Bahadur Sain Dhawan, W/o-Vijay Kumar Khanna, Residing at,H.No.132,2nd.Floor, New Rajdhani Enclave,Vikas Marg,Delhi-110092,declare That name of my father has been wrongly-written as Bal Dhawan Sain in my Pan-No.AEGPKB216A.The actual name of my-father is Balbahadur Sain Dhawan,which may be amended accordingly.

0040800559-3

I,hitherto known as,RAJESH,S/O-LATE SH NARENDR KUMAR JOSHI,R/O, H.NO 1740, RAM GALI SOHAN GANJ KOLHAPUR-ROAD KAMLA-NAGAR,DELHI- 110007,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAJESH JOSHI.

0040800570-3

I,hitherto known as YUDHISHTHR,S/O-SANTOSH KUMAR,R/O/HOUSE NO-75,UPPER GROUND FLOOR POCKET-5,ROHINI SECTOR-24 DELHI-110085,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as YUDHISHTHR BISHNOI.

0040800570-4

I,Subhash S/o Jai Singh,H.No.-29/17, Gali No-7, Libas Pur, Delhi-110042,have changed my name to Subhash Yadav for all Purposes.

0040800593-2

I,Sri Nandosai Prajna alias Nando Sai S/o Agar Sai R/o,D-2/2, DMS-Colony, Shasipur-Depot,Patel-Nagar West,Central-Delhi,Delhi-110008,have changed my name to Nando Sai.

0040800600-2

I, Sanjeev Kumar S/O-Kasturi Lal R/O,AD-4 Third Floor,Tatogre Garden,New Delhi-110027 Have Changed My Name To Sanjeev Chawla Permanently.

0040800590-3

I, Sanjay Haryanvi,S/o-Lt. Shri R.S.Haryanvi,R/o-plot no.82,U/G floor,Sai Enclave,Sector-23, Dwarka,Delhi-110077, have changed my name,from Sanjay Kumar to Sanjay Haryanvi, for all purposes.

0040800613-1

I,Sahil S/o-Naresh,H.No.-75,Pataudi-Road, Kadipur,Near Sector-10 Nanth Sweets, Gurugram (Haryana)-122001,have changed my name to Sahil Yadav.

0040800593-1

I,Safali Sharma,W/o-Sandeep Sharma,R/o Flat,No.F-106,2nd Floor,Sushant Lok-2,Sector 57, Gurgaon,have changed my name to Shafali Sharma after marriage.

0040800590-7

I,RAJANI BATRA,W/o Mr.Gulshan Hans R/o 15/7,Subhash Nagar,New Delhi-110027,have changed my name to RAJNI HANS.

0040800590-5

I,Pramod Gera S/o Late Aya Ram Gera R/o Wz-3178,Third-Floor Mahindra Park Rani Bagh Delhi-110034,have changed my name to Parmod Gera

0040800600-4

I,PINKY W/o sh. Suresh Chand,R/o,H.O.No.435,Ambekar Marg,Raj-Nagar Part-II,Palam Colony,New-Delhi-110077,have changed my name,from Pinky Solanki to Pinky,for all purposes.

0040800590-9

I,PARMAR NILESHKUMAR,S/O PARMAR RAMESHBHAI,R/O,D/21,Wagholia-Road Vadodara Gujarat-390199,changed my minor Son's name HITARTH alias PARMAR HITARTH NILESHKUMAR to SINORA HITARTH NILESHKUMAR aged-6-Years.

0040800600-8

I,Om Parkash Saluja S/o-Ram Saluja,Add-Plot No-94 Upper Ground floor, Block-L,Kirti Nagar,Ramesh-Nagar,west Delhi-110015,changed my name to Om Prakash Saluja

0040800600-1

I,Neetu Varma,W/o-Shri Vikas Varma,R/o,H.No.8191,Sector-B,Pocket-11,Opp. Adayant School, Vasant-Kunj,South West-Delhi, Delhi-110070,have corrected my name,from Neetu Varma to Neetu Singh,for all,future purposes.

0040800570-6

I,Yasin S/O Mohd Umar,R/o H No.B-514,1st Floor, Old B-156/7,Gali No-05,Shri Ram Colony,Delhi-110094,have changed my name to MOHD YASIN. Permanently.

0040800569-5

I,Navya Popli@Navya,D/o Sh.Gulshan Popli,R/o DDA-Flat.No.7-C,Pocket No.3,Mayur-Vihar Phase-I,East Delhi-110091,do hereby declare that Navya Popli & Navya is one and the same person and both names are mine.

0040800593-5

I,Naveen Kumar,s/o Subhash Chand Jain,R/o,H.No.97,2nd Floor,Block-J,DLF Model Town,Sec-10,Faridabad-121006,Haryana,have changed my name to Naveen Kumar Jain,permanently.

0040800593-3

I,NAVAL KANT YADAV,S/O SHRI RAJ KUMAR,R/o-7,KHANGARPUR SARNAU ETAH U.P.207001, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NAVAL KANT FOR ALL,FUTURE PURPOSES.

0040800569-1

I,N.Arul Kumar, alias Narayana Arul Kumar Sarma,S/o-N Narayana Sharma,R/o C-8,Ground-Floor,C-Block,Vishwas Park,Uttam Nagar,New-Delhi-110059,have changed my name to ARUL KUMAR NARAYAN.

0040800570-2

I,Mohd Huzaifa S/o-Mohd Jalaluddin,Address-A-3-4/2,Second Floor Flat,no-201,Al-kehkha apartment okhla vihar jamia-nagar New Friends Colony delhi-110025,changed my name to Mohd Huzaifa Jalal.

0040800590-10

I,Mohd Haroon,S/o Mohd Yasin,R/o H No.514,1st Floor,Old B-156/7,Gali No-05,Shri Ram Colony,Delhi-110094,have changed my name to HAROON. Permanently.

0040800569-2

I,Mehar Fareed,W/O Mohammad Fareed R/o H.No.N-2,4th Floor,N-Block,Abul-Fazal Enclave,Part-1,Jamia Nagar,Okhla,Delhi-110025,have changed my name to MeHRUN NISA. Permanently.

0040800569-6

I,Manjit Kaur@Manjit Kaur Sethi@Manjeet Kaur@Manjeet Sethi,W/o-Balwant Singh Gill R/o-M203,Guru Harkishan-Nagar,Paschim Vihar,New Delhi-110088,have changed my name to Manjit Kaur Gill,Permanently.

0040800593-1

I,LOVELY GUPTA,W/O-VISHAL JAISWAL,R/o HOUSE NO.C-36 KHASRA NO.36/14 BLOCK-B NANESH ENCLAVE JAIN COLONY BARWALA DELHI-110039,I have changed my name from KM. LOVELY GUPTA to LOVELY GUPTA and I shall hereafter be known as LOVELY GUPTA.

0040800570-5

I,Jessica D/o-Narender Kumar R/o,Ho.486,Sector-23,Faridabad,Have changed my name to Jessica Sangwan,for all purposes.

0040800590-6

I,IMRAN Son of MD YUNUS,R/o H.NO-A-246, F/G,LALI NO-10, BHAGIRATI VIHAR,PHASE-2,MUSTAFABAD, NORTH EAST,DELHI-110094,have changed my name to IMRAN KHAN,for all purposes.

0040800590-8

I,Fardeen Fareed,S/O- Mohammad Fareed,H.No.N-2, 4th Floor,N-Block,Abul-Fazal Enclave,Part-1, Jamia Nagar,Okhla,Delhi-110025,have changed my name to ABSAR. Permanently.

0040800569-4

I,Dheeraj Singh S/o Sh. Jagbir Singh R/o-VPO Jatheri (66),Sonpat-131029,Haryana have changed the name of my minor son Vedant Singh aged 01 year and 01 months and he shall hereafter be known as Amayveer Singh, for all future purposes.

0040800566-1

I,Asha Pratap Singh,S/o-Ram Pyare Singh,H.no-6,Ground floor,Adhchini-Malviya Nagar,D-17,have changed the name of my-minor daughter VEDIKA SINGH aged-2 yrs to DHRUVIKA SINGH.

0040800569-7

I,Bharti Mittal,W/O Puneet Mittal,R/o-B-83 First Floor,Surajmal Vihar,Delhi-110092,Have Changed My-Minor Daughter's Name Stuti Mittal To Stuti Mittal Permanently.

0040800590-2

I,Sahil S/o-Naresh,H.No.-75,Pataudi-Road, Kadipur,Near Sector-10 Nanth Sweets, Gurugram (Haryana)-122001,have changed my name to Sahil Yadav.

0040800593-1

I,Safali Sharma,W/o-Sandeep Sharma,R/o Flat,No.F-106,2nd Floor,Sushant Lok-2,Sector 57, Gurgaon,have changed my name to Shafali Sharma after marriage.

0040800590-7

I,RAJANI BATRA,W/o Mr.Gulshan Hans R/o 15/7,Subhash Nagar,New Delhi-110027,have changed my name to RAJNI HANS.

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0040800600-8

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0040800600-1

I,Neetu Varma,W/o-Shri Vikas Varma,R/o,H.No.8191,Sector-B,Pocket-11,Opp. Adayant School, Vasant-Kunj,South West-Delhi, Delhi-110070,have corrected my name,from Neetu Varma to Neetu Singh,for all,future purposes.

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I,Om Parkash Saluja S/o-Ram Saluja,Add-Plot No-94 Upper Ground floor, Block-L,Kirti Nagar,Ramesh-Nagar,west Delhi-110015,changed my name to Om Prakash Saluja

0040800600-1

I,Neetu Varma,W/o-Shri Vikas Varma,R/o,H.No.8191,Sector-B,Pocket-11,Opp. Adayant School, Vasant-Kunj,South West-Delhi, Delhi-110070,have corrected my name,from Neetu Varma to Neetu Singh,for all,future purposes.

0040800570-6

I,Neetu Varma,W/o-Shri Vikas Varma,R/o,H.No.8191,Sector-B,Pocket-11,Opp. Adayant School, Vasant-Kunj,South West-Delhi, Delhi-110070,have corrected my name,from Neetu Varma to Neetu Singh,for all,future purposes.

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0040800570-6

I,Neetu Varma,W/o-Shri Vikas Varma,R/o,H.No.8191,Sector-B,Pocket-11,Opp. Adayant School, Vasant-Kunj,South West-Delhi

BRIDGE

When opponents enter the bidding, counting becomes a simple matter. After all an opening bid means 13 to 14 high card points (HCP) concentrated in one hand. After having read this, see last week's problem again.

Dealer: West Vulnerable: None

NORTH	SOUTH		
♠J108 ♥AK843 ♦Q62 ♣43	♠AKQ932 ♥62 ♦J109 ♣AQ		
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1D	1H	Pass	2S

Pass
Pass
West leads the ace of diamonds, East plays the seven. West continues with the king of diamonds at trick two, East plays the five. The third round of diamonds is ruffed by East who returns the six of clubs. Do you take the club finesse? How should South plan the play?

South can count 16 HCP in hand and 10 HCP in dummy. Total 26 Points missing 14. Where will most of those points be? With West who opened the bidding. Without the king of clubs, West would have opened with an 11 count, possible but highly unlikely. Even without any bidding, it's best to refuse the club finesse. Here the club finesse is virtually certain to fail, but even if it were a 50% chance, you should rise with the ace of clubs and plan to set up dummy's hearts, an 84% chance of success.

The West hand: S-76H-010D-AK843 C-KJ92
The East hand: S-54H-J975D-75C-108765
he right order is: Win the ace of clubs at trick four, play a heart to the ace, cash the king of hearts and ruff a third heart with a top trump. Next comes the spade ace followed by a low spade to dummy and a fourth heart, ruffed in your hand. The last heart in dummy is now a winner. Play a low spade to dummy, cash the winning heart and discard the club queen.

Do not draw trumps first. You will not have enough entries to set up and cash your winning heart. Make sure you ruff the third heart high. Silly to be overruled when you can afford to ruff high.

Dealer: South Vulnerable: None

NORTH	SOUTH		
♠B3 ♥AKQ ♦J873 ♣9763	♠A6 ♥843 ♦Q42 ♣AK52		
WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH

Pass
3NT
Pass
Pass
West leads the jack of spades, East playing the seven. You, South, duck and West continues with the ten of spades, East playing the deuce. Clubs happen to break 3-1. What is the problem? How can you overcome it?

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quiz.

— is much closer to tears than laughter. - Victor Hugo (4,5)

CVEIO

AABDLM

AE OSS

ADEEJY

ANSWER: JOYS & SMILE IS MUCH CLOSER TO TEARS THAN LAUGHTER - Victor Hugo

SUDOKU 6021

Difficulty Level 5s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 6020



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

CENTRAL GOODS & SERVICES TAX, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
BLOCK 'C' & 'D', NEW CGO. COMPLEX, GST BHAWAN, NH-IV, NIT, FARIDABAD (HR)

"PENSION ADALAT"

Central GST Commissionerate Faridabad, Government of India will hold "Pension Adalat" on 22.07.25 (Tuesday) at 12:00 Noon for redressal of grievances of Pensioners of erstwhile Central Excise & Service Tax Commissionate, Faridabad - I, II & CGST Commissionate, Faridabad, Ifany.

Venue : Conference Hall, O/o Commissioner CGST Commissionate Faridabad, Block - D' New CGO Complex, NH-IV, NIT, Faridabad.

-SD/-
COMMISSIONER
(Central Goods & Services Tax, Faridabad)

ARMY INSTITUTE OF LAW (AIL)

SECTOR-68, MOHALI - 160062
Tele: 0172-5095336-38, FAX-0172-5039280

Website: www.ail.ac.in, E-mail - info@ail.ac.in

PRINCIPAL VACANCY AT AIL MOHALI

- Post: Principal on regular basis.
- Eligible candidates will apply online on Punjabi University Patiala portal collegejobs.punjabiuniversity.ac.in.
- After applying, the candidate to send a copy of application alongwith all academic certificates with recent photograph to Ord. Branch, HQ Western Command, Chandimandir-134107 (email address ailprcdara@gmail.com) by 11 Aug 2025
- For qualification and other details, refer to College Website: www.ail.ac.in



OFFICE OF UJJAIN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Pradhikaran Bhawan, Bharatpuri Administrative Zone, Dewas Road, Ujjain - 456010

email- udujjain@gmail.com, website- www.udujjain.org

Notice Inviting Tender

Online percentage rate bids for the following works are invited from registered contractors and Firms of repute fulfilling registration criteria, Tender documents can be purchased from website <https://www.mptenders.gov.in>. Help manual to the contractors can be seen on the portal of e-procurement system.

Time for completion - 18 Months including rainy season And Category of Contractor- Centralised mp pwd Registration

NIT NO & DATE	TENDER ID	Name of work	Probable amount of contract (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs)	Cost of tender form+GST (Rs.)
25/61 15/7/2025	2025_DTCP_-437825_1	Construction of 6 Lane 30 M wide CC Road from Shani Mandir To Jeewan Khedi 6 Lane	31,21,25,700/-	15,60,630/-	59000/-
25/62 15/7/2025	2025_DTCP_-437847_1	Construction of CC Road from Juna Somwariya To Pipali Naka Anarkapur Chouraha	17,80,61,368/-	10,00,000/-	35400/-
25/63 15/7/2025	2025_DTCP_-437804_1	Construction of 24 M wide CC Road from Kartik Mela Ground to Nayi Khedi Road Sinhasth bypass	27,40,83,287/-	13,70,416/-	59000/-
25/64 15/7/2025	2025_DTCP_-437843_1	Construction of 12 M wide CC Road from Prashanti Dham Chourah To Shani Mandir	7,11,00,715/-	7,11,010/-	23600/-
25/65 15/7/2025	2025_DTCP_-437841_1	Construction of 12 M wide CC Road from Bharatri Gufha to Rinnukhteshwar	6,69,29,596/-	6,69,300/-	23600/-
25/66 15/7/2025	2025_DTCP_-437835_1	Construction of 12 M wide CC Road from Gadkalika Mandir to Pirmatshendranath ji Samadhi	2,96,11,817.95	2,96,118/-	17700/-

(KULDEEP RAGHUWANSHI)
Executive Engineer,
UDA, Ujjain

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR

(At/Po- Ambapua, Near Income Tax office, Berhampur-760011, Ganjam, Odisha)
O-455 (E-Mail) :- serwpr2004@yahoo.com, Tel No.: 0680-2404287
E-Mail/E-despatch

NOTICE

FOR PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH "e"-Procurement Bid identification

No. Online Tender/11-2025-25/PMGSY/BPR

The Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Berhampur on behalf of Odisha State Rural Road Agency invites the percentage rate bids in electronic tendering system for construction of roads & Bridges under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (Balance Work) in the districts of Ganjam for 01 (One) number of packages with estimated cost totalling to Rs. 3.50 Cr (Approximate) including their maintenance for five years from the eligible contractors registered with State PWD/CPWD/MES / Railways. The registered bidder of outside Odisha, can also participate in this process, but shall have to subsequently undergo registration with the appropriate authority of the State Govt. preferably within a month of the deadline for bid submission, but prior to signing of the contract

Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: Dtd. 22.07.2025

Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid document is available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgstenders.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have a valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities. The bidders are required to submit (a) original Demand Draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (a) (ii) of ITB with Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Berhampur // Superintending Engineer / Executive Engineer of the Concerned divisions on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the Bid, either by registered post or by hand, failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive.

Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-procurement: 05.08.2025 upto 5.30 PM

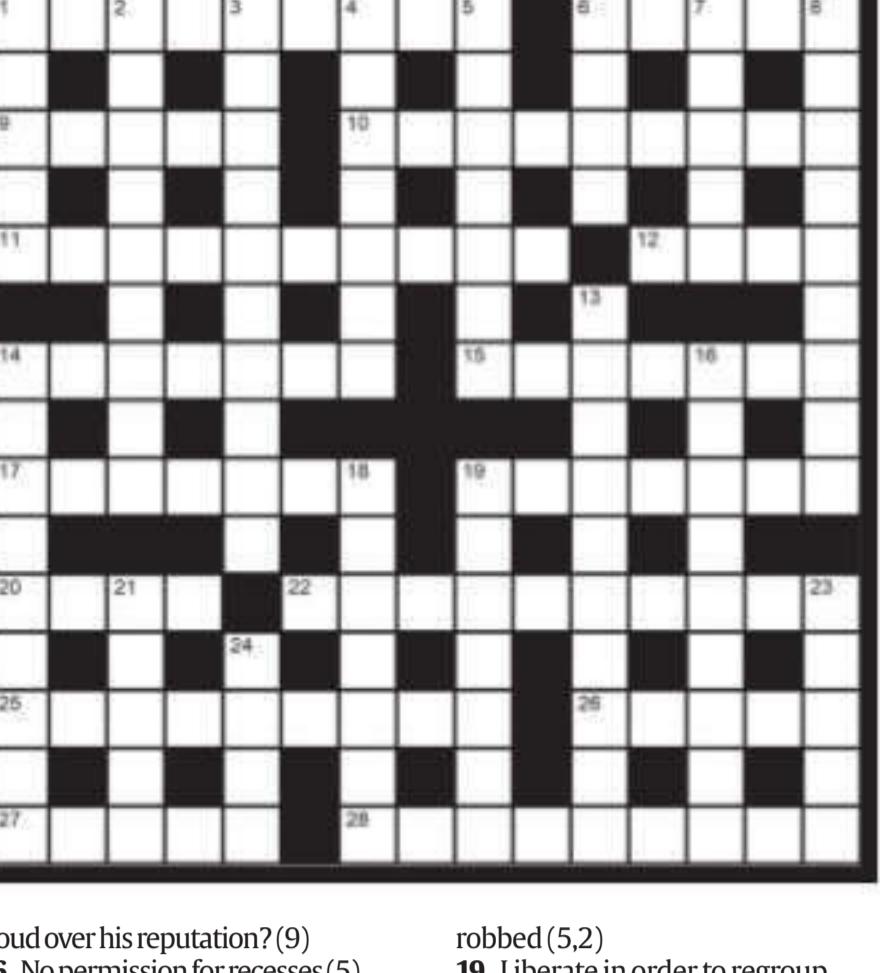
For further details and corrigendum (if any) please log on to www.pmgstenders.gov.in.

Chief Construction Engineer
R.W.Circle, Berhampur
OIPR 25071/11/0104/2526

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2539

QUICK CLUES ACROSS

- Not easy(9)
- Clay block (5)
- Silken(5)
- Fake (9)
- Not capable of making mistakes (10)
- An alcoholic radical (4)
- Large feline (7)
- Was skeptical (7)
- Wholly (7)
- Ornamental window drapery (7)
- Computer operating system (4)
- Astounds (10)
- Longing for the past (9)
- Tropical fibre (5)
- Female relatives, usually older (5)
- Recited easily (6,3)



DOWN

- Ex-India left-arm spinner Dilip (5)
- Vanguard (9)
- Blameless (10)
- Became one (7)
- Sang like a bird (7)
- Boast (4)
- A form of expression (5)
- Scrap metal used as ballast (9)
- Device for beheading (10)
- Longing for the past (9)
- Baltic country (9)
- It adds up to twelve ? (3,3)
- Not as old (7)
- Oscilate (7)
- Norwegian dramatist (5)
- Ledge (5)
- Mountain goats (4)

CRYPTIC CLUES ACROSS

- Lost again, confused, longing for home (9)
- Left protected by a great deal of ground cover (5)
- Cast down (?)
- How to sing people out of bed? (9)
- String pattern for ingenious lad, cars etc (4,6)
- Major or minor but sky high? (4)
- Went round with a buzz (7)
- Pick a tutu oddly in imitation (7)
- Gets Sid to produce abstracts (7)
- Try to make a little yarn go a long way? (4,3)
- Dry plates, perhaps (4)
- Men of spirit are at work here (10)
- Witch-doctor happy to have
- cloud over his reputation? (9)
- No permission for recesses (5)
- Where one often appears in spirit? (5)
- As he will be dressed in trousers for the game (9)
- Customary microbe thus achieving ceremonial garb (5)
- In a crap position, being a resident with no entitlement (9)
- Funny new shirt for Old Nick (10)
- Fish the Royal Navy brought in to protect (7)
- Not a bright morning in the Biblical cave (7)
- But French is a setback for Thailand (4)
- Algebraic problem without "A.B.C." - need a drink (5)
- London theatre where fodder is obtainable? (9)
- Youths who skin fish? (10)
- One way in which Henry Longfellow's named the value of a bundle of banknotes (9)
- Along, poor Noone is planted (2,4,3)
- Speak in support of getting

Solutions to 2538

QUICK CLUES Across: 1 Pamper, 4 Keep at it, 10 Courtship, 11 Amble, 12 Feta, 13 Underworld, 15 Society, 16 Skimp, 19 Review, 21 Schero, 23 Octahedron, 25 Cast, 27 Error, 28 Loftiness, 29 Precide, 30 Flatly Down: 1 Pacific, 2 Moustache, 3 Eats, 5 Empire, 6 Playwright, 7 Tiber, 8 Trends, 9 Shandy, 14 Peripheral, 17 Permanent, 18 Soothsay, 20 Waddled, 21 Scoffs, 22 Doneup, 24 Three, 26 FillCRYPTIC CLUES Across: 1 Pomade, 4 Isotherm, 10 Temperate, 11 Basier, 12 Doha, 13 Bitterness, 15 Winking, 16 Search, 19 Ceding, 21 Polenta, 23 Indian hemp, 25 Mobs, 27 Heidi, 28 Necessary, 29 Handyman, 30 States Down: 1 Puts down, 2 Mumchance, 3 Drew, 5 Siestas, 6 Tabernacle, 8 Else, 9 Merest, 9 Paring, 14 Similarity, 17 Consonant, 18 Cat's eyes, 20 Gehenna, 21 Pumice, 22 Eighth, 24 Djinn, 26 Isn't

If it's your Birthday

Sunday July 20

You never quite know what's around the next corner. It might be a pleasant surprise. With your stars well-placed, you can expect the best. And, if you do get into difficulties rely on a cool head.

Monday July 21

Your wild plans may get off the ground but if they don't, at least you have had a go. Family affairs need extra attention.

Tuesday July 22

It's never too late to say never. You're about to have a second chance to take a major long-term decision, even to back out of a recent commitment.

Wednesday July 23

You're ever the optimist. But are you chasing lost hopes? The stars indicate nostalgia for passions past, but look to the future.

Thursday July 24

There is bound to be anticipation in the air, and the effect can be positive. For example, if you are driven to make valuable improvements at work, you will



Arshdeep Singh had suffered a cut on his bowling hand during a training nets session while stopping a ball. PTI

Arshdeep likely to be ruled out of fourth Test

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, JULY 19

ARSHDEEP SINGH, the left-arm swing bowler, is likely to be ruled out of the fourth Test between India and England. The 26-year-old had suffered a cut on his bowling hand during a training nets session on Thursday while stopping a ball hit by Sai Sudharsan on his follow-through. The hand was stitched up; it's now unlikely he will be fit to play.

The suspense still remains on Akash Deep's availability as he is struggling with a groin niggle. Akash Deep didn't bowl in a nets session organised by the Indian team before leaving for Manchester.

"He has stitches on his hand and is likely to be unavailable for the fourth Test match, the Indian team will see if he is ready for the fifth Test or not," a source informed this newspaper.

Arshdeep hasn't been entrusted with a spot yet in Tests but if the team management chooses to rest one of the pacers, he was in the running to make his debut. India's assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate had said: "Arshdeep took a ball while he was bowling there, Sai hit a ball and he tried to stop it and it's just a cut. So we have to see how bad the cut is. Obviously, the medical team have taken him off to see a doctor and obviously, if he needs stitches or doesn't need stitches it's going to be important to our planning for the next few days."

On day 4 of the third Test at Lord's, in the 28th over of the England innings, Akash Deep left for the dressing room after feeling discomfort. With the team physio by his side, the pacer held his waist and grimaced. The 28-year-old has had a history of injuries that sidelined him in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in 2024 and also in the 2025 IPL season. After being treated in the dressing room, the pacer returned to the field but didn't bowl that day.

The tourists are already faced with concerns over the injury to wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant.

He was struck on the index finger of his left hand as he attempted to collect a Jasprit Bumrah delivery that flew down the leg side during England's first innings on Day 1 of the Lord's Test. Pant was in visible pain and did not keep wickets for the rest of the Test.

The Indian team will play its fourth Test match in Manchester, which is scheduled to kick off from July 23.

EXPRESS IN ENGLAND

SANDEEP DWIVEDI
MANCHESTER, JULY 19

ON THAT famous 1996 tour of England, Sanjay Manjrekar, the team's trusted No.3 batsman, twisted his ankle in the first Test. In the second game at Lord's, Rahul Dravid, along with Sourav Ganguly, would make a sparkling Test debut. Manjrekar would play his last Test the same year and Dravid, who would go on to be India's new No.3, would go on to play 91 straight Tests.

In 1996, Manjrekar was 31, Dravid 23. For the crucial Test of this series in Manchester, India is considering a change at No.3 and this too can have far-reaching consequences. India is wondering aloud if Sai Sudharsan is a better option than Karun Nair. Here are the numbers.

Sai got one Test, the opening game at Leeds, made 0 and 30 and was dropped because of combination calculations. Nair has played 3 Tests, made 0, 20, 31, 26, 40, and 14. There are calls for his dropping. As coincidences go, Nair is 31 and Sai is as old as Dravid in 1996. He is 23.

Nair or Sai? — this will be an important call for Indian cricket. Dropping a player in the early 30s for someone in the 20s is a switch that comes with a stamp of permanency. It is seen as a hint to the older player that the team has moved on. Will it be fair on Nair, whose return to the Test side was seen as justice to someone wronged for long?

Before the England tour, whenever there would be a debate on selection apathy, Nair would get mentioned. After every Test match setback, there would be an outcry about recalling the batsman who scored a triple hundred but was dropped within six months of that marathon milestone.

Loss to New Zealand at home, Australia abroad, retirements of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, Nair's roaring domestic performance — the stars aligned and the most-awaited comeback would take place. However, the Nair story hasn't been written by a fairytale writer.

Playing as a guest player for Vidarbha on the domestic circuit, Nair has had two stellar seasons where he scored 1,553 and 883 runs. As cricket writers love to say, he didn't just knock at the selectors' door, he blew it with a bazooka full of runs. Nair plays domestic cricket, unlike the stars in the Indian middle-order who kept failing. He should be playing Tests, it was said.

But things didn't pan out the way it was expected. In this ongoing England series of multiple hundreds, Nair hasn't even scored one half-century in three Tests. Was this the time to toggle to Indian cricket's other favourite rhetoric — Does India's domestic circuit prepare a player for international cricket? Dropping Nair isn't merely a middle-order musical chair; it is not just a line in a selection story, it's a hyperlink to other big picture narratives.

Sai's massive reputation

Nair is fighting for the No.3 spot against a very able competitor. Sai comes to the Indian set-up with a massive reputation. His work ethics and commitment haven't gone unnoticed by the team management.

The story goes that Sai had suffered a se-



Sai Sudharsan is highly-rated in the India camp. (Above) Karun Nair. Pics: PTI

rious setback a day before the India A vs England Lions series at the start of 2024. On eve of the first match, the left-hander broke his finger at the nets. That series was important for Sai in case he wanted to remain in contention for a place in the Test squad. A decision was taken, the Tamil Nadu batsman would bear pain and carry on.

In the two games, he scored a century and a 97. Among the England Lions was present Test pacer Brydon Carse. Those were quality knocks. Sai's IPL runs came much later, the selectors had liked what they saw. They were impressed by the youngster's temperament and technique.

The chairman of the national selection committee Ajit Agarkar underlined this fact at

the press conference when the team for the England tour was announced. "When England Lions came, he did well. We have not picked him because of the IPL. He has shown the right way and seems to have the game to succeed at the top level. We have been looking at him for a while, but there has never been any place in the team," Agarkar said.

All through this England tour, Sai has come across as a compulsive trainer. Coaches have had a tired look on their faces indulging the batsman's request for a few more balls of knocking. A day before the second Test at Birmingham, when it was already decided that Sai would sit out, he trained as hard as Shubman Gill, his captain both at Team India and Gujarat Titans.

Whatever I saw of Sai Sudharsan, he looked compact when playing front-foot defense. His hands are close to his body, which is good. If he can continue to keep his hands close to the body with his vertical bat-shots, he will be fine. Like I said, batting in V and getting forward without hands going away from the body."

SACHIN TENDULKAR
FORMER INDIA CAPTAIN

It was a day of optional training and very few had turned up, Shubman and Sai after long batting nets had a long fielding session. There was no one to tell them, these were self-motivated cricketers sweating it out to improve. An important voice in Indian cricket says Sai is easily the most-hardworking Indian cricketer. "He has the potential to play international cricket for the next 15 years," he said.

His batting approach too is the kind that would work overseas. His pull, sweep, straight drive as well as back foot punches to covers are noteworthy. He is fast on his feet and has great hands. On Sai, the great Sachin Tendulkar said: "Whatever I saw of Sai Sudharsan, he looked compact when playing front-foot defense. His hands are close to his body, which is good. If he can continue to keep his hands close to the body with his vertical bat-shots, he will be fine. Like I said earlier, batting in V and getting forward without hands going away from the body."

Nair or Sai?

Pant as pure batsman?

As India contemplates bringing in B Sai Sudharsan in place of Karun Nair for the Manchester Test, there are also other tactical changes they are mulling in quest to draw level in the series.

SPINNER
KULDEEP YADAV

The left-arm wrist spinner has been confined to the benches as India have turned to their all-rounders instead.

Washington Sundar has given them wickets, Ravindra Jadeja has provided stability to the batting. Playing Kuldeep, possibly in the place of Nitish Kumar Reddy, would make him the lead spinner with Washington for company. Moreover, once the new ball goes soft, India's struggled to take wickets, and Kuldeep with his guile could make things happen. Like Bumrah, he has the capability to take the pitch out of equation.

WICKETKEEPER
DHRUV JUREL

Came in as a substitute keeper after Rishabh Pant hurt his fingers. When Jurel ended up conceding 25 byes in the second innings and as India went down by 22 runs, he came under sharp scrutiny. But most wicketkeepers have struggled to keep not just at Lord's but generally in England as the ball tends to wobble a lot once it goes past the batsman. With Pant still recovering from the injury and given his workload, should India unburden him? Pant as a specialist batsman is an option.

FAST BOWLER
PRASIDH KRISHNA

India benched Prasidh Krishna who struggled to hit the right length in the two Tests he played during this series. Jasprit

Bumrah seems ready to play back-to-back Tests. Akash Deep didn't find rhythm at Lord's and appeared to be struggling with a niggle. Arshdeep Singh is also unlikely to be fit because of an injury that required stitches to his bowling hand. Even Mohammed Siraj's workload could become a concern. In such a scenario, Prasidh being given another match could be an option.

VENKATA KRISHNA B

FIDE WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Humpy makes short work of China's Song, moves closer to semifinals berth

MAYANK
NEW DELHI, JULY 19

HEADING INTO the quarterfinals of the FIDE Women's World Cup 2025, China's Yuxin Song had already made waves, eliminating some top contenders to set up a clash against India's Koneru Humpy. After prevailing over India's WGM Kiran Manisha Mohanty and Estonia's IM Mai Narva with expected wins in the first two rounds, Yuxin transformed into a giant slayer, ousting Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk, a multiple-time World Champion (in faster formats), before dispatching Georgia's IM Lela Javakhishvili in the fourth round.

It seemed as if Yuxin would prove to be another tricky customer, this time for the veteran Indian, but Humpy took a giant step ahead in pursuit of her maiden World Cup title after making light work of Yuxin's defense, which had troubled some experienced players.

The India No. 1 was playing whites in the first leg for a place in the semifinal in Georgia's Batumi on Saturday. By any means, Humpy's start was slow. By just the 13th move, Yuxin had already gained a minute and 46 seconds on the clock on top of the allotted 90 minutes while blitzing out her moves in the opening and was ahead by nearly 34 minutes after Humpy was down

to less than an hour, thinking deeply about her early moves.

Getting caught in an opening preparation is any player's worst nightmare in the game of chess. One might rather get outplayed in the endgame than let the opponent dictate the terms from the beginning. Humpy knew what she had to do. She allowed Yuxin to go ahead on the clock while making accurate moves, asking tough questions to Yuxin with each passing move in the Chinese's preferred opening choice.

At this point, Humpy had already neutralised Yuxin's time edge, and when the 19-year-old Chinese castled kingside on the 18th move, it became clear that it was Humpy's game to lose from here on. She went for a quick exchange of minor pieces and forced her counterpart to a queen exchange, essentially killing her last hopes. The 38-year-old was clinical in a winning rook endgame and converted the position easily while being two pawns up. All she needs is a draw on Sunday in the second leg to qualify for the semis.

Vaishali rock solid

In the other quarterfinal, R. Vaishali was rock solid against World Championship challenger Tan Zhongyi with white pieces. Tan had lost to compatriot Ju Wenjun in the recently concluded World Championship.

Vaishali, who looked dicey in her fourth-



Koneru Humpy was clinical in a winning-rook endgame against China's Song and converted the position easily while being two pawns up. Anna Shtourman/FIDE

round tiebreak against Kazakhstan's Meruert Kamalidenova, brought her A-game against Tan. She was an equal match to Tan's play and had 97.4 accuracy to the Chinese's 97.6. If only anything, it was Vaishali who had some initiative early on in the position, which appeared to favour the light pieces.

In the Giuoco Piano Game, both players

agreed to end the game in a draw via three-fold repetition after 72 moves, which was also the longest game of the day.

There wasn't much brewing in an all-Indian clash between Divya Deshmukh and Harika Dronavalli as the duo played a rather uneventful draw and were the first to finish their game.

There wasn't much brewing in an all-Indian clash between Divya Deshmukh and Harika Dronavalli as the duo played a rather uneventful draw and were the first to finish their game.

and offered a draw in a fairly equal position after the 31st move, and Harika, after a little deliberation, accepted it.

The other quarterfinal between local favourite Nana Dzagnidze and World No. 3 China's Lei Tingjie ended in chaos, with Dzagnidze losing on time after an apparent oversight.

Already in a hopeless position, Dzagnidze believed she had reached the 40-move mark — where players receive an additional 30 minutes for the rest of the game — and kept calculating while her clock ran out of time. The confusion arose after Nana missed a line on her scoresheet, while Lei accidentally recorded a move twice, leaving both players under the impression they had completed 40 moves. A bewildered Dzagnidze engaged in a lengthy discussion with the arbiters, but the ruling stood, handing Lei a 1-0 lead in the match.

Arjun's dream run ends with 0-2 loss

New Delhi: Arjun Erigaisi's dream run at the Las Vegas leg of the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam Tour came to an end after losing to Levon Aronian in the semifinals on Saturday. The American-Armenian Aronian turned out to be too tough for Arjun to handle in the semis, as Arjun was handed a straight 0-2 defeat. Aronian advanced to the finals, where he will take on compatriot Hans Niemann, who beat fellow American Fabiano Caruana in the other semifinal.

Aronian, who had already knocked out Freestyle tour leader and World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen and World No. 2 Hikaru Nakamura earlier this week, continued his solid run by defeating the Indian after winning both classical games without needing tiebreaks. In the Lower Bracket, Carlsen, Nakamura, Wesley So, and Pragganandha Rameshbabu advanced to the semis.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

SHAMI IN BENGAL LONG LIST

Veteran India pacer Mohammed Shami, who has been out of action since IPL 2025 and is not part of India's ongoing Test tour of England, was on Saturday named in Bengal's 50-member list of probables for the upcoming domestic season. PTI

KEY NO.3 BATTING SLOT

At one down, two choices

Dropping Karun Nair, who is in his early 30s, for Sai Sudharsan in his 20s, is a switch that comes with a stamp of permanency



EXPRESS IN ENGLAND

SANDEEP DWIVEDI
MANCHESTER, JULY 19

ON THAT famous 1996 tour of England, Sanjay Manjrekar, the team's trusted No.3 batsman, twisted his ankle in the first Test. In the second game at Lord's, Rahul Dravid, along with Sourav Ganguly, would make a sparkling Test debut. Manjrekar would play his last Test the same year and Dravid, who would go on to be India's new No.3, would go on to play 91 straight Tests.

In 1996, Manjrekar was 31, Dravid 23. For the crucial Test of this series in Manchester, India is considering a change at No.3 and this too can have far-reaching consequences. India is wondering aloud if Sai Sudharsan is a better option than Karun Nair. Here are the numbers.

Sai got one Test, the opening game at Leeds, made 0 and 30 and was dropped because of combination calculations. Nair has played 3 Tests, made 0, 20, 31, 26, 40, and 14. There are calls for his dropping. As coincidences go, Nair is 31 and Sai is as old as Dravid in 1996. He is 23.

Nair or Sai? — this will be an important call for Indian cricket. Dropping a player in the early 30s for someone in the 20s is a switch that comes with a stamp of permanency.

It is seen as a hint to the older player that the team has moved on. Will it be fair on Nair, whose return to the Test side was seen as justice to someone wronged for long?

Before the England tour, whenever there would be a debate on selection apathy, Nair would get mentioned. After every Test match setback, there would be an outcry about recalling the batsman who scored a triple hundred but was dropped within six months of that marathon milestone.

Nair or Sai? — this will be an important call for Indian cricket. Dropping a player in the early 30s for someone in the 20s is a switch that comes with a stamp of permanency.

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BRIEFLY

Priya wins Ranking Series silver in 76 kg

Budapest: Indian wrestler Priya Malik lost to Thamires Martins of Brazil in the 76 kg final of the Hungarian Ranking Series to win silver on Saturday. Earlier, she defeated former Asian champion Elmira Syzdykova of Kazakhstan in the first round 7-2 and entered final after winning against Valeria Trifonova 11-0 in the semi-finals. In the 62 kg category, Asian champion Manisha won bronze defeating Krystsina Sazykina 9-0. With two medals on the last day, the Indian women's team won the team title finishing with 130 points and two gold, two silver, and two bronze medals. Antim (53 kg) and Harshita (72 kg) won the gold medals. ENS

India one step away from medal at WUG

Rhine-Ruhr: The young Indian shuttlers overcame a gritty challenge from the United States to advance to the mixed team quarterfinals, while talented tennis player Vaishnavi Adkar secured a place in the pre-quarterfinals at the World University Games in Germany's Rhine-Ruhr region on Saturday. Taekwondo exponents Anika fought hard before losing her 46kg quarterfinal bout to a South Korean, while fencer Abhinash Meitei lost in the pre-quarterfinal after commendable wins against Qatari and Israeli opponents on day three of competitions. However, it was the Indian mixed team shuttlers who held centre-stage defeating USA 3-1 to set up a quarterfinal clash with Malaysia later in the day, and be one step away from ensuring a medal for the country. PTI

India enter quarters at Jr Asia team c'ships

Solo: India booked their place in the quarterfinals of the Badminton Asia Junior Mixed Team Championships after registering a commanding 110-83 win over the United Arab Emirates in their Group D encounter, here on Saturday. The victory came on the back of India's strong opening-day performance against Sri Lanka on Friday. With Hong Kong also notchng up two wins from two matches, both the teams have secured their spots in the knockout stage. India and Hong Kong will now clash on Sunday to decide the Group D topper. The tournament is being played under a relay scoring format, where teams race to 110 points across 10 matches. PTI

Minerva Academy win U-14 Gothia Cup

Gothenburg: In a remarkable feat, Punjab's Minerva Academy FC on Saturday became the champions of Gothia Cup, touted as the World Youth Cup, in the boys under-14 category in Gothenburg, Sweden, two years after winning the U-13 title. The Mohali-based side beat Escuela de Football 18 Tucuman of Argentina 4-0 in the final on Saturday. They had won the Boys U-13 title in 2023 after beating Brazilian side Ordin FC 2-0 in the final, then becoming the first Indian club to become champions of the prestigious tournament. In the final, Minerva emerged 4-0 winners against the Argentine club with Rhythm, Yohenba, Raj and Denamoni finding the targets. Minerva thus won the title undefeated. Minerva scored more than 50 goals and conceded just two in the tournament. PTI

TANISHQ VADDI
HYDERABAD, JULY 19

N SHREE Charani's quick rise from Women's Premier League to the Indian team has its roots in her uncle's mid-day hobby of playing cricket. Kishore Reddy worked at the Rayalseema Thermal Power Station (RTPC), which is about 35 km away from his native place, Yerramala Palle, a small village in Kadapa district. He used to stay at his uncle - Charani's father - Chandra Shekar Reddy's place in the RTPC quarters.

Kishore's routine was to head to work at 9 am, returning home around 11, then playing cricket till 3 pm, and returning to the office post lunch. Neither Kishore nor his uncle, in their wildest dreams, thought that the hobby Kishore pursued for those few hours would turn out to be the foundation of Charani's India dream. When she was in Class III, she started playing with Kishore mama at their home with plastic bats, and followed him to the grounds in the quarters where she competed with players way above her age.

The 20-year-old left-arm spinner made her international debut in ODIs this April during the Tri Series in Sri Lanka, and then played her first T20I in England in June - eventually finishing as the player of the series in the five-match affair, where she was the leading wicket-taker. With 10 wickets at an average of 14.80 over the five matches, she made her presence felt in India's series win and also established herself quickly in the ODI set-up too, with a home World Cup on the horizon.

Early start in sports

In her early years, it was athletics she pursued at the DAV school in RTPC. "She was very good at playing Kho-Kho. She also played badminton and did 3K running," Kishore recalled speaking to *The Indian Express*.

When she was in Class X, her physical education instructor at school, Nareesh, brought her to Hyderabad for selections at the SAI training centre in Gachibowli. "She got selected there for athletics and she used to practice.

MSK Prasad (former Indian selector) sometimes used to come to the academy. When Prasad and others saw her skills, they advised her to pick cricket.

Chandra Shekar was not too keen on his daughter leaving athletics and opting for

The 20-year-old left-arm spinner played her first T20I in England in June - eventually finishing as the player of the series



N Shree Charani has come a long way after making her international debut. AP



N Shree Charani with Andhra's head coach Srinivas Reddy. Special Arrangement

She changed her mind, told us she did not want to go to athletics anymore, she wanted to play cricket."

CHANDRA SHEKAR REDDY
CHARANI'S FATHER

She used to bat at five and six, also came to bowl after fast bowlers were done and even sometimes took the new ball responsibilities. In her first year, she used to score 50s-60s and also picked up 4-5 wickets regularly"

MARRIPURI SURESH
CHARANI'S CHILDHOOD COACH

spinner.

What impressed Suresh the most was the fitness level of a 16-year-old Charani. If fitness levels are good, there is always a good probability to mould their game at that age. Additionally, she is a power-hitting batter down the order; she could clear the boundary ropes with ease. Impressed, I focused more on her."

Charani's rise in cricket was rapid. "She played very well at the district (Kadapa) level. She used to bat at five and six, also came to bowl after fast bowlers were done and even sometimes took the new ball responsibilities. In her first year, she used to score 50s-60s and also picked up 4-5 wickets regularly," Suresh added.

Road to Team India

Srinivas Reddy was looking to strengthen the bench for the senior team and Charani, in 2022, impressed at the U-19 level as an all-rounder. Although her left-arm spin was enough to take her to the next level, she needed an upgrade.

"There are usually five selection matches when we want to pick a player, and from the first game to the fifth game, there was a lot of difference in her," Srinivas observed. "She used to come before everyone and practice spot bowling, where we put a marker in the good length area. Those are wicket-taking deliveries."

Even on match days, Charani would go back to the nets. "She used to ask, 'I will bowl three more overs, please help me,'" Srinivas recalled with a laugh. She got picked up for the state side at the U-19 level, and the Andhra team would go on to play the semis at the national level. Although her contributions were good in 2022, Srinivas said in 2023, there was a sudden spike in her game that caught the eye of national selectors too.

Charani's skillset saw her get picked for Delhi Capitals for Rs 55 Lakhs. She went on to have a good stint representing Team B at the Challenger Trophy in Dehradun, which got her the India call-up.

The team management, in the last couple of years or so, have been looking for a left-arm spinner – a spot that's witnessed musical chairs. But in Charani, they seem to have found their answer: "She's been a find of the WPL," India head coach Amol Muzumdar recently said. "We were searching for a left-arm spinner and she's fitted the bill perfectly."

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Additionally, because of her early years as a medium pacer while playing tennis ball gully cricket at RTPC quarters, she had a mean quicker delivery.

Andhra Head Coach Srinivas Reddy was awestruck by her ability to generate the same amount of pace as medium pacers with just a four-step run-up as a left-arm

Chandra Shekar recalled.

Through reference from a player at the GHMC cricket academy in Kukatpally, Charani went to former Ranji cricketer Marripuri Suresh, who was the coach there at the time. Despite only having limited professional coaching in Proddatur, she already had the gift of consistency and accuracy.

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POINT OF VIEW, PAGE 2

Shape of You

Artist Madhvi Parekh on her Delhi solo, dipping into childhood memories to make motifs and using folk elements in her work

eye

Suanshu Khurana

AFTER DANCING for over 50 years, when 66-year-old Malavika Sarrukai — one of the most influential names in the world of Bharatanatyam — metamorphoses into Yashoda now, beckoning Krishna in the long-revered bhakti piece, *Krishna nee Begane Baro* (O Krishna! Come soon), commanding, imploring, coaxing, she carves its contours with a clarity so certain that it is no longer just a mother-child tale from a fabled past. Under Sarrukai's supervision, this composition by the 15th-century poet Vyasarirtha — with years of introspection in tow — has evolved into something more contemplative; with different hues on different days — of longing, vulnerability and connection with the spiritual. Going beyond the usual adoration, this piece manifests. Perhaps, because, as Sarrukai says, she "sees more" now. "After revisiting and refining it over the years... I feel it's a much deeper felt moment now. I see so much more than I have in the past," she says.

It's interesting how Sarrukai's approach to the presentation of this age-old piece, which as a young girl she saw being performed by T Balasaraswati — the last of the great dancers from the Devadasi lineage and one of the most revered dancers in the history of modern classical dance — is far away from emulation. Of Balasaraswati or other masters or her gurus and so many artistes who have performed this before her. At the Capital's Kamani Auditorium, in concert titled 'Darshan' presented by Bharatanatyam exponent Rama Vaidyanathan's Madhvi Foundation, one saw Sarrukai's approach through evolution, where four compositions were delineated depending upon how much and what Sarrukai saw when peeking inside a story or feeling that evening.

"The *manodharma* (imagination) happens on the spot, when there is mastery over the piece, technique, a sense of poetry, along with musicians who have the wherewithal to follow, to improvise, to change, to shift and to read dance. So what I did yesterday was not what I did earlier. It is changing. But to change, you need to invest... Be it any performance, it is all about the artiste putting in that sense of *prana* (life) into the dance," says Sarrukai in a conversation on a humid afternoon at Delhi's India International Centre.

This sense of life is critical to most of the works that Sarrukai has touched or invented under the aegis of Bharatanatyam in the past decades. She has performed at sacred as well as secular spaces — temples and the proscenium — and danced numbers from mythology as well as other traditional pieces from the repertoire. But she's also looked vividly at contemporary themes, including climate change, created a production inspired by the Chipko Movement, looked at the significance of the warp and weft of the handloom, presented the transcendence of Amir Khusrau's poetry, portrayed Hanuman in a solo piece and looked at some older compositions with a feminist lens.

Sarrukai's work has always been about experiences that affect her. Her latest work *Beeja* — Earth Seed, which will premiere in Delhi in September, will talk about the instability of the planet and "allow the subaltern voices to speak." The deer, the swan, the birds, the trees — they all will have a voice in the production. As for the humans, they aren't in the main role. She got the idea while visiting friends in Landour in Uttarakhand where she found a tree with a placard that read 'I was once a tree that held its ground.' "Look at the floods in Texas, the forest fires in Spain and LA. We are the ones who have created havoc. The production celebrates the planet but it also asks questions about where we are going — important in these times," says Sarrukai.

Vaidyanathan, who invited Sarrukai to lead the festival this year, has been fascinated by the level of expertise and excellence the Chennai-based dancer brings to the dance form. So much so that she calls herself a "fan", a rare moment in a world where dancers rarely admit to admiring other dancers. "Her artistry is so nuanced... her ability to evolve her vocabulary but at the same time maintain strict levels of aesthetics, excellence and loyalty to the dance vocabulary is something which has astounded me. She is able to widen the canvas of the form and make the dance an extension of herself," says Vaidyanathan, who is drawn in by Sarrukai's ability to bring in a "modern sensibility to normal mythological stories within the parameters of the dance form."

DANCING THE DISTANCE

Bharatanatyam exponent Malavika Sarrukai on her dance journey, questioning tradition and how pay parity between a dancer and a vocalist is overlooked in the Carnatic world's debate on caste and gender



IN STEP WITH THE TIMES

Malavika Sarrukai in performance; Sarrukai at the India International Centre, Delhi

SCREEN, PAGE 3

Imitation of Life

Guru Dutt's classic films blurred the lines between his personal life and cinematic work, giving him a mythical quality



TN Rajaratnam Pillai and received her training in *abhinaya* from Kalanidhi Narayanan. For the first 20 years of her dance life, Sarrukai danced and performed what her gurus taught her, which was the *margam* or the traditional repertoire. She took the dance world by storm with her geometric lines and intricate footwork and travelled all over the world. But about 30 years ago, when Sarrukai began to choreograph herself, by which time Bharatanatyam had become a language for her and moved beyond the 'items', she began to "respectfully question" the repertoire.

There were times, for instance, when she wasn't happy with representing a tree with the plain tripataka mudra, a hand gesture used to denote a tree among other ideas. Sarrukai was concerned about how the tree felt when the birds stood on it or when its leaves rustled. She wanted to use the human body's physicality to represent these ideas and energies. "I decided to remove the decorations. Now I could say more with less," she says.

On occasion, she'd become a courtesan and instead of traditionally complaining about how the man promised her jewellery and gifts, she turned her *nayika* into a sarcastic woman. Sarrukai starts this piece by adorning her jewellery and showing it off. She then asks the man, "What happened to all your promises?" A feminist *nayika*, who was not a victim or dependent on the man to provide, felt radical. Or when she didn't want to do a piece about a woman chastising her companion for not touching her with the hands that touched another woman. "Is this relevant today?" she asks.

What strikes Ghosal, who remains a creative collaborator with Sarrukai, is her refusal to give up on her work. "And that is not easy. Dance is not particularly funded and is a lonely journey... and one compromises for various reasons, including economics, time constraints, an artiste's growing years. She refuses to give in to any of these pressures and holds on to the core concept of her work," he says.

■ ■ ■

Not following tradition blindfolded and questioning it put Sarrukai on a difficult path, especially when everyone was celebrating the traditional repertoire. "But I wanted to do what was more honest," says Sarrukai, who felt that for any gesture or a footwork design to be a part of her dance, there had to be a need for it to be there. "I followed the style for 20 years in exactly the way that my gurus taught. I danced the way they wanted. It was real for me then. But context is also important. One doesn't have to discard tradition but extend oneself. When I extend, I do so with responsibility. When you respect a discipline so deeply, there will be a connection when you stretch," says Sarrukai.

The criticism arrived almost instantly. There was discomfort with an artiste pushing tradition. In 2006, dance critic and musicologist BM Sundaram wrote in *The Hindu*, "... Luckily, this program was billed only as 'dance' and not as 'Bharatanatyam'. Sarrukai sent a rebuttal speaking of her right over tradition as well as finding newer meanings.

In an article that dancer Anita Ratnam wrote in her dance newsletter *Narthaki*, she mentioned the rejection of the Khusrau piece in Delhi. "Not swayed by her brilliance, fans of Malavika Sarrukai almost unanimously rejected her experiments with costume and movements in her New Delhi performance... Even her most diehard fans had harsh words about her adventures. Why cannot an artiste try out a new silhouette?" she asked. "It still continues. People still talk," says Sarrukai. None of it has stopped her from choosing her themes, stories and the way she wants to use the grammar of Bharatanatyam to represent them.

In recent times, when the Carnatic world has been debating inequities in the tradition, including vocalist TM Krishna raising issues of caste and gender, Sarrukai feels a topic like pay disparity between a vocalist and dancer of the same stature or dancers being grossly underpaid is not even acknowledged. "Between music and dance, music is considered high art and dance is somehow not so high. A senior musician will get much more money than a senior dancer. Nobody wants to talk about this. It is unequal, it is exploitative," says Sarrukai.

The situation for the younger dancers, she says, is worse — they get a "ridiculous amount that will barely cover the cost of coming to the Sabha," she adds. "And yet they dance. My heart goes out to them. They are up against the odds. I have been up against the odds. Why does Krishna not speak about this? No one is talking about changing the scene for dancers," asks Sarrukai. This is perhaps why, to make a living, many dancers teach "when they should be training themselves," says Sarrukai.

To address some of these issues, Sarrukai, a winner of the Sangeet Natak Akademi award as well as a Padma Shri, set up a trust named Kalavaahini, which helps with fellowships to choreograph new works, besides dance residencies. She also runs a dance festival in December during the Marghazi season and presents many dancers. But funds are always short. How does she manage to do it all? "It's exhausting," she says. But amid all that exhaustion, Sarrukai continues. To try and make an age-old art form speak to the world of the present. Like she always has, she is willing to take on the rigour.



What I did yesterday was not what I did earlier. It is changing. But to change, you need to invest... It is all about the artiste putting in that sense of *prana* (life) into the dance

TASHITOBGYAL
epaper.indianexpress.com

Before Sarrukai moved to her home Dharini near Chennai's Seaward Road with a dance studio and the trees that have seen her grow into the dancer she's become, she lived in an apartment at Mumbai's Nepean Sea Road and went to Cathedral School in Fort. No one danced in the family but Sarrukai's mother Saroja Kamakshi absolutely wanted her seven-year-old daughter to dance and would drive her to Matunga every day to the home of guru K Kalayanasundaram Pillai. There, a reluctant Sarrukai had to be coerced to climb to the third floor through the cramped wooden staircase and learn the Tanjore style of Bharatanatyam. Sarrukai's mother, instrumental in making

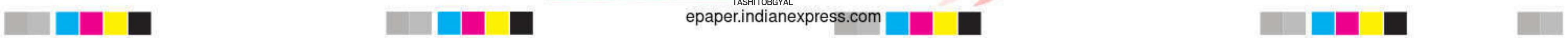
sure that her younger daughter danced, towers above all else in her dance life. She wasn't a dancer, worked for a magazine and was not involved with choreography. But she could think of deeper ideas, goad her daughter to think harder, to look at the contexts and content with a newer outlook. Then there were costumes, finances, managing a career. "She was my sounding board. Everything was run past her," says Sarrukai about her mother who passed away in 2013. She was also the only one allowed in her green room before Sarrukai stepped on the stage. Among all of this, she was also raising two daughters — Malavika and her older sister Priyadarshini — as a single mother.

In Sunmtra Ghosal's documentary on Sarrukai, *The Unseen Sequence* (2013), Kamakshi talks candidly about the unravelling of her marriage. "It was good that I got through

my marriage and finished with it. Otherwise, I would have never been able to do all the things that I did," she says.

At this time, dance became a sanctuary for Sarrukai. After her *arangetram* at 12 and after she decided to be a professional dancer at 16, Kamakshi decided to move to Chennai to her brother's home. "How does one practise (in an apartment in Mumbai), because you are constantly disturbing others," says Sarrukai. In Chennai, they lived in a joint family and Sarrukai shared a room with her mother, albeit on the ground floor. "It was my living room, my study, my bedroom, my dance room where I practised," said Sarrukai at a seminar organised by Raza Foundation while describing the concept of 'space' in dance.

They lived frugally and struggled but Sarrukai kept dancing. She also trained under





DOWN IN JUNGLELAND

RANJIT LAL Author, environmentalist and bird watcher

LEAP OF FAITH

The Palm Squirrel has been, often uncharitably, called a 'rat with a bushy tail'

RANJIT LAL

Click Bait

In the concluding part of this series, conjuring up social media profiles for animals

Cheetah: FORCIBLY taken out of Africa and brought to India to give blackbuck and chinkara proper exercise. But not allowed to roam free, hence, you don't see them racing down some of our showpiece expressways where people crash their Lamborghinis. Status is somewhat hush-hush after reported deaths of many animals — some say due to homesickness. Billed as the next big thing in wildlife tourism.

Indian Wolf: Very rare and extremely maligned as a child-lifter and not to be confused with the kind of wolves that you can find in the Metro or the lobbies of five-star hotels, which are far more numerous and dangerous. The one good thing that Rudyard Kipling did was to give wolves a big, big 'like' in his book, *The Jungle Book* (albeit at the cost of the tiger).

Porcupine: Not the sort of animal you would like to have a honeymoon with and one wonders how they make

successfully captive-bred, though releasing them back into river waters is posing problems as villagers don't believe they make good neighbours.

Rock Python: This huge, beautifully enamelled snake, as thick as your thigh, loves hugging. It will lie in wait, strike in a flash (its kiss can be extremely unpleasant) and then take you into its loving embrace... So loving that when you breathe out, you'll find you cannot breathe in because it is squeezing you tight ('I love you so much, I could eat you'). Fortunately, this treatment is usually reserved for rabbits, deer, wild-boar etc.

Cobra: Worshipped and regularly offered milk (which it cannot drink), the cobra is famous for rearing up off the ground and flaring its hood and weaving from side to side, as the 'be'en' master plays on, seemingly in tune with its wailing. Actually the snake is deaf and only follows the movement of the be'en, waiting for a chance to strike and transfuse you, with enough venom to kill an elephant. Again, prefers to reserve this treatment to frogs and rats.

Indian Peafowl: The 'Taj Mahal' of birds and naturally our national bird. Famous for its fan dance and the shimmering eyespots on its train, the real miracle with this

species is that it is able to take down its fan and soundlessly slip away into the forest, virtually invisibly at the first sign of danger, without tangling up its cloak in thorn bushes. As good as Dobermanns in guarding, it will vociferously give tongue if it sees anything suspicious. Has been used to guard prisons for this reason.

Humans: Various subspecies; indigenous forest dwellers making their living off forest produce and by grazing livestock in protected areas (legally or not), poachers by illegal hunting and most commonly seen: the wildlife tourist.

Usually in blabbering groups on elephant back or in Gypsies all belligerently clamouring that they must see a tiger — or else. A subspecies of this is the wildlife photographer, who behaves just like the paparazzi does in the presence of any Bollywood star stepping out of his or her car. The less morally inclined may also destroy the young or homes of rare species to prevent competitors from getting the image.

Rats: See above.

Peafowls are as good as Dobermanns in their guarding ability and are used to watch prison yards for this reason

out during their own honeymoons. Probably responsible for more tigers and leopards turning man-eaters. No, they don't fire their quills as if from an AK47, but have a turbo-reverse gear and no reverse cameras.

Sloth Bear: Shambling, shaggy and notoriously short-tempered. But you would be too, if you were made to dance on the dusty road for passing buses by means of a rope yanking you through your nostrils and having needles inserted into your gall bladder every now and then. Can take your face off with one swipe of their claws.

Mugger Crocodile: This armoured, smiley full of teeth can be found sunbathing on the sandbanks of rivers and coastal areas and will slip into the water like silent submarines on spotting you trailing your fingers through the water. A clampdown of those jaws can cut you in half, which is what you probably deserve if you've been using shoes, belts, wallets and bags made of their skins. Very rare at one time, they have been

species is that it is able to take down its fan and soundlessly slip away into the forest, virtually invisibly at the first sign of danger, without tangling up its cloak in thorn bushes. As good as Dobermanns in guarding, it will vociferously give tongue if it sees anything suspicious. Has been used to guard prisons for this reason.

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destroy the young or homes of rare species to prevent competitors from getting the image.

Rats: See above.

Still Playing in a Theatre Near You

Veteran Punjabi singer Muhammad Sadiq on his song *Jogi* that's making waves, a folk artiste's legacy and performing during militancy and with Diljit Dosanjh

Suanshu Khurana

WHEN PUNJABI folk singer Muhammad Sadiq recorded his song *Na de dil pardesi nu* ('Don't give your heart to a stranger') aka *Jogi* in the turbulent '80s of Punjab marked by significant insurgency, it was under a modest contract with HMV, with his singing partner Ranjit Kaur. Penned by popular Punjabi songwriter Babu Singh Mann and arranged by Charanjit Ahuja, the song quickly found a place in the village *akhadas* (live performances), at weddings and had trucks and tractors blaring it on their crackling stereos — a litmus test for the popularity of any song in the region. Algorithm-based music searches and Spotify chart toppers were yet to arrive.

The song was revived and given a new lease of life in the 2000s by music producer Panjabi MC, who took the raw appeal of the song and its high-pitched and bright Punjabi tumbi riff and turned it into a club favourite in the British Asian underground space. Two decades later, the song is back — this time with rapper Hanumankind and singer

Jasmine Sandlas layering their voices with Sadiq and Kaur's rustic, unpolished voices in the Ranveer Singh-starrer action thriller, *Dhurandhar*. Singh's smouldering intensity and the numerous action sequences in the recently released first look have been paired with this age-old Punjabi ditty in a new avatar. The film will release in December.

Sadiq, 78, is chuffed that the song is back in the spotlight. "I lived and grew up in a village and my background is traditional. Whatever I sang and whenever I made these songs, the idea was to appeal to the people from the village. The young then were not so educated. The urban audience was never on my mind. Now this film has done another version of it," says Ludhiana-based Sadiq, who is also a former Member of Parliament and had won on a Congress ticket from Faridkot in 2019.

The song, which Sadiq calls an example of 'Punjabi civility and culture', uses figures like Heer, Sassi and Sohni — tragic heroines in Punjabi folklore — besides traditional Punjabi folk styles. This was one of Sadiq's most significant moments; he has sung it at almost every concert. "I was in England last year. They



'THERE IS A FREEDOM IN DRAWING'

Artist Madhvi Parekh, whose solo exhibition is on in Delhi, on her creative journey, dipping into childhood memories to make motifs and using folk elements in her work

Vandana Kalra

IN SEVERAL ways, artist-couple Madhvi and Manu Parekh's Delhi home reflects the essence of their marriage: a mutual respect for their individual preferences and interests. Between discussions and occasional diverging views, their distinct artistic practices also find space on common walls alongside works of friends and fellow artists such as Ashok Ahuja and Bhupen Khakhar. Looking at the canvas of the late Baroda modernist, Madhvi, 83, recalls how their association grew stronger because both did not receive a formal art education. "We used to discuss the challenges we faced. When I first began painting on canvas, I felt like crying if I made a mistake. Bhupen taught me how to paint a layer of white on top and do it again. The white background also made the colours brighter," says Madhvi, days after the opening of her solo, 'Madhvi Parekh: Remembered Tales', at DAG in Delhi.

The exhibition, on till August 23, features her recent canvases alongside a selection of drawings spanning from 1978 to 2018. The latter are distinctly more intuitive, offering a glimpse into her creative process, with depictions ranging from figures with fish and birds seated on them to creatures bearing multiple heads. "There is a freedom in drawing and a certain spontaneity. The different elements that appear on the same page may not always be related or interconnected," says Madhvi. As she browses through the three-volume publication, titled *Madhvi Parekh: Early Drawings*, she shares how several of these notations have led to larger works, including of a Tibetan prayer wheel she encountered during a trip to Ladakh, and another work featuring a vivid village scene where a man is seen lazily on a charpoy while another figure sits under a tree, on which a bird is perched.

Several of her works also stem from childhood recollections of growing up in Sanjaya, a village in Gujarat, 60-odd km from Baroda. She recalls how her home-maker mother and educator-ayurvedic practitioner father instilled in their six children early lessons on hard work and optimal utilisation of time. "I had the best childhood there can be. There was so much natural beauty around and the entire neighbourhood was like a big family. We would



SHAPE OF YOU

(From top) Travelling Circus in My Village; Madhvi Parekh; Two Scarecrows in My Rice Field



sit together in the evenings, embroider and make rangolis during festivals. We used to look forward to the Ramlila during Navratri and the travelling circuses and behrups, who would make an occasional stop," recalls Madhvi.

One of the larger canvases in the exhibition, titled *Travelling Circus in My Village*, alludes to some of those outings. The triptych features acrobats, birds, animals, protagonists with horns and other fantastical creatures dancing across the mélange. If *Pond in my Village* comprises varied scenes

from rural settings, in the canvas *Two Scarecrows in my Rice Field*, the titular figures dominate the predominantly black-and-white composition that features numerous reptiles, birds, animals, flying objects and a shrine that seems to be dedicated to fauna.

Engaged to artist Manu Parekh when he was 12 and she was nine, and married when she was 15, it was in her 20s that a then pregnant Madhvi decided to pursue art. Paul Klee's *Pedagogical Sketchbook*, handed to her by Manu, became her Bible, that she pored over with careful attention. Within a

week, Madhvi was giving Klee's geometric forms a personal twist, adding limbs and wings and placing her figures in more familiar rural landscapes. "In India, no one after Jamini Roy had really explored this merger of the West and traditional Indian folk, and this became Madhvi's unique language," says Manu.

While raising their two daughters (Manisha and Deepa) took precedence, Madhvi recalls how any spare moment would be spent in practising art and discovering new techniques. Artist-friend Nalini Malani, for instance, taught her the nuances of reverse glass technique that Madhvi adapted in her own way and still extensively employs.

Though the diverse exposure she had as a child continues to direct her oeuvre, her experiences and observations from residing in different cities such as Mumbai and Kolkata, and her extensive travels also find expression in her work. Her visit to the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem in 2004, where she was moved by the testimonies of the victims and the atrocities committed by the Nazis, led her to seek solace in the figure of Christ.

After researching numerous depictions, Madhvi reflected on how she had been mesmerised by Leonardo da Vinci's Renaissance masterpiece *The Last Supper* during a trip to Milan, Italy. She decided to paint her version, imbuing it with diverse folk elements. The series was among the highlights of her first major travelling retrospective, *The Curious Seeker*, organised by DAG in 2017-18 and was also part of her solo presentation at Frieze Masters in London in 2022. While her canvas, *The Bird on the Tree*, is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the 2024 Venice Biennale saw her and Manu's works being replicated onto intricately embroidered wall art created in collaboration with Karishma Swali's Chanakya School of Craft. "During the initial years, I had to find time to become an artist. Creating a work gives me immense joy," says Madhvi, adding, "I paint and sketch what comes to my mind. I am not really affected by what people say."

So the beginnings of her complex narratives still appear relatively simple. A circle forms a face, followed by a square for the body and triangles for limbs — as they come together, a complete figure is born.



HEART WILL GO ON

(Above left)

Muhammad Sadiq; a still from the Ranveer Singh-starrer *Dhurandhar*



are still playing it in the clubs."

Earlier this year, Sadiq was the guest artiste in global popstar Dosanjh's Ludhiana concert, which was part of his sold-out Dil-Luminati tour, where he was introduced as "the real OG" of Punjabi music. The two also sang songs together, including *Na de dil pardesi nu*.

Dosanjh honoured Sadiq with a shawl and tumbi — Sadiq's instrument — in a glass case, besides going on his knees and bowing to him

on stage. "That boy (Dosanjh) has shown the way to the younger generation and what it is to respect senior artistes. It is because of him that the younger generation knows me and my music. He's achieved so much and yet he is still so down to earth. I wish Waheguru gives him more success," says Sadiq.

Born in Kup Kalan, a sleepy little village in Punjab's Malerkotla, Sadiq grew up in the Mirasi community. They were travelling musicians and keepers of the folklore in the sub-continent, who came from Rampur near Ludhiana. Sadiq's father, a military man, became a *raagi* in the Manji Sahab gurdwara — a significant religious site for the Sikhs — in the nearby Alamgir. So the first strains that Sadiq heard and imbibed were that of the *gurbani* (hymns from Guru Granth Sahib). "Also, on my way to school, I often heard Mohammed Rafi in shops; his voice mesmerised me," says Sadiq. He was 10 when he performed at an event where the PEPUS (Patiala and East Punjab States Union — a state that united eight princely states) Chief Minister Brish Bhan was the chief guest and gave him Rs 100 as a reward for singing Rafi's *Jagwala mela yaaron* from the 1949 album *Lachhi*. "My mother didn't sleep that night," says Sadiq, with a laugh.

He soon began learning Hindustani classical music from Ustad Baqir Hussain of the Patiala gharana. "After a few years, I realised that classical music was a niche form and heard only by a few," says Sadiq, who was also the eldest of six children and needed to work. He was about 16-17 when he joined the neighbouring *natak mandali* and did small roles in Ramlilas and Punjabi plays.

In the '80s, when duets were the trend, he began singing with many women musicians. His recording of *Laungawacha* with Surinder Kaur remains famous. Others include *Kurti malmal di* and *Sun ke lalkaara*. He finally began singing with Kaur. Even though Punjab in the '80s was riddled with violence, Sadiq and Kaur continued their singing tours so that they could earn a living. This is also the time when Amar Singh Chamkila was singing. "The *mahaul* (atmosphere) was not conducive to singing. While I wasn't threatened the way he was, I was asked not to sing on the platforms which were given by the Congress party. There was also the 11 people at a wedding rule for a while. After Chamkila's death, the work stopped. Families organising weddings stopped calling artistes. Slowly things began improving," says Sadiq, who says that he hasn't received any royalty for the song since HMV changed hands in 1986.

While Punjabi folk has found a new lease of life in Hindi cinema, questions of credit and royalty remain unanswered. *Dhurandhar* producers had not given credit to Sadiq or any member involved with the song until Charanjit Singh's son called them out on social media. There has been no payment since the songs were owned by labels earlier and artistes were not aware of their rights. "Almost every other Hindi film either has a Punjabi tune or a glimpse of one. But folk artistes are often left on the margins. I hope there is better awareness and credit to them as well."



IMITATION OF LIFE

Guru Dutt's classic films blurred the lines between his personal life and cinematic work. They give a mythical quality to a man whose fragility was all too real

Akshay Manwani

THERE IS a telling moment in the climax of the Guru Dutt classic *Pyaasa* (1957), when his character, a poet named Vijay, declares that he has no grievances against anyone. Vijay says, "Mujhe shikayat hai samaj ke uss dhaanchey se jo insaan se uski insaaniyat chheen leta hai" (My complaint is against those social structures that take away a man's compassion). The lament comes soon after Vijay is presumed dead, a misapprehension that is exploited to the fullest by his friends and family.

The ephemeral nature of fame was a theme that Dutt carried into his next film as well. In *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (1959), the actor-filmmaker played director Suresh Sinha. Once a star in his own right, Sinha falls out of favour with his producer boss after a spate of unsuccessful films owing to his unravelling personal life. Here too, like in *Pyaasa*, Dutt's character prefers to resign himself to a life of oblivion rather than compromising his artistic freedom. "Matlab ki dunya hai saari, bichhdey sabhi baari baari" croons Mohammed Rafi, mourning how easily people forget a man whose fortunes are in freefall.

Born a century ago, Dutt left a body of work that made an indelible mark on our cinema and national consciousness. As author and documentary filmmaker Nasreen Munni Kabir noted in the preface of her seminal book, *Guru Dutt: A Life in Cinema* (1996), "As an American academic commented after seeing *Pyaasa*, if Guru Dutt's work had been better known internationally in his own lifetime, he would have been ranked alongside the likes of Douglas Sirk and Billy Wilder."

In the same preface, Kabir also remarked, "It is interesting to note that in his own films, Guru Dutt speaks suggestively of the posthumous fame of the creative artist who is only truly valued after he has died."

It was Guru Dutt's social commentary that assured his films a place in cinematic history. *Pyaasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool* held up a mirror to a nation coming to terms with its new-found independence. The films raised uncomfortable questions about human avarice, increasing materialism and the short-lived nature of success.

Dutt's preoccupations were evident even in the supposedly lighthearted *Mr & Mrs 55* (1955). A quick exchange between his character, Preetam, and Seeta Devi (Lalita Pawar) highlights the plight of millions of pavement dwellers for whom home did not even mean a roof over their head. "Tum communist ho? (Are you a communist?)," an irate Seeta Devi asks, to which Preetam replies, "Jinahin, cartoonist! (No, just a cartoonist!)."

Consider also the song sequence, *Jinhe naaz hai Hind par* in *Pyaasa*. The song was an adaptation of noted Urdu poet and songwriter Sahir Ludhianvi's poem, *Chakley*, meaning "brothels." As Vijay makes his way through a red-light area, the song unfolds in Rafi's voice, imploring the nation to pay attention to the plight of these exploited women. It is no surprise that *Pyaasa* finds a place in *Time* magazine's 100 greatest films of all time.

Beyond the politics of his films, Guru Dutt



AT BREAKING POINT

Guru Dutt's films held up a mirror to a nation coming to terms with its new-found independence

championed a certain fragile masculinity that has since gone out of fashion in our cinema and society. His characters weren't afraid to weep and wallow in self-pity. This could be said of Dilip Kumar, too, who courted a definitive tragic persona as espoused by his characters in *Devdas* (1955), *Madhumati* (1958) and *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960). But Kumar could be self-confident in some of his other notable films such as *Aan* (1952), *Naya Daur* (1957), *Gunga Jumna* (1961) and *Ram Aur Shyam* (1967).

In the films he is best remembered for, Guru Dutt withdrew to a more philosophical place when the tide turned against him. His cinematic gems underscored the necessity to pause and reflect. His protagonists — cartoonist, poet, filmmaker — advocated a higher intellectualism, something that any civilisation needs, no matter the era. In contemporary times, when there is so much chest-thumping, perhaps there is an urgent need to revisit Dutt's films. Even today, the fine songs in these films can provide cathartic release in moments of despair.

To Guru Dutt also goes the credit of shaping several film careers, both before and be-

hind the camera. Writer Abrar Alvi, who worked with Dutt beginning with *Aar Paar* (1954) until the latter's last film, changed the theatrical manner of dialogue delivery in Hindi cinema to a more conversational style. The composer-songwriter duo of SD Burman-Ludhianvi got a firm foothold in the industry thanks to their early work in *Baazi* (1951) and *Jaal* (1952) before hitting their peak in *Pyaasa*. Dutt forged a similar successful collaboration with music director OP Nayyar and lyricist Majrooh Sultanpuri who worked on successive hits — *Aar Paar*, *Mr & Mrs 55*, *CID* (1956) — with Dutt. *CID* saw Dutt hand the directorial baton to Raj Khosla, his assistant director on films like *Baazi* and *Aar Paar*. Following its success, Khosla would go on to become one of the most successful directors of mainstream Hindi cinema in the 1960s and 1970s.

Highlighting the noir-ish and poignant mood of many of Guru Dutt's films was ace cinematographer VK Murthy. Starting his career as an assistant cameraman on *Baazi*, Murthy flourished under Dutt's patronage. His high-contrast lighting style in *Pyaasa*, *Kaagaz Ke Phool* and *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam*

(1962) enhanced the frailties and dilemmas of the characters.

Dev Anand, one of the dominant trio of male actors of the 1950s, alongside Dilip Kumar and Raj Kapoor, also benefited from his partnership with Dutt. But Dutt's biggest gift to the film industry was the actor Waheeda Rehman. In bringing the teenage Rehman from Telugu cinema to face the shining arc lights in *CID*, Dutt unearthed a rare gem. The relationship between actor and filmmaker, very much like the story between Suresh Sinha and Shanti (Rehman) in *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, is also speculated to have enhanced the turmoil in Dutt's personal life. Dutt allegedly ended his life in October 1964.

This mix of classic films, an untimely death and the blurring of lines between his personal life and cinematic work is what makes the Guru Dutt story so captivating. It gives a mythical quality to a man whose fragility, both on screen and in real life, was all too real.

Manwani is the author of *Sahir Ludhianvi: The People's Poet and Music, Masti, Modernity: The Cinema of Nasir Husain*



YESTERDAY ONCE MORE

The audience at the recent re-release of *Umrao Jaan* in Mumbai

Play it Again

As re-releases of popular and acclaimed movies become almost a weekly affair, what's driving this trend?

Alaka Sahani

DURING VALENTINE'S Week in 2023, when the film industry was still grappling with the pandemic's after effects and production work was slow, the multiplex chain PVR INOX released a few popular rom-coms as 'fillers' to cope with the lean period. The shows of fan-favourite *Jab We Met* (2007) — which had Geet, epitomising self-love and transforming a dejected Aditya — were sold out across India. This success prompted yet another re-release of the Imtiaz Ali directorial. This time, too, the movie pulled the crowd back to the theatres.

At a time when cinema halls were struggling with dismal footfall, such overwhelming response to older movies, high on nostalgia, led to the return of much-talked-about movies such as *Rockstar* (2011), *Tumbbad* (2018), *Kal Ho Naa Ho* (2003), *Interstellar* (2014) and *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani* (2013).

The focused re-release strategy under the multiplex chain's 'Curated Shows' segment brought a mixed bag of classics as well as the critically-acclaimed films, which may not have enjoyed box-office success earlier. About a year ago, PVR INOX even did a week-long retrospective of Zoya Akhtar's movies that also marked her 15-year journey as a director.

The unexpected boost to this initiative came with the re-release of *Laila Majnu*, the film featuring Tripti Dimri and Avinash Tiwary, on August 9, 2024. With that, the 2018 movie was not a box-office success in spite of being critically appreciated, finally, got a chance to reconnect with the audience. *Laila Majnu*, which had earlier registered a box-office collection of Rs 3 crore, raked in Rs 10 crore. The folk-horror film *Tumbbad*, which had earned Rs 15 crore earlier, made about Rs 35 crore when it was re-released. Popular movies like *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani* and *Rockstar* made around Rs 25 crore and Rs 10 crore, respectively. The romantic drama *Sanam Teri Kasam* (2016) earned Rs 50 crore worldwide (source: Saclink), becoming the highest-grossing re-released film.

The re-release of movies has now become a bigger deal. A grand cinematic evening was rolled out at Maison PVR, Mumbai, recently to celebrate Muzaffar Ali's *Umrao Jaan*. Niharika Bijli, lead strategist, PVR INOX, shared: "We were surprised by the

organic publicity its release triggered." The movie, which was restored by the National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC), went on to be released in about 30 Indian cities.

Moments before the premiere of *Umrao Jaan*'s 4K restored version, Ali was excited that a new generation of cinema lovers will be watching the 1981 masterpiece on the big screen. "I am waiting with bated breath to know how they will receive it. There is a continuity of feelings related to *Umrao Jaan* — people have watched it on small screens and heard about it from their parents. There is also a time lapse. Some of them have watched it earlier and are watching it again," said Ali.

Fresh energy and thoughts have gone into making their 'Cult Classics' segment stronger. Niharika says, "We are trying to devise it in a way that we have a large circuit. There are about 1,700 screens (of PVR INOX). In a week that's action packed and has Hollywood releases, we have the ability to offer something different. There is no compulsion that we have to release a certain number of films in a year. However, we are committed to preserving and reintroducing timeless films to newer generations through curated big-screen experiences." Presented by Viacom18 Studios and Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra Pictures, *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* (2013) will release on August 8. *The Godfather Trilogy* and *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), too, will play in theatres soon.

Sanjeev Kumar Bijli, executive director, PVR INOX Ltd said, "Everytime we look at the release, the idea is to make it big. Some movies organically become big, given the audience's love for them or depending on the starcast and director. We had 287 re-releases last year." Nearly 8.5 percent of their overall revenue last financial year came from re-releases. When asked about what's driving the audience to watch the re-released movie, Sanjeev emphasises on "the comfort of predictability" as the primary reason. However, describing "the film business as a mystery", he said, "Even today no one knows what will work. This is an industry where you can't serve the same dish again and again. The audience prefers a buffet. At the end of the day, whether the movie is a spectacle or not, the story has to resonate with the viewers and the execution has to be good."

'In the end, when the heart breaks, it still hurts'



Director Mohit Suri on making messy love stories, working with newcomers and banking on music instead of stars to draw in the audience

Alaka Sahani

With *Saiyara*, a new romantic movie, you are back on familiar turf. Did it pose any fresh challenges for you?

While working on the movie (a Yash Raj Films production), I was reminded of the time when I was a Class VIII student and watched *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) for the first time in the theatre. I was impressed with its young director Aditya Chopra and wanted to become a director some day. So, my expectations of myself was to live up to this company's bar that has made so many iconic love stories like *Veer Zaara*.

How did Aditya Chopra come on board as *Saiyara*'s producer?

I don't think we make our films, our films make themselves. I had directed the sequel of an action franchise, *Ek Villain Returns* (2022), and it had not done well. There were a bunch of big-budget, larger-than-life movies being made at the time. I was halfway through writing an action movie when I realised that so many films are blowing up helicopters and buildings. I decided to make a romantic musical with newcomers instead. I asked my assistant Sankalp Sadanah to write

this movie and got Rohan Shankar to write the dialogues. One day, I bumped into Sumanna Ghosh of YRF and she asked if I have the script of a love story. Within a week, they called me and Adi Sir told me that they were looking for a movie like this.

From the trailer, it seems to be another 'good girl-meets-bad boy' kind of love story.

This is a classic trope. *Aashiqui 2*'s Rahul Jaykar (Aditya Roy Kapur) was a good guy but Krish of *Saiyara* is mean. In *Titanic* (1997), Jack is a gambler and brash while Rose is prim and proper. Even in *DDLJ*, Raj is party-going guy while Simran has to return home by a particular time.

You started working when you were 16. How has that experience shaped you?

In my films, I push the bar a bit. Maybe

that's the kind of Krish (Ahaan Panday) I have been; the kind of boy whom mothers don't want their daughters to be friends with. My life experiences reflect in my stories. I believe the morality of the characters will have shades of the director's. In a deeply emotional scene, when the protagonist of *Saiyara* gets violent with his father, I was scared I might be pushing it too far. When I called up Bhatt saab (Mahesh Bhatt), he referred to my WhatsApp DP image of my son's hand in my hand and said: 'This shows that you have immense faith in the father-son relationship. So, you can't shoot a bad scene.' Those who have watched that scene love it.

Why do contemporary Hindi films not have great music?

Today, a lot of independent music is really good. The relationship between a music composer and a film director, when they jam together, is quite pure. I love that process.

How has the idea of romance evolved?

We have just given more names to it such as situationship, benching. Complications in relationships have always existed. The ways of communication have changed. In the end, when the heart breaks, it still hurts. No matter what you do online, you still wish to hold someone's hand.



ROMANCE REBOOT

Director Mohit Suri; (left) Ahaan Panday and Aneet Padda in *Saiyara*

When Beetroot Cutlets Replace Burger Buns

Two months ago, CBSE had suggested setting up informative sugar boards in schools. Here's a status check

Tabshir Shams

IT'S 11 AM, time for a mid-morning break at Delhi Public School, Gautam Buddha Nagar in Uttar Pradesh. Students are milling around the canteen for the best-selling beetroot cutlets. But they have sold out already. Class V student Anushka is relishing a whole wheat paneer roll instead. "Our teacher says eating healthy will get us good grades," she says. "I didn't know that my favourite cupcake has five teaspoons of sugar, so much more than I put in my morning glass of milk. Mango juice has six teaspoons of sugar. Maybe I will have the jaljeera instead," says her friend, keeping all eyes peeled on the board that displays all the sugar information of the fast foods and colas they have been used to so far.

The school has not only revamped its menu to include healthier options but has also displayed a graphic board indicating the sugar component in widely-consumed food products, recommended daily sugar intake and healthier alternatives. Two months ago, on May 14, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) had suggested setting up informative sugar boards in schools to monitor and reduce sugar intake among children and prevent childhood obesity, a precursor to diabetes in adulthood.

The communiqué was aimed at educating students, helping them make informed food choices at an early age and gear up for long-term health. The idea was to weave nutrition awareness into curricula in the hope that school regimentation would take care of the foundational health of students. The initiative has already begun showing some results. Like Anushka, who says she still likes junk food but has reduced the number of times she has it. Shashwat, another class V student, says, "My parents were really happy seeing all the healthy food being served here. They are now cooking the same for me at home too."

The CBSE had noted a significant increase in Type 2 diabetes among children over the

past decade, adding that sugar constitutes 13 per cent of the daily calorie intake of children between the ages of four and 10 years and 15 per cent of those between the ages of 11 and 18 years. This is much higher than the recommended five per cent.

WHY TACKLING CHILDHOOD OBESITY IS PRIORITY

Active public health interventions are necessary as next generation Indians are perched on the upper end of the obesity curve. According to Lancet's Global Burden of Disease study, the number of obese and overweight adults in India is projected to increase from around 18 crore in 2021 to 44.9 crore by 2050. The economic impact of obesity – measured in terms of increased healthcare spending and reduced workforce productivity – is expected to rise from \$23 billion in 2009 to \$479 billion by 2060.

Principal Supriti Chauhan has decided to focus on ways to tackle childhood obesity and has been consulting diet counsellors for cleaning up the school meal. "Our developmental years decide how we eat for the rest of our lives. That's why we conduct regular counselling sessions with students about healthy eating. We have been conducting awareness activities around junk food for our primary students much before the circular was issued," she says.

Tracing the childhood obesity curve, Dr Rajesh Khadgawat, endocrinologist at the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi, says, "Obesity has been progressively rising in school-going children. Almost 20 per cent students in this age group are living with the condition, most being private school-going children." While government school students may not have access to expensive fast foods, the low prices of mini snack and cookie pouches mean they are getting addicted to high salt and sugar foods too.

WHAT ARE KEY TRIGGERS OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY?

The obesity spiral is because of the imbal-



GROUND REPORT



FIT INDIA

Sugar boards, as recommended by CBSE, are up at DPS, Gautam Buddha Nagar. The menu has also been revamped at the school canteen

ance of the calories we consume and their expenditure, according to Dr Khadgawat. "Children consume a lot of HFSS (high in fat, sugar and salt) foods and are physically active for a lesser number of hours needed to burn them. That's why the excess calories we consume are stored in the form of fat. Not all schools can afford large playgrounds where children can take to aerobic sports. School playgrounds are shrinking due to commercial encroachment of open spaces and community parks are unsafe for children. Up to 98 per cent cases of childhood obesity are because of calorie overload and lack of exercise," he says.

Obesity is not restricted to being a family or school-centric problem but has become a public health issue. "Children who are obese and continue to be so into adulthood will have a higher risk of diabetes, hypertension and even cancer," warns Dr Khadgawat.

WHY THIS SCHOOL'S MODEL WORKS

DPS, Gautam Buddha Nagar, has 10 sugar boards positioned across the campus. Most of them have been made by the students themselves, helping them internalise the message-



TABSHIR SHAMS

ing. Says Shikha Rathi, coordinator for the primary wing, "Earlier, we would sell high caloric foods like samosas, chips, patty and sugary cold drinks. Now we have replaced them with whole wheat rolls, beetroot cutlets, baked kulcha, jaljeera and strawberry and banana shakes without added sugar. The menu is balanced in such a manner that the children can maintain steady energy levels. We also present healthy food in a manner that appeals to their taste buds."

Teachers have smartly made the children a part of the health awareness campaign. Pointing to a display board outside a classroom, social science teacher Sayeeda Kirmani says how students gave a few suggestions on what they would like to replace the branded sugary drinks with. The biggest sugar board is placed next to the canteen's main counter. "We have placed the biggest board here because we want our students to pause, read and make a conscious buy," says Kirmani.

Rathi says the school has also roped in parents to correct dietary habits among students. "There has to be a synergy between eating healthy at school and eating healthy at home



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PARENTAL GUIDE

SCAN LABELS Watch out for hidden sugar in labels. Look for ingredients ending in "-ose," like fructose, dextrose or sucrose and those containing syrup (corn syrup, rice syrup) or malt

USE NATURAL SUGARS Use these in whole foods. Wean kids away from processed snacks and drinks by fixing a routine for such outings. Encourage them to help in food prep to build food awareness

FOLLOW STANDARDS Below 25 grams (5 teaspoons) of added sugar per day for those above two years. None for infants, toddlers

as well. Any indulgence would cancel out the benefits," she adds. The school has built a lot of physical activity into the routine to break sedentary behaviour. "Apart from football, badminton, basketball, lawn tennis and swimming, there are regular physical training sessions across age groups," says Rathi.

A WORD OF CAUTION

Dr Khadgawat warns that schools should be vigilant about the food preparation method as well. "Healthy foods prepared through unhealthy methods, like deep frying or adding excess sugar or salt, can negate their positive effects. Watch out for trans fats," he says. There is no fixed caloric intake for a child between five and 17 years. It depends on their physical activity and BMI (body mass index). "The best intervention to control the obesity epidemic is to educate our children. An experiment in Brazil found a positive correlation between health education and reduction in obesity of children. The study indicated how an awareness drive reduced childhood obesity by 20 per cent," Dr Khadgawat adds.

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasises why it's not just important to serve meals but teach children why eating right matters. As Chauhan puts it, "It's time for a simple but goal-oriented slogan – Healthy food ensures a healthy body, a healthy body ensures a healthy mind and a healthy mind ensures good academic performance."

ADVERTORIAL

is: starting is easier than you think. You don't need to commit to a month at sea or sail halfway across the world to dip your toes into this style of travel.

For first-timers, it helps to begin with a short cruise, maybe a 3 to 5-day sailing. Think of it as a weekend getaway, except it's on the sea. Next, pick the kind of experience you want. Are you travelling with family? Planning a romantic escape? Want to splurge? All these factors play a key role in deciding the type of cruise ship you want to be on.

Choosing the destination also plays a big role. Mediterranean cruises offer cultural ports like Rome, Barcelona, and Athens. Northern Europe brings fjords, castles, and endless daylight in summer. The Caribbean is all about beachy bliss, and Southeast Asia, especially with Disney Cruise Line arriving soon, is an exciting new frontier for Indian families.

Most importantly, work with someone who understands the ecosystem. Cruises have their own language: port fees, cabin types, tipping system, embarkation times, and having a knowledgeable planner makes the experience seamless.

Let me end with this, then. Cruising may not be the most obvious choice for Indian travellers, but once you experience it, it's easy to see the magic. Watching Dil Dhadakne Do gave many of us a glimpse into this floating world of possibility. But what stays with you is the simplicity of that setting. That, in essence, is what a cruise does: it gives you the space to connect, explore, and reflect.

Before I sign off, a heartfelt thank you to each one of you who writes in week after week. The messages I receive at neil@veenaworld.com genuinely help shape these articles. Your feedback guides what I explore next and how I can make each piece more meaningful. So, thank you, truly. See you next week!

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Floating Cities

Imagine unpacking just once and still waking up to a new part of the world every day!



And then there's Aman, long known for its minimalist elegance, launching Amangiri at Sea in 2027, a ship designed to feel like a private coastal retreat. Their existing Amanira, a handcrafted two-masted Phinisi, already offers bespoke diving expeditions in Indonesia, staffed by a crew of 14 for just five cabins. These experiences are rare, refined, and very much at the top of the cruising pyramid. But that's a deep dive for another article...

While luxury cruise lines certainly exist, the spectrum is wide. There are so many more options that are affordable and even budget-friendly. Remember, cruises include your stay, meals, entertainment, and travel between destinations, all in one seamless experience. In many cases, they can actually save you money when compared to booking everything separately.

There's also the worry of motion sickness. But thanks to stabilisers and advanced ship design, you will likely forget you're even at sea.

And finally, some people think cruises are rigid, that you are stuck to a strict schedule with little freedom. But many cruise lines now offer flexible dining, offbeat excursions, and the ability to choose your pace. Whether you want to explore every port or simply read a book by the pool, it's your holiday, today is not what it used to be, and that's a good thing.

In short, cruising today is not what it used to be, and that's a good thing.

The Big Names

Once I began exploring the world of cruises, I realised just how vast and varied it truly is. Different cruise lines offer different experiences, atmospheres, and destinations. And much like choosing a hotel or a tour, picking the right cruise line can make all the difference.

Take Disney Cruise Line, for instance. Designed for families, especially those with younger kids, it's a world of magic on water. Think Disney character meet-and-greets, themed dining, musical shows, and even fireworks at sea.

Then there's Royal Caribbean International, which is all about scale and entertainment. Their newest ship, the Icon of the Seas, is the world's largest cruise ship that can carry about 7600 passengers. These ships are like mini-cities with surf simulators, water parks, Broadway shows, fine dining, and more, all floating from one exciting destination to the next. It's ideal for multigenerational families and groups who want variety and activity on board.

Norwegian Cruise Line is another standout, especially for travellers who like flexibility. There are no fixed dinner slots, no strict dress codes, just the freedom to explore and enjoy on your own terms. Their ships are sleek, modern, and perfect for couples or younger travellers who like a good mix of relaxation and adventure.

And for those who want something closer to home, there's Cordelia Cruises, India's very own cruise line. Sailing from ports like Mumbai and Chennai, it's a great introduction to cruising for domestic travellers. Think weekend getaways with everything sorted.

Other big players like MSC, Costa, Celebrity, and Silversea bring their own style, from European flair and family-friendliness to quiet luxury and expedition-style adventures to places like the Arctic and the Galapagos.

What Kind of Cruise Fits You?

Cruising isn't one-size-fits-all. In fact, that's what makes it so exciting.

If you are travelling with family, especially kids or seniors, consider a Mediterranean or Caribbean cruise. These routes include Rome, Barcelona, Santorini, or in the Caribbean, places like the Bahamas and St. Lucia. There's plenty to do both on the ship and off it, and the rhythm is balanced: sea days for rest, port days for adventure. Most major cruise lines operate here, offering a mix of comfort and excitement.

For couples or honeymooners, a Danube or Rhine river cruise in Europe might be the perfect match. These ships are smaller, the pace is slower, and every day brings a new postcard-perfect town. Think Vienna, Budapest, Strasbourg - each one brimming with charm, music, and cobbled streets.

And then there's the truly bucket-list level cruising: Antarctica and the Arctic. To this day, it remains one of the most awe-inspiring experiences of my life. These expedition cruises take you to the edges of the earth. Penguins waddle past you, icebergs float beside the ship, and the silence is humbling.

If you're more into celebrations and group fun, cruises through Southeast Asia, say, from Singapore to Thailand and Malaysia, offer short, vibrant itineraries filled with night-life, shows, shopping, and food, all without needing to pack and unpack.

The truth is, there's a cruise for every kind of traveller. You just need to know where to start looking.

Where to Start

If you have never considered a cruise holiday before, the good news



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A few days ago, I found myself thinking about cruises. 'Dil Dhadakne Do' introduced an entire generation to cruises in India. But still, despite all the glamour and intrigue, most Indian travellers don't really know what a cruise holiday truly entails. It's often wrapped in myths about high costs, formal dress codes, or limited food options. The reality, of course, is far more accessible and diverse.

When I started researching cruises recently, it struck me that we have only scratched the surface of this incredible way of travelling. And while Veena World has always focused more on land-based tours, in fact, every year, we take travellers to the Arctic and Antarctica. Yes, even to the ends of the Earth.

I still remember my own journey to Antarctica back in 2013. It was nothing short of life-changing. And that's why this week's article had to be about cruises. To explore what they are, why they matter, and why they might be the perfect holiday for Indian travellers. Here's everything I have learned, and everything I think you should know, too.

Why Cruises? For many years, cruises were seen as something reserved for travellers in the West, popular in places like the Caribbean or the Mediterranean, but distant and unfamiliar to Indian holidaymakers. That perception, however, is changing fast. Today, cruising is one of the most convenient, comfortable, and immersive ways to explore the world, and it's catching on among Indian travellers for all the right reasons. What makes cruises truly special is their simplicity. You unpack once, settle into your cabin, and every day brings you to a new

city, coastline, or country. There's no hassle of constant hotel check-ins, no stress about transportation or meal planning. Everything, from gourmet dining and live entertainment to kids' activities and curated shore excursions, is seamlessly taken care of.

Cruises also cater beautifully to different kinds of travellers. Families appreciate how there's something for every age group, from water parks to live shows. Couples find the mix of romance and discovery perfect for honeymoons or anniversaries. Retired travellers enjoy the slower pace and effortless logistics, while corporate and incentive groups value the novelty and ease of planning events at sea.

And now, with cruise departures increasing closer to home, from ports like Mumbai, Kochi, Dubai, and Singapore, it's clear that this form of travel is no longer just a Western experience. It's global. And more importantly, it's ready for the Indian traveller.

Let's Break the Myths For many Indian travellers, the idea of taking a cruise is often met with a raised eyebrow or a cautious smile. There's a perception that cruising is either too expensive, too foreign, or simply not for 'people like us.'

One common myth is that you will get bored on the ship. This couldn't be further from reality. From roller coasters and spas to cooking classes and themed dining, modern ships are floating cities of entertainment. Some even have ice rinks and go-kart tracks!

Another misconception is that cruises are only for the ultra-rich. While that's certainly not true across the board, the world of ultra-luxury cruising is a fascinating niche in itself. Take the Ritz-Carlton Yacht Luminara, for example, set to launch this month with just 226 suites, it's less a ship and more a floating boutique hotel.

Next year, the Orient Express' Corinthian will set sail, reviving a legendary name with a new level of maritime opulence. The Four Seasons Yacht 1, with only 95 all-suite accommodations, promises an experience that blurs the line between sea and sky.

In short, cruising today is not what it used to be, and that's a good thing.