

GADCHIROLI

Turning into a Steel Hub of India



Shri. Narendra Modi
Hon. Prime Minister of India

Inauguration
and Foundation stone laying
of various Projects by
Shri. Devendra Fadnavis

Hon. Chief Minister of Maharashtra

Date: 22nd July 2025 | Time: 12 PM
Lloyds Metals & Energy Ltd, Konsari,
District - Gadchiroli



Shri. Devendra Fadnavis
Hon. Chief Minister of Maharashtra

Key Accomplishments and Developmental Landmarks

Foundation stone for 4.5 MTPA Integrated Steel Plant

Vidarbha's mega project, ushering an Industrial Revolution in Maharashtra (will be complete in 2 phases)

Foundation stone for 100-bed Hospital in Konsari

Advancing Healthcare, with growth that cares

Foundation stone for a Modern CBSE School in Konsari

Investing in Education and Community upliftment

Foundation stone for Lloyds Township at Somanpalli

Smart homes for dignified, future-ready living

Inauguration of Slurry Pipeline from Hedri to Konsari

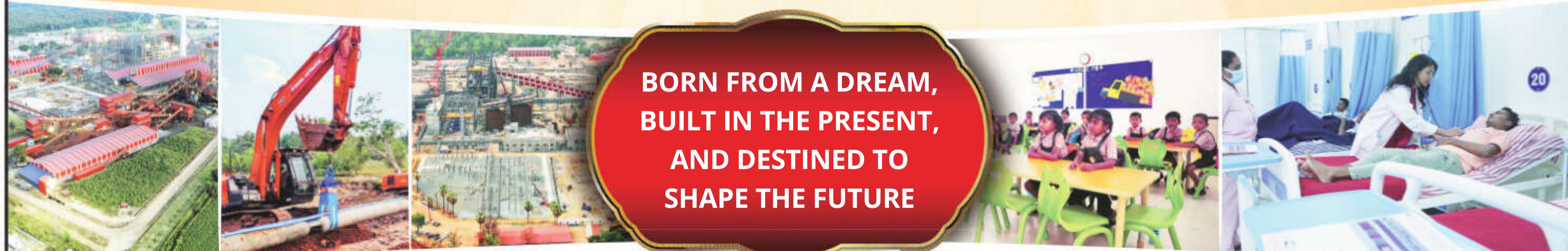
Maharashtra's first, commissioned in record time reducing carbon emissions by 55%

Inauguration of Iron Ore Grinding Unit at Hedri

Maharashtra's first, setting new benchmarks in steel production

Inauguration of Pellet Plant at Konsari

Maharashtra's first, and India's largest single configuration plant for sustainable steelmaking



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BUILT IN THE PRESENT,
AND DESTINED TO
SHAPE THE FUTURE

Built by the People, For the People,
to Transform Gadchiroli



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THE WORLD

TOP OF THE
WORLD



Reuters

Japan Prime Minister

Shigeru Ishiba

JAPAN

Will stay in office to tackle inflation, US tariffs: PM

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said Monday he will stay in office to tackle challenges such as rising prices and high US tariffs after a weekend election defeat left his coalition with a minority in both parliamentary chambers and triggered calls for his resignation. Ishiba's ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its junior coalition partner Komeito were short three seats to maintain a majority in the 248-seat upper house in Sunday's vote. Though the LDP is still the leading party, its ruling coalition is now a minority in both houses of the Diet, or parliament, which makes it difficult for the coalition to pass any legislation.

AP

FRANCE

Farm bill sparks a million petition signatures

PARIS: A petition against a French farm bill loosening environmental rules for farming, including over the use of a pesticide accused of harming bees, has set a record for signatures, increasing pressure on the government to revisit the law. Launched by a 23-year-old student this month, the petition poses a fresh challenge for President Emmanuel Macron, already under strain over his budget. It had gathered 1.3 million signatures by Monday morning, becoming the first petition on National Assembly website to surpass 500,000. REUTERS

PAKISTAN

Christian man held in blasphemy case in Lahore

LAHORE: A Christian man has been arrested on blasphemy charges in Pakistan, police said on Monday. The incident took place in Lahore's Nishat Colony last week. A police officer, Zulfiqar Ali, told PTI that Amir Masih has been arrested on the complaint of Sanooor Ali. "Ali said that his neighbour Masih came to his grocery shop and started talking about leaving Pakistan because of poor economic conditions. Then he suddenly passed derogatory remarks against the Prophet," he said. The officer said later Ali filed a complaint against Masih.

PTI

CHINA-MADE JET FACED MECHANICAL FAULT, PROBE ON: MILITARY

20 killed, 171 injured as Bangladesh Air Force plane crashes into school

Pilot tried to steer aircraft away from densely populated areas, but failed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DHAKA, JULY 21

A BANGLADESH Air Force training fighter jet crashed into a school building in Dhaka shortly after takeoff on Monday, killing at least 20 people, mostly students, and injuring 171, in one of the deadliest aviation accidents in the country's history.

The F-7 BGJ aircraft, a training fighter jet manufactured in China, experienced a "mechanical fault" moments after takeoff and crashed into the two-storey building of Milestone School and College at Diabari in Dhaka's Uttara area, officials said.

The pilot, Flight Lieutenant Mohammad Towkirk Islam, was killed in the crash. "Twenty people, including Flight Lieutenant Towkirk Islam, have so far been killed and 171 others injured in the crash," according to an updated statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) - the media wing of the military.

The pilot attempted to steer the aircraft away from densely



Firefighters and army personnel at the crash site in Dhaka on Monday. Reuters

populated areas. However, despite his efforts, the aircraft tragically crashed into the two-storey building of the school, said the ISPR. The jet crashed "due to a mechanical fault" (the details of which will be informed after investigation) after taking off from the Bangladesh Air Force Base AK Khandaker in Kurmitola at 01:06 pm as part of a regular training, the statement said.

"All injured individuals are being promptly transported to

the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) and nearby hospitals for necessary treatment, with assistance from Air Force helicopters and ambulances," it said.

It said that the chief of army staff and senior military officers rushed to the crash site where rescuers, including firefighters, army troops, police and elite Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), continued their rescue operations.

A high-level investigation committee has been formed by

the Bangladesh Air Force to determine the cause of the accident, the statement added.

Earlier, Md Sayedur Rahman, the special assistant to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus for the Health Ministry, said that injured people, mostly students, were being treated at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH), Dhaka Medical College Hospital, and the National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery (NIBPS).

PM MODI SAYS INDIA READY TO EXTEND ALL POSSIBLE SUPPORT

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday expressed deep shock at the loss of lives in an aircraft crash in Dhaka. India stands in solidarity with Bangladesh and is ready to extend all possible support and assistance, he said. "Deeply shocked and saddened at the loss of lives... Our hearts go out to the bereaved families," he said. "We pray for the swift recovery of those injured. India stands in solidarity with Bangladesh and is ready to extend all possible support and assistance," he added.

PTI

"The number of injured people being brought to our facility is rising," a doctor at NIBPS told reporters.

The interim government has declared a one-day state mourning on July 22 when the national flag will be flown at half-mast across Bangladesh and its missions abroad.

Chief Adviser Professor Muhammad Yunus expressed shock and sorrow over the casualties caused by the crash.

The deal began to unravel in 2018, when the United States

Iran, European countries to hold n-talks in Turkey

China, Russia officials to discuss likely 'snapback' if discussions fail to succeed

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHRAN, JULY 21

IRAN SAID Monday it would hold renewed talks this week with European nations over the country's nuclear programme, with talks to be hosted by Turkey.

The discussions, to be held in Istanbul on Friday, will be the first since a ceasefire was reached after a 12-day war waged by Israel against Iran in June, which also saw the US strike nuclear-related facilities in the Islamic Republic. A similar meeting had been held in the Turkish city in May.

The discussions will bring Iranian officials together with officials from Britain, France and Germany - known as the E3 nations - and will include the European Union's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas. "The topic of the talks is clear, lifting sanctions and issues related to the peaceful nuclear programme of Iran," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said.

Under a 2015 deal designed to cap Iran's nuclear activities, Iran agreed to tough restrictions on its international programme in exchange for an easing of sanctions.

The deal began to unravel in 2018, when the United States

pulled out of it and began to reimpose certain sanctions. European countries have recently threatened to trigger the 2015 deal's "snapback" mechanism, which would allow sanctions to be reimposed in the case of non-compliance by Tehran.

German Foreign Ministry spokesperson Martin Giese, asked who Germany will send to the talks and what its expectations are, said that "the talks are taking place at expert level".

"Iran must never come into possession of a nuclear weapon... This course of action is also coordinated with the US... If no solution is reached by the end of August... snapback remains an option for the E3," Giese told reporters in Berlin.

Iran, Russia and China will meet on Tuesday to discuss Tehran's nuclear programme and the risk of sanctions being reimposed under the United Nations' snapback mechanism, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said.

Baghaei said there were currently no plans to resume nuclear talks with the US.

The meeting between Iran, China and Russia will take place in Tehran at the level of foreign ministry director generals.

EU to ramp up retaliation plans as US tariff deal prospects dim

PHILIP BLENKINSOP
BRUSSELS, JULY 21

THE EUROPEAN Union is exploring a broader set of possible counter-measures against the United States as prospects for an acceptable trade agreement with Washington fade, according to EU diplomats.

An increasing number of EU members, including Germany, are now considering using wide-ranging "anti-coercion" measures which would let the bloc target US services or curb access to public tenders in the absence of a deal, diplomats say.

The European Commission, which negotiates trade agreements on behalf of the 27-member bloc, had appeared on course for a deal in which the EU would still have faced a 10% US tariff on most of its exports, with some concessions. Such hopes now seem dashed after President Donald Trump's threat to impose a 30% tariff by August 1, and following talks between EU Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic and US counterparts in Washington last week.

Sefcovic, who has said a 30% tariff would "practically prohibit" transatlantic trade, delivered a sober report on the current state of play to EU envoys on Friday, diplomats told Reuters.

US counterparts had come up with diverging solutions during his meetings, including a baseline rate that could be well above 10%, the EU diplomats added.

Monday's hearing ended without Burroughs issuing a ruling from the bench. A ruling is expected later in writing.

AP

Israeli tanks enter central Gaza, hostages' kin voice fears; airstrikes target Yemen port

NIDAL AL-MUGHRABI
CAIRO, JULY 21

ISRAELI TANKS pushed into southern and eastern districts of the Gazan city of Deir al-Balah for the first time on Monday, an area where Israeli sources said the military believes hostages may be held.

The area is packed with Palestinians displaced during more than 21 months of war in Gaza, hundreds of whom fled west or south after Israel issued an evacuation order, saying it sought to destroy infrastructure and capabilities of the militant group Hamas.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military attacked Houthi targets in Yemen's Hodeidah port on Monday in its latest assault on the



A residential building hit by an Israeli strike in Gaza City on Monday. Reuters

Iran-backed militants, who have been striking ships bound for Israel and launching missiles against it. Israeli Defence Minister

Israel Katz said the army was "forcefully countering any attempt to restore the terror infrastructure previously attacked."

In its daily update, Gaza's health ministry said at least 130 Palestinians had been killed and more than 1,000 wounded by Israeli gunfire and military strikes across the territory in the past 24 hours, one of the highest such totals in recent weeks.

There was no immediate Israeli comment on the Deir al-Balah and Khan Younis incidents.

Israeli sources have said the reason the army had stayed out of the Deir al-Balah districts was because they suspected Hamas might be holding hostages there.

Families of hostages have expressed concern for their relatives and demanded an explanation from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Defence Minister Israel Katz and the army chief of how they will protect them.

REUTERS

Harvard, Trump administration face off in court over cancelled \$2.6-bn federal funding

MICHAEL CASEY
BEIRUT, JULY 21

HARVARD UNIVERSITY appeared in federal court Monday in a pivotal case in its battle with the Trump administration, as the storied institution argued the government illegally cut \$2.6 billion in federal funding.

President Donald Trump's administration has battered the nation's oldest and wealthiest university with sanctions for months as it presses a series of demands on the Ivy League school, which it decries as a hotbed of liberalism and antisemitism.



The university's lawyer said the government is trying to control its "inner workings"

Harvard has resisted, and the

lawsuit over the cuts to its re-

search grants represents the primary challenge to the administration in a standoff that is being widely watched across higher education and beyond.

A lawyer for Harvard, Steven Lehotsky, said at Monday's hearing the case is about the government trying to control the "inner workings" of Harvard. The fund cuts, if not reversed, could lead to the loss of research, careers and the closing of labs, he said.

The case is before US District Judge Allison Burroughs, who is presiding over lawsuits brought by Harvard against the administration's efforts to keep it from hosting international students. In

that case, she temporarily blocked the administration's efforts.

At Monday's hearing Harvard is asking her to reverse a series of funding freezes. Such a ruling, if it stands, would revive Harvard's sprawling scientific and medical research operation and hundreds of projects that lost federal money.

A lawyer for the government, Michael Velchik, said the government has authority to cancel research grants when an institution is out of compliance with the president's directives.

Monday's hearing ended without Burroughs issuing a ruling from the bench. A ruling is expected later in writing.

AP



An explosion lights up the sky over Kyiv on Monday. Reuters

Russia, Ukraine may hold Istanbul talks this week, says report

REUTERS
MOSCOW, JULY 21

RUSSIA AND Ukraine appear close to agreeing to hold a new round of peace talks in Turkey this week, although the Kremlin said on Monday that the two sides held "diametrically opposed" positions on how to end the war.

Two days after Ukraine called for new talks in Istanbul this week, Russian state news agency TASS quoted an unidentified source as saying that negotiators - who have not sat down together for seven weeks - may meet there on Thursday and Friday.

The Kremlin said on Monday that it did not rule out the possibility of a meeting between Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump if the Russian and US presidents were both in Beijing at the same time in September. Peskov confirmed that Putin would visit China for events to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War Two, but said Moscow had not heard if Trump planned to go.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told a gathering of his diplomats in Kyiv: "We need greater momentum in negotiations to end the war." He added: "The agenda from our side is clear: the return of prisoners of war, the return of children ab-



A family outside a pediatric hospital in Beijing. APfile

lutions at the school were perfunctory, according to an official report released Sunday by a special investigative team convened by the Gansu provincial Communist Party committee and government.

Even before the release of the report, the lead poisoning scandal had dominated public discussion for weeks in China, where food safety has been a long-running concern.

The poisoning stemmed from powdered pigments that the school staff had used as food coloring, the report said. Some of the pigments, which were marked as inedible on its packaging, consisted of more than 20

percent lead; lead levels in the food the children were given exceeded the national food safety standard by 2,000 times.

But the investigation results further fueled public outrage at the official misconduct on multiple levels. Some parents at the preschool had already said they suspected a cover-up, even taking their children to other provinces for testing. Now their fears were confirmed.

One child was found to have elevated levels of lead six times over the course of half a year, starting in November 2024, without the hospital, Tianshui No. 2 People's Hospital, issuing any alert, the report said.

After many children began showing symptoms, the Gansu Provincial Center for Disease Control and Prevention this month was then tasked with

conducting its own testing of 267 students and staff at the school, Peixin Kindergarten. But officials there did not take the work seriously, the report said. They shook the blood samples or let them sit for nearly three hours, allowing the samples to separate, "resulting in a huge difference between the test results and the actual values," according to the report.

Afterward, the report continued, staff there "evaded responsibility and obstructed the investigation in various ways," though it did not give details.

The Chinese authorities tightly control the flow of information after any public disasters or scandals. In recent food safety

scandals, such as when cooking oil was transported in dirty fuel tanks, or a restaurant sprayed carcinogenic paint on barbecue skewers, the authorities have promised to hold individual companies or low-level officials accountable.

In the Tianshui case, parents who took their children for testing in neighboring Shaanxi Province said the results of tests administered there showed significantly higher lead levels than those taken in Gansu.

Six people have been arrested, including the preschool's principal, the school cooks and the investor who had given unauthorized gifts.

NYT

IN RARE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HIGH-LEVEL HUSH-UP, AUTHORITIES SAID THE POISONING STEMMED FROM FOOD COLOURING

200 Chinese children were affected by lead poisoning, health officials covered it up

HAD TOLD HOUSE HE RECEIVED MOTION FOR REMOVAL OF JUSTICE VARMA

Flutter in Delhi as V-P Dhankhar quits on Day 1 of Monsoon Session, 2 years of his term left

Cites 'medical advice'; comes hours after his office announced July 23 visit to Jaipur

DAMINI NATH,
LIZ MATHEW & DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

INA surprise late-evening development, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar announced Monday that he was stepping down from his post, two years to go for the

end of his five-year tenure, citing health concerns.

His resignation, addressed to President Droupadi Murmu, was with immediate effect, and hence it is unlikely that Dhankhar will be presiding over the Rajya Sabha in his capacity as its ex-officio Chairman Tuesday.

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Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar conducts proceedings in Rajya Sabha on Monday. ANI

WHAT NEXT, PAGE 13

More to it than meets the eye: Opp raises questions

ASAD REHMAN
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

RAISING QUESTIONS over Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar's "shocking" announcement, the Congress said on Monday night that there was "more to his totally

unexpected resignation than meets the eye". The Opposition party said Dhankhar had scheduled a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee for Tuesday afternoon, and was also supposed to make "major announcements related to the judiciary".

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2006 SERIAL BLASTS IN MUMBAI LOCAL TRAINS KILLED 189; CM FADNAVIS SAYS WILL APPEAL IN SUPREME COURT

7/11 Mumbai train terror: High Court acquits all 12 facing death and life; eight walk free

Creating false appearance of having solved a case gives a misleading sense of resolution... this deceptive closure undermines public trust: Bombay HC



One of the seven local trains targeted in the Mumbai blasts on July 11, 2006. File



Relatives of some of those acquitted with the head of the NGO that provided legal aid. Ganesh Shirsekar



Ramesh Naik lost his 27-year-old daughter Nandini when a bomb went off on a train at Borivali. Ganesh Shirsekar

OMKAR GOKHALE
MUMBAI, JULY 21

THE BOMBAY High Court Monday set aside the 2015 verdict of a special court that had awarded death sentence to five accused and life imprisonment to seven others in the 7/11 Mumbai train blasts. It acquitted all the 12 accused, and refused

the Maharashtra government's plea seeking confirmation of the death penalty for five.

Hours after the verdict, eight of them were released from various prisons across the state. Two were released from Nagpur Central Prison, four from Amravati Central Jail and one each from Yerawada Jail in Pune and Nashik Jail, respectively. While two were not released

due to pending cases, one was already released on parole and one had died of Covid in 2021 in the Nagpur prison.

On July 11, 2006, a series of bombs ripped through seven local train coaches of the Western Suburban Railway around 6.30 pm, killing 189 people and injuring 824. The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad investigated the case.

Of the total 13 accused originally, one was acquitted by the Special Court under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crimes Act (MCOCA) on September 11, 2015. Later, on September 30, the court sentenced five to death, including the one who died of Covid, and seven to life imprisonment.

On Monday, a special bench

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How case fell: Court flags torture signs, identical statements, dodgy witnesses

OMKAR GOKHALE &
APURVA VISHWANATH
MUMBAI, NEW DELHI, JULY 21

THE VERACITY of "identical confessions" by 11 accused made to the police; allegations of custodial torture before confessions were made; and the lack of any reliable material for the state to grant "prior approval" to invoke

the stringent anti-terror laws — a combination of these factors were behind the Bombay High Court's acquittal Monday of the 12 accused in the 2006 Mumbai blasts case.

To illustrate the discrepancies in the prosecution, the court flagged statements by two prosecution witnesses, Deputy Commissioners of Police Brijesh

EXPLAINED

Singh and DM Phadtare, recorded on two different dates, at different places and time.

"By any stretch of imagination, it is highly impossible to have (the) same questions, and its sequence in both the statements with same answers. Thus, it speaks volume and creates(s) doubt about the

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Govt agrees to 16-hr debate in House on Op Sindoor, but next week as PM away

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

THE GOVERNMENT has agreed to a 16-hour-long debate in Parliament on the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor, but next week, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi returns from an overseas visit. The decision was taken after the

Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Parliament on Monday. Anil Sharma

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He had been away from public life since 2019, when he suf-

fered a stroke. One month ago, he was admitted to a hospital following a cardiac arrest and had been on life support since then.

Achuthanandan was one of the 32 leaders of the undivided CPI to walk out in 1964 and form the CPI (M). He served as Kerala Chief Minister from 2006 to 2011, and as Opposition leader for three terms — 1991-1996, 2001-2006 and 2011-2016.

In his political life spanning eight decades, Achuthanandan became known as a relentless fighter. Starting from the pre-Independence period, his career

has been closely interwoven with the socio-political history of modern Kerala. A politician shaped by struggles and agitation, the Communist luminary donned different mantles in the Left movement and society at large. At different points in his life, he has been an organiser of grassroots workers, an underground revolutionary, an election manager, his party's crowd-puller, a public interest litigator, an anti-corruption crusader, and a voice for green movements. He also maintained a streak of rebellion

throughout his political life.

He was CPI(M) state secretary from 1980 to 1992, the period when the state settled into coalition politics. He also served as convener of the Left Democratic Front — the CPI(M)-led alliance currently in power in Kerala — from 1996 to 2000.

Born on October 20, 1923, at Punnapra village in Alappuzha district, Achuthanandan lost his mother, Accamma, when he was just four and his father, Sankaran, when he was 11.

Soon after, he dropped out of class 7 and started working at his

"To whom should I go for justice now?": Pain, anger among victims' families

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

JUSTICE DENIED

That there is no closure, only unanswered questions, in 2006 Mumbai blasts case is an enormous injustice

PAGE 10

ON THE evening of July 11, 2006, Mahendra Pitale was travelling home from work. Like most days, he stood at the door of an overcrowded North-bound local train. Around 6 pm, as the train approached Juhu station, a powerful blast tore through the coach, throwing him out. He woke up the next day in hospital to find his left arm amputated.

Nineteen years later, with the High Court on Monday acquitting all 12 accused in the 7/11 Mumbai train bomb blasts, Pitale says, "This one day is more unjust than the 19 years of suffer-

ing we have gone through. My only expectation now is that if these were not the perpetrators, then find the real culprits. I am convinced that the investigation fell short."

The court also set aside a special court verdict that had awarded the death sentence to five convicts, and refused the Maharashtra government's plea

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7/11 TRAIN BLAST VERDICT
Acquitted 17 years ago, gaps in probe, question over identity of accused

RTI AS 'RIGHT TO FAIR TRIAL': HOW THEY BUILT THEIR DEFENCE

THE MEN WHO HAVE BEEN ACQUITTED

PAGES 5, 6

Bangla speakers being hounded, sent to detention camps': Mamata targets BJP

ATRI MITRA & RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
KOLKATA, JULY 21

BUILDING HER poll pitch around "Bengali ashmita (pride)", West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday accused the BJP of "linguistic terrorism" and announced a "bhasha an-dolon (language movement)"

CM Mamata Banerjee at the Martyrs' Day rally in Kolkata on Monday. Partha Paul

from July 27. She alleged that people speaking in Bangla were being hounded in some BJP-ruled states and were getting sent to detention camps after being falsely labelled as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh.

The TMC chief said her party would take the "fight to Delhi" if the "oppression of Bengali and Bengalis" continued, and added

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

throughout his political life.

He was CPI(M) state secretary from 1980 to 1992, the period when the state settled into coalition politics. He also served as convener of the Left Democratic Front — the CPI(M)-led alliance currently in power in Kerala — from 1996 to 2000.

Born on October 20, 1923, at Punnapra village in Alappuzha district, Achuthanandan lost his mother, Accamma, when he was just four and his father, Sankaran, when he was 11.

Soon after, he dropped out of class 7 and started working at his

elder brother Gangadharan's tailoring shop, which regularly saw locals dropping in for informal chats on politics.

Over the years, he developed an interest in politics himself and joined the Travancore State Congress. After he turned 17, he became a member of the undivided CPI. The teen Communist was deputed to work among the fishermen, toddy-tappers and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

EC COUNTER-AFFIDAVIT IN SC

Poll panel says no to including Aadhaar, voter ID, ration card for revision of rolls

'Citizenship won't terminate on account of being held ineligible for registration'



WHAT WILL
NOT
COUNT IN BIHAR

proof of citizenship, and this has been held by various High Courts. "Aadhaar has not been included in the list of 11 documents provided in the enumeration form, as it does not help in screening the eligibility under Article 326. However, this is not to say that Aadhaar cannot be used to supplement other documents to prove eligibility," it said.

On July 10, the Supreme Court, while hearing petitions voicing concerns over the SIR in poll-bound Bihar, declined to restrain the EC from proceeding with the SIR but suggested that the poll panel also consider Aadhaar, voter ID and ration cards for the purpose of updating the rolls. It said the EC could file a counter-affidavit by July 21 and the matter be listed for another hearing on July 28.

In its counter-affidavit, the EC said Aadhaar does not constitute

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INSIDE

AFTER A MONTH AT KERALA AIRPORT, BRITISH FIGHTER JET SET TO FLY HOME P 13

Tariff uncertainty: US team to visit India mid-Aug, well after 'hard deadline'

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

AFTER OFFICIALS from the Commerce & Industry Ministry wrapped up another round of talks in Washington last week, a US team led by US Trade Representative for South and Central Asia Brendan Lynch is expected to visit India in mid-August to continue negotiations for a trade agreement, *The Indian Express* has learned.

While India and the US have agreed on a wide range of tariff lines, the negotiations — which currently only involve market access for goods — are stuck over sensitive sectors such as agriculture and automobiles, which are key job creators in India.

The new round of talks beyond the August 1 deadline comes amid growing suspense over whether India will face 26 per cent reciprocal tariffs starting August 1, as US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick on

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'Comrade VS', darling of the masses & fiery Opposition leader



V.S. Achuthanandan 1923 - 2025

Business as usual

By Unny

Any democracy will miss this opposition leader.

Join FREE WhatsApp Channel https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJ0mBd0F

Join FREE Telegram Channel https://t.me/+Bu7senHpQdhiODg1

• Opposition raises questions

"The sudden resignation of the Vice President and Chairman of the Rajya Sabha is as shocking as it is inexplicable. I was with him alongside a number of other MPs till around 5 pm today and had spoken to him over the phone at 7:30 pm. No doubt... (he) has to give topmost priority to his health. But clearly there is far more to his totally unexpected resignation than meets the eye. This is not the time for speculation though," Jairam Ramesh, Congress general secretary in-charge of communications, said in a post on X.

"He had fixed a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee tomorrow at 1 pm. He was also to make some major announcements related to the judiciary tomorrow. We wish him the best of health but also request him to reconsider his decision. We also expect the Prime Minister to get... (Dhankhar) to change his mind. This will be in the nation's interest. The farming community particularly will be greatly relieved," he said.

Congress Lok Sabha member Imran Masood asked "what happened in just one hour that he had to resign".

"Two and two don't always make four. In politics, not everything is straight. There are some things. There are the Bihar elections. You can think... Tomorrow will bring answers. He could have resigned in the day, but it seems he was under pressure or it was per planning," said Congress MP Sukhdeo Bhagat.

Samajwadi Party Rajya Sabha member Javed Ali Khan said he had seen the V-P in the House and "he seemed fine".

CPI(M) Rajya Sabha member John Brittas said he was "dis-

turbed by the news of reasons beyond his health for the resignation". "The entire House was working with him – even today. It is shocking that he has resigned," said Brittas.

RJD MP Sudhakar Singh said Dhankhar "looked healthy" while presiding over the proceedings in Rajya Sabha during the day. "Within the BJP and the government, this is a time of Constitutional crisis... I believe this is political distress," said Singh.

Rajya Sabha member Kapil Sibal said that he would not want to "speculate" on the reasons for the resignation.

The Opposition has had several run-ins with Dhankhar in the past, often over his conduct as Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. So much so that the Opposition parties had, in December last year, made an unprecedented move of bringing a no-confidence motion against the Vice President, accusing him of "partisan conduct" in the Upper House.

In their notice, the Opposition had alleged that Dhankhar had taken it upon himself to be an "impassioned spokesperson" of the government's policies in public forums. They had alleged that he was "explicitly partisan" and conducted the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha in an "extremely biased manner".

The Opposition also had, on several occasions, accused him of interrupting their members when they attempted to speak. In their notice, they had accused Dhankhar of repeatedly making disparaging comments about MPs belonging to Opposition parties publicly and criticising them when they expressed issues with the functioning of the government.

FROM PAGE ONE

Dhankhar

While Opposition leaders speculated about the reasons for his resignation, coming on the first day of the Monsoon Session, there was no immediate reaction from the government.

"To prioritise health care and abide by medical advice, I hereby resign as the Vice President of India, effective immediately, in accordance with Article 67(a) of the Constitution," Dhankhar, 74, said in his letter to the President.

According to sources, the Vice President had an "unscheduled" meeting with President Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan hours before his resignation. There was no official statement from either the President's or the Vice President's office on their discussion.

Earlier this year, Dhankhar had been hospitalised after complaining of uneasiness, and underwent a procedure. But since then, he had performed his official duties in the House as well as attended events across the country.

Incidentally, earlier Monday, the Vice President's Office had put out a statement announcing a one-day official visit to Jaipur on July 23. Days earlier, speaking at an event at JNU, Dhankhar had said, in a lighter vein: "I will retire at the right time, August 2027, subject to divine intervention." August 10, 2027, was when his tenure was to end.

While the resignation came out of the blue, there was frenetic speculation over its timing.

As per a senior BJP leader, the government had to face "much embarrassment" Monday as it was moving a motion sponsored

by it for the removal of Justice Yashwant Varma in the Lok Sabha. Dhankhar made a mention of the one moved by the Opposition in the Upper House. "Hon'ble members, I need to inform you that I have received notice of motion... to constitute a statutory committee for removal of Justice Yashwant Varma... It is signed by more than 50 members of the Council of States, and thus it meets the numerical requirement... for setting in motion a process for removal of a high court judge," he said.

As he was presiding over the House as Chairman at the time, his word was binding on the government, and the government apparently did not appreciate Dhankhar announcing it "without consulting the Treasury Benches". "While the government was trying to build a consensus to move the motion (in the Lok Sabha), the Rajya Sabha Chairman accepted a notice which only had signatures of Opposition MPs and made a statement. It was a big embarrassment for the government," said a BJP leader.

"The government did not want a motion moved in the Rajya Sabha because there is already a notice from the Opposition seeking the removal of Justice Shekhar Yadav in the House, for which the ruling party is not ready." Sources said Dhankhar, a lawyer by profession, was caught in a bind on the Justice Yadav matter as the Opposition technically has the numbers to move the motion (50 MPs), and he could not reject it.

While Dhankhar did not mention the Justice Yadav case Monday, he referred to it, speaking about the motion he had received in December 2024 from 55

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MPs, seeking removal of a judge of a High Court of Allahabad. "Examined and found that one member had signed at two places... An inquiry was conducted to find out who had signed twice, allegedly. The honourable member declined his second signature, that made the matter more serious because it was required of me then to get to the bottom of the issue... That process is under progress. I will get an update and come back to the House," Dhankhar said.

While Justice Varma is facing an inquiry over alleged recovery of currency from his home, the Opposition wants Justice Yadav removed for objectionable remarks at a VHP event.

Dhankhar also said that according to the Judges (Inquiry) Act, as notices of a motion against Justice Varma had been submitted on the same day in both Houses, a committee to examine the charges levelled against him would be constituted by the Speaker and himself as the Rajya Sabha Chairman.

Some BJP leaders claim the party was not happy with his frequent run-ins with the judiciary either. Among other things, he had criticised the Supreme Court over its landmark judgment setting deadlines for the President and governors to clear Bills passed by state Assemblies, saying India cannot have a situation where the judiciary directs the President.

On the Justice Varma matter too, Dhankhar had taken on the judiciary, saying its "independence" could not be a cover against inquiry. His remarks were seen as reflecting the government's view, leaving it vulnerable to unwarranted criticism, said BJP leaders.

• 7/11 Mumbai train terror: HC acquits all 12

of Justices Anil S Kilar and Shyam C Chandak of the Bombay High Court ordered the release of all the accused, if they were not required to be detained in any other case, and directed them to execute personal bonds of Rs 25,000 each.

"Punishing the actual perpetrator of a crime is a concrete and essential step toward curbing criminal activities, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring the safety and security of citizens. But creating a false appearance of having solved a case by presenting that the accused have been brought to justice gives a misleading sense of resolution.

This deceptive closure undermines public trust and falsely reassures society, while in reality,

the true threat remains at large. Essentially, this is what the case at hand conveys," said the bench led by Justice Kilar.

Reacting to the verdict, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the state would appeal the High Court order in the Supreme Court. "For all of us, this is shocking because the lower court gave its verdict based on the chargesheet and all documents. I have not read the judgment yet. We will challenge it in the Supreme Court and I have already discussed it with our lawyers," he said.

Finding substance in the case of defence lawyers, the bench observed that the prosecution "utterly failed to establish the offences beyond a reasonable doubt against the accused on each count." In acquitting them, it questioned the trustworthiness of certain prosecution witnesses and the Test Identification Parade (TIP) of some of the accused. It also held that "the accused succeeded in establishing the fact of torture inflicted on them to extort confessional statements."

The Bombay High Court had conducted hearings over a span of six months since July last year. The special bench passed the judgement over five months after it concluded the hearing on January 31.

Mumbai train bombings and the case

A series of bombs had exploded in the evening rush hour around 6.30 pm in seven coaches

of the Mumbai local trains, killing 189 commuters and injuring 824

on July 11, 2006. After an eight-year trial, the Special Court under the MCOCA awarded death penalty to five of the convicts on charges of spreading terror, organised crime, criminal conspiracy and murder under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), Explosives Substances Act, 1908, MCOCA, Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Railways Act, 1989.

The convicts are lodged at various prisons across the state, including Yerawada and Amravati central jails, for over 18 years now. They filed their pleas after they were convicted by the Special Court, and the matter had been pending since then.

There were 250 witnesses, including 92 prosecution witnesses; the evidence in the case spanned over 169 volumes, and the judgments of death sentences ran into nearly 2,000 pages.

The five convicts awarded

death are: Kamal Ahmed Mohd Vakil Ansari from Bihar, Mohammad Faisal Ataur Rahman Shaikh from Mumbai, Ehtesham Qutubuddin Siddique from Thane, Naveed Hussain Khan from Secunderabad, and Asif Khan Bashir Khan from Jalgaon in Maharashtra. All of them were found guilty of planting the bombs.

The seven who were given life terms are: Tanveer Ahmed Mohammed Ibrahim Ansari, Mohammed Majid Mohammed Shafi, Shaikh Mohammed Ali Alam Shaikh, Mohammed Sajid Margub Ansari, Muzammil Ataur Rahman Shaikh, Suhail Mehmood Shaikh, and Zameer Ahmed Latifur Rehman Shaikh.

One of the 13 originally accused, Wahid Shaikh, was acquitted by the trial court after spending nine years in jail.

Beyond the 13 arrested accused (some of them were Pakistani nationals), 15 wanted accused and two other deceased (accused), who were Pakistani nationals, were named in the chargesheet by ATS.

The ATS had claimed that the accused persons were members of banned organisation Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and had conspired with Pakistani members of banned terror group

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

The agency claimed that it wanted accused Azam Cheema and other Pakistani nationals, who continued to remain members of LeT and take part in its activities. While the lawyer representing the state government did not seek a stay of operation of the judgement after it was pronounced, the probing agency ATS is yet to approach the Supreme Court against the Bombay High Court verdict.

Maharashtra versus defence

In 2015, the Maharashtra government approached the Bombay High Court with pleas seeking confirmation of the death penalty granted to the five convicts. On the other hand, the convicts filed appeals challenging the order of the MCOCA Special Court.

As the convicts sought speedy disposal of the matter, pending since 2015, the High Court constituted a special bench led by Justice Kilar in July 2024. This court conducted regular hearings through more than 75 sittings over the span of six months.

Senior lawyer S Muralidhar (former Delhi HC judge), Senior Advocates Nitya Ramakrishnan and S Nagamuthu, along with Advocates Yug Mohit Chaudhary and Payoshi Roy, represented the convicts, whereas Senior Advocate Raja Thakare, appointed as special public prosecutor (SPP), appeared for Maharashtra.

The lawyers representing the convicts argued that their "extra-judicial confessional statements" obtained by the Maharashtra ATS through "torture" were inadmissible under the law.

They also argued the convicts were falsely implicated, innocent, and were languishing in jail

for 18 years without substantial evidence, and their prime years were gone in incarceration. They said the trial court erred in convicting them, and, therefore, the said order be set aside.

On its part, Maharashtra appealed the appeals by the convicts, claiming the probe agency provided sufficient evidence to establish it was a "rare of the rare" case to sentence the accused to the death penalty.

General of Police, before the law is invoked in a case. This procedure is an essential safeguard against the misuse of the law that reverses the burden of proof, allows prolonged detention and relaxes evidentiary standards.

The court noted that the sanction was obtained based on a "2.5 pages long proposal" with no supporting documents.

"Mere reproduction of some expressions, used in the definition of 'organised crime', continuing unlawful activities' or 'organised crime syndicate' to show the compliance, cannot be said to be in tune with the letter and spirit of the law relating to grant of approval for invocation of the provisions of the MCOCA," the court said.

Discarding the Test Identification Parade (TIP) of the accused, the court noted that the Special Executive Officer (SEO) who conducted it did not have the authority to do so.

The court noted that the prosecution examined eight witnesses, including taxi drivers who drove the accused to Churchgate station; witnesses who saw the accused planting bombs in trains; witnesses to the assembly of bombs, and witnesses to the conspiracy.

About the taxi drivers, the court said they were silent for over 100 days after the incident, and gave their statement to the police only on November 3, 2006, that two of the accused had travelled in their taxis. It observed that there was no special reason to trigger their memory about the faces and descriptions of the accused, to enable their identification after such a long gap.

Similarly, the court flagged the long gap in the case of witnesses who claimed to have seen the accused planting the bombs in the trains. The court noted that while one of the witnesses said that he saw the accused and some more persons making bombs when he entered the house of one of the accused, he changed his version during cross-examination, saying he did not enter the house, but a friend who accompanied him told him about the bombs.

"Thus, since the defence succeeded in shattering his oral evidence in cross-examination, for this reason and other reasons recorded, we have not considered his evidence worth relying," the HC held.

On the version of a person who claimed to be a witness to the conspiracy, the bench noted that while he said the accused were discussing some issues in secret meetings, he was unaware of the subjects discussed.

On the statement of the witness who helped to draw sketches of the accused, the HC noted that he was not called for the trial and was not asked to identify the accused in the court.

On evidence related to recoveries of explosives, including RDX granules, detonators, cookers, circuit boards, hooks, maps, etc, the HC noted that "evidentiary value of these recoveries does not attach any importance on the ground that the prosecution failed to establish and prove the proper custody and proper sealing which ought to be intact till the articles were taken to Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL)."

The judges observed that circuit boards recovered from two accused were of "no help to the prosecution to establish as the prosecution failed to bring any evidence on record and to establish the type of bombs used in the present case".

• To whom should I go for justice now?: Pain, anger among families of victims

seeking confirmation of their sentences.

On July 11, 2006, a series of bombs had ripped through seven local trains in Mumbai, killing 187 people and injuring 824.

Following Monday's verdict by a special High Court bench of Justices Anil S Kilar and Shyam C Chandak, the victims of the blast and their families expressed their disappointment.

Ramesh Naik, who lost his 27-year-old daughter Nandini when

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ED PROBE IN DJB CASE AGAINST UDIT RAI

'IAS officer, kin got nearly Rs 5 crore in kickbacks'

Alleged transactions took place during Rai's tenure as DJB CEO

SAKSHI CHAND
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate's investigation into a money laundering case involving IAS officer Udit Prakash Rai has claimed that nearly Rs 5 crore was allegedly routed to his account and that of his mother-in-law from six firms.

The alleged transactions took place during his tenure as CEO of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), when he is accused of favouring a firm in a tender process, it is learnt.

Last May, the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of the Delhi government had booked the six firms and government officials on charges of corruption in the case. The ED had filed an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, in the same case.

Rai could not be contacted despite repeated attempts.

The investigating agency wrote to the ACB earlier this month, mentioning a "maze of complex transactions made by the firms"

The investigating agency wrote to the ACB earlier this month, mentioning a "maze of complex transactions made by the firms"

Prevention of Corruption Act and IPC against the six firms — M/s Eurotech Environmental Pvt. Ltd; M/s Ayyappa Infra Projects Pvt. Ltd; M/S Khilari Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd; M/s GSJ Envo Limited; M/s Shubhash Infraengineers Pvt. Ltd; M/s Dineshchandra R Agrawal Infracon Pvt. Ltd — and other unknown government officials/public servants/private persons etc, an ECIR dated May 13, 2024, was recorded by the ED. The letter claimed that during the probe, it was "revealed" that Rai, when posted as Chief Executive Officer of the DJB, had awarded a tender to various contractors.

"However, the terms and conditions of the tender were restrictive, which resulted in favouring one technology provider — M/s Eurotech Environmental Pvt. Ltd. Investigation revealed that funds to the tune of Rs 1.52 crore were received in the bank accounts of Rai and his mother.

in-law... from a proprietary firm, AN Enterprises (Prop. Nagendra Yadav), which were transferred through a maze of complex transactions starting from M/s Eurotech Environmental Private Limited (a technology provider company in the said tender) and its related entities," the letter claimed.

Further, during the investigation, the letter alleged certain transactions were found where M/s Eurotech Environmental Pvt. Ltd and Director of M/s Ayyappa Infra Project Pvt. Ltd Satish Varma paid Rs 4.82 crore (including Rs 1.52 crore mentioned earlier to Nagendra Yadav and his associates in the form of commission etc.)

The ED also shared a note containing details of these transactions.

The Indian Express emailed five firms named in the note but did not receive a response.

Senior officials in the ACB stated that sanctions for prosecuting some people under Section 17A have been sought.

"We received the letter from the ED and are investigating the matter," an ACB official said.

"While sanctions have been issued for some individuals, approvals for others are still pending. Our investigation had earlier revealed that some firms were favoured," the official further added.

**UNDERCOVER**

A man uses a makeshift raincoat made from a plastic sheet to protect himself from the rain, at India Gate, on Monday evening. Abhinav Saha

From Kathak to Sitar recitals: 'A piece of India's culture' at airportEXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The initiative was launched Monday. Express

WHEN YOU are at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI) in Delhi the next time, waiting for your flight, don't be surprised if you get an opportunity to attend live Kathak performances, sitar recitals, and craft workshops.

This is part of Delhi International Airport Limited's (DIAL) new initiative — 'DEL Vibes'. Passengers can experience live Indian classical dance, music, and craft workshops while travelling. The programme, which DIAL claims is a first-of-its kind initiative at any Indian airport, has been

richness even before they leave the airport," said DIAL CEO Vipul Kumar Jaipuria. "It reflects our vision not just to manage and operate India's busiest transit hub, but to create memorable experiences for passengers."

According to DIAL, the programme will include live performances of Indian classical dance forms such as Kathak and Bharatanatyam, as well as instrumental recitals using the Tar Shehnai, Santoor, Sitar, and Sarangi. Travellers can also take part in hands-on craft sessions and artist-led demonstrations.

The performances are scheduled daily between 10 am and 6 pm.

"This is our way of giving every traveller a piece of India's cultural

'It was in kitchen, on third floor...': Snake sightings surge in Delhi as monsoon pushes them out of natural habitatEXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

may sound rare, incidents like these become common during monsoon in the Capital.

With flooded burrows and waterlogged grounds, snakes seek dry refuge and often get pushed out of their natural shelters and end up inside homes, schools, warehouses, and even government buildings, according to experts. "The monsoon season typically leads to an increase in snake sightings as they seek dry and safe shelters, often leading them into urban areas," said Suvidha Bhatnagar, Director of Communications at Wildlife SOS.

In the last few weeks, Wildlife SOS says it has caught multiple snakes across Delhi-NCR. A four-foot-long spectacled cobra was removed from a Jawaharlal Nehru University canteen, where it was



A rat snake rescued from East of Kailash on Sunday; (right) a cobra found at a JNU canteen. Express

found coiled close to a gas cylinder.

In the first week of July, a similar incident took place at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence — a rat snake was found and later removed.

Snakes have been spotted and removed by the teams of Wildlife SOS. All these incidents were reported in June.

This sharp increase in snake sightings and rescues is not limited to Delhi. In Agra, over 100 snake rescue calls were received between June and mid-July this year, according to the NGO. The reptiles thus removed included 34 Indian rat snakes, 23 spectacled cobras, and 21 common wolf snakes.

Kartick Satyanaryan, Co-founder and CEO of Wildlife SOS, said, "Instead of reacting out of fear, people are now seeking safe and humane solutions. This change is not just encouraging, it is

essential for the survival of these ecologically critical reptiles."

In July 2024, the NGO's rapid response team in Delhi handled at least 48 reptile rescues and in July 2023, they reported 56 reptile rescues, predominantly snakes, following heavy rain.

The Delhi Forest and Wildlife department also has an active helpline number for snake rescues, with multiple rapid response teams deployed based on the forest divisions, said a senior forest department official.

In Delhi, the NGO has observed that the monsoon season coincides with the hatching period of several native snake species.

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Unaudited Financial Results for the Quarter Ended 30th June, 2025 (₹ in Lakh)

Si. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended 30.06.2025 (Unaudited)	Quarter Ended 30.06.2024 (Unaudited)	Year Ended 31.03.2025 (Audited)
1.	Total Income from Operations (net)	743321.00	685942.00	294735.00
2.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	94620.00	86247.00	383355.00
3.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	94620.00	86247.00	383355.00
4.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	60744.00	55096.00	244496.00
5.	Total Comprehensive income for the period (comprising Profit/Loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax)	1253956.00	1195596.00	1253956.00
6.	Paid up Equity Share Capital	1541844.00	1240327.00	1541844.00
7.	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserves)	504211.00	362571.00	504211.00
8.	Securities Premium Account	222220.07	1638417.00	2110741.00
9.	Net Worth	0.08	0.07	0.07
10.	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	0.83	1.07	0.93
11.	Debt Equity Ratio	0.48	0.46	2.04
12.	Earning Per Share (of ₹ 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)	0.48	0.46	2.04
13.	Capital Redemption Reserve			Not Applicable
14.	Debtenture Redemption Reserve			

Note : 1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly Financial Result filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and 52 of the Listing Regulations. The full format of the quarterly Financial Result are available on the Stock Exchange websites, (BSE : www.bseindia.com and NSE : www.nseindia.com), Bank's website (www.ucobank.com/investors)
2. Information relating to total comprehensive income and other comprehensive income is not furnished as IND AS is not yet made applicable to the bank.

After the Wildlife SOS emergency helpline was approached, the NGO's rapid response unit arrived and caught the yellowish, slender, and non-venomous reptile with black crossbands, said residents. Even as such sightings

1. It is for the information of allottees of the project "Anant Raj Estate" being developed by M/s Anant Raj Limited in Sector-63A, Gurugram. The project was registered with the Interim RERA, Panchkula vide registration no. 142 of 2017 dated 28.08.2017 and the registration was valid up to 27.08.2022 + 6 months COVID-19 = 27.02.2023. Further, an extension of registration of project under Section 6 of Act of 2016 was granted to the promoter by RERA, Gurugram vide extension no. 19 of 2023 dated 10.07.2023 valid upto 27.02.2024.
2. The promoter has made an application with the request to the authority that instead of revoking the registration on its expiry, the authority may permit it to remain in force subject to such further terms and conditions as it thinks fit to impose in the interest of the allottees, and any such terms and conditions so imposed shall be binding upon the promoter.
3. The promoter has submitted the revised layout plan of the project which stand revised on account of grant of additional license for development of residential plotted colony and there are revisions in existing area of the colony registered with the Authority.
4. As per the provisions of Section 14(2)(ii) of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 any alteration or addition in the sanctioned plan of the project requires written consent of at least two third of the allottees. The promoter has submitted written consent of allottees for revision of layout plan which is more than two third of the total number of allottees.
5. The relevant plans, sanctions, consents and documents of the application are available in the office of the Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority Gurugram which can be seen by any allottees on any working day during office hours i.e., 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM upto 01.08.2025 and may file objections if any till 01.08.2025. Further, the concerned may also appear in person in the Authority on 04.08.2025 at 11:00 AM during project hearings.

Given under the approval of the Authority and its seal.

For and on behalf of NTPC Ltd. s/-/ (Ritu Arora)

Company Secretary & Compliance Officer M. No.: F5270

Date: 22.07.2025 Place: New Delhi

Leading the Power Sector

Vegetable vendor dies days after truck hits him in Defence Colony, accused yet to be tracedEXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

TWELVE DAYS after he was injured, allegedly in a hit-and-run incident in South Delhi's Defence Colony, a 45-year-old vegetable vendor died at the All India Institute Of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on Friday, an officer said.

A resident of Kotla Mubarakpur, the vegetable vendor was under treatment for 12 days at the Trauma Centre. During this period, his hands and legs were amputated by the doctors to prevent an infection, the officer added.

The incident happened on July 6 around 3:45 am, said officers. Identified as Sameer Singh, the deceased was going to buy supplies with his cart. A call was received at the Defence Colony police station to report that a vegetable vendor was injured after a truck allegedly ran him over and fled.

"He was en route to Okhla Mandi in his rickshaw when a truck hit him and fled. As per MLC, he sustained injuries to his upper and lower limbs and was declared unfit for a statement. He died on July 18. No CCTV was found at the spot. The investigation is ongoing," DCP (South) Ankit Chauhan said.

The incident happened on July 6 around 3:45 am, said officers. Identified as Sameer Singh, the deceased was going to buy supplies with his cart. A call was received at the Defence Colony police station to report that a vegetable vendor was injured after a truck allegedly ran him over and fled.

"He was en route to Okhla Mandi in his rickshaw when a truck hit him and fled. As per MLC, he sustained injuries to his upper and lower limbs, according to an FIR that has been filed in the matter.

He succumbed to his injuries on Friday. Multiple CCTV cameras were analysed by the police over the past 15 days, but the accused driver hasn't been arrested. The vehicle has not been traced as well, a police officer said.

Phone thieves busted at Himesh concert in covert police operationEXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

surveillance operation conducted by the police to curb any mischief among the crowd.

As the singer sang his popular numbers and the crowd danced, plainclothes police officers quietly moved through the stadium, keeping a close watch. "Knowing that such events often attract pickpockets, our special teams blended into the audience, spotted suspicious activity, and apprehended the accused," Valsan said.

Both the accused have been booked under Section 303(2) of the BNS. "We want people to feel safe at such events. Our job is to ensure that no one ruins the experience for others," the officer said.

According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Nidhin Valsan, the two thieves, identified as Wasim (36) and Mohammad Tayab (33), were caught during an undercover surveillance operation conducted by the police to curb any mischief among the crowd.

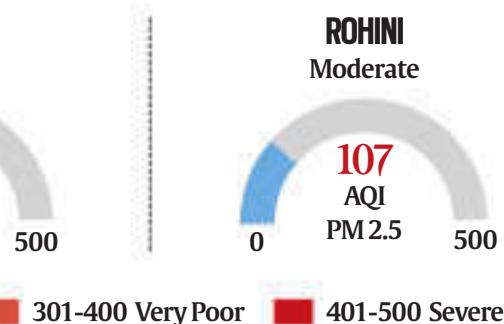
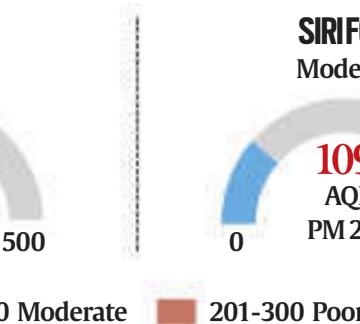
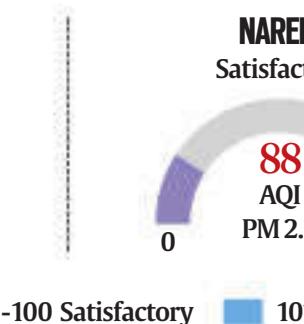
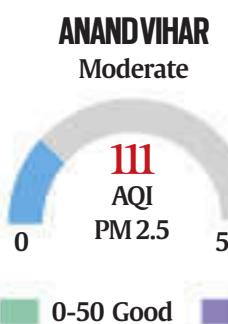
Details of the shareholders, in respect of shares for which dividend had remained unclaimed or unpaid for seven consecutive years and transferred to the IEPF Authority's Demat Account, are available on the website of the Company at <https://ntpco.co.in/iepf-details/iepf-account>

The Final Dividend for the financial year 2017-18 @ Rs.2.39 per equity share was paid on 1st October 2018. As per the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013, the unpaid and unclaimed amounts of the aforesaid dividend became due for transfer to Fund. The corresponding shares of the holders who have not encashed/ claimed their dividend for seven consecutive years are also liable to be transferred to IEPF Authority's Demat Account.

Shareholders may please note that if any amount/ shares are transferred to the Fund, then the same has to be claimed from the 'Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority' following the procedure as provided under IEPF Rules, 2016.

Shareholder(s) may refer to "IEPF Details" under the "Investors" section of the website: www.ntpc.co.in for further information for unclaimed/ unpaid dividend/ shares due to be transferred to IEPF Account. To avoid the inconvenience of claiming the refund/ shares from 'Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority', shareholders who have not received/ claimed/ encashed warrant(s) relating to the Final Dividend for the financial year 2017-18 paid in October 2018, may lodge their claims with the RTA i.e. Beetal Financial & Computer Services (P) Ltd., Beetal House, 3rd Floor, 99 Madangir, Behind Local Shopping Centre, Near Dada Harsukhdas Mandir, New Delhi-110062. Tel.: (011) 29961281, 29961283, Fax: (011)-29961284 and Email: ntpco@beetafinancial.com or with the Dy. Nodal Officer, Investor Services Department, NTPC Ltd. at the address indicated above. Shareholders may kindly ensure that claim, if any, shall be received by the RTA/ NTPC Ltd. on or before 24th October 2025 to ensure that unclaimed/ unpaid dividend amount and shares are not transferred to the Fund.

NTPC Ltd. had also issued Tax-Free Bonds – 2013, Tax-Free Bonds – 2015 and Bonus Debentures. Investors are also requested to check the details of such unclaimed interest amounts of Tax-Free Bonds and Bonus Debentures under the "Investors" section of the website: www.ntpc.co.in and lodge the claim with KFin Technologies Limited (RTA for Tax-Free Bonds and Bonus Debentures) at Selenium Tower-B, Plot No. 31 & 32, Gachibowli Financial District, Nanakramguda, Serilingampally, Hyderabad-500 032, Phone No: 1800-3094001, and Email: einward.ris@kfinotech.com or with the Dy. Nodal Officer, Investor Services Department, NTPC Ltd.



S K Y W A T C H
FORECAST: July 22
Generally cloudy sky; light to moderate rain with thunderstorm/lightning

MAX: 31-33 1.9°C below normal **MIN: 24-26** 1.3°C below normal

3,043 HOUSEHOLDS REHABILITATED, RAJYA SABHA TOLD

5,000+ houses demolished by DDA in three yrs: Minister

DEVANSH MITTAL
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

A TOTAL of 5,185 houses were demolished in the Capital in the action taken by Delhi Development Authority (DDA) in the last three years, Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Tokhan Sahu told Rajya Sabha on Monday.

Of these, 3,043 households – and effectively 17,015 people – have been provided with alternative rehabilitation in the form of flats in Ashok Vihar, Kalkaji and Narela.

According to Sahu, who provided the details in response to a question, the DDA has spent Rs 766 crore (excluding land cost) in building housing for the rehabilitation of slum dwellers.

Considering an average household size of five, an estimated 25,000 people have been displaced due to such demolitions.

A total of 1,896 households from the Bhoomiheen Camp in Kalkaji were allotted flats in the



A demolition drive was carried out at Bhoomiheen Camp in Kalkaji last month. Archive

In-situ Rehabilitation (ISR) project at Kalkaji Extension. From slum clusters in Jairwala Bagh in Ashok Vihar, Golden Park, Rampura, and Mata Jai Kaur, 1,404 households have been rehabilitated by the Swabhiman Apartments in Ashok Vihar. From a JJ cluster at Kalibari near RML Hospital, 103 families have been rehabilitated in Narela.

The rehabilitation of slums in the city is governed by the Delhi Slum & Jhuggi Jhopri Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy, 2015, which was approved by the Cabinet in 2016. It prioritises in-situ rehabilitation to ensure alternative accommodation to a slum dweller on the same land or within a 5 km radius.

To be eligible for rehabilita-

tion, however, the slum must have at least 50 households, must have existed before 2006, and the slum dweller must prove residence in the slum before 2015.

"The transition from jhuggi living to life in a modern flat, cohesive group living, sense of community ownership of common resources like common area, lift etc, and adapting to the changes" were the main challenges faced by slum dwellers in the rehabilitation process, according to the reply.

There are 675 slum clusters in Delhi, according to the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB). Of these, 376 occupy Central government land and come under the DDA's jurisdiction.

DUSIB is responsible for rehabilitating the remaining 299 JJ clusters located on Delhi government land.

Political parties estimate that roughly 50 lakh people, or close to quarter of the total population, live in slums in the national capital.

MCD hits 50% of its property tax collection target in first quarter

DRISHTI JAIN
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

THE MUNICIPAL Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has achieved 50% of its property tax collection target in the first quarter of the current financial year, officials said on Monday. A total of Rs 1,650 crore has been collected so far against the target of Rs 3,200 crore.

"Numbers used to be high, but the actual amount with the department was less because of these reasons, and it was difficult for the officials to trace the person since they would – on many occasions – not write the full address," the official added.

On Monday, the civic body organised 2,333 property tax camps across the city's 12 zones to facilitate taxpayers in filing their taxes and availing benefits offered under the Amnesty Scheme. To avail of this benefit, taxpayers are required to file their online Property Tax Return (PTR) on the official MCD portal.

Police said the murder took place in Nuh near the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway, officially known as the Western Peripheral Expressway, on July 19.

On July 19, according to a police complaint filed by the child's father, when his wife returned home around 7 pm, she could not find the boy. She assumed he was playing with other children. The father left for work at 8 pm. The next day, a child's body was found near a bus stand, with injuries on the chest and forehead. The man

confirmed it was his son.

About two months ago, the complainant further stated, the teen had stolen the man's mobile phone. The phone was recovered from the accused after the 7-year-old informed his father of the theft. The accused was forced to apologise, fuelling his resentment, according to the police.

"Based on some inputs, we found the accused in a room in a Nuh village. So far, he has been cooperating with the investigation. The scissors was recovered from the scene," Station House Officer Dilbagh Kumar said.

The police, along with fingerprint, forensic, and crime scene teams, inspected the crime scene, recovered the scissors used in the murder, and sent the boy's body for a postmortem in Gurgaon, said officers.

The teenager was produced before a juvenile court on Monday, police added. Officers said the victim's parents had not filed any complaint immediately after he was found missing on Saturday night.

Teen stabs 7-year-old to death over phone theft grudge: Police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, JULY 21

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EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

ACTION INITIATED BY THE COLLEGE

8.45 pm: Call made to Mandela Hostel's warden
8.55 pm: Warden reaches room no. 1209
9.20 pm: Ambulance called
9.35 pm: Body taken to the



Emergency Dept of Sharda Hospital. Student declared dead
10.45 pm: Call made to 112
11.02 pm: Police receive memo from hospital

booked by Greater Noida Police on the charge of abetment of suicide.

According to police, during questioning, Dr Chauhan claimed the matter began over her allegedly forging his signature.

"She had forged my signature in one of her practicals. We also called her parents regarding this," he allegedly told police.

The varsity has initiated an inquiry, an official said, adding that a high-level committee will submit a report soon.

Greater Noida Additional DCP Sudhir Kumar told *The Indian Express*: "We are looking into every detail of the case, including the delay in informing the police."

"The college has begun an inquiry, its probe will also determine the source of negligence. It is clear they informed us late...

two hours after they got to know about the incident," said Sarvesh Singh, SHO, Knowledge Park.

Speaking about the post-mortem report, Singh said, "It says 'asphyxia' due to hanging."

In the purported suicide note, which named six accused, Jyoti (21), wrote that she was humiliated and mentally harassed. Saying that she had been feeling stressed for a long time, she added: "I am sorry. I cannot live like this anymore. I can't."

While two professors, Dr Shairy Vashist and Dr Mahinder Singh Chauhan, were arrested on Saturday and suspended by the varsity, four other faculty members, including the dean, and one unidentified staff have been

"We take attendance online. She only attended 33% of the total classes," Kumar added.

On being asked about the delay in reporting the matter to the police and informing the family, Kumar said the college's priority was to ensure medical attention.

"We have a hospital inside

the campus, nearly 100 metres from her hostel. We thought of taking her to the hospital and providing her with emergency care. But we will still inquire as to why the police were not informed on time," he said.

BRIEFLY

Man killed after truck rams into pedestrians

New Delhi: A 36-year-old man died, while three others sustained serious injuries, after a truck lost control, collided with a parked motorcycle, and rammed into multiple pedestrians near the Okhla Tank Bus Stand on Monday, said police.

The accused, Brahmdeo Singh, 43, has been taken into custody. "Eye-witnesses said... a truck loaded with gas cylinders came from Ashram side... and rammed into multiple pedestrians. The driver attempted to flee but was apprehended by alert traffic policemen near Apollo Hospital," said DCP (South-east) Hemant Tiwari. ENS

AI flight rescheduled after snag

New Delhi: An Air India flight from Delhi bound for Kolkata on Monday evening was rescheduled due to a technical issue detected by the cockpit crew, the airline said. "Flight AI2403 operating from Delhi to Kolkata on July 21 has been rescheduled to depart later this evening. The rescheduling was necessitated by a technical issue detected during the take-off roll," an Air India spokesperson said. ENS

industrial areas and 4 flatted factories in Delhi.

To boost the Hospitality sector, the policy recommends permitting hotels and serviced apartments as part of commercial centres in industrial zones.

The government has proposed a series of targeted interventions, including increasing hotel rooms near locations like ITPO at Pragati Maidan and Yashashbhami. "Facilitate the PPP model for developing tourism infrastructure at government facilities... Make Delhi a restaurant and bistro-friendly city with streamlined compliance and regulatory burden, and a reasonable alcohol policy," reads the draft.

An inter-departmental committee will be formed to serve as a recommendatory body to the Cabinet for sanction of incentives across various sectors. A high-level review and monitoring committee will be constituted to monitor the implementation and progress of all the policy provisions regularly, said officials.

Officials said the subsidies will be sanctioned by the Commissioner, Industries.

Delhi govt unveils draft industrial policy to tackle red tape, attract investments

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

WHAT IT ENTAILS

Promote sectors such as Banking, Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, R&D and Hospitality to boost revenue & employment

Recommends holding a Global Investor Summit

For Hospitality sector, policy recommends permitting hotels, serviced apts as part of commercial centres in industrial zones

mended by the draft policy included implementing single-window business registration portals with blockchain verification for automated approvals and real-time tracking, inspired by Singapore's BizFile+ and Estonia's e-Residency.

Under this policy, the government aims to set up a Rs 400-crore venture capital fund. There are also plans to provide reimbursement of 50% fixed capital investment (including land) for five years for businesses in frontier-tech sectors up to a maximum limit of Rs 50 crore per project.

In addition, there will be a 6% interest subsidy per annum for the first five years; reimbursement of 100% GST for five years; 100% reimbursement of patent filing up to Rs 5 lakh per patent; and exemption of 50% on wheeling and transmission charges, on interstate purchase of power, reads the draft policy.

Industrial areas in Baprola, Rani Khera and Kanjhawala have been earmarked for development of the frontier-tech services sector. There are a total of 32 planned and 27 unplanned in-

vestment projects.

The draft policy noted that the city's business environment suffers from "significant regulatory inefficiencies" – lengthy registration and licensing processes, multiple agency approvals, bureaucratic "delays", "corruption", and complex tax policies. This hinders businesses, especially SMEs, discourages FDI, and slows infrastructure development.

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Fadnavis: Verdict shocking, govt will challenge it in SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JULY 21

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis

CHIEF MINISTER Devendra Fadnavis said that the Bombay HC's judgment Monday in the 2006 Mumbai train blast case setting aside a special court verdict and acquitting all 12 men was "shocking" and added that the government will challenge it in the Supreme Court.

CM Fadnavis said, "For all of us this is a shocking verdict. Because the lower court has already given its verdict and it was all based on the chargesheet and other documents. I am yet to read the judgment. We will challenge it in Supreme Court. I have already discussed it with the lawyers about it."

Earlier in the day, BJP leader and state minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule had said the state government would review the matter and consider filing an appeal in the Supreme Court. "The HC has delivered its verdict. At this moment, it would not be appropriate to comment. However, we will discuss with the CM whether there were any shortcomings on the government's part. We will also explore whether the matter

can be taken to the SC," Bawankule said. Senior BJP leader Kirit Somaiya said that justice must not be denied due to procedural lapses in investigation or legal handling.

"The decision delivered today has shaken us. Yes, there may have been gaps in the investigation, legal representation, or courtroom proceedings – but that cannot be a reason to deny justice to the victims and the people of Mumbai," Somaiya said.

He urged Fadnavis to form an SIT and a strong legal panel to immediately move SC. Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Nirupam also called for a fresh probe. "Justice must be delivered, not delayed or denied. The government must appeal the verdict and reexamine the case," Nirupam said.

State minister and NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal echoed Bawankule on deciding the next legal step following the high court verdict. **WITH PTI INPUTS**

OMKAR GOKHALE
MUMBAI, JULY 21

ACQUITTING ALL accused in the train blasts case, the Bombay HC picked holes in the ATS submissions, noting that it "utterly failed to establish offences beyond reasonable doubt against the accused on each count".

The accused have already spent over 18 years in jail. The HC overturned the September 2015 verdict of a special court designated under the MCOCA, which had sentenced five to death and life term to seven.

On July 11, 2006, a series of bomb blasts ripped through 7 Mumbai local train coaches around 6.30 pm, killing 189 people and injuring 824. The bombs were in pressure cookers. Maharashtra ATS investigated the case. One accused who was sentenced to death by special court died due to Covid-19 in jail in 2021. The HC today acquitted him too.

Reliance on prosecution evidence

Holding that the matter was "rarest of the rare case", Special Judge Yatin D Shinde had ob-

EXPLAINED E.

served that "mitigating circumstances pleaded by accused are not sufficient to displace the aggravating circumstances". The special court heavily relied on confessional statements of the accused and supporting evidence produced by the prosecution. Many of these have been rejected by HC.

"Punishing the actual perpetrator of a crime is a concrete and essential step toward curbing criminal activities, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring the safety and security of citizens. But creating a false appearance of having solved a case by presenting that the accused have been brought to justice gives a misleading sense of resolution. This deceptive closure undermines public trust and falsely reassures society, while in reality, the true threat remains at large. Essentially, this is what the case at hand conveys," a Bench of Justices Anil Kilar and Shyam C Chandak said in the 671-page judgment.

Grounds on which HC rejected ATS case

The Bombay HC observed that among the aspects the prosecution failed to establish are the

trustworthiness of the witnesses who identified the accused and what kind of explosives used. It also held that confessional statements of the accused were "not found to be truthful", and accepted the defence's claim that the accused were tortured into making the confessions.

The HC also discarded the Test Identification Parade of accused, noting that the Special Executive Officer who conducted it did not have the authority to do so.

Evidences of eyewitnesses

The Bench noted that the prosecution examined 8 witnesses, including taxi drivers who drove the accused to Churchgate station, the witnesses who saw the accused planting bombs in trains, the witnesses to the assembling of bombs, and the witnesses to the conspiracy.

The HC scrutinised the evidence of each of these witnesses.

About the taxi drivers, it noted that they were silent for over 100 days after the incident, and gave their statement to the police only on November 3, 2006 that two accused had travelled in their taxis. It observed there was no special reason to trigger

the witness's memory about the face and description of the accused to enable their identification after such a long gap.

The HC raised the point of a long gap also for the witnesses who claimed to have seen the accused planting the bombs in the trains. The Bench noted that while one of the witnesses had said that he saw the accused and some more persons making bombs when he entered the house of one of the accused, he changed his version during cross examination, saying he did not enter the house himself, but a friend who accompanied him told him about the bombs.

"Thus, since the defence succeeded in shattering his oral evidence in cross-examination, for this reason and other reasons recorded, we have not considered his evidence worth relying," the HC noted. On the version of a person who claimed to be a witness to the conspiracy, the Bench noted that while he said the accused were discussing some issues in secret meetings, he was unaware of the subjects discussed.

On the statement of the witness who helped to draw sketches of the accused, the HC noted that he was not called for the trial and he was not asked to identify the accused in the court.

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Evidence about the explosives

On evidence related to recoveries of explosives, including RDX granules, detonators, cookers, circuit boards, hooks, maps, etc, the HC noted that "evidentiary value of these recoveries does not attach any importance on the ground that the prosecution failed to establish and prove the proper custody and proper sealing which ought to be intact till the articles were taken to Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL)."

The HC held that the "confessional statements inadmissible" and "not truthful or complete" based on various grounds, including lack of proper approval for the same, variations in correspondence made by officials before or after recording the confessions, and absence of the certificate mandated under MCOCA Rules to establish voluntariness of the confessions.

The HC perused medical evidence of doctors of KEM Hospital and Bhabha Hospital and noted that it "sufficiently hinted at the possibility of torture" being inflicted on the accused to extort a confession.

Hours after HC verdict, eight released from different jails

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JULY 21

HOURS AFTER Bombay HC acquitted the 12 accused in the 2006 Mumbai train blasts case, eight of them were released from different jails in the state.

While two were not released due to pending cases against them, one of the accused had died due to Covid-19 and another was already released parole.

Ehtesham Qutubuddin Siddiqui, who was earlier on death row and Mohammed Ali Alam Sher Sheikh, facing life term, were released from Nagpur Central Prison around 8 pm. Other accused including Tanveer Ahmed Mohd Ibrahim Ansari, Mohd Majid Mohd Shafi, Suhal Mohd Sheikh, and Zamir Ahmed Latifur Rehman Sheikh were released from Amravati Central Jail around 9 pm.

Afz Khan Bashir Khan was released from Yerawada Jail in Pune and Muzammil Ataur Rahman Shaikh from Nashik jail. After being released, Suhal Mohd Shaikh told media persons, "We had complete faith in the court and the establishment. There was nothing in the case against us. We should have been acquitted by the special court itself, but now the HC has done it."

RTI as 'right to fair trial': How they built defence, police to hospital records

SADAF MODAK
MUMBAI, JULY 21

THEY FILED "20-25 RTI applications a day", says Wahid Shaikh, seeking information on "logbooks of police stations to location of vehicles cited in the probe, to hospital records, to service records of investigators".

On Monday, as Bombay HC acquitted all 12 accused in the 2006 Mumbai train blasts, these RTIs played a big part in the collapse of the prosecution case. It's not clear how many RTIs were filed by the accused in all, but their lawyers put it at "hundreds", pointing out that most of the defence documents were, in fact, RTI responses.

Shaikh, who was acquitted in 2015 in the case (the only one cleared by the trial court), says soon after they were charged in 2007, they decided to go over the police document carefully, divide it topic-wise, and then go about filing RTIs to try and find holes in the prosecution evidence.

Perhaps the most prolific in terms of RTI applications was Ehtesham Siddique, once a printer and publisher of Islamic books, who was among those sentenced to death by the trial court.

Part of the evidence that the HC held unreliable Monday was the testimony of a prosecution witness (PW-74) that he saw two men with a black raxine bag at Churchgate Station, boarding a

train towards Virar on the evening of July 11, 2006. He identified one of the two men as Ehtesham.

It was on the basis of this testimony that police identified Ehtesham as the planter of one of the train bombs, and that the trial court sentenced him to death.

The witness told the trial court that he had come to the Churchgate Station after meeting a person at the ENT Hospital at Hutatma Chowk in Fort, and had then taken a train to Dadar, to meet a person working with a bank.

The HC held that RTI replies obtained by Ehtesham showed that witness's testimony didn't hold up. For instance, the witness identified the man he went to meet at the ENT Hospital on July 11, 2006, as

'Baban Rankhambe'. An RTI application filed by Ehtesham showed there was no such person at the hospital by that name then. The prosecution then argued that a person named 'Baban Rongya Kamble' worked at the hospital, and the name could have been mistyped. But RTI response showed that Kamble was supposed to be on the night shift that day, but had remained absent.

"Thus, it creates doubt about the veracity of the evidence of PW-74," the HC said. The court also noted that, as per police, PW-74 had approached them over 100 days after the blast to identify Ehtesham, and questioned how anyone could recollect the face of a person after such a long gap.

Another RTI by Ehtesham showed that there was no one by the name that the same witness claimed to have met at a bank the evening of the blasts – a fact that was also noted by the HC Monday.

Another RTI response referred to by the court was that the same witness, PW-74, had appeared in four other cases for police. The defence claimed that this showed he was a "stock" witness of police and could not be considered "independent".

Wahid Shaikh, who credits a fellow undertrial with giving them the idea of using RTIs to prepare their defence, says that they stepped up the filing of applications after the trial against them began in 2010.

The same year, on an appeal filed by Ehtesham, an Additional Principal Judge of the City Civil Court in Mumbai held that since he was an undertrial since 2006 with no income, he should be treated as below poverty line – under the RTI Act, it exempted him from paying fees for his applications.

The accused also filed RTI pleas to seek Call Data Records, as they were not made part of the evidence, taking the route after a court plea failed. Their advocate Yug Mohit Chaudhari argued that the accused's right to a fair trial was severely compromised due to it.

Chaudhari also submitted that the Maharashtra ATS had tried to

stop the accused from accessing the CDRs via RTI, by instructing the telecom company concerned MTNL not to provide the details. The RTI response denying the CDR information was part of the defense's court submissions.

In its order, the HC said: "It is to be noted that the prosecution has failed to bring any satisfactory evidence on record to corroborate the above facts. Therefore, in absence of such satisfactory evidence, the prosecution ought to have brought the CDRs of the accused on record, which would have clearly established their locations at the relevant time. It is to be noted that the prosecution had obtained the CDRs but not relied upon (them) or filed along with

the chargesheet."

Ehtesham also filed RTIs with other departments, and filed court appeals when he was denied information. Many of these too were denied.

His RTI on the IPS officers who supervised the blasts probe was denied by the Delhi High Court in 2024, which upheld the Central Information Commissioner's decision that the information was personal and not in public interest.

Another of Ehtesham's RTIs that was unsuccessful was an application seeking an investigation report which showed that another terror group was behind the blasts – and he or the other co-accused with him.

ADVERTORIAL

India's Green Engine: How Agriculture Continues to Empower and Evolve

Deeply rooted in tradition and now growing through innovation, agriculture continues to uphold India's economy, nourish its people, and empower its rural heartland.

A gentle breeze weaves through emerald-green fields as farmers with their quiet determination, carrying generations of knowledge etched into calloused hands and time-worn tools, walk the furrows at dawn, silhouetted against a rosy sky. The rhythmic sway of paddy stems and wheat ears evokes the dawn of hopes and livelihoods that begin every day in rural India. From the tactile richness of soil to the chorus of birds and tractors, agricultural life forms the heartbeat of the countryside. It is here, in these fields and hamlets that the true story of India's economy unfolds. Agriculture remains a foundational pillar, contributing to the livelihoods of over 40% of rural households and engaging nearly half of the national workforce. Beyond being a source of sustenance, agriculture is interwoven with India's food security, cultural identity, economic health, and social stability. This enduring connection between the land and its people makes agriculture an indispensable cornerstone of national progress and a vital force shaping India's present and future.

Innovation Redefining Farming

India's agricultural journey is undergoing a transformative evolution driven by technology. Across many parts of the country, a quiet revolution is taking shape as farmers increasingly engage with innovations that enhance productivity and decision-making. Digital platforms now allow many cultivators to access weather forecasts,

sustainability and Rural Value Creation. While technology is reshaping practices, sustainability and rural enterprise are redefining purpose. Across India, the concept

of waste is being transformed into wealth. Organic farming methods are gaining momentum, with farmers returning to natural manures, compost, and bio-inputs that enrich the soil without harming the environment. Biogas plants are turning agricultural residue and animal waste into clean energy, powering homes and irrigation systems while reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

Drones are being deployed to spray fertilizers and pesticides with greater precision, reducing costs and ensuring less wastage. Meanwhile, smart soil sensors are enabling real-time monitoring of moisture and nutrient levels, empowering farmers to fine-tune irrigation and input use. Additionally, AI-powered tools are assisting farmers by offering crop advisories, diagnosing pest infestations, and recommending ideal sowing or harvesting times. In some areas, cloud-connected systems enable farmers to track and plan agricultural activities based on accurate, location-specific insights.

These technological advancements are not intended to replace the wisdom of traditional farming practices, but to enhance them. The combination of heritage and innovation is redefining what is possible in Indian agriculture. Where once intuition and experience alone guided the farmer, now data and digital tools are helping shape more resilient and prosperous agricultural futures.

Sustainability and Rural Value Creation

While technology is reshaping practices, sustainability and rural enterprise are redefining purpose. Across India, the concept

of waste is being transformed into wealth. Organic farming methods are gaining momentum, with farmers returning to natural manures, compost, and bio-inputs that enrich the soil without harming the environment. Biogas plants are turning agricultural residue and animal waste into clean energy, powering homes and irrigation systems while reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

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7/11 TRAIN BLASTS VERDICT



7/11 TIMELINE

- **JULY 11, 2006:** Seven bomb blasts ripped through Western Line suburban trains in Mumbai, killing 189.
- **JULY-AUG 2006:** Seven FIRs registered in various police stations and later consolidated. Maharashtra ATS took over the investigation and arrested 13 during this period.
- **NOV 30, 2006:** ATS filed a chargesheet against 30 people, including Pakistani nationals listed among 15 wanted accused.
- **2007:** Trial began in a special MCOCA court against the 13 accused.
- **SEPT 11, 2015:** Special court convicted 12 of the 13 accused.
- **SEPT 30, 2015:** Five of the convicts sentenced to death; remaining 7 get life imprisonment while one was acquitted.
- **OCT 2015:** The Maharashtra government filed death sentence confirmation pleas in the Bombay HC. All convicts also filed appeals, which continued through to 2021.
- **JAN 2019:** The HC noted that while jail authorities had informed the convicts about their right to appeal, they had not been notified of the state's confirmation pleas. Fresh notices were issued.
- **2021-23:** Appeals were placed before multiple HC division benches. Hearings delayed due to judge retirements and recusals.
- **SEPT-DEC 2023:** Justice Nitin Sambre began hearing the appeals, but the matter was reassigned following his transfer to the Nagpur bench.
- **JUNE 2024:** Ehtesham Siddique, one of the convicts sentenced to death, filed a plea seeking speedy disposal of the appeals.
- **JULY 2024:** The HC constituted a special bench comprising Justices Anil S Kilar and Shyam C Chandak to hear the matter.
- **JULY 2024 - JAN 2025:** The special bench conducted over 70 hearings. Arguments were heard from the ATS and the defence based on a record running over 40,000 pages.
- **JAN 31, 2025:** Hearings concluded. The bench reserved its verdict.
- **JULY 21, 2025:** The Bombay HC acquitted all 12 and said that the prosecution had "utterly failed to establish the offences beyond a reasonable doubt against the accused on each count".

Maharashtra should appeal in SC against verdict: Ex-ATS chief who headed probe



KP Raghuvanshi

VIJAY KUMAR YADAV
MUMBAI, JULY 21

FORMER MAHARASHTRA ATS chief, K P Raghuvanshi, who headed the investigation into the train blasts case, said Monday that the state government should appeal against the Bombay HC judgment acquitting all 12 accused.

The HC set aside a special court verdict that awarded the death sentence to five accused in the 2006 Mumbai train blasts and refused the Maharashtra government's plea seeking confirmation of their sentences. The HC acquitted all 12 accused in the case, including those sentenced to life imprisonment.

Raghuvanshi told *The Indian Express*, "I believe we had made a very strong case on the basis of which the trial court had convicted the accused. Now, ATS will examine the judgment, and in consultation with the PP (public prosecutor) and other legal experts, they will decide."

"We are pretty sure we have done a good investigation and collected ample evidence; that's why the trial court had convicted the accused... I believe they should appeal against the verdict in Supreme Court," Raghuvanshi said.

Around 15 ATS officers were involved in the probe, recorded statements of around 250 witnesses and gathered evidence spanning over 169 volumes. A special court under the MCOCA in October 2015 awarded death penalty to five and life terms to seven. In a statement, the ATS Monday said its Mumbai office will take a decision after consulting the special prosecutor of the case.

Acquittals: 17 yrs ago, gaps in probe, questions over identity of accused

Unlike ATS probe, Crime Branch linked the blasts to an IM module

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

THE BOMBAY HC acquittal of all 12 accused in the July 11, 2006, serial Mumbai train blasts case comes 17 years after a Mumbai Police Crime Branch probe indicated loopholes in its investigation by the Maharashtra ATS.

At a press conference on September 25, 2008, the Crime Branch announced it had busted a key Indian Mujahideen (IM) module and that it was responsible for several blasts since 2005 – including those in Jaipur, Ahmedabad and Delhi between 2006 and 2008, as well as the July 2006 Mumbai serial train blasts.

The ATS chargesheet had held the banned SIMI responsible for the blasts, arresting 13 people and chargesheeting 30, including "Pakistani nationals".

But as per the Crime Branch, four of the five IM men it arrested in 2008 were actually the absconding "Pakistani nationals" mentioned in the 2006 blasts chargesheet filed by the ATS.

At the same time, the Crime Branch never claimed that those arrested for the train blasts by the ATS were innocent, or tried the IM men it had itself held for the Mumbai train blasts. The IM module the Crime Branch busted, led by Sadiq Israr Sheikh and including his associates, were, however, convicted for the July 26, 2008, Ahmedabad blasts and remain on trial in some other cases.

"How could the Crime Branch chargesheet them for a crime in which a sister agency had arrested



A train which was targeted in the Mumbai blasts on July 11, 2006. Express archive

a different set of accused? It was a job for that sister agency to do," a Central security establishment officer told *The Indian Express*, adding he was not surprised by the court's acquittal on Monday.

In its order, the HC said: "Punishing the actual perpetrator of a crime is a concrete and essential step toward curbing criminal activities, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring the safety and security of citizens. But creating a false appearance of having solved a case by presenting that the accused have been brought to justice gives a misleading sense of resolution. This deceptive closure undermines public trust and falsely reassures society, while in reality, the true threat remains at large... Essentially, this is what the case at hand conveys."

At the press conference in September 2008, when it suggested its findings regarding the 2006 blasts case differed from the ATS's, then Mumbai Crime Branch chief Rakesh Maria, accompanied by then Additional CP and current Mumbai Police chief Deven

Bharti, said: "The absconding Pakistani nationals mentioned in the 7/11 case as conspirators are actually the men we have arrested. They had not revealed their true identity during the (blasts) operation, and told their associates they were Pakistani nationals. That's why when their associates were quizzed, they told investigators that those absconding were Pakistani."

The Crime Branch "breakthrough" following the arrest of an alleged car thief, Afzal Usmani, by a team led by one of its inspectors, Arun Chavan. Usmani led Chavan's team to Sadiq Israr Sheikh, Arif Badruddin Sheikh, Mohammed Zakir Abdul Sheikh and Mohammed Ansar, who were then arrested. The Crime Branch said that during interrogation, Sadiq, who headed the UP module of IM, said it was along with fellow IM operative Dr Shahnaaz and two others who had executed the July 2006 train blasts.

According to Crime Branch investigation, also confirmed by Central agency sources to *The Indian Express*, Sadiq received a year's training in Pakistan in the use of sophisticated weapons and assembling bombs.

He, along with Shahnawaz, who allegedly also received training in Pakistan, later rented a room in Sewri area of Mumbai. They had been supplied with explosives from across the border. In that Sewri room, Sadiq and Shahnawaz assembled bombs in pressure cookers. To avoid suspicion, the four pressure cookers in which bombs were assembled were all bought at different periods of time. Before the blasts, they stole the cars on the instructions of Afzal Usmani. Chavan's team nabbed Usmani from UP's Mau district on August 24 that year.

"Until then, for all practical purposes, we were groping in the dark... If it was not for that inspector from Mumbai Crime Branch, we would not have known what the IM was really," an ex-IB official, who later tracked the new outfit and is now retired, told *The Indian Express*. "In the four years before the Ahmedabad blasts, when a series of blasts were taking place in different parts, we were chasing Pakistan-backed operative Shahid Bilal. Until then, we believed the IM was just another name for LeT, and that Bilal had perpetrated the blasts. This was the info that even R&AW had at that time. But we learnt later Bilal had already died in Pakistan by then," the retired official said.

According to the officer, during interrogation, Sadiq even expressed anger and sadness at the arrest of Ehtesham Siddiqui, one of the 2006 train blasts accused,

and others. "He told the probe team categorically that the ATS had the wrong people and that they had nothing to do with the blasts. He even said that it was because of (the 2006 train blasts) case that the IM began sending emails claiming responsibility for the terror attacks they executed later," the officer said.

In fact, until the 2008 arrest of the IM module by Mumbai Crime Branch, the organisation had been a shadowy entity – so much so that even Central agencies such as the IB and R&AW had no clue about what it really was. The chance discovery was made after Maria roped in Inspector Arun Chavan (now retired) following the serial blasts in Ahmedabad on July 26, 2008, to look into the finding that the cars used for it had been stolen from Navi Mumbai.

Chavan, with the help of Constable Pralhad Madne (an expert in car theft cases), managed to catch the two men who had allegedly stolen the vehicles in a month. The two reportedly told Chavan they stole the cars on the instructions of Afzal Usmani. Chavan's team nabbed Usmani from UP's Mau district on August 24 that year.

"Until then, for all practical purposes, we were groping in the dark... If it was not for that inspector from Mumbai Crime Branch, we would not have known what the IM was really," an ex-IB official, who later tracked the new outfit and is now retired, told *The Indian Express*. "In the four years before the Ahmedabad blasts, when a series of blasts were taking place in different parts, we were chasing Pakistan-backed operative Shahid Bilal. Until then, we believed the IM was just another name for LeT, and that Bilal had perpetrated the blasts. This was the info that even R&AW had at that time. But we learnt later Bilal had already died in Pakistan by then," the retired official said.

KAMAL AHMED MOHAMMAD VAKIL ANSARI (DIED IN 2021): Ansari, 50, a resident of Bihar's Madhubani, was accused of receiving arms training in Pakistan and ferrying two Pakistani terrorists from across the Indo-Nepal border and dropping them in Mumbai. He was also accused of planting the bomb that exploded at Matunga. He was the youngest son of Vakil Ansari, who was a tailor in the Army. Ansari died in 2021 due to Covid-19 in Nagpur prison.

MOHAMMED FAISAL ATTUR RAHMAN SHAIKH: Shaikh, 50, a resident of Mira Road, was accused of being the head of LeT's Mumbai unit and convicted for being the key financier of the blasts. He was accused of planning the conspiracy, obtaining hawala money to fund it, harbouring Pakistanis, assembling bombs, and planting them.

EHTESHAM QUTBUDDIN SIDDIQUE: Siddiqui, 42, was charged with harbouring Pakistanis, surveying trains, assembling the bombs and planting them which went off in Mira-Bhayandar. Son of Qutbuddin Siddiqui, who worked in the Gulf, Siddiqui left his hometown of Jaunpur in UP and came to Maharashtra, enrolling in an engineering college in Pen but dropped out. Siddiqui also served as an office-bearer of SIMI's Maharashtra unit.

NAVEED HUSSAIN KHAN RASHEED: Rasheed, 44, was accused of helping in assembling bombs and planting the device that exploded in Bandra. Rasheed was born in Kuwait and is supposed to have returned with his family after his mother's death. The family bought a flat on Mira Road. Rasheed had developed a friendship with Faisal Shaikh. While working at a call centre in Secunderabad, Rasheed was held.

ASIF KHAN BASHIR KHAN: Khan, 52, a civil engineer from Jalgao, was accused of harbouring Pakistani terrorists at Mira Road. He was responsible for procuring pressure cookers and helped in assembling bombs. A known SIMI member, Khan was also accused of planting the bomb that went off in Borivali. After the blasts, Khan shifted Belgaum and was the last to be arrested.

TANVEER AHMED MOHAMMED IBRAHIM ANSARI: A resident of Agripada, Ansari, 50, was convicted of attending terror camps in Pakistan and surveying trains for the blasts. Tanveer earned a degree in Unani medicine from Nagpur and got allegedly associated with SIMI, which he denies. But he was part of a relief team organised by the group and sent to Gujarat after the 2001 earthquake. He was picked up and booked by Mumbai police after he was found sitting at a library operated by SIMI. Tanveer, however, was allowed to fly to Iran in 2004 for what he claimed was a pilgrimage. He was later picked up by Mumbai police in 2006 from a hospital, where he was being treated.

MOHAMMED MAJID MOHAMMED SHAFI: Shafi, 46, was accused of helping six Pakistanis cross over into India through Bangladesh border. Majid reportedly ran a footwear shop in Kolkata's Rajabazar. The police claimed he was operating a hawala racket and would frequently cross the India-Bangladesh border. His family claimed they had relatives there. Shafi claimed he has never been in Mumbai.

SHAIKH MOHAMMED ALI ALI AMAL: Ali, 55, was charged with assembling bombs at his house in Govandi with help of Pakistanis. Ali worked at a cooperative bank before moving to Dubai. He reportedly came back within a month and started his business of supplying Unani medicines and during this time began working as a SIMI operative and was booked. He was summoned even after the 2002-03 blasts in Mumbai.

MOHAMMED SAJID MURGUB ANSARI: Ansari, 47, a resident of Mira Road, was accused of procuring timers for bombs and helped assemble them. He also allegedly harboured two Pakistanis. Ansari ran a mobile shop in Naya Nagar. The police claimed his technical expertise was used.

MUZAMMIL ATTAUR RAHMAN SHAIKH: A software engineer, Shaikh, 40, was allegedly trained in Pakistan and had surveyed the trains. He is the youngest accused and two of his brothers – Faisal and Raahil – are accused of being main plotters. Raahil was never caught. Shaikh had joined a software company in Bengaluru a few months before the blasts. He was picked by Bengaluru police but allowed to go as he was not in Mumbai on the day of the blasts. They tipped off Mumbai cops about him after his brother Faisal was held.

SUHAIB MEHMUD SHAIKH: Shaikh, 55, a resident of Pune, was accused of being trained in Pakistan and surveyed the trains. The police claim that Shaikh, a resident of Pune, was a SIMI operative.

ZAMEER AHMED LATIFUR REHMAN SHAIKH: Worli resident Shaikh, 50, was allegedly trained in Pakistan, surveyed trains, and attended conspiracy meetings. He graduated from Maharashtra College in Nagpur in 1996. In early 2000s he allegedly came in contact with the other accused. He is also said to have travelled abroad in 2005. His family claimed it was to look for job.

ZEESHAN SHAIKH:

'His daughter has grown up without her father': Families recall long struggle

SADAF MODAK
MUMBAI, JULY 21

FAMILY MEMBERS of the 12 men acquitted in the 2006 Mumbai local train blasts case Monday expressed relief and highlighted the hardships they faced during the lengthy imprisonment of their loved ones.

As they rushed to complete paperwork to get those acquitted released from various jails in Maharashtra, they said they believed in their relatives' "innocence from the beginning".

Dr Tanveer Ansari, who was serving life imprisonment, was arrested by the Maharashtra ATS in 2006 when his daughter was six months old, said his brother Maqsood. Tanveer, a resident of Agripada, had completed his Unani medicine from Nagpur and was working at a hospital at the time of his arrest, with the ATS claiming that he had surveyed the trains for the blasts.

"He was at a clinic and was picked up by the police without any proof. We were informed two days later, and my father went to meet him and found that he had been brutally assaulted and tortured. My father was deeply affected by it. My mother passed away two years later and Tanveer was permitted to visit only for half-an-hour. We continued to fight for justice, knowing that he and others booked in the case were innocent," Maqsood said. He added that their father also

passed away in 2018, awaiting Tanveer's return. "My father required surgery, but Tanveer was not granted parole. His daughter has grown up without her father," Maqsood said.

Maqsood said over the years, the families of the convicted men have remained each other's hope, staying in touch through a group called Innocent Families.

Besides Tanveer Ansari, the others awarded life imprisonment in 2015 were Mohd Majid Mohd Shaikh, Mohd Sajid Margub Ansari, Muazzamill Attaur Rahman Shaikh, Suhaib Mehmud Shaikh, and Zameer Ahmed Latifur Rehman Shaikh. Those awarded the death penalty were: Kamal Ahmed Mohd Vakil Ansari from Bihar, Mohd Faisal Attaur Rahman Shaikh from Mumbai, Ehtesham Qutbuddin Siddique from Thane, Naveed Hussain Khan from Secunderabad, and Asif Khan Bashir Khan from Jalgao. Kamal Ahmed Mohd Vakil Ansari died in prison in 2021.

One of the accused (centre) leaves Central Jail in Amravati on Monday. PTI

Even as the Maharashtra government in 2015 moved pleas seeking confirmation of death sentences to five convicts in the 2006 train blasts case, it took over nine years to pass its verdict, acquitting all 12 men. A special court under the MCOCA in September 2015 awarded death penalty to five and life imprisonment to seven others, while acquitting one accused.

As a special Bombay HC bench of Justices Anil S Kilar and Shyam C Chandak, which was formed in July 2024, concluded marathon hearings on January 31, and delivered the verdict Monday.

Senior advocate S Muralidhar who had appeared for two accused, argued that due to protracted legal battle, the "innocent" convicts who languished in jail for over 18 years without sufficient evidence "lost their prime years" in jail.

The train explosions on July 11, 2006 killed 189. Kamal Ahmed Mohd Vakil Ansari from Bihar, Mohammad Faisal Attaur Rahman Shaikh from Mumbai, Ehtesham Qutbuddin Siddique from Thane, Naveed Hussain Khan from Secunderabad, and Asif Khan Bashir Khan from Jalgao in Maharashtra were awarded death penalty by the special court in 2015. Kamal Ahmed Mohd Vakil Ansari died in prison in 2021.

The matter first came up before the HC in January 2019. The HC order noted that an intimation was issued by Nagpur jail superintendent to convicts in October 2015, seeking their response if they intended to file an appeal against the special court verdict; however, the pendency of death

confirmation pleas was not mentioned. This led HC to order fresh notices to be served on convicts, after which they filed appeals.

While the confirmation pleas earlier came up before three benches, including former judges Naresh Patil, B P Dhamadikar and S S Jadhav, the hearings could not happen since the judges were due to retire.

Among other factors contributing to the delay, in January 2022, the prosecution submitted that the matter could not be heard by a bench consisting of Justice P K Chavan as its member. In November 2022, Justice A S Gadkari, who headed the two-judge bench, recused himself.

In the same year, a bench led by Justice R D Dhananjay, now retired, adjourned hearing the pleas as the bench assigned to the matter was "overburdened with work". This was after the state government told the HC that

hearing would take at least five to six months, considering evidence ran over 169 volumes, judgments of death sentences of nearly 2,000 pages, and over 100 witnesses.

On September 6, 2023, a Justice Nitin W Sambré-led bench slammed the state government for "lack of seriousness" in conducting the matter, as the court was informed that the state was yet to appoint a special public prosecutor (SPP). It warned of summoning the additional chief secretary of home department if an SPP was not appointed within two days. Senior advocate Raja Thakare was then appointed on September 8, 2023.

Thereafter, the Justice Sambré-led bench heard the pleas until December 2023. However, the matters were listed before another bench due to his transfer to the Nagpur bench of HC. They were not taken up for another few months

• Govt agrees to 16-hr debate

the Treasury Benches pointed out at the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting that the Opposition wanted the PM and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to be present during the debate. "So the time is slotted for next week," said a source.

PM Modi is leaving for the UK and Maldives on Wednesday and is returning on July 26.

The government wants to take up the Income Tax Bill, 2025, on priority, as per sources. However, the Opposition is yet to decide whether to allow any legislative business before a discussion on Pahalgam and Operation Sindoora.

A meeting of INDIA bloc floor leaders has been scheduled for 10 am Tuesday at Lok Sabha Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi's chamber in Parliament complex.

On Monday, BJP MP Bajayant Panda-led Select Committee tabled its report on the Income Tax Bill. The BAC, which recommends allocation of time for discussions, has kept aside 12 hours for a debate on the Bill.

The Select Committee has suggested over 285 amendments to offer relief to small taxpayers and for clarity on certain provisions, and the Bill is likely to be amended and get the clearance of the Cabinet before being brought to the House. The Union Cabinet is scheduled to meet on Tuesday.

Congress general secretary K C Venugopal said in the morning: "Our demand is that there should be a discussion (on Pahalgam), this is an important issue... The Prime Minister should come and make a statement."

The Lok Sabha witnessed four abrupt adjournments, with the Opposition ignoring the appeals of Rajnath Singh and Parlia-

tary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju when the House met at noon to let the proceedings continue, saying the government was ready for a debate on every issue, and "was ready to answer all questions".

Rijiju told the Opposition to place their demands during the BAC meeting, and let the Speaker take a call. "But to raise slogans and not let the House function on the first day of the Monsoon Session is unacceptable."

Speaker Om Birla said he was ready to allow the members to raise all issues, including Operation Sindoora, but after Question Hour. "The House will function according to rules and regulations. I cannot allow sloganising and raising of placards."

Rahul Gandhi claimed he was not allowed to speak in the House when he tried to on Monday. "The Defence Minister is allowed to speak, but Opposition members, including me, who is the LoP, are not allowed to speak... This is a new approach... The convention states that if people from the government side can speak, then we should also be given space to speak," he told reporters.

However, senior BJP leader Sanjay Jaiswal denied this, saying Gandhi was not even present when the House met at noon, after which papers on the agenda were tabled and the ministers spoke. "Rahul Gandhi did not come to the House initially... He came late, but was seen talking to other Opposition leaders on the side. Not once did he ask the Chair to let him speak," Jaiswal said.

PM Modi in his customary opening remarks said the government will be introducing Bills "that will strengthen the country's development journey..."

FROM PAGE ONE | FULL REPORT ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

• EC says no to including Aadhaar for revision of rolls

The EC cited a press release issued by the government on March 7 that said the Centre had removed over 5 crore fake ration card holders.

On voters' cards, the EC said: "...the EPIC (electors photo identity card), by its very nature, merely reflects the current state of the electoral roll and cannot, in itself, establish antecedent eligibility for inclusion in the roll."

The EC reiterated that the list of 11 documents was indicative and not exhaustive, so the Electoral Registration Officers could consider all documents presented by electors.

The EC's June 24 order required all existing 7.8 crore electors in Bihar to fill enumeration forms by July 25 to remain on the rolls. For those added to the electoral rolls after January 1, 2003, when the last intensive revision was carried out in Bihar, the EC has specified additional documents to establish eligibility.

The exercise has led to concern among political parties and civil society groups that genuine electors may get disenfranchised as they may not be able to produce one of the 11 documents prescribed by EC. Several petitions have been filed in the Supreme Court, including by the Association for Democratic Reforms and Opposition leaders.

Opposition leaders, including West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, have raised concerns that the exercise would amount to preparing a National Register of Citizens (NRC) through the back door. The court, in its July 10 hearing, had observed that determination of citizenship was the Ministry of Home Affairs' domain.

"Under the SIR exercise, the citizenship of an individual will not terminate on account of the fact that he/she is held to be ineligible for registration in the electoral rolls," the EC said.

The EC said its powers to scrutinise the qualifications flowed from Articles 324 and 326, which

pertain to its powers of superintendence over elections and electoral rolls, and the eligibility for electors. "However, it is reiterated, that determination of non-eligibility of anyone under Article 326 will not lead to cancellation of citizenship," it said.

Responding to the petitioners' argument that it was the Central government that was empowered to determine citizenship and not the EC, the Commission said when it came to inclusion in the electoral roll, it was well within its powers to ask for proof.

"The exclusive powers of the Central Government under Section 9 [Citizenship Act, 1955] are confined to reviewing the acquisition of foreign citizenship and whether, based on such acquisition, citizenship of a person should be terminated. This is the scope and mandate of the prevalent laws in force," the EC said.

The EC said that for those covered under Section 3 of the Act (citizenship by birth), Section 9 (renunciation of citizenship) and Section 10 (termination of citizenship) don't apply.

"Therefore, the EC is fully competent to require a person claiming citizenship by birth to produce relevant documents for inclusion in the electoral roll," it said. As per its order, the EC has asked all those not on the 2003 electoral roll to submit documents as per their age. For individuals born between July 1, 1987 and December 2, 2004, documents establishing their date and/or place of birth are required; for individuals born after December 2, 2004, documents for themselves and both parents are needed.

While the EC had not specified the reason for this distinction, it said in its counter-affidavit that "Section 3 [Citizenship Act] is the basis for segregation of age groups in the enumeration form".

"In the absence of a specific exclusion, as in Sections 9 and 10 of

the Citizenship Act, 1955, it is submitted that the ECI, being a constitutional body, would have constitutional authority to determine whether the constitutional requirement of citizenship has been fulfilled by a person claiming the right to be included in the electoral roll. It is also submitted... the Citizenship Act, 1955, ought not to be understood as taking away the constitutional authority of ECI, as a parliamentary law cannot take away the said power. Moreover, conferment of delegated authority under a parliamentary law cannot detract from the authority of the ECI conferred by the COI [Constitution of India]. Any denial of such authority would result in inclusion of illegal immigrants and foreigners in the electoral rolls," the EC said.

The EC also defended placing the burden of proof on the electors. "That is so far as the burden to prove citizenship is concerned, it is submitted that the necessary documents required to establish citizenship are within the special knowledge of the individual claiming to be a citizen of India.

Given the nature of this evidence and the fact that such evidence should/ought to be within the personal knowledge of the individual concerned and not of the authorities of State, it is incumbent on the said individual to provide such proof," it said. It drew a distinction between the burden of proof for the purpose of registration as an elector and when citizenship is under scrutiny. It noted that it was "well within its jurisdiction to conduct an SIR of the electoral roll" and that the process had multiple layers of checks to ensure that no elector is deleted without due process.

On the need for such an exercise now, the EC said since there has not been an intensive revision in the past two decades, though summary revisions have been held annually, there was a need for a "more rigorous and foundational exercise".

VS tried to start his legislative career during the 1965 Assembly election, contesting from the Ambalapuzha constituency, but lost. However, in 1967 and 1970,

• 'Comrade VS', darling of the masses, fiery Opp leader

coconut tree climbers of Alappuzha district. The first break in his political career came in 1940, when he joined a coir factory in Alappuzha. There, Communist leader PKrishna Pillai urged him to bring the workers closer to the movement and urge them to fight for their rights.

The Punnapra-Vayalar uprising of October 1946 was a defining event in the making of the organiser in VS. He spurred coir workers to fight against Travancore Diwan C P Ramaswami Iyer's plan for an independent state, separated from the Indian Union. At the behest of the party, he went underground to evade arrest by the Diwan's police. While hiding in Poonjar, he was nabbed by police and was subjected to brutal torture. He was later imprisoned for nearly five years during and after the struggle for independence.

In the meantime, Achuthanandan had risen through the ranks to the leadership of the CPI. He became a member of the CPI State Committee in 1954, and three years later, was promoted to the State Secretariat.

When the first Communist government took office in Kerala in 1957, Achuthanandan headed the party in the then-unbifurcated Kollam district, winning nine out of 11 Assembly seats in the elections. Realising his ability to run the campaign machinery, the party also dispatched Achuthanandan, then 35, to manage the 1958 by-election held at the high ranges of Devikulam in Idukki.

When the CPI was divided in 1964 as a fallout of the prolonged inner-party struggle over political strategy, VS was one of the 32 national council members to walk out of the meeting, leading to the formation of the CPI(M). The others included Jyoti Basu, A K Gopalan, EMS Namboodiripad, Harkishen Singh Surjeet, and E K Nayanar.

VS tried to start his legislative career during the 1965 Assembly election, contesting from the Ambalapuzha constituency, but lost. However, in 1967 and 1970,

he won from the same seat.

During the Emergency, he was arrested and jailed for 21 months.

In 1980, when the state turned into a laboratory for coalition politics, VS was elected as state secretary of the CPI(M) — a post he held for 12 years until 1992.

His term as party state secretary was marked by traits of political stubbornness. In 1986, M V Raghavan, then a powerful leader from the party citadel of Kannur, was ousted for his efforts to get the Muslim League to join the Left Front. In 1994, VS was again instrumental in the dismissal of firebrand leader K R Gouri Amma from the party.

In 1991, Achuthanandan became the Leader of the Opposition. However, while the party returned to power in 1996, he lost the election in party stronghold Mararikulam in Alappuzha in a shock result.

The electoral setback of 1996 and the failure to retain the post of party secretary after 1992 left him fighting multiple battles within the party in the following years.

In the state conference held in 1998, VS virtually decimated a rival group in the party's trade union wing, CITU, demonstrating that he retained his clout to dictate terms within the party.

He was made chief minister, and his term was a stormy one, with the government being buffeted by intra-party bickering and conflicting stands on policy matters. Even as Achuthanandan resurrected his image as a crusader against social evils and corruption, all those who stood with the CM in the party were either silenced or shunted out.

In the 2011 elections, too, VS led the LDF to a photo finish, leaving the Congress with 72 seats in the 140-strong Assembly. In 2016, at the age of 92, VS was in the election fray, leading the LDF's campaign. Despite age not being on his side, VS longed for another innings at the helm in the event of an LDF win.

However, it was Vijayan who the party picked as chief minister in 2016. VS was given Cabinet rank and accommodated as the chairman of the state Administrative Reforms Commission from 2016 to 2021.

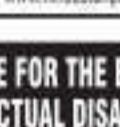
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Email ID: corpgo@hpcl.in Website: www.hindustanpetroleum.com
CIN: L23201MH1952G0100858

PUBLIC NOTICE OF CONVENING THE 73RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that 73rd Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited will be held on Friday, August 22, 2025 at 11:00 A.M. through VC/OMV in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 read with the various circulars issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs in this regard. The Notice of the AGM and the Annual Report will be sent by email to all those Members, whose e-mail addresses are registered with Company/Depositories Participants (DPs). The same will also be available on the website of the Company at www.hindustanpetroleum.com and the website of NSDL at www.eservices.nSDL.com. Additionally, the same shall also be available on websites of the stock exchanges on which the securities of the Company are listed i.e. at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com. Members can cast their votes through e-voting facility provided through NSDL. The instructions for joining the AGM and the manner of remote e-voting or casting vote through the e-voting system during the AGM are provided in the Notice of the AGM.

Members can register their email ID/Bank account mandate:
a. Demat holding- Register the details with respective DP.
b. Physical holding- Register the details by sending the prescribed Form ISR-1 and other relevant Form(s) to the Company's RTA- MUFG Intime India Pvt Ltd. The details for updation of KYC including Email ID and Bank account are provided in the AGM Notice.

By the order of the Board
V. Murali
Company Secretary

Place : Mumbai
Date : July 21, 2025

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN)
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WALK-IN-INTERVIEWS FOR EMPANELMENT OF GUEST FACULTY/ STAFF POSITIONS - 2025

Walk-in-interviews/screening for empanelment of professionals/personnel to work as guest faculty/staff for NIEPID Secunderabad and its Regional Centres located at Noida, Navi Mumbai, Kolkata & MSEC, Noida and its Composite Regional Centre, Rajnandgaon, Davangere and Nellore. The centre wise schedule for conducting the interviews against vacant posts is as detailed below:

Walk-in-interviews/Screening schedule.

S.No.	Name of the centre	Dates
1	NIEPID Regional Centre, Kolkata	28 th July, 2025
2	NIEPID Regional Centre, Navi Mumbai	30 th July 2025
3	NIEPID Regional Centre, Noida & MSEC	31 st July & 1 st Aug.2025
4	Composite Regional Centre, Rajnandgaon	4 th Aug., 2025
5	Composite Regional Centre, Davangere	6 th Aug., 2025
6	Composite Regional Centre, Nellore	8 th Aug., 2025
7	NIEPID Headquarters,, Secunderabad	11 th & 12 th Aug. 2025

For complete details about the qualifications, experience, remuneration, terms & conditions and to download application forms, please visit Institute's website www.niepid.nic.in. For any other information, please contact at Ph. No. 040-27751741-45 Extn. 209.

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(Advt. No. HR 05/2025)

Recruitment Of Deputy General Manager (Finance), Deputy General Manager (Administration & Engineering Services) & Deputy Manager (Hindi)

ONLINE REGISTRATION & PAYMENT OF FEE – 19/07/2025 to 09/08/2025

The Shipping Corporation of India Limited invites applications for the posts of one (1) Deputy General Manager (Finance), one (1) Deputy General Manager (Administration & Engineering Services) and one (1) Deputy Manager (Hindi). Details regarding vacancy, qualifications/experience and service conditions can be viewed on SCI's website link:

www.shipindia.com/career-shore-personnel-current-recruitment

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IN PARLIAMENT MONSOON SESSION

BEFORE START OF MONSOON SESSION

PM message to Opp: Differences there... but hearts must unite in nation's interest

Lauds armed forces for Op Sindoor success, MPs for global outreach on Pak-sponsored terrorism

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JULY 21
REACHING OUT to the Opposition before the beginning of the Monsoon Session of Parliament, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said political parties may have differences of opinion, but "our hearts must unite in the interest of the country".

Addressing the media, Modi said, "I accept the reality that political parties are different — each has its own agenda, its own role. But I also acknowledge this truth: *Dal hit mein bhale na mile, lekin desh hit mein man zaroor mile*," Modi said.

"With this very sentiment, many important Bills — which will strengthen the nation's journey of development and empower its citizens — have been proposed for this Monsoon Session. I am confident the House



PM: Many key Bills lined up for Monsoon Session

"I had announced this during a programme in Bihar, and our armed forces accomplished it within a very short time. The new face of our 'Made in India'

will conduct detailed discussions and pass them (the Bills)," he said in his brief address. The Prime Minister hoped for a productive Monsoon Session, filled with enriching discussions that would strengthen democracy.

Referring to Operation Sindoor, Modi said, "The Monsoon Session stands as a proud moment for the nation. It is like a 'Vijay Utsav' (celebration of victory) for the country as the might of Bharat's military power and capability were manifested in Operation Sindoor. The world witnessed the capability of the armed forces. They achieved their targets with 100 per cent success. Within just 22 minutes, the mission neutralised its targets right inside the enemy's territory."

"With this very sentiment, many important Bills — which will strengthen the nation's journey of development and empower its citizens — have been proposed for this Monsoon Session. I am confident the House

military strength has attracted global attention. These days, when I meet global leaders, there is growing interest in the indigenous defence equipment being developed in Bharat," he said.

"I firmly believe that when Parliament, in one unified voice, expresses sentiments of victory during this session, it will further strengthen and inspire our armed forces. It will serve as motivation for the country and will provide a boost to research, innovation, and manufacturing in the defence sector. The 'Made in India' defence equipment will gain further momentum, creating new employment opportu-

nities for our youth," he said. Observing that the "brutal killings, atrocities and massacre" in Pahalgam on April 22 had shocked the entire world, Modi said, "Attention turned towards the terrorists and their masterminds. At that moment, setting aside party interests and working in the national interest, representatives of most political parties and states travelled around the globe to various countries and led a successful campaign to expose Pakistan — the hub of terrorism — before the world."

"Today, I wish to commend all those Members of Parliament and political parties for this important work done in national interest. Their efforts created a positive atmosphere in the country. The world opened its doors to hearing and accepting Bharat's perspective," he said.

"We know how the spirit of unity and a collective voice fills

the nation with great enthusiasm. This celebration of victory will also be reflected in the Monsoon Session — it will appreciate the strength of our armed forces, glorify the nation's capabilities, and serve as a new source of inspiration for 140 crore Indians."

Stating that over 100 districts have become Maoist-free, Modi said, "India has endured many violent challenges, be it terrorism or Naxalism, but today, the influence of Naxalism and Maoism is shrinking rapidly..."

The Constitution prevails over bombs and guns. The red corridors of the past are now transforming into green zones of growth and development."

He also noted that the Indian flag was unfurled recently at the International Space Station, a reference to Shubhanshu Shukla becoming the first Indian to set foot on the facility.

READY TO DISCUSS, REPLY TO ALL ISSUES: GOVT IN LS



Opposition members protest in Lok Sabha on Monday. PTI

Both Houses disrupted as Opp presses for discussion on Pahalgam, Op Sindoor

In RS, Dhankhar refuses Opp notices given under Rule 267



Mallikarjun Kharge, J P Nadda in Rajya Sabha on Monday. PTI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

AMID NOISY protests from the Opposition, seeking a discussion on the April 12 Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor, both Houses of Parliament were disrupted Monday, the first day of the Monsoon Session.

The Lok Sabha was adjourned thrice — and finally for the day — as Opposition members continued sloganising even as Speaker Om Birla urged members "to bust the perception that disruptions happen in the House on the first day" and the government said it was "ready to discuss and reply to all issues" after Question Hour.

Dhankhar read out the specific provisions from the Judges Inquiry Act if a similar motion is presented in both Houses of Parliament on the same day.

After Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal confirmed that over 100 members had submitted a motion in Lok Sabha, Dhankhar said that the relevant sections of Judges Inquiry Act will come into effect and the Secretary General will take necessary steps in this direction.

Under the Judges Inquiry Act if notices of motion are submitted for the removal of a judge on the same day in both Houses of Parliament, no committee shall be constituted unless the motion has been admitted in both Houses.

In Lok Sabha, which met at 11 am, when Speaker Om Birla called for Question Hour, Opposition members stood up, shouting slogans, prompting him to urge the House to "maintain

high parliamentary standards". "We should bust this myth that disruptions happen in the House on the first day..." he said.

Birla sought to assure the Opposition that the government would address every issue. When the sloganising did not stop, he adjourned the House till noon.

At noon, the House proceedings resumed — as did the Opposition's protest. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju intervened, saying the government "is ready for discussion".

"But how would a discussion take place if there is a ruckus in the House?" he said. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, too, said the government was ready to have "long discussion" on all issues that the Speaker agrees to.

Around 12:20 pm, as the disruptions went on, BJP's Jagdambika Pal, who was in the Chair, adjourned the House until 2 pm. When the House resumed, it was adjourned till 4 pm and then later for the day.

During Zero Hour in Rajya Sabha, Kharge and other Opposition members had submitted notices under Rule 267

(to suspend all listed business and discuss an issue) for a discussion on the Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor.

When Chairperson Jagdeep Dhankhar indicated he was inclined to entertain notices by Opposition leaders to discuss the issue under Rule 267, Kharge said

"we need to know what happened". "There was intelligence failure, the (J&K) L-G has said that, we have not said," he said.

Kharge also termed Trump's repeated claims of mediating truce between India and Pakistan in May as "humiliating for the country".

Dhankhar then gave the floor to Nadda. After wishing Kharge on his birthday, Nadda said: "The message should not go out to the country that the government does not want a discussion on Pahalgam and Operation Sindoor. We will have a discussion... we will present all the points to the country and the world."

He said BJP member Samik Bhattacharya had asked for a discussion on the matter under Rule 167 and that it will take place after the time is decided.

BRIEFLY

MoE drafting Bill for unified higher edu body

THE MINISTRY of Education is in the process of drafting a Bill for establishing a higher education commission of India (HECI), proposed as a unified higher education regulatory body, Union MoS for Education Sunkanta Majumdar said in a written reply in Lok Sabha.

Proposed in the new NEP, the HECI looks to replace the UGC, the AICTE and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).

While the UGC oversees non-technical higher education, the AICTE oversees technical education and the NCTE is the regulatory body for teachers' education.

PTI

Naidu: AAIB carrying out AI 171 probe as per global norms, unbiased

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JULY 21

THE AIRCRAFT Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is "totally unbiased" and is carrying out a definitive, thorough and global rule-based probe into the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad, Civil Aviation Minister K Rajnath Singh said Monday.

"We want to stand with truth, not anything else... we want to find out what exactly happened in the Air India plane crash and that will come out only after AAIB final probe report," Naidu told Rajya Sabha after he faced questions from both the Opposition and Treasury members about the causes of the crash.

Naidu said that for the first

time, the country, equipped with its own lab for analysing flight-data and cockpit voice recorder data, did not have to send the black boxes outside for being decoded. AAIB is conducting the investigation as per international norms. They are totally unbiased and looking at facts alone," he said.

Separately, in a written reply to a question, MoS for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said nine show cause notices have been issued to Air India over the past six months in connection with five identified safety violations. Enforcement action has been completed in one case, he said.

As for the aircraft that crashed in Ahmedabad, Mohol said that "no adverse trend" was reported in Air India's reliability reports pertaining to the plane.

PTI

Keezhadi excavation report under review, time bracket not justified: Minister



ASI excavations at Keezhadi in Tamil Nadu have unearthed evidence of a sophisticated urban society. Gokul Subramaniam/File

inates somewhere in pre-300 BC," he said in an annexure attached with the response to a question by DMK MP Sumathy.

Keezhadi is an ancient site in Tamil Nadu's Sivaganga district, about 12 km from Madurai. Over a decade ago, Amarnath Ramakrishna, ASI's then Superintending Archaeologist, led excavations at the site that unearthed evidence of a sophisticated urban society.

According to the Keezhadi report, carbon dating had revealed the objects to be over 2,160 years old, corresponding to the Sangam era in Tamil history. It classified the site's history into three periods — Pre-Early Historic (8th-5th century BCE), Mature Early Historic (5th-1st

century BCE) and Early Historic (1st century BCE-3rd century CE).

The report triggered a controversy between the DMK-led Tamil Nadu government and the NDA-led Centre, after the ASI, which comes under the Union Ministry of Culture, asked Ramakrishna to review his report. The DMK saw this as an attempt by the Centre to pressure Ramakrishna to "change" his findings.

DMK MP Sumathy had asked the Ministry if the Keezhadi report prepared was officially reviewed by the Government after submission in June 2025, seeking details of the specific deficiencies cited by the Government or ASI leading to its rejection.

In his reply, Shekharwati said:

"Keezhadi excavation has been conducted under the aegis of ASI and a report of lead archaeologist is under review. The comments of experts have been shared with the lead archaeolo-

gist, which are still to be finalised." However, the minister added, "there is no practice of rejecting a report".

In the annexure, which details excerpts from experts' observa-

tions, on the basis of which Ramakrishna has been asked to review the report, Shekharwati said the "missing details" require the village map to be redrawn and the cultural period to be reorientated as specified, among other things.

"As per experts suggestion: a) the nomenclatures of the three periods require change; b) the time bracket of 8th century BC to 5th century BCE given for Period 1 is not justified at all; c) The other two periods should also be determined on the basis of scientific AMS dates and the material recovered in view of stratigraphical details. For the earliest period in the present state of our knowledge we can, at the maximum, suggest that it originates somewhere in pre-

300 BCE..." the annexure said.

On June 10, Shekharwati had said further studies were needed to validate the ASI findings on an ancient civilisation at Keezhadi.

In response to another question by DMK MP Dayanidhi Maran, the Ministry informed Parliament Monday that ASI has not requested any "revised report" on the site from the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology.

Maran also asked details of the "additional excavation phases and funding support" by ASI for the tenth phase of Keezhadi excavation that began on June 18, 2024, which has already "identified six terracotta pipelines and various urban settlement structures". To this, Shekharwati replied: "Question does not arise."

Passed: Bill on framework for shipping papers

PARLIAMENT ON Monday passed Bills of Lading Bill, 2025 that aims to update and simplify the legal framework for shipping documents. A bill of lading refers to a document issued by a freight carrier to a shipper. The legislation makes provisions for transfer of rights of suit and liabilities to the consignee in a bill of lading and endorses of a bill of lading, to whom the property in the goods shall pass, upon or by reason of consignment/ endorsement.

PTI



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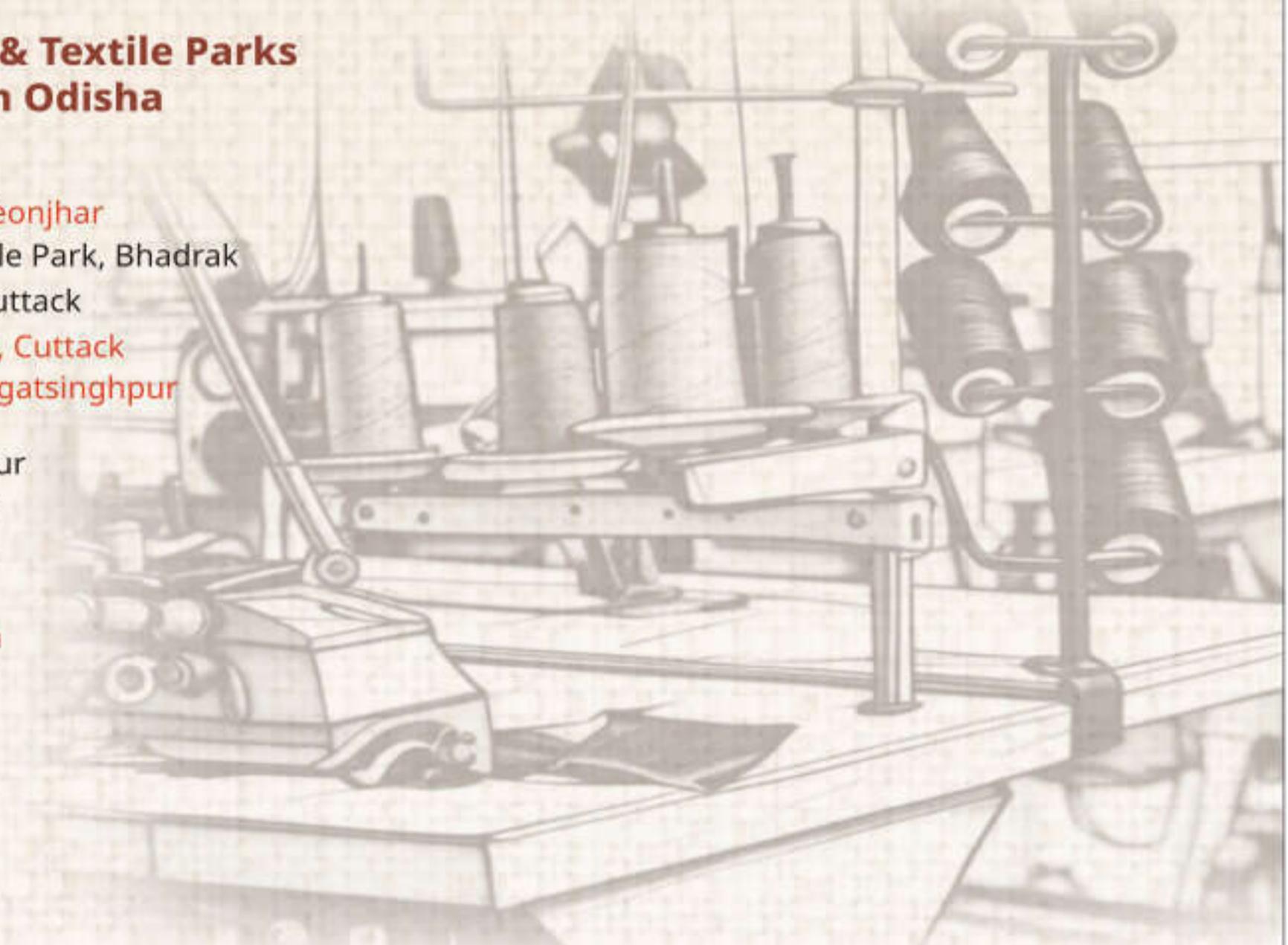
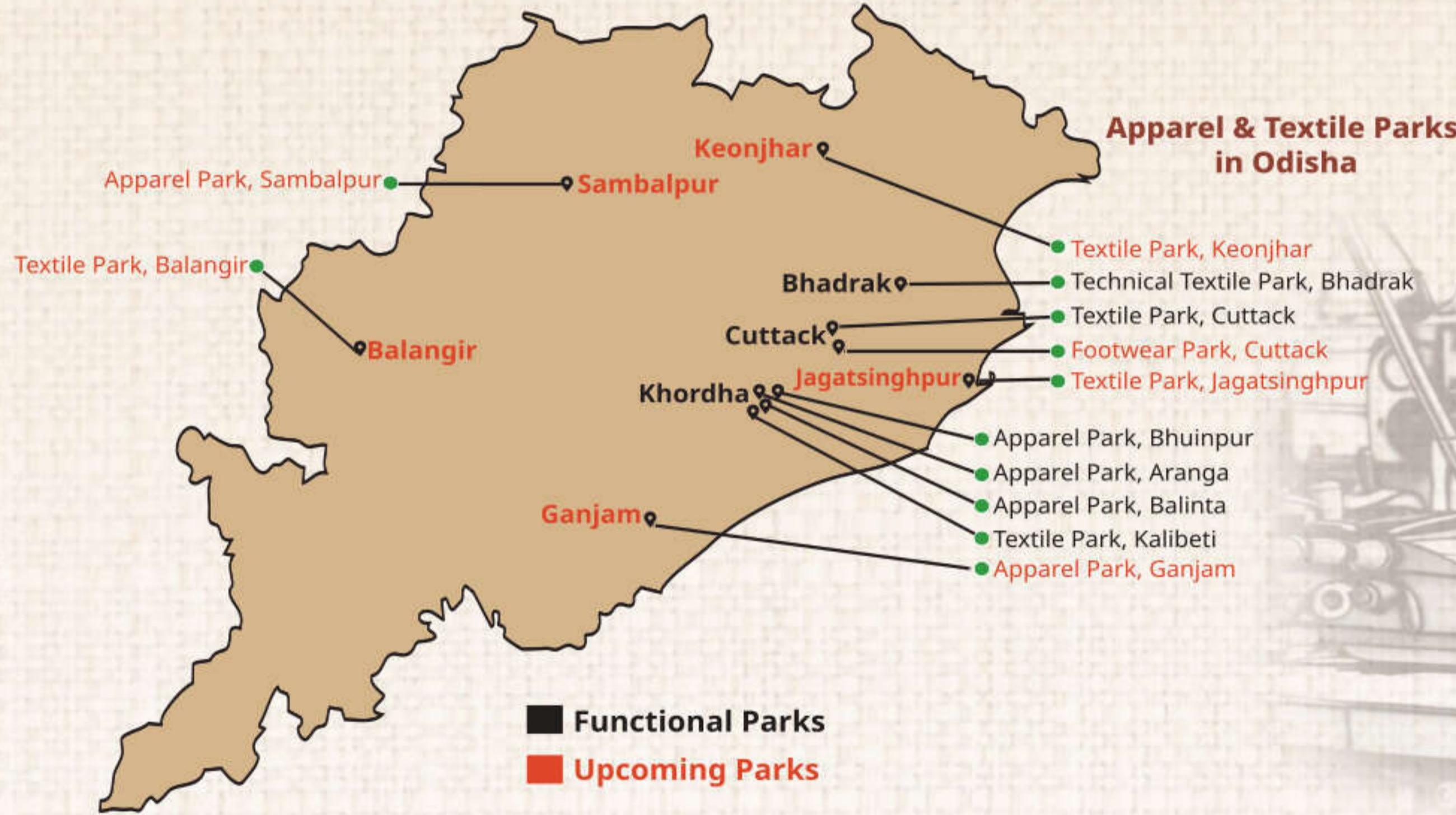


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THE EDITORIAL PAGE

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

JUSTICE DENIED

There is no closure, only unanswered questions, in 2006 Mumbai blasts case

NINETEEN YEARS AGO, sophisticated bombs ripped through seven local trains in Mumbai within 11 minutes. They killed 189 people, and injured 816. In less than three months, the Anti-Terrorism Squad of Maharashtra Police arrested 13 individuals, named another 15 in hiding as accused, and claimed to have cracked the case. Stringent anti-terror laws, from the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act to the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, were invoked, and the investigators claimed the accused had confessed to their crimes. They were subsequently tried and awarded sentences of life imprisonment and the death penalty in 2015. On Monday, the Bombay High Court acquitted 12 men, highlighting critical procedural lapses in the investigation. The 617-page verdict raises important questions about how an investigation in a case that shook the nation is riddled with worrying loose ends and gaps. Justice Anil S Kilor begins with a disquieting assessment of the case: "Punishing the actual perpetrator of a crime is a concrete and essential step toward curbing criminal activities, upholding the rule of law, and ensuring the safety and security of citizens. But creating a false appearance of having solved a case by presenting that the accused have been brought to justice gives a misleading sense of resolution. This deceptive closure undermines public trust and falsely reassures society, while in reality, the true threat remains at large."

The High Court ruling points to a series of serious lapses in the investigation, from picking and choosing eyewitnesses, reliance on maps allegedly recovered from the accused, and how confessional statements were obtained. The court notes the serious allegations and medical evidence of custodial torture of the accused. The ruling shows that even the basic element of the case — the nature of the bombs used — was not established with cogent evidence by the prosecution. The state did not have adequate reasons or material evidence, the court held, to grant sanction to prosecute the accused under MCOCA. This is a crucial step in the process when stringent anti-terror laws are invoked. These are laws enacted with the stated goal of combating terror threats that give the state wide powers. They reverse the burden of proof, allow prolonged detention and powers of invasive surveillance, and relax evidentiary standards. It is worrying that Maharashtra Police could not establish the case even to this standard. "The prosecution has utterly failed to establish the offence beyond a reasonable doubt against the accused on each count, it is unsafe to reach the satisfaction that the Appellants/Accused have committed the offences for which they have been convicted and sentenced," the court said.

Strict anti-terror laws provide a legal framework for the state. But rigorous and fair investigations are crucial for their effectiveness and legitimacy. It is true that there is immense pressure on the state when a gruesome attack, such as this one, is perpetrated on the people. But that makes it even more important that it holds itself to high standards of investigation. Botched investigations and trials that span decades do an added injustice to the victims. The state has a right to appeal the verdict before the Supreme Court, where the final word lies. For now, 19 years later, there is no closure for families of the victims.

LISTEN TO THE COURT

On ancestral property rights of tribal women, constitutional promise of equality overrides customary law

ON JULY 17, the Supreme Court affirmed that a woman from a tribal community has an equal right to her family's ancestral property. The court struck down an order of the Chhattisgarh High Court, which in 2022 cited the absence of a specific customary law to deny inheritance rights to an appellant. Customary laws are generally unwritten conventions that govern the community affairs of tribal groups. Last week, however, the SC took a more expansive view of the rights of women from these communities and laid down that their exclusion from inheritance rights was discriminatory. Emphasising Article 14, which guarantees equality before the law, the SC pointed out that "customs too, like the law, cannot remain stuck in time". They cannot be used to "deprive others of their right", the Court ruled. The case dates to 1992, when Dhaiya, a tribal woman in Chhattisgarh, sought the partition of her maternal grandmother's property and was denied multiple times — first by customary laws, and then by trial and appellate courts. The SC's order is a significant intervention in the debate on gender justice in tribal communities.

This is not the first time that the apex court has taken a strong stand in favour of inheritance rights of women from tribal groups. In December 2022, while hearing a case of a tribal woman from Odisha who sought a share in the compensation awarded for the acquisition of land belonging to her ancestors, the SC said, "When the daughter belonging to the non-tribal is entitled to the equal share in the property of the father, there is no reason to deny such right to the daughter of the tribal community. Female tribal is entitled to parity with male tribal in intestate succession..." The bench had then advised the Centre to "look into the matter and if required, to amend the provisions of the Hindu Succession Act (HSA)". The Act does not apply to Scheduled Tribes. The Indian Succession Act, 1925, too, gives states the power to exclude the tribals. The Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act, 1949 allows the woman to co-own her father's property — after his death — only if she marries a man and makes him a ghar-jamai (resident son-in-law). The marriage, however, has to happen during the lifetime of the father.

Customary laws are important as a bulwark against forceful assimilation and homogenisation of tribal communities. At the same time, as the SC rightly pointed out in Dhaiya's case, "collective ethos of the Constitution" ensures "that there is no discrimination against women".

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THE MUSICIAN'S LIBRARY

Nick Cave's donation is a reminder of the serendipitous connections physical books can forge

THE OXFAM BOOKSHOP in East Sussex, England, just had the unlikeliest of windfalls. Rockstar Nick Cave, whose personal library has featured in art exhibitions, donated over 2,000 books to the shop. Scores of his fans are thronging to the bookstore to get their hands on the pre-owned works. The collection reportedly includes books by Salman Rushdie, Christopher Hitchens and Ian McEwan, as well as on philosophy, art and sundry subjects. In essence, it is the eclectic library of a true bibliophile. For Cave's fans, it's a chance to get their hands on a novel where he may have underlined a passage or a line, and perhaps gain insight into the influences that went into making the artist. The library, and the love of a used book, though, is also a reminder of a time gone by.

There is a drab utilitarianism, driven by a soulless algorithm, in the contemporary relationship with the written word. There's the well-produced audiobook — complete with voice actors and sound effects to act as prosthetics for the imagination — that people can "consume" on a walk or a drive. A couple of clicks and the rarest of books can be downloaded on an e-reader, without the hassle of bookshelves occupying real estate. And the physical book, when it is desired, can be ordered from a website. Perhaps this convenience is welcome. It could be seen as a democratic flattening of knowledge and culture, wiping away superfluous and supercilious hierarchies and creating the great beast known as "content".

What is lost, though, is serendipity. The chance discovery at a used bookstore, the conversation with friends after you have finished the borrowed book they insisted you read, the complaints about the invertebrate book thief who refuses to return a cherished, inscribed novel. There is an aura of authenticity to that world gone by, howsoever distorted by the sepia-tinted lens of nostalgia. A book from or recommended by someone you know, on a shelf in the home, feels more real than words on a screen. Perhaps, that's why a musician's library has so many takers.

Verdict should wake us up



MEERAN CHADHA BORWANKAR

THE ACQUITTAL OF all the accused in the July 11, 2006 multiple train blasts in Mumbai is shocking. It is a wake-up call for all of us who have been working for a safe and secure environment in the country. That no innocent should be convicted is an often-repeated dictum, but that no terrorist or criminal should go scot-free has equal, if not more, significance. After all, who killed more than 180 innocent commuters of Mumbai and left more than 800 injured? How and why did the police and prosecution fail to get justice for the victims?

I was posted in the Crime Branch of Mumbai during those days. I remember the ghastly scenes and the utter panic with bodies strewn in railway compartments and across the tracks. The city was shaken to its core and memories of the 1993 explosions were revived. Since there were multiple blasts, various FIRs came to be registered. The Anti-Terrorism Squad of Maharashtra had recently been formed and selected officers with a flare for investigation had been picked up.

The investigation was naturally entrusted to them and they were able to successfully prosecute 12 arrested persons in the special MCOCA court in 2015. It is to be noted that more than 10 accused in the serial blasts were identified but could not be arrested. They are still absconding and could have filled the gaps about the conspiracy and its execution, while five arrested were sentenced to death and seven were given life sentences by the special court.

The High Court acquitting all of them after 10 years shows that something is terribly amiss in the criminal justice system. If they were innocent, how do we justify their incarceration for nearly 19 years? And if they were part of the terror gang responsible for the mass killing, why are they allowed to go scot-free? These questions are bound to disturb citizens who have already taken to cynicism about the working of the police and prosecution, courts and prisons. This distrust has become so rampant that it pains

those of us who have worked or are still serving in government.

equipped with the latest technology. The courts are increasingly showing distrust of depositions of witnesses, most of whom are, in any case, fearful of giving evidence in such cases. And when it comes to organised crime or terror-related cases, their fear for their lives is genuine as our witness protection programme is at a very nascent stage. This is the reason the police often depend on stock witnesses.

Once a terror incident takes place, there is immense pressure on the police for immediate detection. I had seen it happening in Mumbai in those days. Political leadership, too, gets nervous, creating further stress. Sometimes it can lead to hasty arrests and premature declarations about detection. But field-level officers are generally spared and allowed to dig deep, touch base with their informants and trace the criminal gangs or terrorists involved. In the case of the latter, we as investigators would generally come across information, including confessions of the arrested, of their having been trained in Pakistan. There were many well-trained sleeper cells going around and they were being given very specific stand-alone tasks with no sharing of information about the actual incident planned. Thus, linking of different individuals involved in the crime, delineating their specific roles, securing concrete proof about the conspiracy, collection of scientific and forensic evidence, are very tough challenges that our investigators face, working quietly behind the scenes.

I admit that some of us go wrong and there can be lacunae in the investigation. But officers working in special units like anti-terrorism squads and various crime branches work very hard to secure evidence that can withstand court scrutiny. Though police stations sometimes lack legal advice, these special units engage high-quality prosecutors to represent them. Therefore, the collapse of the case of this brutal mass murder of innocents needs deep introspection by all sections of the criminal justice system.

If we say that "we have a history of failure in probes in terror cases", who is to be blamed? The police alone? Let us admit that it is a collective failure and we need to work together to streamline the criminal justice system.

It is time that police and special squads created to handle terror crime were not only well trained in investigation but also



JOHN BRITTAS

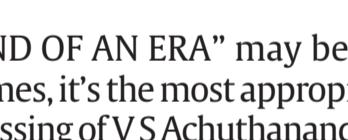
END OF AN ERA" may be a cliché, but at times, it's the most appropriate phrase. The passing of VS Achuthanandan at 101 is such a moment.

VS defined communist politics for about eight decades. He was the last survivor of the 32 leaders who walked out of the stormy national council meeting of the undivided CPI in 1964 to form the CPM. But it is not just the years that he lived through or the epochs that he witnessed or participated in — India's struggle for Independence, the Pannapra-Vayalar revolt of 1946 that paved the way for Kerala to join the Indian Union, the split in the Communist Party in 1964, the fight against the Emergency in 1975 or the country's tectonic shift from a planned economy to a free market in 1991 — that defined him. Comrade VS was the last living link to Indian politics shaped by workers' and peasants' movements, and the idea that mass struggle could be a vehicle for social change.

As I write this on a rainy day in New Delhi, I can't help but notice the visuals being beamed live from Thiruvananthapuram: Even school children could be seen milling around the AKG Centre to catch a glimpse of the departed leader. I can't help but think that even their grandfathers might not have been born when VS took up the red flag, while toiling as a tailor or lifting bales in a coir factory to earn his daily bread. Little wonder, then, that he chose to name his autobiography *Life is a Struggle*. As the news of his demise came in, there was a common

COMRADE OF THE PEOPLE

For eight decades, VS Achuthanandan undertook struggles — and set an example



COMRADE VS ACHUTHANANDAN

As CM, the biggest allegation against VS was that he behaved more like the Opposition leader. The jibe was about the mass agitations he led — such as against encroachment in the tourist paradise of Munnar by powerful vested interests or the fast he underwent demanding a ban on the deadly pesticide endosulfan. What his opponents failed to grasp — and what the masses instinctively grasped — was that he was a man fighting the system, not the Opposition.

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thread in tributes, ranging from Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to the grassroots worker: VS proved that life and struggle are not two different things.

What makes Comrade VS a darling of the masses? It has as much to do with his commitment to the cause he believed in as with his passion. In the ever-changing world of realpolitik, VS chose to be a man of the party organisation for decades. One of the State Committee members of the undivided CPI that came to power in 1957 in Kerala, VS became a minister for the first time — Chief Minister to be precise — at the age of 82 in 2006. There were only two pillars in his world — the party and the people.

As CM, the biggest allegation against VS was that he behaved more like the Opposition leader. The jibe was about the mass agitations he led — such as against encroachment in the tourist paradise of Munnar by powerful vested interests or the fast he underwent demanding a ban on the deadly pesticide endosulfan. What his opponents failed to grasp — and what the masses instinctively grasped — was that he was a man fighting the system, not the Opposition. It is precisely this conviction that made him an unlikely champion of the free software movement.

His uncompromising stand on core issues of corruption, the environment and violence against women earned him a few foes but his popularity skyrocketed. As CM, he once famously refused to present an award to a then-star of Malayalam cinema

who was battling charges of sexual harassment. That was VS. Setbacks only emboldened him, and he lived to fight another day.

It remains a topic of academic interest how a dyed-in-the-wool party organisation man like VS became, overnight, a wildly popular mass leader in the 1990s. He was the biggest crowd-puller I have seen. His speeches, replete with sarcasm, drew in people of all persuasions. Imitating his speeches — that style of stressing a syllable here or pausing in the middle of a wisecrack there — became a subculture in school/college festivals, movies and TV shows.

In his personal life, VS inculcated the same discipline as he did in the party as its long-standing state secretary. VS was not given indulgences. In that, he leaves another model for India's youth to follow: Life is about discipline, courage and commitment. More importantly, he redefined youth when questions were raised about his fitness to be CM. Comrade VS demolished the sceptics by reciting a verse:

Your age is not the grey or black/That rests upon your crown/But in the fire that burns your spirit/And a head that never bows down to tyranny.

A few days ago, I was at the hospital where the dear comrade was admitted. His son, V A Arun, said: "The fighter that he is, it won't be easy for death to conquer him."

V S will live on. Lal Salam, comrade.

The writer is leader of CPI(M) in Rajya Sabha



JULY 22, 1985, FORTY YEARS AGO

PLANE BROKE APART

AN ANALYSIS OF the recordings of communications between the Air India jumbo and the air traffic control tower at Shannon airport in Ireland has indicated that the aircraft broke apart before crashing into the Atlantic. Paul Turner, an American expert investigating the crash, is quoted in a newspaper as saying that the tapes recorded at Shannon airport showed the plane's transmitter sent out radio impulses intermittently for five or six seconds after the digital flight data recorder and the cockpit voice recorder had stopped. That would indicate that the power supply to the recorders had been cut off suddenly.

POLICE FIRING

ELEVEN PERSONS WERE killed in Ahmedabad — nine of them in police firing in the Dariapur area — as violence continued to rock communally sensitive localities of the walled city for the fifth successive day. After a relatively peaceful night, trouble erupted when bombs were hurled and shots fired at a passing police vehicle. The police returned fire and nine persons were killed in the incident, while four were admitted to hospitals with bullet injuries.

FLASH FLOODS TOLL

THE DEATH TOLL in flash floods and unpre-

dented rains in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh rose to 55 while major rivers in Bihar, fed by overnight heavy rains, are likely to worsen the flood situation in the state. In Uttar Pradesh, all major rivers were rising at different places but were still under the danger mark.

BJP BATS FOR BOMB

THE BHARATIYA JANATA Party wants the government to develop "our own" nuclear bomb because it feels that the threat of a Pakistan N-bomb is "real". The party said the country could no longer afford to adopt a policy of drift and escapism in this "serious matter".

THE IDEAS PAGE

The game is on

Designation of The Resistance Front as a terrorist group is welcome, but also a reminder: We must assert our narrative, unfiltered by Western media, unpressured by superpower coercion



MANOJ K CHANNAN

ASIM MUNIR'S VISIT to Washington reaffirmed Pakistan's alignment with US strategic interests. Publicly endorsed by CENTCOM chief General Michael E Kurilla as a "phenomenal partner", Pakistan continues to position itself as a counterterrorism ally, despite its longstanding use of militant groups as foreign policy tools. These developments underscore the transactional nature of the US-Pakistan relationship, where tactical alignment often overshadows long-term strategic divergence.

For India, this highlights the need for vigilance and independence in dealing with regional security issues, particularly as Washington continues to balance its ties with both Islamabad and New Delhi. India's approach must be practical, based on realism, and free from the historical baggage that hinders progress.

The recent designation of The Resistance Front (TRF), a rebranded offshoot of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), as a global terror organisation by the US represents more than just a counterterrorism action. It sends a strategic message that connects with broader regional dynamics and internal shifts within Pakistan. The US has long utilised terror designations, military aid, and economic pressure as tools of influence. The timing of the TRF's listing — during backchannel meetings, changing alliances, and defence cooperation talks — should not be seen as coincidental.

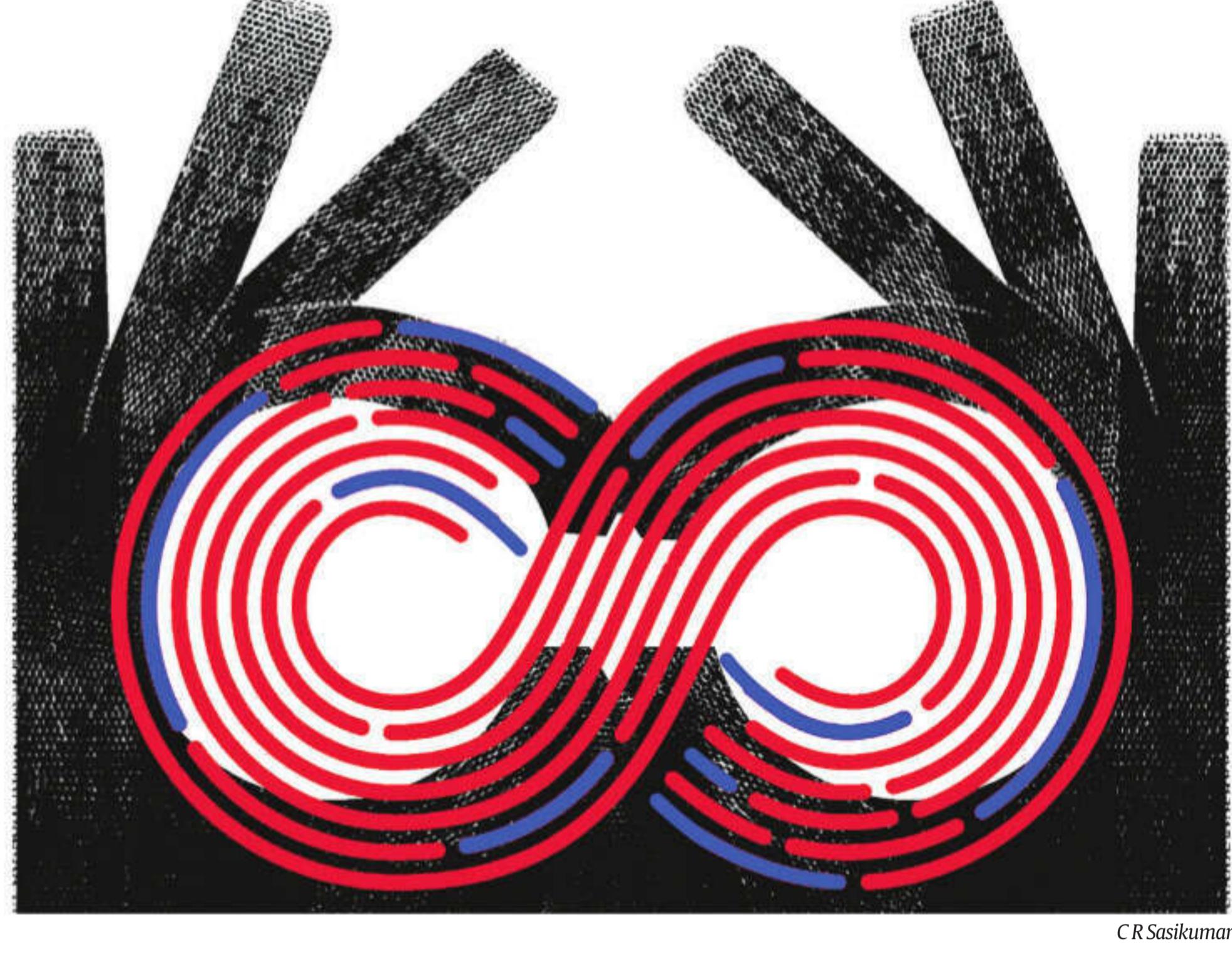
Pakistan, under the informal control of the powerful military establishment led by Munir, remains a central player in this situation. Reports that Munir may be preparing for a transition from military to civilian leadership — possibly as the country's next president — add a new layer of complexity. The Pakistan Army has always played a dual role, exerting de facto political power while maintaining the appearance of democratic governance. If Munir does become president, it would formalise what has long been an open secret: Pakistan is a state run by its generals, not its elected officials.

Munir's current influence, untethered by public accountability, distorts Pakistan's already fragile democratic structure. His management of both foreign and domestic policy blurs the line between governance and military strategy. Recent high-level meetings involving Munir and the chief of the Pakistan Air Force (PAF), coinciding with TRF's terror designation, raise questions about the legitimacy and goals of these interactions.

The backdrop to these engagements is likely Pakistan's urgent military needs. Indian punitive strikes during Operation Sindoar caused significant damage to key Pakistani airbases at Nur Khan and Sargodha, amongst others, requiring repairs and replacements. The PAF is reportedly seeking spare parts for its F-16 fleet — a need that cannot be met without US cooperation. It appears that the Pakistani government is quietly collaborating with Washington to secure this support without resorting to IMF or World Bank funds, thereby avoiding scrutiny of military spending amid economic instability.

This implicit understanding between the US and Pakistan reflects an evolving relationship. Washington no longer views Islamabad

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CR Sasikumar

solely through the lens of the Afghan conflict but instead as a flexible partner, willing to meet demands in exchange for support. The days of aid in exchange for loyalty are gone — now, cooperation is transactional, and Pakistan's leadership appears more than eager to cooperate.

For India, this situation presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The shifting alignment of US interests — sometimes favouring Pakistan, at other times leaning toward India — requires a clear and focused response. American support for Indian security remains strong, but it is not without conditions. Washington will prioritise its national interests above all, even if that means playing both sides in South Asia.

Whether it's counterterrorism cooperation, arms sales, or trade negotiations, New Delhi must assert its independence with Washington. American tariffs and weapons deals serve as tools of influence, often used to sway policy decisions or gain concessions. India's autonomy is crucial in these interactions, and it must remain focused on its national interests and avoid being manipulated into a state of dependency.

Meanwhile, new alignments are starting to form. Russia and China are showing renewed interest in strengthening the Russia-India-China (RIC) grouping. Although this tri-lateral framework lacks the strength of NATO or the Quad, it serves as an essential counterbalance to Western influence. India should explore this space, not out of unquestioning loyalty, but to prevent undue pressure from any single power bloc.

The re-emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan, three decades after being ousted, and the US's ongoing operational presence in the region (including leasing airbases and printing Afghan currency) indicate a long-term American interest in Central and South Asia. These actions are not driven by altruism — they are part of a calculated strategy to maintain influence in one of the world's most volatile regions.

India must recognise that it is being

watched, evaluated, and targeted by global powers who see it as both a partner and a pawn. In this environment, the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) gain renewed relevance. Not the NAM of the Cold War era, but a reimagined model — one that is pragmatic, flexible, and focused on issue-based cooperation rather than ideological loyalty.

To navigate this complexity, India must also look inward. There is an urgent need to engage its neighbours, not as subordinates, but as equal stakeholders. The Subcontinent cannot afford to be shackled by its past. While historical wrongs and unresolved disputes persist, they must not define the future. The policy of strategic patience must be replaced with a strategic approach to problem-solving, one that values and promotes regional cooperation.

This means reevaluating relationships with nations such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and even Pakistan. It involves restarting stalled dialogues, not to compromise sovereignty or national security, but to build a regional consensus that benefits India. Assertiveness must be balanced with diplomacy, and power must be tempered by responsibility.

India's path forward should be neither isolationist nor interventionist — it should be independent. We must assert our narrative, unfiltered by Western media, unpressured by superpower coercion, and unfazed by regional provocations. The TRF listing, the whispers of a presidential coup in Pakistan, and the transactional nature of US foreign policy are all reminders that the game is on. We must shed the weight of the past. We cannot undo Partition. We cannot undo wars. But we can choose how we move forward. Let history be a lesson, not a leash. Let us walk forward — eyes open, feet grounded, and purpose clear.

The writer is a lieutenant colonel (veteran), former Armoured Corps officer and defence analyst

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policy focuses on: injury surveillance, prevention, and early intervention, which remain essential for athlete longevity; biomechanics and performance analytics to refine training and technique; nutrition and recovery science — areas where marginal gains often make the difference between podium finishes and missed opportunities; and mental health and cognitive conditioning, which, in today's high-pressure environment, are non-negotiable.

The policy outlines that facilities for sports science and sports medicine will be established and upgraded at major training centres across the country. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) has already begun enhancing sports science facilities and installing world-class recovery equipment at its regional centres and National Centres of Excellence, in partnership with the National Centre for Sports Science & Research.

The SAI regional centre in Bengaluru, where our Olympic medal prospects under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) train, has got one of the best sports science facilities in the entire country. Another return to Sports division was recently es-

tablished at the Indira Gandhi Stadium in New Delhi. These are multi-disciplinary hubs where coaches, physiotherapists, psychologists, orthopaedic surgeons and data scientists work together to support athletes. In a significant step, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports had constituted a 10-member medical panel in association with the Indian Olympic Association last year, including myself, to be stationed in Paris during the Olympic Games. For the first time, India had a dedicated medical team on-ground to manage injuries, monitor recovery, and make real-time decisions for our athletes' health and safety.

The policy also rightly champions technology as a tool for governance and performance monitoring. Platforms will be upgraded and restructured to improve the transparency and efficiency of various schemes. From AI-driven performance analysis to real-time dashboards, monitoring training loads and recovery metrics, technology will be harnessed not just to track, but to intervene early, predict outcomes, and course-correct when necessary.

What excites me even more is that we

The writer is a sports orthopaedic surgeon. He was head of a medical panel constituted by the sports ministry to support Indian athletes at the Paris 2024 Olympics



DINSHAW PARDIWALA

AS SOMEONE WHO has spent decades in the field of sports medicine, closely observing the physical and psychological toll elite sport takes on athletes, I am both encouraged and excited by the emphasis placed on sports science and technology in the upcoming National Sports Policy 2025. This is not just a policy — it's a paradigm shift.

For the first time in our nation's sporting journey, we are embedding science, technology, and evidence-based medicine at the heart of athlete development. From injury prevention and biomechanics to mental conditioning and recovery, the policy envisages a system where performance is supported, not just expected.

India has made great strides in global sports. But to compete consistently at the highest level, performance needs to be sustained by systems that are smart, adaptable, and medically sound. The National Sports Policy 2025 acknowledges this and integrates sports science, sports medicine, and cutting-edge technology as foundational pillars for the next decade of Indian sports.

It gives me immense satisfaction as a medical practitioner to note that the new

How to create champions

National Sports Policy 2025 will empower athletes through science, innovation

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Join FREE WhatsApp Channel <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0F> are not stopping at application — we are fostering sports innovation by leveraging technology for data-driven monitoring and implementation of sports programmes. With the proposed sports innovation task force and research grants, educational and research institutions will be encouraged to explore interdisciplinary solutions, creating a pipeline of ideas, tools, and technologies that are India-specific.

In a nutshell, the National Sports Policy 2025 is not just forward-thinking — it is vital. By embedding sports science and technology into the fabric of our sporting ecosystem, we are moving toward certainty — from passion alone to passion empowered by precision.

As someone who has treated hundreds of India's top athletes, I know that talent and training are never enough. Support, science, and systems are what create champions. With this policy, we are finally building those systems.

The writer is a sports orthopaedic surgeon. He was head of a medical panel constituted by the sports ministry to support Indian athletes at the Paris 2024 Olympics

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The truth revealed by the Epstein scandal — that ordinary Americans are deeply angry at the unfairness and abuses created by elites — is worth heeding."

— THE GUARDIAN

Political questions, textbook answers

NCERT history books and their revisions frame a challenge: To reckon with violence in medieval ages, nudge people to see it in context



KAUSHIK DAS GUPTA

OF KINGDOMS far away from sultanates in Delhi. Yet, an understanding of violence in pre-modern times is a relatively recent historiographical pursuit. Charges of destruction of places of worship continue to be countered by narratives that stress the political impulses behind such violence — as opposed to religious motives. The standard response is also that instances of destruction of places of worship by sultans and badshahs were far fewer compared to the grants they gave to temples and monasteries. A historian should, of course, be judged by her fealty to facts. Viewed from that perspective, there is nothing wrong with how most professional historians have responded to allegations of "brutality" levied on Islamic kings.

However, today the challenge in classrooms — and beyond — is not just to provide a point-to-point counter. The internet, political propaganda, social media, films and TV make lives information-heavy. WhatsApp chats have precipitated the collapse of some of the traditional filters on information.

Can narratives that place violence in medieval times in their historical context help? Why do people need to understand the complexities of times when rulers could destroy some temples and give grants to many others? What purpose would it serve to depict Mughal and several other rulers as complex personalities who had the blood of their kin on their hands and yet presided over great cultural refinement? Why tell the stories of Shivaji's successors who struck terror in people in Bengal or frame Tipu Sultan's role in resisting the Britishers without underplaying the violence his forces meted out to some communities? Studies placing personalities in their times — and dissemination of such scholarship outside academia — are, of course, needed for purely epistemological purposes. History is at its most vigorous when it not only celebrates the resilience of societies but also tries to understand fault lines. The search for syncretism in medieval times was driven by a young nation's desire to place a salve on the wounds of Partition as well as to counter the colonial historian's charge that Indian history, before the arrival of the British, was nothing but an account of communal feuding. Histories of pre-modern violence, not prejudiced by colonial blinkers and innocent of sectarian agendas, have been few, and they have not gone beyond academia.

But why disturb the student's "well-being" by introducing such complexities in textbooks? The latest changes have been introduced in Class VIII textbooks — a time when youngsters step into their teens. They are introduced to complicated concepts in mathematics and science — cell division, for instance. Why not in the social sciences? Kings and sultans were not accountable for their actions, statecraft had very different objectives and wars were often critical to empire-building. All this is historical common sense. However, it's yet to become general common sense. Narratives of the pre-modern era continue to be framed around heroes and villains. The search for a proto-nationalist in Ashoka, Akbar, Shivaji or Tipu Sultan — depending on ideological inclination — and describing a Mahmud of Ghazni or Alauddin Khilji or Aurangzeb as evil might seem somewhat different endeavours. But both obscure an understanding of epochs, much removed in time — Mahmud of Ghazni lived in the 10th-11th centuries, the Khaljis in the 13th and 14th centuries, and the last great Mughal ruled from 1658 to 1707. That the latest revisions in textbooks bracket a more than 500-year period under the shibboleth of "Dark Age" shows that even a section of historians, affiliated to the ruling regime, carry such blinkers.

These are significant interventions. Yet, there is a broader challenge for historians: To underline the fundamental differences between the social and moral universe of pre-modern times and today's norms. Kings and sultans were not accountable for their actions, statecraft had very different objectives and wars were often critical to empire-building. All this is historical common sense. However, it's yet to become general common sense. Narratives of the pre-modern era continue to be framed around heroes and villains. The search for a proto-nationalist in Ashoka, Akbar, Shivaji or Tipu Sultan — depending on ideological inclination — and describing a Mahmud of Ghazni or Alauddin Khilji or Aurangzeb as evil might seem somewhat different endeavours. But both obscure an understanding of epochs, much removed in time — Mahmud of Ghazni lived in the 10th-11th centuries, the Khaljis in the 13th and 14th centuries, and the last great Mughal ruled from 1658 to 1707. That the latest revisions in textbooks bracket a more than 500-year period under the shibboleth of "Dark Age" shows that even a section of historians, affiliated to the ruling regime, carry such blinkers.

The challenge, in large measure, has to do with a historiographical deficit, plugging which remains a work in progress.

Indian historians have produced groundbreaking studies on the extractive nature of medieval kingdoms, the ebb and flow of commerce, the caste system and the rise

kaushik.dasgupta@expressindia.com

of Israel's brutality

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A prism of exclusion' (IE, July 21). The eviction drives in Assam raise grave concerns about due process and inclusive governance. While environmental degradation and land use are valid concerns, targeting predominantly Bengali-origin Muslims with the rhetoric of "land jihad" and "demographic invasion" sets a dangerous precedent. With 19.6 lakh residents still needing to prove their citizenship, governance must not turn into institutional erasure. Administrative action must be humane, equitable, and just — not exclusionary.

Nilesh Dubey, Ahmedabad

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Not so private' (IE, July 21). The Supreme Court correctly ruled that spousal communications are privileged. Protecting the admissibility of secret disclosures by a spouse is also important to preserve the sanctity of the marital relationship. Section 122 of the Evidence Act preserves marital intimacy and trust between spouses. The exclusion of digital evidence in the age of technology would defeat the act's purpose.

Vaibhav Goyal, Chandigarh

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'UPSC's helping hand' (IE, July 19). The initiative by the UPSC to support candidates who couldn't get a posting is a welcome step. Even then, however, most candidates will not be able to get a satisfying job without policy changes. We are in the age of skill-based employment. The hysteria around UPSC should be toned down. Otherwise, we will lose our youth to decades of unemployment.

Arshi Siddiqua, via email

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DRIVE TO EXCLUDE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Orwell in Gaza' (IE, July 21). While the debasement of language is rightly exposed, the world must confront the deeper horror: War crimes under the guise of "security". Israel's alleged use of white phosphorus in densely populated areas, banned under international law, is deplorable. There are also allegations of contaminated aid routes, forced displacement masked as "voluntary migration", and strikes on hospitals. All these acts are violations of the Geneva Conventions. Doublespeak should not distract us from what may amount to ethnic cleansing.

Zainab Irshad, Patna

ADMIT THE EVIDENCE

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Arshi Siddiqua, via email



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



Rahul Gandhi and other Congress leaders celebrate party chief Mallikarjun Kharge's birthday at CPP office in Parliament House on Monday. PTI

SWEET & SUGAR-FREE

CONGRESS PRESIDENT Mallikarjun Kharge, who turned 83 on Monday, was in for a surprise during the cake cutting at the Congress office in the old Parliament House. Party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra had baked a sugar-free cake for the veteran leader. Sources said Priyanka's cake was flavoured with dates as Kharge can't consume sugar. The Congress president, who was greeted with three different cakes — two ordered from outside — chose to cut Priyanka's cake first. Sitting next to him, Lok Sabha LoP Rahul Gandhi was more curious about the yellow flowers in Congress treasurer Ajay Maken's bouquet and a matching yellow cake placed on the table. "Is there any significance to the yellow colour?" he asked and was told that it was just a sweet coincidence.

ALL-WOMAN TEAM

THE INDIAN Forest Service Association achieved a unique milestone on Sunday by electing a new national executive body during its General Body Meeting. Notably, all the newly elected members of the executive team are women. Among the 36 civil services associations in the country, the Forest Service Association stands out as the only officers' body with an all-woman executive committee.

MISSSED COMMUNICATION

AS CONGRESS MPs walked out of the Rajya Sabha on Monday morning, demanding a discussion on the Pahalgam attack and related issues, several leaders in the Opposition camp were left surprised. The Congress had not communicated to the INDIA bloc allies its decision to walk out of the House. As a result, leaders from other Opposition parties continued to sit through the proceedings in the House in the first half. In the second half, however, all Opposition parties staged a walkout in the Upper House after collectively deciding to boycott the proceedings for the remainder of the day.

'YOUR OFFICERS ARE CROSSING ALL LIMITS'

Let political battles be fought before electorate, SC tells ED

ANANTHAKRISHNANG
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

THE SUPREME Court Monday saw sharp exchanges over some of the actions of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), with the court suggesting that the agency should not be used for political battles, and saying that its "officers are crossing all limits".

As Chief Justice of India B R Gavai, presiding over a two-judge bench, which also included Justice K Vinod Chandran, made the observation, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta contended, "There is a concerted effort to create a narrative against an institution."

The observations came in three matters, first involving summons against Karnataka CM Siddaramiah's wife B M Parvathi and Minister Byrathi Suresh in connection with alleged illegal allotment of sites by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), and the other two notices to some senior advocates for appearing before the agency in connection with cases allegedly involving their clients.

Taking up ED's appeal against the Karnataka High Court order quashing the summons to

Parvathi and Suresh, CJI Gavai told Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, who appeared for the probe agency, "Mr Raju, please don't ask us to open our mouth. Or we will have to pass very harsh comments. We have been saying since morning that we don't use this court as a political platform... Unfortunately, I have some experience with ED in Maharashtra."

As Raju referred to a connected plea about the alleged larger conspiracy involved, the bench expressed reluctance in entertaining it saying, "You don't percolate this virus throughout the country... Let the political battles be fought before the electorate."

"In the facts and circumstances of the case, we do not find any error in the reasoning as adopted by the learned single judge. In the peculiar facts and circumstances of the case, the petition is dismissed," the bench said.

The court agreed to Raju's request that the order not be treated as a precedent.

Summons to lawyers

A short while later, the bench took up petitions asking whether a lawyer who gives an opinion can be summoned in connection with a probe. The petitions were

filed in the context of ED notices to senior advocates Arvind Datar and Pratap Venugopal over a probe involving their clients.

The notices were subsequently withdrawn. In a circular, ED said, "No summons shall be issued to any advocate in violation of Section 132 of the Bharatiya Saksha Adhiniyam, 2023..."

The agency also stated that, where necessary, it will do so with the approval of its director.

Appearing for the Supreme Court Bar Association, senior advocate Vikas Singh said, "ED has now come out with a circular which says lawyers will not be summoned now. But that will not apply to CBI, etc." Senior advocate Vijay Hansaria said some guidelines are needed in this matter.

Pressing for direction, Singh said, "If a lawyer is not free in giving advice and he feels giving advice can also result in being summoned for probe... it will have a chilling effect on the complete justice delivery system."

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi said such "advice can be right, advice can be wrong". To which, CJI Gavai said, "Even if it's wrong, it's a privileged communication. How can you be summoned by the ED for that?"

"Certainly not," responded Attorney General R Venkataramani. "I think for all matters, we must lay down guidelines," said CJI Gavai, and turning to the AG, added, "Your officers are crossing all limits."

The CJI recalled the matters that his bench had taken up earlier and said, "In two matters, we had to tell Raju, if you open your mouth, then we will have to say a lot about ED."

Intervening, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said, "So far as this issue is concerned, lawyers... cannot be summoned for giving an opinion. General observations are... sometimes misconstrued..."

What happens is, I am saying this, ED is not saying this, there is a concerted effort to create a narrative against an institution."

Urging against generalising, he said if, in a given case, there is overstepping by ED, the court would intervene. "We have been finding it in many cases..." said the CJI. S-G Mehta said, "Please don't carry that impression based upon interviews and YouTube shows. There is a narrative building... outside." The CJI said he was speaking from experience. "Not from interviews. My experience from family courts to... presiding over the bench..."

NASA-ISRO joint satellite NISAR set for July 30 launch

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

THE MUCH awaited launch of NISAR — an earth observation satellite jointly developed by NASA and ISRO — is set to take place on July 30 at 5:40 pm from the country's only spaceport in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

ISRO said that GSAT-16 will inject the observation satellite into a 734 km sun-synchronous orbit — an orbit in which the satellite reaches over a place at the same time each day.

NISAR, which stands for NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar, will scan the entire globe every 12 days and provide a series of very detailed images of the Earth's surface.

Costing around \$1.5 billion, it is the most expensive earth observation satellite in the world, with ISRO contributing ₹469.4 crores. The Indian space agency will also incur costs in launching it.

"The NISAR launch is the result of strong technical cooperation between ISRO and NASA/JPL technical teams for more than a decade," the India space agency said. The scheduled launch of the satellite last year was pushed after technical issues.

This would mean that the satellite would be able to provide high resolution data in every weather condition, and during

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the day as well as the night.

The satellite is also powerful enough to capture changes as small as one centimetre in size during its repeated observations over the same terrain. It will therefore be able to study the dynamic processes on Earth's surface, like retreat of glaciers, movement of sea ice, the path of a storm, changes in vegetation and forest cover, and even movements during earthquakes and volcanoes.

Scientists expect this satellite to provide new insights regarding the processes of climate change or natural hazards, and better prepare for them. It can also help with practical applications such as tracking changes in soil moisture or mapping surface water levels.

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Railways to launch AI-enabled chatbot for grievance redressal

DHEERAJ MISHRA
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

IN A step to make grievance redressal platforms like RailMadad more accessible and easier to use, the Ministry of Railways is working on an AI-enabled WhatsApp chatbot which will allow the passengers to register their complaints without hassles.

Officials said that the chatbot will provide real-time assistance through WhatsApp, which will be much easier than calling on 139 or filing a complaint through an app or online portal. Currently, the beta testing of this system has been rolled out in

Northern Railway (NR) and East Central Railway (ECR) zones.

A senior ministry official said: "Once introduced, the passengers would be able to access the RailMadad AI-Enabled WhatsApp Chat Bot by simply sending any input to 7982139139. This will end the need for additional apps like RailOne, our complaint number 139 or website navigation, which sometimes take a lot of time and responses are delayed. Now passengers will have to just send their complaint, including in voice-note format, and the issue will be resolved promptly. This system will be synced with RailMadad infrastructure. We want to ease the 139 number for complaints."

In 1941, Communist leader P Krishna Pillai asked an 18-year-old Achuthanandan to organise the farm workers of their native village Punnarapura, Achuthanandan — as he was then — was exposed to tales of oppression, including denial of wages, of toddy and coir workers. After he joined a coir factory at Aspinwall, he also got swept into trade unionism.

It was thus that V S established the Travancore Karshaka Thozhilai Union, which later grew into the Kerala State Karshaka Thozhilai Union, a CPI(M)-affiliated trade union of farm workers.

During the 1946 Punnarapura-Vayalar uprising, a historical struggle against Diwan C P Ramaswami Iyer of Travancore, a camp led by VS took charge of making sharpened lances out of arecanut tree planks to use against police. As the heat on him grew, the party asked VS to go into hiding, but police found and arrested him from Poonjar in Kottayam.

In 1948, when the Communist party was banned,

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, JULY 21

REFERRING TO him as a "rare source of hope for the forgotten and voiceless", former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti on Monday urged Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi to raise the issue of "victimisation, dispossession and disempowerment" of Muslims in the ongoing Monsoon Session of Parliament.

In her letter, Mufti said that the Muslims of India chose to remain in the country due to their faith in the Congress leadership and it was Gandhi's "responsibility to defend them".

"Today, as the bearer of that legacy, the responsibility falls on your shoulders to uphold and defend the secular and democratic values enshrined in our Constitution," the letter read.

Pointing out that issues like the horrific Pahalgam terrorist attack, Operation Sindoora and other critical security matters were expected to dominate discussions in Parliament, the PDP chief wrote,

"I sincerely hope the Opposition, especially the INDIA bloc, raises the growing concern of Muslim victimisation across the country."

Referring to the "targeting" of Muslims and the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar, Mufti said the community is being pushed into "desperate situations".

"Under the pretext of targeting 'Bangladeshis' and 'Rohingyas', Muslims are being pushed into increasingly desperate situations. Disturbing media reports have even suggested that some were forced into the sea in attempts to expel them from India. As you rightly highlighted during your visit to Assam, the large-scale demolition of thousands of Muslim homes is deeply troubling. The latest development the

PDP chief and former J&K CM Mehbooba Mufti



SIR being conducted in Bihar appears to be yet another systematic effort to dispossess, disempower, and ultimately disenfranchise Muslims, effectively erasing their presence," she said in the letter.

She said while India rightly expresses rage over the treatment of Hindu minority in Pakistan and Bangladesh, there is "complete silence" when Muslims are targeted in our country. "...A fear that prevents many from speaking up.

As a politician from one of the only Muslim-majority regions that chose to join the Indian Union... I feel extremely helpless at times. Placing great hope in your leadership I urge you to continue speaking up for a minority that is being... pushed to the fringes of Indian society," she said.

every social issue, even taking a trek through the hills as part of his fight against the alleged encroachment of the Mathikettan Shola forest. The forest was eventually declared a national park in 2003. The palmolein impart scam, which emerged during the Congress regime of '90-'96, was another of his legal battles.

V S's campaign led to the conviction of senior UDF politician R Balakrishna Pillai over a corrupt deal when he was in the government. V S next became a litigant in the sensational ice cream parlour sex scandal case, which was exposed under the LDF regime of 1996-2001, not deterred even when the Supreme Court rejected his petition. In 2015, by when the UDF was in power in the state, V S joined the protest of women workers in Munnar.

Sometimes, his fight went beyond the state borders. In 2012, V S ventured out to Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu to pledge solidarity with an anti-nuclear protest, but was stopped at the state border.

On several occasions, Achuthanandan's rebellious nature eclipsed the party at crucial moments. When a bypoll to the Neyyattinkara Assembly seat was held on June 1, 2012, V S left the party red-faced by visiting Chandrasekharan's wife. In February 2015, when the party's state conference was in progress in Alappuzha, Achuthanandan walked out in protest against an attack from rival delegates and the party secretariat passing a resolution against him for an anti-party stand.

VS ACHUTHANANDAN (1923-2025)

VS as in versus: Paddy fields to nuclear plants, his tryst with causes

As 18-yr-old, he set out to organise farm workers; as octogenarian, he trekked hills over 'encroachment' of forest land

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 21

THE KERALA government has declared a public holiday on Tuesday and three days of mourning following the death of former chief minister and Communist stalwart V S Achuthanandan on Monday.

Achuthanandan, fondly called as V S, will be cremated Wednesday at the state secretariat for public homage. On Tuesday afternoon, the remains will be taken to Alappuzha ahead of the cremation on Wednesday.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said VS's death marked the end of an era. "His death is a loss for the party and the state. His life was a remarkable chapter in the history of Kerala as well as of the revolutionary movement," Vijayan said.

Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar said VS had been a towering figure in Indian politics. "He was instrumental in shaping the party's direction, both in Kerala and nationally," he said.

Opposition Leader V D Satheesan of the Congress said VS had given a new perspective for Opposition politics in Kerala.

On Monday, his remains will be kept at the party's former state headquarters, AKG Study Centre,

located in the middle of paddy fields, reached via wooden planks placed across streams. His speeches to farmers then, spread out across the vast paddy fields, without the aid of a public address system, would go on to define his distinctive speaking style — later a fodder for Kerala's mimicry artists.

It was thus that V S established the Travancore Karshaka Thozhilai Union, which later grew into the Kerala State Karshaka Thozhilai Union, a CPI(M)-affiliated trade union of farm workers.

During the 1946 Punnarapura-

Vayalar uprising, a historical struggle against Diwan C P Ramaswami Iyer of Travancore, a camp led by VS took charge of making sharpened lances out of arecanut tree planks to use against police. As the heat on him grew, the party asked VS to go into hiding, but police found and arrested him from Poonjar in Kottayam.

At the police lock-up in Pala, he was subjected to brutal torture, so much so that police thought VS had died. It was while

he was being taken for burial that he was discovered to be breathing,

and the veteran got a new lease of life. But Alappuzha police again jailed him for 15 months,

on charges of organising people against the government.

In 1948, when the

Communist party was banned,

he was again arrested and jailed. After the first Communist government took over in Kerala in 1957, VS was the CPI district secretary. In his maiden speech in the Assembly in 1967 as an MLA, Achuthanandan took up his pet issue of rights of coir workers and fishermen. He was also

active in debates that led to the Kerala Toddy Workers' Welfare Act of 1969, and was critical in the formulation of the then CPI-led government's legislation for agricultural workers.

When the Emergency was declared, Achuthanandan, then the Ambalapuzha MLA, was arrested and jailed for 21 months.

Dhankhar's turbulent innings: Shifting loyalties to Raj Bhavan rows to RS stint

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

THE ABRUPT resignation of Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar came just hours after what turned out to be the 74-year-old's final sitting as the Rajya Sabha Chairman. There was no indication about it during the day.

Dhankhar, who assumed office as the 14th Vice-President of India in August 2022, is no stranger to controversies. His stint as the Rajya Sabha Chairman remained turbulent, as he had run-ins with the Opposition members on a regular basis. He also strictly took on the judiciary over the issue of separation of powers.

So far, Dhankhar has been the only Vice-President against whom the Opposition brought a notice of removal for "partisan" conduct as the Rajya Sabha Chairman. The notice was rejected by Deputy Chairman Harivansh, even as Dhankhar dubbed it as a "rusted" vegetable-cutting knife which, he said, was used for a by-



Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. File

pass surgery.

Prior to the second highest constitutional office, Dhankhar had been the West Bengal Governor. Since July 2019, when the Modi government sent him to the Kolkata Raj Bhavan, Dhankhar had been at loggerheads with the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress government on a range of issues. The TMC had often accused of him of acting as an "agent of BJP".

First election

Dhankhar contested his first election in 1989 on a Janata Dal ticket and was elected to Lok Sabha from Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu. His next election was for the Rajasthan Assembly – this time on a Congress ticket. He represented the Kishangarh Assembly seat from 1993 to 1998.

A graduate from University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, Dhankhar completed his LLB degree in 1978-79. From 1998, he was a full-time senior advocate practising in Supreme Court – until he was appointed the Governor of West

Bengal in 2019," said his younger brother Randeep Dhankhar.

After he joined BJP, Dhankhar, a Jat leader, became the national convener of the BJP's law and legal affairs department in 2016.

Born into a farmer's family at Kithana village in Jhunjhunu district in 1951, Dhankhar studied at Sainik school in Chittorgarh.

During his role as the Bengal Governor, Dhankhar was virtually a one-man opposition in the state, having taken on the TMC govern-

ment on issues ranging from law and order situation to post-poll violence, and from corruption charges to lapses in bureaucracy.

Bengal stint

The relation between Dhankhar and the Mamata government took a turn for the worse when the latter decided to replace the Governor with the CM as the Chancellor of state universities. While the TMC had accused Dhankhar of not clearing various

Bills and creating "unnecessary hurdles" in the functioning of the state government, the latter claimed he had gone by the book and the Constitution in pointing out issues to the government.

Interestingly, in the V-P polls, the TMC MPs had abstained from voting, not backing the Opposition candidate, which left many baffled given the protracted bad blood between the party leadership and Dhankhar.

Dhankhar is said to be an avid reader, a sports aficionado – he has been president of the Rajasthan Olympic Association and Rajasthan Tennis Association – and loves travelling.

In 1989, the then Haryana CM Chaudhary Devi Lal had vigorously campaigned for Dhankhar when the Janata Dal had fielded him from Jhunjhunu.

Ranjit Singh Chautala, Devi Lal's son and former Haryana minister, had earlier told *The Indian Express*: "Dhankhar is like a member of our family. He came into politics after being influenced by Devi Lal."

V-P quits mid-term: What's next

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

VICE-PRESIDENT Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation late Monday night has created a rare mid-term vacancy in the country's second-highest Constitutional office. He is only the third Vice-President in India's history to resign before completing his term, after VV Giri and Venkataraman – both stepped down to contest presidential elections and were succeeded by Gopal Swarup Patnaik and Shankar Dayal Sharma, respectively. Here's what happens next:

Who performs the Vice-President's duties now?

The Constitution does not provide for an acting Vice-President. However, since the Vice-President is also the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, the Deputy Chairman, currently Harivansh Narayan Singh, will preside over the House in his absence.

When will election be held?

In the case of the President, the Constitution requires that a vacancy be filled within six months. But for a Vice-

Presidential vacancy, there is no such fixed deadline. The only requirement is that the election be held "as soon as possible" after the post falls vacant. The Election Commission will announce the schedule. The poll is conducted under the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Elections Act, 1952. As per convention, the Secretary General of either House of Parliament is appointed as the Returning Officer, in rotation.

How long will the new Vice-President serve?

The elected candidate will serve a full 5-year term from the date of assuming office – not just the remainder of Dhankhar's tenure.

How is a new Vice-President elected?

The Vice-President is elected by an electoral college made up of members from both Houses of Parliament – Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha – including nominated members. Unlike in a presidential election, state legislatures do not participate.

Voting is held in Parliament House, by secret ballot, using the system of proportional repre-



sentation with a single transferable vote. Each MP casts a vote by ranking candidates in order of preference. All votes carry equal value.

To be declared elected, a candidate must reach a required minimum number of votes – called the quota. This is calculated by dividing the total number of valid votes by two and adding one (fractions, if any, are ignored). If no candidate crosses the quota in the first round, the one with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated, and their votes are transferred to the remaining candidates based on second preferences. The process continues until one candidate crosses the quota.

What are the eligibility criteria for candidates?

A person contesting for the post of Vice-President must be a citizen of India, at least 35 years old, qualified to be elected to the Rajya Sabha, and registered as an elector in any parliamentary constituency. They must not hold any office of profit under the central or state governments, except positions like President, Governor, or Minister.

3rd V-P to resign before term end

New Delhi: As he tendered his resignation Monday, Jagdeep Dhankhar became the third Vice-President in the history of independent India to resign before completing his term.

Earlier, VV Giri stepped down from vice presidency on July 20, 1969 to contest the presidential election following President Zakir Husain's death. He then served as acting President and was later elected as President.

R Venkataraman resigned as Vice President in 1987 after being elected President. He had served as Vice-President from August 1984 to July 1987 and held the presidency until July 1992.

ENS

NJAC Act to Basic Structure doctrine, Dhankhar kept asking questions of SC

VIKAS PATHAK
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR's term as Vice-President, cut short by his resignation Monday evening, was marked by controversy as he spoke up against not just the Opposition but also the judiciary on multiple occasions. This followed his term as West Bengal Governor, where he had several run-ins with TMC government.

In 2022, his term as the Rajya Sabha Chairman began on a controversial note during the Winter Session as he called the Supreme Court's 2015 judgment striking down the National Judicial Appointments Commission

(NJAC) Act a "glaring instance" of "severe compromise" of parliamentary sovereignty and disregard of the "mandate of the people". He said Parliament, being the custodian of "ordainment of the people", was duty-bound to "address the issue" and expressed confidence that "it will do so". The remarks, made in the House on December 7, were a reiteration of what he had said a week earlier.

Dhankhar also said it was time for "all constitutional institutions to reflect and give quietus to public display of adversarial challenging stance/trading or exchange of advisories emanating from these platforms". The comments came at a time when the Opposition was planning to seek

a discussion in the House on alleged government interference in the functioning of constitutional bodies, including a faceoff with the judiciary. A month earlier, then Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju had said the Collegium system of appointing judges was "opaque" and "not accountable" and "alien" to the Constitution. His remarks had attracted the displeasure of the Supreme Court.

A month later, on January 11, 2023, he rekindled the debate on the doctrine of separation of powers, citing the SC's landmark 1973 judgment in the Kesavananda Bharati case in which it ruled Parliament had the authority to amend the Constitution but not its basic structure. At an event in

Jaipur, Dhankhar said it would be difficult to answer the question, "Are we a democratic nation?"

"In a democratic society, the basic of any basic structure is supremacy of the people, sovereignty of the people, sovereignty of Parliament. Executive thrives on the sovereignty of Parliament. Legislatures and Parliament decide who will be the Chief Minister, who will be the Prime Minister. The ultimate power is with the Legislature. The Legislature decides who will be in other institutions. In such a situation, all Constitutional institutions – the Legislative, Executive, Judiciary – are required to be within their limits," he said.

"In 1973, in the Kesavananda Bharati case, the Supreme Court gave the idea of basic structure saying that Parliament can amend the Constitution, but not its basic structure. With due respect to the Judiciary, I cannot subscribe to this," Dhankhar said.

This March, amid the row over the alleged discovery of cash at the residence of Justice Yashwant Varma, Dhankhar again revived the NJAC debate. He said "things would have been different" if the SC had not struck down the mechanism for judicial appointments. His remarks on March 25 came on a day a three-member committee constituted by the top court began its inquiry into the conduct of Justice Varma and visited his residence.

The NJAC Act had proposed that appointment of judges should be done by a six-member body, headed by the CJI, and comprising two most senior SC judges, the Union Law Minister and two "eminent" persons. The two eminent persons were to be selected by a panel comprising the PM, the CJI and the leader of the largest Opposition party in Lok Sabha.

However, the SC was of the view that there was no question of accepting an alternative procedure which did not ensure primacy of the judiciary in the matter of selection and appointment of judges in the higher judiciary.

On April 22, Dhankhar minced no words in questioning the judiciary soon after the SC imposed a

three-month time limit on the President and governors to give assent to a Bill. At a gathering at a Delhi University event, Dhankhar said, "There is no visualisation in the Constitution of any authority above Parliament ... elected representatives ... They are the ultimate masters as to what (the) Constitution content will be."

He also said India cannot have a situation where the judiciary directs the President. "So, we have judges who will legislate, who will perform executive functions, who will act as super Parliament, and absolutely have no accountability because the law of the land does not apply to them," he said the same day in his address to the sixth batch of Rajya Sabha interns.

Soura-Srinagar conclusively established the horrific nature of the injuries which inter alia include, complete mutilation of genitalia with both testicles removed, a 10 cm x 5 cm laceration on the scrotum, tenderness on palms and feet, bruises on buttocks extending to thighs, multiple vegetative particles in the rectum, and fractures throughout the body."

It said that though his wife filed a complaint within 3 days of the alleged incident, no action was taken on it. "These facts, standing alone and uncontroverted, establish a prima facie case of the most heinous form of custodial torture and the total apathy of the local police officials in taking action against the perpetrators of custodial violence," the judgement said.

The wife then approached the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. In its September 18, 2023, order, the HC directed the SSP to conduct a detailed preliminary inquiry into the allegations and file an FIR if the allegations were substantiated. The HC also declined to quash the attempt to suicide FIR.

On appeal, the SC said that the HC "committed a grave error" in not mandatorily directing registration of FIR.

SC orders ₹50L relief, CBI probe into 'custodial torture' of J&K cop

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

TERMING THE alleged custodial torture of a J&K Police Constable "deeply shocking to its conscience", the Supreme Court Monday ordered a CBI probe into the matter and a compensation of ₹50 lakh. Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta asked the CBI to register a FIR within seven days.

"The Director, CBI, shall constitute a SIT headed by an officer not below the rank of SP to investigate this matter. The police officials found responsible for the custodial torture shall be arrested forthwith and not later than a period of one month from today. The investigation shall be completed within 90 days of the date of registration of the case," the bench said.

It also asked the CBI to "conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the systemic issues at the Joint Interrogation Centre, Kupwara", where Constable Khursheed Ahmad Chohan was allegedly "illegally detained and tortured, including examination of all CCTV systems, interrogation of all personnel present during the relevant period, forensic examination of the premises, and review of all protocols and

procedures followed for detention and interrogation of suspects".

Chohan, who was posted at the District Police Headquarters, Baramulla, at the time of the incident alleged that on February 17, 2023, he received a signal from Kupwara DSP Ajiaz Ahmad Naiko, directing him to report to the SSP office on February 20, 2023, in connection with an inquiry related to a narcotics matter.

He claimed when he reached the SSP office, he was detained and subjected to brutal custodial torture for six consecutive days. Due to the grave nature of the injuries, he was then admitted to the Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura-Srinagar, on February 26, 2023.

The SC, which perused his medical records, said, "It is admitted that between 20th February and 26th February, 2023, the appellant sustained numerous injuries including castration of his genital regions and was admitted to SKIMS Hospital at 2:48 pm on 26th February, 2023. It is also undisputed that the dismembered genitalia were brought to the hospital in a separate plastic bag by a Sub-Inspector, a fact that shocks our conscience. The medical documents issued from SKIMS,

TB, sickle cell, hepatitis: ICMR recommends key tests at PHCs

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

FROM RAPID diagnostic tests for Hepatitis B, point-of-care tests for thalassaemia and sickle cell disease to sample collection for molecular testing for TB at the sub-centre level – the ICMR has updated its National List of Essential Diagnostics with the aim

of collecting samples for dengue testing at the sub-centre level. Over the years, the spread of the mosquito-borne disease has expanded to all states, making it a bigger public health challenge.

Three, many of the blood tests – such as those to check for blood glucose levels, liver enzymes, and cholesterol – which could not be performed at the PHCs earlier, are now recommended at that level, with semi-auto analyzers (machines for conducting chemical and biological analysis of samples with minimal human intervention) becoming available.

The updated list, once implemented, will have significant public health implications. Experts say the list has been updated keeping in view the ambitious targets set for specific diseases. For instance, the government runs a national mission aimed at eliminating sickle cell anaemia by 2047 by screening people and making them aware of whether they are carriers of the faulty gene. The mission also focuses on quick and accurate diagnosis, and providing quality care to patients. The government also runs the National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme, which focuses on reducing cases and deaths due to the various hepatitis infections.

Some of the key changes to the 2025 list are:

One, inclusion of several rapid diagnostic tests at the level of sub-centres and PHCs. These include rapid diagnostic tests for sickle cell anaemia, thalassaemia, Hepatitis B, and syphilis at the sub-centre level. Many of these are priority diseases for the government.

Join FREE Telegram Channel <https://t.me/+UYKg0AFHBAwMQQ1>

THE ELECTION Commission has added 12,817 new polling stations in Bihar, increasing their total number in the state to 90,712.

With the new additions, Bihar has become the first state in the country to have less than 1,200 electors in all its polling stations, and the EC said on Monday.

As part of the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Bihar, the EC carried out a rationalisation and rearrangement of the existing polling stations and decided to increase their number. The move is aimed at easing voter access and reducing overcrowding during elections, said the poll panel.

"This major achievement of

express news service NEW DELHI, JULY 21

THE MAMI Mumbai Film Festival to skip a year and return in 2026

ALAKA SAHANI
MUMBAI, JULY 21

THE MAMI Mumbai Film Festival will not take place in 2025. The festival organisers are using this break to revamp the festival, which will return in 2026 with a new logo and refreshed approach.

Festival director Shivendra Singh Dungarpur said that the revamped version of the festival would extend more support to independent cinema and create ways of engaging with the host city, Mumbai. He also said, "We are working diligently to reschedule the festival and will announce the new dates for the 2026 edition as soon as possible."

The festival, which was started by the Mumbai Academy of Moving Image (MAMI) and is being held in Mumbai since 1997, is being revamped, announced Dungarpur on Monday and the festival will return as a showcase "for the best of... classic cinema".

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PUBLICATION NOTICE

IN O.A. NO. 183 OF 2024
 SUMMONS UNDER SUB-SECTION (4) OF SECTION 19 OF THE
 RECOVERY OF DEBTS AND BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993, READ WITH
 SUB-RULE (2A) OF RULE 5 OF THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
 (PROCEDURE) RULES, 1993 AS AMENDED FROM TIME TO TIME

By No. 545 / 2025 Dated: 12.06.2025

Canara Bank V/s M/s Raja Brick Udyog & Sons.

To,

2/1. Smt. Roshan Jahan (Legal Heir of Late Sh. Rais Azam) widow of Late Sh. Rais Azam R/o Mou Alipur Inayat, Tehsil Dhampur, Raja-ka-tajpur, Bijnor-246735 U.P.

2/2. Hamasha Rani (Legal Heir of Late Sh. Rais Azam) D/o Late Sh. Rais Azam R/o Mou Alipur Inayat, Tehsil Dhampur, Raja-ka-tajpur, Bijnor-246735 U.P.

2/3. Iqra (Legal Heir of Late Sh. Rais Azam) D/o Late Sh. Rais Azam R/o Mou Alipur Inayat, Tehsil Dhampur, Raja-ka-tajpur, Bijnor-246735 U.P.

2/4. Zulkar Nain (Legal Heir of Late Sh. Rais Azam) S/o Late Sh. Rais Azam R/o Mou Alipur Inayat, Tehsil Dhampur, Raja-ka-tajpur, Bijnor-246735 U.P.

3. Sh. Navab Ali S/o Abdul Aziz R/o Mohalla Alipur Inayat Urf Mangal Khera, Post Raja ka Tajpur, Bijnor-246735 U.P.

Whereas the above named Applicant Bank has instituted

OA No. 183 of 2024 against you for recovery of debts of

Rs. 79,45,482.80/- in which Hon'ble Tribunal was pleased to

issue Summons/ Notice U/s 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts and

Bankruptcy Act, 1993 and was listed before the Hon'ble Presiding

Officer on 09.06.2025.

Whereas, it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal

that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this

notice is given by way of this publication directing you to appear in

person or through your duly authorized agent or legal practitioner

before the Tribunal on 11.08.2025 at 10:30 A.M. Further, you are

required to show cause as to why the relief(s) prayed for in OA

should not be granted and to file reply, if any, in your defence in a

paper book form in sets and produce all the documents and

affidavits under which your defence or claim for set off, counter

claim, in this Tribunal personally or through your duly authorized

agent or legal practitioner within 30 days from the date of the

publication of this notice.

Take notice that in case of default of your appearance on the

specified day and time before the Tribunal, the case shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the

12th day of June, 2025.

By order of Tribunal

Registrar

Debt Recovery Tribunal

Dehradun

"IMPORTANT"

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Rural Works Department

NIT Corrigendum

Corrigendum No.-2

Memo No. मुजाहिद नियमों का सूचना पत्र - 22-13 / 2025 Patna

Reference to the Notice Inviting Tender No- RWD/SSY/HQ/ET/03/2025-2026(PR-007791 (RWD) 2025-26), due to unavoidable circumstances, the important date and time for this NIT are being hereby extended as per following table.

Description	Published Date & Time	Amended date & Time
1	From: 14.07.2025 to 22.07.2025 (09:00 hrs to 15:00hrs)	From: 14.07.2025 to 29.07.2025 (09:00 hrs to 15:00hrs)
Online Bid Submission end date	22.07.2025 up to 15:00 hrs	29.07.2025 up to 15:00 hrs
Online Bid opening date	22.07.2025 at 15:30 hrs	29.07.2025 at 15:30 hrs
Pre Bid Meeting at concerned office of Superintending Engineer	21.07.2025 From 15:00 hrs	28.07.2025

All other information as mentioned in the advertisement will remain unaltered. This corrigendum will be addendum to the original NIT.

This information is available on www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also

PR. No. 009123 (RWD) 25-26

Engineer in Chief

Rural Works Department

नशे की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार।

विहार सरकार

कार्यपालक अभियंता (यॉर्ड) का कार्यालय

क्षेत्र चंत्र प्रमंडल, भागलपुर

Email ID- mech.bhagalpur812003@gmail.com

शुद्धि पत्र (Corrigendum)

इस कार्यालय का पत्रका-643, दिनांक-11.07.2025, द्वारा आमंत्रित पुर्ण ई-नियमों सूचना सं-10 / 2025-26, जिसका PR No-008556 (RWD) 2025-26 है, जो दैनिक समाचार पत्र में प्रकाशित हुआ था, को अपरिवर्त्य कारणवश नियम प्रकार से संशोधित किया जाता है-

क्रम संखा	कार्डिंग	विवरणी	अंशित
01	08 (पुर्ण सं-01)	E-auction Fee/Cost (Non-Refundable) in Rs. 2,000.00 को विलोपित किया जाता है।	
02	11 (पुर्ण सं-01)	Period of Sales & Sale of Bid Document. 29.07.2025 To 03.08.2025 at (3.00 pm) को Period of Sale of Bid Document and start of Submission/Receipt of Bid Document on eproc-2 29.07.2025 To 04.08.2025 at (3.00 pm) को पारा जाय।	
03	(ख)	"साफल उद्योग बोलीदाता का उद्देश द्वारा उद्देश्य पुर्ण ई-नियमों की प्रयोग की नियम एवं विवरणी के कार्डिंग-22 द्वारा के पर्याप्तता की कार्यालय आवेदन आवेदन नियम किया जायेगा। कार्य पूर्ण होने के पश्चात अनुमति वजन से सामग्री कम होने पर वास्तविक वजन से गणना के दिसाव से सफल बोलीदाता को बढ़ी तारीख समाचार उठाव से पुर्ण जमा करनी होती होने को पारा जाय।	

तदनुक्रम पुर्ण ई-नियमों सूचना सं-10 / 2025-26 को इस हद तक संशोधित समझा जाय एवं नियमों के शेष तरीके सुनित होंगे।

(ई ० अधिकारी कुमार)

कार्यपालक अभियंता

क्षेत्र चंत्र प्रमंडल, भागलपुर

नशे की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार।

URBAN DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, NAGAR PARISHAD AURANGABAD

Invitation for Bids

Invite Re-Tender vide NIT No. 08/2025-26

The Executive Officer, Aurangabad Nagar Parishad, Bihar invites online Tender in two bid system (Eligibility and Financial) on Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Mode basis from eligible firms/contractors of repute for the following work:

Start of Bid/Downloading of RFP Document. From 25.07.2025 (10.00 AM) www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in

Last Date of Online Bid Submission 01-08-2025 Till 5.00 PM.

Pre-bid Meeting 24-07-2025 Till 12.00 PM. At Nagar Parishad office, Aurangabad

Period during which hard copies of documents shall be physically submitted. 04-08-2025 Till 1.00 PM At Nagar Parishad office, Aurangabad

Time & date of online opening of documents. (Mandatory documents) Technical bid 04-08-2025 Till 3.00 PM

Time & date of online opening of Financial bid After decision of Technical Bid.

Sl. No. Name of the Work Estimated Project Cost (In Rs.) Bid Security EMD (2%) (In Rs.) Cost of Bid Document (In Rs.) Plant Capacity (TPD)

Design, Build, construct, install, and commissioning of Waste to Compost Plant (W2C) 1. Plant of 30 TPD for fresh waste along with operation and maintenance of the plant for 5 years on EPC Mode.

Periods of Bids Validity 120 Days

The bid forms and other detail scan be seen & downloaded from the website portal https://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in.

• Document fee is mandatory to be paid through online mode i.e internet payment gateway (Credit/Debit Card), Net banking, NEFT /RTGS in favour of Executive officer Nagar Parishad Aurangabad.

• The RFP Maybe Postponed, modified or Cancelled at any time due to administrative reasons and No Claim shall be entertained on this account.

For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

Executive Officer

Aurangabad Nagar Parishad

PR-009083 (RCD) 2025-26

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यारा।



BIHAR STATE EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD

(A Govt. of Bihar Undertaking)

ShikshaBhawan, Bihar RastrabhashaParishad Campus, Acharya Shiv PujanSahai Path, Saipur, Patna-800004

Ph. -9431028206, E-Mail : bseidc@gmail.com

SHORT TERM APPOINTMENT NOTICE

Advt. No. 03/2025

The Bihar State Educational Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (BSEIDC), a State Govt. undertaking under Education Department Bihar invites application from the eligible persons for appointment for the following post:

S. No. Name of the Post Number of Post UR EBC SC BC EWS BC (W) ST Total Remuneration per Month Min. Qualification Eligibility

1	Company Secretary	1						As per Norms (Based on Experience)	Must have passed the Company Secretary ship exam I.C.S.I.	Must be an Associate Member of ICSI

General Instruction:

1. The appointment shall be strictly on contract basis for one year which may be renewed annually depending upon the satisfactory performance.

2. The upper age limit (as on 31.03.2025) for the post shall be 50 years (60 years in case of retired personnel).

3. A DD of Rs.600/- (Six hundred) as application fee (

SENSEX: 82,200.34 ▲ 442.61 (0.54%) NIFTY: 25,090.70 ▲ 122.30 (0.49%) NIKKEI: 39,819.11 ▼ 82.08 HANG SENG: 24,994.14 ▲ 168.48 FTSE: 8,984.74 ▼ 7.38 DAX: 24,253.84 ▼ 35.67

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market; gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) per barrel as of July 18

International market data till 1900 IST

Syria's continuing turmoil: al-Sharaa, Druze & Israel

Jihadist-turned-President Ahmed al-Sharaa wants to unify Syria after its 14-year civil war. But domestic and external pressures pose a significant challenge



BASHIR ALI ABBAS

OVER THE past week, clashes between Druze and Sunni Bedouin militias in southern Syria's Suweida Governorate have left more than a 1,000 people dead. They have also triggered Israeli intervention, in favour of the minority Druze, including an airstrike on Syria's Ministry of Defense in Damascus on Wednesday.

These developments underlie the complexity of the challenge facing Syria President Ahmed al-Sharaa: as he tries to pick the pieces of a bloody 14-year-long civil war, fissures within the Syrian body politic and external geopolitical pressures have put him in a very difficult situation.

Distrustful minorities

In his six months as President, Sharaa has

publicly presented a singular focus: the integration of Syria's various ethnic/sectarian factions under the new Syrian flag. This is crucial for Syria's reconstruction and economic revival.

But Sharaa's personal history – he was formerly an al-Qaeda leader and a designated US terrorist, and has been implicated in violence against Syrian minorities during the civil war – and inability/lack of intent to prevent sectarian violence has complicated this effort. Thus far, he has faced scrutiny on three fronts: the Alawites, the Kurds, and the Druze.

ALAWITES: Residing primarily along Syria's Mediterranean coast, Alawites are the country's largest ethnic minority who served as the former President Bashar al-Assad's principal support base. Alawite areas have been a staging ground for last-ditch armed efforts by pro-Assad militias.

Clashes with Syrian security forces in March led to the death of more than 1,500, mostly Alawite civilians and unarmed fighters. While Sharaa has promised an investigation, he has also repeatedly blamed the supporters of the former regime for the violence, and called them to disarm and surrender.

KURDS: Like their counterparts in Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, Syrian Kurds fiercely guard

their distinct ethnic identity. An (uncomfortable) *modus vivendi* with the Assad regime in 2012 gave them a semi-autonomous civil administration (Rojava) with an armed wing (Syrian Democratic Forces; SDF) in oil-rich northeastern Syria.

Sharaa has sought to bring the region under Damascus' direct control and maintained that the SDF needs to fully integrate itself with the Syrian Army. This led to daily clashes between the SDF and armed forces allied with Damascus till March, when the Kurds largely agreed to Sharaa's demands in exchange for specific protections.

But the failure of Syria's interim constitution to specifically guarantee Kurdish rights has been viewed as a betrayal: the Kurds demand a longer timeline to implement the March agreement as well as American and French oversight.

Israel, Syria & the Druze

Around 500,000 Druze live in Syria, mostly in the Suweida Governorate. This historically persecuted ethno-religious minority has rejected the interim constitution, which would see the disarmament of all Druze militias and the imposition of Damascus' rule on the semi-

autonomous Suweida Governorate.

But unlike the Alawites and the Kurds, Israel's interest in "protecting" the Druze represents a fundamentally different challenge to Damascus. Israel is the home of some 150,000 Druze; there is a vocal, highly integrated Druze community in the Jewish country which has, in recent months, constantly pushed for Israeli intervention against Sharaa's "imposition".

Israel itself sees the Druze as additional cover for its ongoing territorial expansion in southern Syria. Between December and July, Israel has repeatedly struck Syria in order to destroy its conventional military capabilities and expand its occupation of the Golan Heights. This, Israel says, is to ensure that hostile forces cannot use the region as a springboard for attacks on the country.

The recent clashes between Druze and Bedouin militias, the latter of whom Israel claims is backed by Damascus and Sharaa, only gave the Jewish nation further justification to intensify its attacks until a US-brokered ceasefire on July 19.

Despite Israeli aggression, Sharaa has refrained from taking an overly antagonistic position vis-à-vis its southern neighbour. In fact, Sharaa in May confirmed that Syria had been

indirectly negotiating with Israel "to pressure them to stop interfering in Syrian affairs."

Sharaa's conciliatory tone has as much to do with his country's incapability to take on the Middle East's predominant military power, as it has to do with his domestic priorities. That said, Israel itself has repeatedly undercut Sharaa's position.

In February, when Sharaa was convening the much-anticipated National Dialogue Conference with various tribal, ethnic and sectarian stakeholders, Benjamin Netanyahu declared that Israel "will not allow... the new Syrian Army to enter the area south of Damascus", promising "indefinite" Israeli presence in the demilitarised buffer zone – a direct challenge to Syria's sovereignty. The very same month, Netanyahu asserted that Israel will "not tolerate any threat to the Druze community in southern Syria".

What this means

Syria's Arab neighbours and Turkey have supported Sharaa's attempts at rebuilding Syria. Gulf states have repaid Syria's \$15.5 million debt to the World Bank, successfully convinced the Trump administration to lift American sanctions on Syria, and have com-

mitted vast sums of money for Syria's reconstruction.

This is fuelled both by their common interests in preventing an Iranian resurgence in the region – another factor that has driven Sharaa to negotiate with Israel – and a hope for a more stable neighbourhood.

Israel's independent interests in Syria, however, hinder this regional effort and create what scholars call a "broken windows" effect: instability and violence in one part of Syria risks further instability elsewhere.

Broadly, strong ethnic and sectarian tensions continue to tug at Syria's peripheries while its political core in Damascus struggles with enforcing national unity. In the south specifically, Israel's military actions have supplemented Sharaa's pre-existing challenges.

For the time being, it remains in Sharaa's continued interest to seek peace with Tel Aviv, leveraging Arab and Turkish support.

However, the more pressure Israel exerts externally, the more Sharaa's position is weakened internally, spelling more instability for Syria, and the whole region.

Bashir Ali Abbas is a Senior Research Associate at the Council for Strategic and Defense Research, New Delhi

EXPLAINED GLOBAL

MORE TROOPS & AIR POWER: WHY RUSSIA IS GAINING GROUND IN UKRAINE



Russia has advanced around Kostyantynivka and Sumy. *The NYT*

RUSSIA'S SUMMER offensive in Ukraine is gaining ground as its forces attack on multiple fronts.

In June, the country's numerical advantages in troops and air power produced its biggest monthly gains in territory since the beginning of the year.

The ground war

Over the past two months, Russian units have been able to step up their attacks on multiple fronts, from Ukraine's Sumy region in the north to the steppes of Zaporizhzhia in the south.

Russia now controls more than two-thirds of Ukraine's Donetsk region – the main theater of the ground war. Russian forces have carved out a 10-mile-deep pocket around the Ukrainian troops defending the crucial city of Kostyantynivka.

Russia has also entered the Dniproetrovsk region of eastern Ukraine.

Ukrainian soldiers say the Russian army uses two main tactics to advance on the battlefield: pinning down Ukrainian troops with drones, shells, and glide bombs before attacking enemy lines with relentless squad assaults.

Ukraine responds by sending experienced, drone-equipped units to help plug the gaps.

But Russia's relentless attacks are placing a strain on Ukraine's outmanned army.

According to Deep State, a Ukrainian group that maps the conflict using drone footage and its links with the Ukrainian military, Russia gained more than 214 square miles of Ukrainian territory in June, up from 173 square miles in May.

The air war

Russia has been increasing the toll it in-

flicts on the Ukrainian population at large by pummeling the country with mass-produced exploding drones. Over the past weeks, Russia has been setting records on the number of drones it sends into Ukraine. This month, Russia launched 728 exploding drones and decoys. As Russia builds up its drone-making infrastructure, military analysts expect Moscow to routinely launch more than 1,000 drones per volley by autumn.

The Russian barrages also include cruise missiles and ballistic missiles. Ukraine has a variety of air-defense systems but the ballistic missiles can be shot down by only one air-defense system in Ukraine's arsenal: American Patriot missiles.

On July 13, US President Donald Trump said he would send these missiles to Ukraine to help the country defend itself.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

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**OFFICE OF THE DY.COMMISSIONER OF POLICE,
SOUTH EAST DISTRICT, SARITA VIHAR, DELHI-110076.**
Telephone No. 011-26825544, Email : dcpsd@gmail.com

PROCLAMATION U/S 67 D.P. Act 1978

The vehicles and articles as per below mentioned details have been seized u/s 66 D.P. Act 1978 by the Police Stations of South East District, New Delhi. Now, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me by the Commissioner of Police, Delhi as envisaged vide section 67(1) of Delhi Police Act-1978, vehicles and articles mentioned in below list are notified for the information of the general public through this proclamation. Any person who may have a claim there to, may appear before the concerned ACP/Sub Division of South East District, New Delhi along with proof of the ownership to establish his claim within six months of issue of this proclamation.

LIST OF UNCLAIMED VEHICLES SEIZED U/S 66 D.P ACT

S. NO.	DD NO. & DATED	REGN. NO.	MAKE OF VEHICLE
POLICE STATION SUN LIGHT COLONY			
1.	33 B, 11/02/14	MN05B7220	HONDA CBR WHITE & RED COLOR
2.	35 B, 01/04/18	DL3SD97477	SUZUKI GIXXER WHITE & BLUE COLOR
3.	11 B, 28/05/16	UK07A04843	BAJAJ PULSAR BLACK COLOR
4.	54 B, 08/09/16	DL7SAJ7839	YAMAHA FZS RED & WHITE COLOR
5.	11 A, 26/12/21	UP16DA8043	HERO SPLENDER + BLACK COLOR
6.	36 A, 02/04/20	DL3SAY1796	BAJAJ DISCOVER BLACK & BLUE COLOR
7.	102 A, 14/10/22	DL3SDB1899	HONDA SHINE BLACK COLOR
8.	34 A, 01/04/22	HR01M4877	LML SCOOTER SILVER COLOR
9.	54 B, 27/02/18	DL3SAH9953	M/C YAMAHA RED COLOR
10.	37 A, 01/04/20	DL13SH9233	YAMAHA RED COLOR M/C
11.	45 B, 17/03/18	DL14SH3720	HERO SPLENDER, I SMART RED SILVER COLOR
12.	37 B, 18/07/18	DL8NDN9035	TVS WEGO WHITE SCOOTY
13.	45 PP, 27/02/18	DL8SB8194	YAMAHA R15 WHITE RED COLOR
14.	48 A, 05/10/18	DL2S01724	TVS JUPITER
15.	6 B, 29/05/18	DL3SD-2280	HONDA ACTIVA SCOOTY
16.	47 B, 08/12/17	DL7SBX2312	HERO PASSION XPRO BLACK COLOR
17.	54 B, 27/02/18	DL7S8B2425	HONDA AVIATOR BLACK
18.	33 B, 11/07/18	DL8SAE4959	HONDA ETERNO SCOOTER BLACK TVS STAR M/C BLACK & BLUE COLOR
19.	57 B, 30/03/18	UP14AQ8771	HERO ETERNO SILVER COLOR
20.	51 B, 30/05/18	DL756984	HONDA ETERNO SILVER
21.	36/22/21, 31/07/21	DL3SCB8827	HERO HONDA SPLENDER + RED
22.	36 PP, 05/05/16	DL3SBK1694	BAJAJ PULSAR 180 BLACK SPLENDER +
23.	41, 29/06/18	UP1D0F2996	HERO SPLENDER +
24.	95 A, 02/04/22	DL5SAE5397	BAJAJ DISCOVER RED BLACK COLOR
25.	45 B, 09/12/17	UK08AF3354	HONDA CB TWISTER M/C BLACK COLOR
26.	34 B, 15/11/11	DL4SK5785	SUZUKI M/C RED COLOR
27.	23 PP, 24/10/17	DL14PS0394	HONDA SHINE BLACK COLOR
28.	69 B, 11/05/18	UP14CC3228	BAJAJ PLATINA BLACK COLOR
29.	69 B, 01/03/18	DL3S8B8172	BAJAJ PULSAR BLACK COLOR
30.	61 B, 27/06/16	DL10SR0859	PULSAR RED COLOR
31.	71 B, 18/06/18	DL7SAM1499	HERO HONDA CD 100 BLACK
32.	11 B, 28/05/16	DL3SB8406	TVS SCOOTY PINK COLOR
33.	33 B, 12/08/18	HR26AU5823	HERO HONDA CD DELUXE BLACK
34.	51 B, 09/04/18	HR26AT5579	PASSION PLUS SILVER COLOR
35.	33 B, 05/07/18	DL3SBX5157	SCOOTY WHITE
36.	44 B, 12/07/18	DL6SM3744	HONDA SHINE BLACK COLOR (UNICORN BLACK)
37.	50, 17/03/18	HR51N8430	LML FREEDOM M/C BLACK
38.	36 B, 28/06/18	DL9SAM1537	AVIATOR SCOOTY WHITE
39.	27 PP, 10/05/16	DL7SBAS5081	BAJAJ XCD GREY COLOR
40.	28 PP, 10/03/18	DL4SCB3159	PASSION PRO BLACK
41.	44 B, 06/02/16	DL3SBN8750	PASSION PRO BLACK COLOR
42.	10 PP, 02/05/15	DL5SAL7977	PASSION PRO BLACK
43.	36 A, 18/09/19	DL9SAH1593	PLEASURE SCOOTY PURPLE COLOR
44.	55 B, 20/02/18	DL3SCC2817	BAJAJ PULSAR BLACK
45.	36 PP, 09/08/17	DL3DQJ8205	HERO HONDA SPLENDER
46.	61 B, 19/06/18	DL3SX9082	SCOOTER BAJAJ
47.	44 PP, 23/05/16	DL9SDAD3496	HERO HONDA CD 100
48.	54 B, 08/12/17	DL3CN0940	ACTIVA SCOOTY WHITE COLOR
49.	63 B, 04/07/18	DL3CY2552	HERO MAESTRO WHITE SCOOTY
50.	66 B, 18/06/18	DL3SDC5470	HERO SPLENDER NXG RED SILVER
51.	57 B, 12/04/18	DL3SDT4803	PASSION PRO RED COLOR
52.	42 B, 18/06/18	DL4SB-3352	M/C TVS FLAME BLACK
53.	47 B, 18/07/18	DL3SAV7331	HERO GLAMOR
54.	5 B, 22/12/17	DL3CH3966	PULSAR RED COLOR
55.	35 B, 28/07/17	DL3SAY7293	BAJAJ DISCOVER
56.	10 B, 25/05/16	DL3CGC8220	SPLENDER M/C
57.	72 B, 25/02/16	DL6ST4998	HONDA ACTIVA SCOOTY GRAY COLOR
58.	59 B, 29/12/17	DL2SN6928	SCOOTY RED COLOR
59.	36 A, 14/01/19	DL7SPL7123	BAJAJ XCD RED COLOR
60.	32 PP, 14/02/18	HR19C8168	HERO HONDA SPLENDER BLACK COLOR
61.	22 PP, 02/03/18	DL11SD6258	ACTIVA SCOOTY WHITE COLOR
62.	20 PP, 04/07/18	(HR29P7942)	KARIZMA HERO HONDA YELLOW COLOR (HR29P7942)
63.	16 PP, 23/12/17	DL8SBX7902	TVS JUPITER GREY COLOR
64.	15 PP, 14/02/15	DL4CH3246	MARUTI 800 WHITE COLOR CAR
65.	72 B, 27/12/16	DL7CA8613	SANTRO GREY OLD CAR
66.	33, 09/07/14	UP16T0449	TATA INDICA CAR
67.	33, 09/07/14	DL8CR2546	MARUTI 800 WHITE WITHOUT TYRE CAR
68.	27 PP, 24/09/15	DL3CAP2062	SANTRO CAR
69.	51 B, 31/10/17	DL1CL2810	ZEN CAR RED COLOR
70.	108 A, 29/01/25	DL3SBS7884	YAMAHA FZ
71.	19 A, 31/03/25	DL7SAC1761	BAJAJ PULSAR RED COLOR 200 CC
72.	21 A, 03/05/25	DL3DE0919	SCOOTY ACTIVA
73.	99 A, 11/05/25	DL1C13484	CAR
74.	10, 07/06/25	DL3SF5597	SCOOTY ACTIVA
75.	92, 06/10/24	PB02D7X318	M/C HERO DELUXE
76.	55, 15/09/24	DL3SPB1512	YAMAHA FZ M/C

S. MUD NO. DD NO. & DATED ARTICLES SEIZED

S. NO.	DD NO. & DATED	ARTICLES SEIZED
1.	287/11 40 B DT,02/09/11	CASH RS. 1500/-
2.	554/13 15 A DT, 12/11/13	01 MOBILE PHONE BLACK BERRY
3.	44/15 13 B DT, 07/02/15	LAPTOP COMPAD BLACK & PRINTER HP WHITE COLOR
4.	110/16 10 B DT, 01/03/16	01 MOBILE PHONE FORME WITH AIRTEL SIM
5.	118/18 61 B DT, 27/02/18	BAG (RED COLOUR AMERICAN TOURISTER WITH CLOTHES AND OTHER ARTICLES)
6.	499/23 59 A DT, 11/11/23	FRUIT PLASTIC TREY
7.	122/23 33 A DT, 23/03/23	FAWDA, TASLA, FATTI, KARNGI, SUT (04 IRON PIECES BLUE COLOR LENGTH 18-20 FEET, ONE LONG IRON ANGLE BLUE COLOR LENGTH 25-30 FEET)
8.	222/24 16 A DT, 06/05/24	
9.	23/25 85 A DT, 11/01/25	SPEAKER
10.	35/25 15 A DT, 17/01/25	SPEAKER SMALL 2
11.	50/25 03 A DT, 22/01/25	MOBILE PHONE
12.	65/25 99/0A DT, 28/01/25	SPEAKER 2
13.	69/25 03 A DT, 31/01/25	SPEAKER
14.	80/25 04 A DT, 04/02/25	BLUE COLOR SPEAKER PORTRONICS
15.	107/25 93 A DT, 19/02/25	SPEAKER MULTIMEDIA
16.	132/25 02 A DT, 01/03/25	SPEAKER BLACK COLOR EDIFIE 10
17.	284/25 29 A DT, 10/05/25	SPEAKER BRAND SHIVANI CUBE 28 NS AMPLIFIER MIKE

S. DD NO. & DATED REGN. NO. MAKE OF VEHICLE

S. NO.	DD NO. & DATED	REGN. NO.	MAKE OF VEHICLE
POLICE STATION HAZRAT NIZAMUDDIN			
1.	5A, DT-07.01.24	HR35K1804	SCOOTY
2.	61A, DT-13.4.24	DL9SBW1246	M/CYCLE
3.	6A, DT-07.04.24	UP16A8052	M/CYCLE
4.	77A, DT-04.06.24	DL55A29237	SCOOTY
5.	55A, DT-29.06.24	DL3SDR8374	SCOOTY
6.	72A, DT-08.12.23	GJ06NH3497	SCOOTY
7.	28A, DT-26.06.21	DL3SBE4670	M/CYCLE

POLICE STATION PUL PRAHALDPUR

1.	73A, DT-06.08.22	HR41BH8292	APACHE
2.	82A, DT-16.08.24	DL3SC6E507	BAJAJ PULSAR
3.	57A, DT-22.08.24	DL3SDC3229	TVS APACHE
4.	52A, DT-25.08.23	W/NP	TVS JUPITER SALETI COLOUR
5.	50A, DT-03.01.22	DL3SE0984	HERO SPLENDER PLUS
6.	34A, DT-20.09.22	DL3SAT3214	HERO SPLENDER PLUS
7.	27A, DT-26.09.22	DL3SCB6594	HERO SPLENDER PLUS
8.	62A, DT-19.08.21	DL3SAV2937	HERO GLAMOUR
9.	63A, DT-22.02.21	DL10SC7946	BAJAJ PULSAR
10.	26A, DT		

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Vanita Mittal W/o Vinod Kumar Mittal R/o 18 pocket 4 and 5 Sector 23 Rohini changed my name to Santosh for all future reference.

0050270541-1

It is hereby unanimously informed that Devansh Pandey son of Manish Kumar Pandey address- 24A, shri Ram Kunj, Farid nagar, Indira Nagar, Lucknow 226015 will henceforth be known and recognized as Agastya Pandey.

0040800831-2

I, hitherto known as ROOPESH KUMAR E.N.S/o Neelakandapillai R/o Thacholickal, Manjor, Kothanallur, PO-Kothanallur, Distt-Kottayam (Kerala-686632) have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as E.N. ROOPESH KUMAR.

0040800708-1

I, hitherto known as MANGE RAM S/O-DHJAJA RAM, residing at- House.no.48/24, DEV-NAGAR, Sonipat, Haryana-131001, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MANGE RAM GOEL.

0040800813-4

I, Vishal Singh Kandhari, S/o- Sardool Singh, House No-1/47, Gali No-1, Nirankari Colony, Dr. Mukherjee-Nagar Delhi-110009, have changed my name to Vishal Kandhari.

0040800809-2

I, mohammad saiyad S/o Sabir Hussain, R/o 1103, Janta-Flats G.T.B. Enclave, Nand nagri, Delhi-110093, changed my name to SHOAIB AHMAD

0040800809-1

I, TENZIN TSUNDU PHUNKHANG S/o Mr. JIGME KUNGA PHUNKHANG, R/o Dawa Dolma, Camp. No.03, House. No.47, Mundgod, PO: Tibetan Colony, Distt.Uttara Kannada, Karnataka-581411, have changed my name from TENZIN TSUNDU PHUNKHANG to TENZIN TSUNDU PHUNKHANG, for all future purposes.

0040800813-9

I, TAJINDER PAL SINGH, S/O HARPAL SINGH BAJAJ R/O-H.NO.-64,Vikas Puri West Delhi-110018,have changed my name to TAJINDER PAL SINGH BAJAJ.

0040800836-5

I, NITIN NANDAL, S/O ASHOK RESIDENT 1535,MELWAN PAN, VPO-BOHAR, DISTRICT-ROHTAK, HARYANA HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NITIN.

0040800813-5

I, Savita D/o Aman Prakash, R/o-B-675, Sector-1, Avantika,Rohini, New Delhi-110085,have changed my name to Savita Vats.

0040800810-3

I, Savita D/o Karan Singh Chauhan R/o-B-58, Sector-50, Noida(U.P) have changed my name to Savita Chauhan for all future purposes.

0040800708-2

I, Sanju Kumari W/o Satish Kumar R/o-A-42, Shastri Nagar Delhi-110052,have changed my name to Sanju for all purposes.

0040800808-7

I, Sanjiv Kumar, S/o Ram Rang, R/o-E-304 and E-305,Flat No.03, First-Floor,New Ashok-Nagar, Delhi-110096,have changed my name to Sanjeev Kumar,for all purposes.

0040800813-3

I, Salman,S/o Rahat Ali Khan, R/o-R-304,Second Floor, Gali No.14, Ramesh Park,Laxmi-Nagar, East Delhi-110092,have changed my name to Salman Khan.

0040800836-2

I, SHASHIKALA JAKHAR,D/O-JAGJEET SINGH JAKHAR,R/O HOUSE-NO-6,GUPTA COLONY,C-1 EXTENSION,PALAM VIHAR,GURGAON, HARYANA-122001,have changed my name from SHASHIKALA JAKHAR to SHASHIKALA JAKHAR,,for all,future purposes.

0040800813-1

I, SAHIBA KAUR KOHLI W/O MANMEET SINGH REKHI R/O-202, SAINIK VIHAR, PITAMPURA, DELHI-110034, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SAHIBA KAUR.

0040800808-5

I, Roshan Khan,W/O-Mohammad Tanveer Alam, R/O/F-433, Gali No-15,Chand Bagh Karawal Delhi-110094,Have Change My Name Roushan Khan To Hamida Khatoon,All Future,purposes. 0040800809-9

I, Rinshu Goel W/o-Prateek Goel R/o A-150,A-Block, Majilish Park, Adarsh Nagar,North West,Delhi -110023,have changed my name to Rinshu Gupta.

0040800810-4

I, Rehan S/o Rahat Ali Khan, R/o 282, Krishna Street,Chhota Bazar, Kashmire Gate,Delhi-110006,have changed my name to Rehan Khan.

0040800836-1

I, hitherto known as Rekha Rani D/o Late Mukesh Pal Singh, residing at-A-89, UG-2, DLF Dilshad Ext.-2, Bhopura, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh201005, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Rekha Raghav.

0040800752-1

I, Waqar Hussain S/O, Ishtiyaq Hussain R/o Plot No-30, T.F Ravi Nagar Near Chand Nagar, Tilak Nagar New Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Waqar Hussain.

0040800763-1

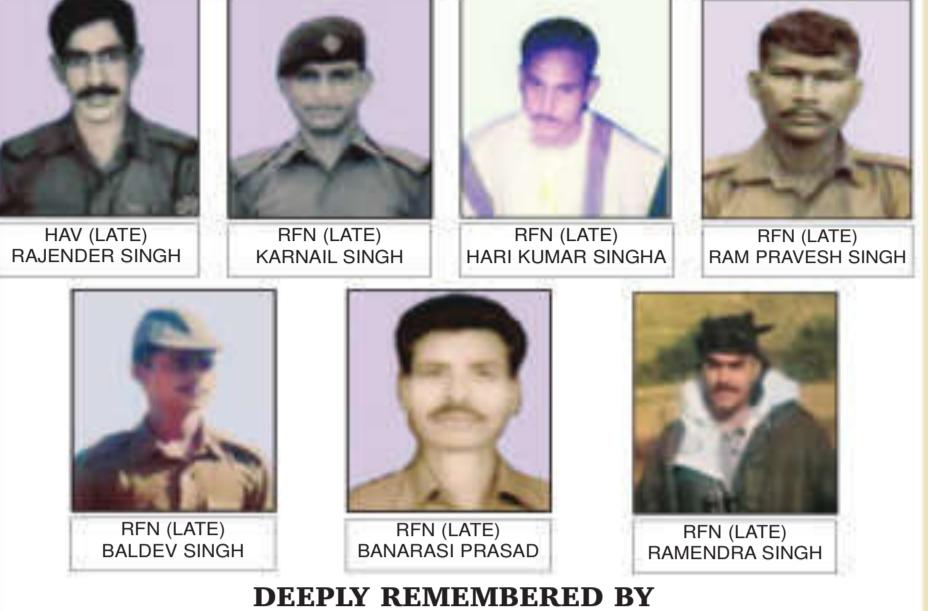
I, Sandhya Verma W/o Varun Verma R/o WZ-130/A-1, Naraina Village, New Delhi-110028 have changed my name to Sandhya Verma for all purposes.

0040800698-3

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

23 ASSAM RIFLES

The Tagra Teyees family proudly remembers its Bravehearts who in the true traditions of the Assam Rifles made supreme sacrifice while bravely combating terrorists in Punjab, Doda District, (J&K) on 22 Jul 1995. May the Almighty grant eternal peace to the souls of under mentioned martyrs. Their gallant action will continue to inspire us all :-



DEEPLY REMEMBERED BY COMMANDANT & ALL RANKS 23 ASSAM RIFLES 'TAGRA TEYEES'

BORDER SECURITY FORCE HEAD CONSTABLE BHANWAR SINGH 16.11.1967 -22.07.2008
Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Head Constable Bhanwar Singh on his Balidan Diwas. on this day, he sustained fatal injuries while fighting with militants in area of FDL Pt. 9813, Mandir Mandi, J&K and later succumbed to his injuries.

CONSTABLE/TRADESMEN ANIL KUMAR 11.02.1979 -22.07.2006
Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Constable/Tradesmen Anil Kumar on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he sustained fatal injuries in a grenade blast while fighting with militants in Sopore area, J&K and later succumbed to his injuries at 92 base hospital.

INDO-TIBETAN BORDER POLICE
ITBP salutes its braveheart Head Constable Madan Lal of 25th Battalion, who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty fighting bravely with the militants on this day (J&K) in 2004.

Resident of : Vill.- Yol Jharer, Distt.- Kangra (Himachal Pradesh)

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE

Veer Balidani Assistant Commandant Shri Vinod Kumar Yadav 40 Bn.	Veer Balidani Constable/ Bugler Khem Singh 40 Bn.	Veer Balidani Constable/ Driver Rajbir Singh 40 Bn.
19-6-1968 To 22-7-2001	15-6-1965 To 22-7-2001	

On 22 July 2001, troops of 40 Battalion CRPF were moving from Lumding (Naogaon) to Haflong (NC Hills) to shift stores. Near village Lasse, the convoy was ambushed by insurgents from a vantage point in the hilly terrain. The troops swiftly de-boarded and launched a counterattack. A fierce gunfight ensued, and despite the disadvantage, the brave troopers forced the insurgents to flee. In the action, Asst. Comdt. Shri Vinod Kumar Yadav, Constable/ Bugler Khem Singh, and Constable/ Driver Rajbir Singh made the supreme sacrifice while valiantly charging at the enemy. The nation will forever remain indebted to them and their families.

On 22 July 2003, troops of 121 Battalion of CRPF along with state police, launched an operation against Maoists. As the forces advanced, Maoists entrenched on a hilltop opened fire. The troops swiftly took positions and launched a counter-attack. Leading from the front, Sub Inspector Baishakha Singh sustained severe injuries but continued to inspire his men, forcing the Maoists to flee. He was later evacuated but succumbed to his injuries. His courage, leadership, and sacrifice remain etched in the nation's memory.

**Veer Balidani
Sub Inspector
Baishakha
Singh
121 Bn.**

71 Battalion of CRPF was deployed in Imphal, Manipur for counterinsurgency operations. On 22 July 1995, while proceeding in two vehicles to lay a Naka at Moirang Kampu (Imphal East), the rear vehicle came under heavy automatic fire after crossing Kongpal bridge. The troops immediately retaliated, and a fierce encounter followed. Despite sustaining serious injuries, Head Constable Gulab Chand continued to fire and support his fellow troopers. He was evacuated to the Hospital, where he later succumbed to his injuries. His courage and sacrifice remain etched in the proud legacy of the Force.

**Veer Balidani
Head
Constable
Gulab Chand
71 Bn.**

On 18 July 1992, while on an area domination patrol in Doda district, troops of 98 Battalion of CRPF were ambushed by militants who opened indiscriminate fire from a dense jungle. The troops retaliated swiftly and advanced with courage, forcing the militants to flee. Leading from the front, Head Constable Vijay Shankar Rai and Constable T. Ravi sustained grievous injuries while charging at the attackers. Head Constable Rai succumbed the same day, and Constable Ravi attained martyrdom on 22 July. Their supreme sacrifice remains etched in the Force's legacy of valour.

35 Battalion was deployed in Sri Lanka as part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to aid the war-torn nation. On 22 July 1988, while on duty, a bomb blast struck the vehicle in which Constable R. S. Besak Rao was travelling. He made the supreme sacrifice in service of a cause the Nation stood for.

**Veer Balidani
Constable
R. S. Besak
Rao
35 Bn.**

Constable Om Prakash was posted with 1st Battalion, CRPF, then deployed in the region of present-day Manipur (then part of Assam) for law and order duties and countering underground militant activity. On 18 July 1968, while travelling to Imphal in a CRPF vehicle as part of an Army convoy, the party was ambushed five miles short of Kangpokpi. The troops retaliated with heavy fire, forcing the hostiles to retreat, and successfully broke the ambush, proceeding to village Hengbung. Three personnel, including Constable Om Prakash, were injured. He was shifted to the Hospital with serious wounds and succumbed to his injuries on 22 July 1968.

**Veer Balidani
Constable
Om Prakash
1 Bn.**

7-12-1947 To
22-7-1968

For details, please visit the website of MSTC i.e. www.mstecommerce.com.

OIPR-30005/11/0225/2526 Chief General Manager S&M

ODISHA MINING CORPORATION LIMITED OMC House, Bhubaneswar-751001, Odisha CIN: U13100OR1956SGC000313, www.omcltd.in

Short Notice

For Sale of High Carbon Ferrochrome (HCFC)

The Odisha Mining Corporation Ltd. intends to sell various grades of High Carbon Ferrochrome (HCFC) produced at Ferro chrome plant, OMC Ltd. situated at Jajpur Road in Jajpur District of Odisha through National e-auction. The e-auction will be conducted by MSTC Ltd. on dt.25.07.2025 from 11.00 AM to 2.00 PM.

For details, please visit the website of MSTC i.e. www.mstecommerce.com.

OIPR-30005/11/0225/2526 Chief General Manager S&M

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, PURNEA

Line Bazar Purnea – 854301 (Bihar)
(An Institution of Govt. of Bihar)
write us : govt.mcprunea@gmail.com, Visit us : [https://gmcprunea.com](http://gmcprunea.com)
-मेडिकल एवं पारा मेडिकल हेतु प्रस्तक एवं जनरल क्राय निविदा सूचना:-
Letter No. 951

भारतीय चिकित्सा परिषद, नई दिल्ली के मापदण्ड को पूर्ण करने हेतु राजकीय चिकित्सा महाविद्यालय, पूर्णियों के केंद्रीय पुस्तकालय एवं विभागीय पुस्तकालय के लिए वित्तीय वर्ष 2025-26 में मेडिकल एवं पारा मेडिकल पुस्तकों नवीनतम एवं मूल संकरण, विभिन्न विषयों/विशेषाताओं के जर्नल (राष्ट्रीय एवं अंतर्राष्ट्रीय) की आपूर्ति करने हेतु प्रकाशकों प्राप्तिकृत प्रकाशकों अथवा अधिकृत विक्रेताओं जो FPBAI नई दिल्ली के मापदण्डों के शर्तों को पूरा करते हैं एवं जीओआरसी के द्वारा पुस्तकों/जर्नलों की आपूर्ति के प्राधिकृत एजेंट्स हो वे निम्न शर्त और स्थिति (Terms and Condition) के साथ निविदा के प्रथम प्रकाशन की तिथि से 21 दिनों के अंदर मुहरबंद लिफाके में निविदित डाक/स्पीड पोस्ट द्वारा निविदा समर्पित करेंगे। 21 वें दिन अगर किसी प्रकाशक का अवकाश रहता है या किसी अपरिहार्य कारण से प्राचार्य कार्यालय बद रहता है तो उससे अगले दिन तक निविदा प्राप्त की जायेगी। निविदा प्राप्त होने की अंतिम तिथि के अगले दिन अपराह्न 1:00 बजे क्रय समिति के समक्ष तकनीकी निविदा खोली जायेगी। जिसमें निविदादाता या उनके प्राधिकृत प्रतिनिधि उपस्थित रह सकते हैं।

► निविदा प्राप्त प्राप्त करने हेतु राजकीय चिकित्सा महाविद्यालय, पूर्णियों के कार्यालय कार्यालय में उपस्थित होकर निविदा विप्रत्र शुक्र रात्रि 5,000/- मो (पाँच हजार) रुपये मात्र नगद जमा कर निविदा की नियम शर्तों प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। जिसकी पावती रसीद निविदादाता को निविदा के साथ संलग्न करना अनिवार्य होगा।

निविदा प्रकाशन की प्रथम तिथि-21 / 07 / 2025

निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि-11 / 08 / 2025

For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar
PR-00900 (Health)-2025-26

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार



OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR

(At/Po- Ambapua, Near Income Tax office, Berhampur-760011, Ganjam, Odisha)
O-461 (E-Mail) :- serwbpr2004@yahoo.com, Tel No.: 0680-2404287

NOTICE

FOR PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH "e"-Procurement
Bid identification No. Online Tender/12-2025-26/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 02 (Two) number of packages with estimated cost totalling to **Rs 3.01 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. 25.07.2025**

Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission: The bid document is available online and should be submitted online in www.pmgstybidders.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 as per provisions of Clause 4.4 B (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: 08.08.2025 upto 5.30 P.M.

For further details and corrigendum (if any) please log on to www.pmgstybidders.gov.in.

Chief Construction Engineer
R.W.Circle, Berhampur
OIPR-25071/11/0105/2526

समाहरणालय, रोहतास (सासाराम)

(मद्य निषेध एवं उत्पाद विभाग)
अल्पकालीन नीलामी सूचना

एतद् द्वारा सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि विहार मद्य निषेध और उत्पाद अधिनियम 2016 की घरा 58 के अन्वर्ग रोहतास जिले के विभिन्न पुस्तिस थाना काली एवं मद्य निषेध विभाग, रोहतास द्वारा उत्पाद वारों में जारी एवं अधिवरित वाहनों की नीलामी खुले ताक द्वारा जो है, जाहीं है, जोसा है उसी स्वरूप में जो आवार पर जिले के दोनों अनुमष्ठल पराविधिकारी की अधिकाता में गठित समिति के द्वारा अनुमष्ठल मुख्यालय में निर्माणित तिथियों को नीलामी की जायेगी।

क्रमांक	वाहनों की सूची क्रमांक	नीलामी का स्थान	प्रथम नीलामी की तिथि	द्वितीय नीलामी की तिथि
1	क्रमांक 01 से 01 तक	अनुमष्ठल कार्यालय, सासाराम।	28.07.2025	04.08.2025
2	क्रमांक 02 से 02 तक	अनुमष्ठल कार्यालय, विकासगंग।	30.07.2025	06.08.2025

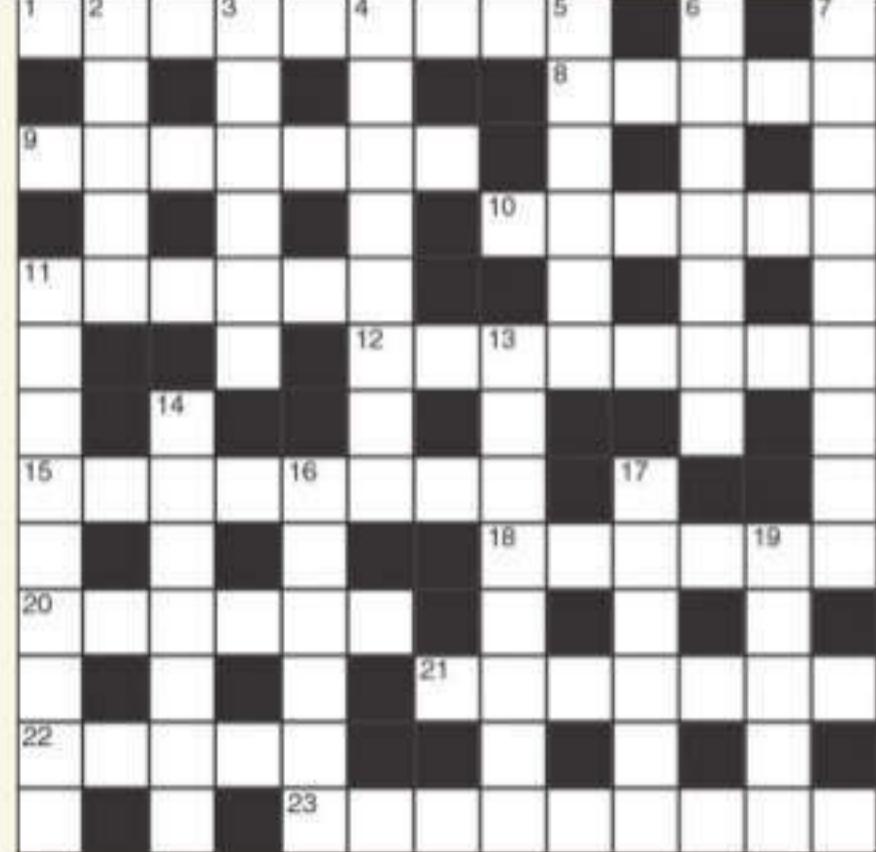
सभी इच्छुक व्यक्तियों से अनुरोध है कि निर्माणित शर्तों के अधीन नीलामी में भाग लेने का काट करें।

सासाराम अनुमष्ठल

क्रमांक	तरिका	विवरण	वाहन संख्या का स्थान	वाहन संख्या की जायेगी	वाहन संख्या का अनुमष्ठल
1	वाहन	03/24 49/24	DL458N025 M02DSN1ZRC14468 JNGBRE46945	5500	550
2	वाहन	37/34 36/33	JL85C7954 MFRG41310002956 G31930129585	315	scrap

अधिक जानकारी के लिए रोहतास जिले के वेबसाइट www.rohtas.bih.nic.in पर तथा सहायक आयुक्त मद्य निषेध कार्यालय, रोहतास, सासाराम/सदर, अनुमष्ठल कार्यालय, सासाराम/अनुमष्ठल कार्यालय, विकासगंज से जानकारी प्र

CROSSWORD 5734



ACROSS

- 1 Right servant to start work (5,4)
8 Pearl's mother seen in northern area (5)
9 Friend failed to speak - he could tell you a lot (7)
10 In which the early bird lies awaiting the worm? (6)
11 No care provided for the eye membrane (6)
12 Loaded pistol report? (8)
13 It doesn't hurt when father's away from home more (8)
14 It's so lethargic - prod it to move (6)
20 Not much of a press perhaps (6)
21 Turn or intend to turn Communist (7)
22 Flier trained to kill? (5)
23 Their charges will be small (9)

Solutions Crossword 5733 Across: 1 Endless, 4 Satin, 7 Done, 8 Pavement, 10 Double beds, 12 Rocco, 13 Divine, 15 Impenitent, 18 Brougham, 19 Kirk, 20 Ethic, 21 Thicker Down; 1 Ended, 2 Denounce, 3 Shabby, 4 Speed limit, 5 Tied, 6 Notable, 9 Black magic, 11 Limerick, 12 Risible, 14 Recant, 16 Token, 17 Noah

JUMBLE WORDS

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 quip.

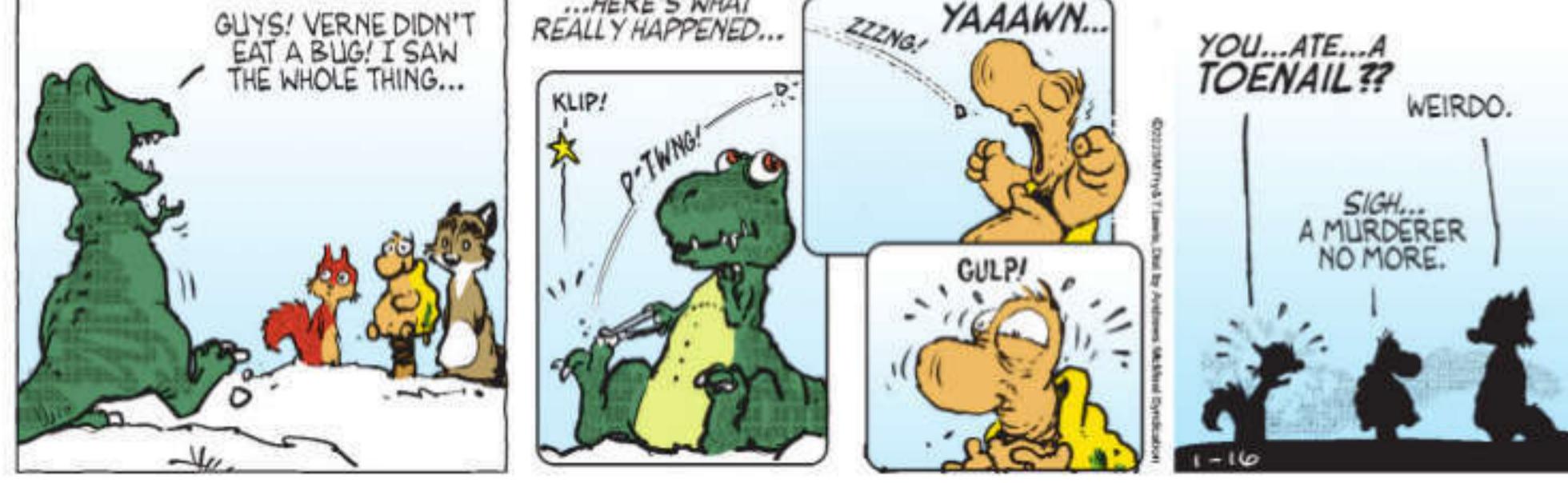
To err is ____ to forgive, ____ - Alexander Pope (5,...,6)

ALKIE RDAMUA

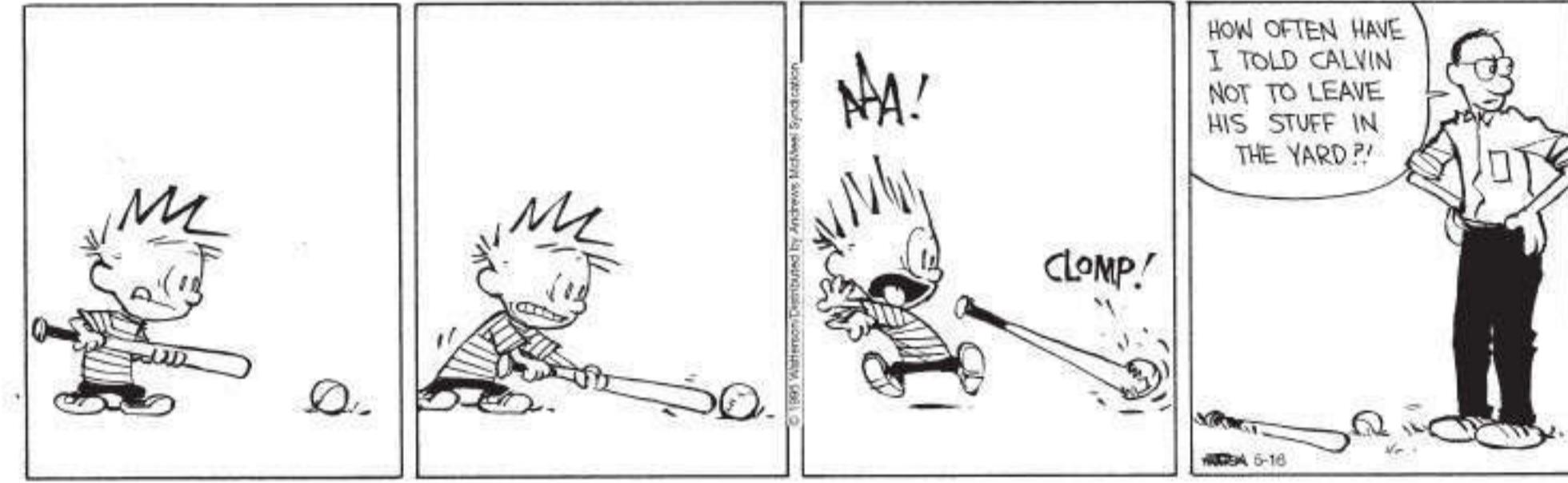
INNNY NASHIV

Answer: ALICE NINNY MARIAUD - VINCENT - Alexander Pope

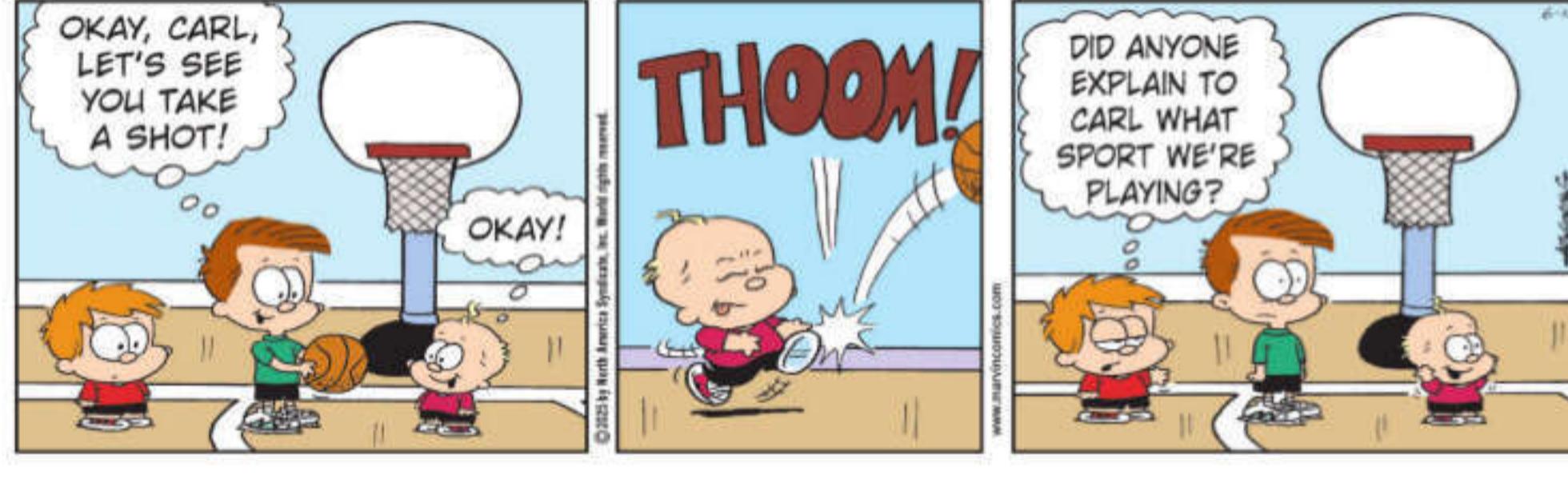
OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



Difficulty Level 1s

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 6022

PUBLIC NOTICE
GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA
EXCISE & TAXATION
DEPARTMENTNOTICE FOR INVITING e-TENDERS FROM GENERAL PUBLIC
FOR ALLOTMENT OF REMAINING RETAIL LIQUOR ZONES IN
SIX (06) DISTRICTS IN THE STATE OF HARYANA FOR THE
EXCISE POLICY YEAR 2025-27.

1. It is notified for the information of general public that e-tenders for allotment of ten (10) retail liquor zones of country liquor and Indian Made Foreign Liquor (L-2/L-14A) in 06 districts in the State of Haryana are hereby invited for the excise policy year 2025-27. The district wise detail of zones available for e-bidding is as under:-

Sr. No.	District	Zone Code
1	Gurugram (East)	ZGRE16
2	ZGRE35	ZGRE37
3	Gurugram (West)	ZGRW12
4	Jagadhari	ZJAG36
5	Kaithal	ZKTL30
6	Narnaul	ZNNL09
7	Panchkula	ZPKL09
8		ZPKL20

The schedule for submission of e-bids for these zones and evaluation thereof shall be as under:-

Gurugram (East), Starting date and time for submission of e-tenders	From 23rd July, 2025 (9:00 A.M.)
Gurugram (West), Jagadhari, Closing date and time for submission of e-tenders	Till 23rd July, 2025 (4:00 P.M.)
Panchkula, Kaithal, Evaluation of e-tenders	23rd July, 2025 (5:00 P.M.)

2. The reserve price and quota of these ten (10) zones for the purpose of e-tendering have been decided as per the provisions of clause 2.16 and other relevant provisions of the Haryana Excise Policy, 2025-27. The zone-wise detail of reserve price and quota of these ten (10) zones shall be displayed in the latest excise arrangement.

3. The e-tenders for these zones can be submitted online through the official website of the department i.e. www.haryanaxtax.gov.in. The remaining terms and conditions of e-tenders and allotment of zones shall be same, as informed vide the Public Notice, published in leading newspapers on 21st May, 2025, for inviting e-tenders for allotment of retail liquor zones of all districts in the State of Haryana. The copy of Public Notice dated 21st May, 2025 is also available on the official website of department i.e. www.haryanaxtax.gov.in. The detailed procedure of registration for participation in the allotment process and submission of e-tenders is also available on the official website.

4. The excise arrangements of these zones containing number of vends, liquor quota, location of vends, command area as applicable and reserve price thereof, as well as the venue for evaluation of e-tenders shall be conspicuously displayed in the office of DETCs (Excise) and DETCS (ST) of the districts concerned. These details shall also be available on the official website of the department i.e. www.haryanaxtax.gov.in.

5. All allotment(s) and grant of licence(s) shall be subject to the provisions of the Haryana Excise Act, 1914, the rules framed thereunder, orders/instructions issued by the competent authority and the Excise Policy for the year 2025-27. Any clarification regarding the procedure may be obtained from the office of DETCs (Excise) in any of the districts. The copy of Haryana Excise Policy for the year 2025-27 is available on official website of the department.

6. All allotments of licenses are subject to the approval of the Excise and Taxation Commissioner (Financial Commissioner). The ETC (FC) may reject, without assigning any reason, any allotment in public interest as the case may be, within 10 days of the date of allotment. In case no decision of Excise and Taxation Commissioner (FC) is conveyed within the stipulated period of ten days, the allotment shall be deemed to have been approved by the ETC(FC).

VINAY PRATAP SINGH, IAS
Excise and Taxation Commissioner,
Haryana.
No. 36840/HRY

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Yesterday's lunar alignments have left you feeling emotionally winded. As luck would have it, this year's version of celestial events offers you all the opportunity you need to get back in the driving seat today, by tomorrow, come out on top.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

There is no reason why everything should be black and white, and expect another day when all is not quite clear. The most ideal way to get the very best out of your planetary aspects is to enjoy your dreams and follow your instincts. Wear your sense of humour on your sleeve.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Keep up the hard work. Even if you are taking time off, be active and flexible. If you adopt a narrow and dogmatic course,

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Listen to what others are saying. Try not to close your eyes or avert your gaze, you might actually provoke them into even louder announcements and proclamations. That doesn't mean that their words will suddenly make sense, though.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

If you are in tune with the heavens, then you have managed to extend a period of hope and opportunity. You are almost enjoying a sort of personal emotional revival. Do not feel bad about enjoying yourself if other people are working. Don't let them put you down or make you feel small.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Forget your sensitive, retiring Cancerian qualities. Today it is time to bring out a different feature of your celestial personality, being more ambitious, tough and ruthless. Also, as a matter of urgency, expect the unexpected. You can never be too prepared.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Venus will soon bring changes to your romantic hopes. Take all opportunities to enjoy yourself, but, keep in mind the general irresponsibility inherent in today's mighty planetary aspects, you will have to decide where to draw the line.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Powerful financial indications continue for a little while longer, but in view of the fact that the stars indicate carelessness and loss, you must question all ambiguous claims and suspicious details. Somebody may have misled you, probably without meaning to.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

There is much to be done that still concerns your long-term future. If you have lost sight of a number of goals, talk to the experts, chat to friends and seek advice from every corner, especially from those who have been here before.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

You could be in a gambling mood. Take emotional risks and adopt unusual plans if they suit your mood. However, do bear in mind that financial prospects are dodgy, so don't throw good money after bad. Listen to loved ones: they could be smarter than you think.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender Notice No. 04-MC-COMPRESSOR-2025-26 Dhanbad, dated: 18/07/2025 O-Open Tender Two in Packet System is invited in IREPS Portal for execution of the following work by Sr. Divisional Mechanical Engineer (Co-ord), East Central Railway, Dhanbad:

1. Name of work : Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) of Air Compressors Machines of Dhanbad Division along with Testing and certification of Pressure Vessels. 2. Contract Period : 36 Months. 3. Location of work : Dhanbad Division. 4. Advertised Tender Value : Rs. 1,38,51,16/- (Rupees One Crore Thirty Eight Lakh Fifty One Thousand One Hundred Sixty Eight) only. 5. Cost of Tender Document : Rs. 5,000/- (Five Thousand) only. 6. Earnest Money (As per TENDER) to be deposited : Rs. 2,19,300/- (Rupees Two Lakh Nineteen Thousand Three Hundred only). 7. Date & Time for submission of E-Tender : from 25/07/2025 to 08/08/2025 up to 11:00 hrs. 8. Date & time of opening of E-Tender : 08/08/2025 at 11:30 hrs. 9. Website particulars : http://www.ireps.gov.in (No manual tender will be accepted against e-tendering)

Sr. Div. Mech. Engineer (Co-ord)
East Central Railway, Dhanbad
PR/0626/DHN/MECH/T125-26/36

Pr. D.S.T.E./ECR/Dhanbad
PR/063/DHN/S&T/T125-26/36

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender Notice No. SG-664-13-Sign-2025-26. E-Tender is invited on behalf of the President of India for the under mentioned work.

1. Name of work : Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) of Air Compressors Machines of Dhanbad Division along with Testing and certification of Pressure Vessels. 2. Contract Period : 36 Months. 3. Location of work : Dhanbad Division. 4. Advertised Tender Value : Rs. 1,38,51,16/- (Rupees One Crore Thirty Eight Lakh Fifty One Thousand One Hundred Sixty Eight) only. 5. Cost of Tender Document : Rs. 5,000/- (Five Thousand) only. 6. Earnest Money (As per TENDER) to be deposited : Rs. 2,19,300/- (Rupees Two Lakh Nineteen Thousand Three Hundred only). 7. Date & Time for submission of E-Tender : from 25/07/2025 to 08/08/2025 up to 11:00 hrs. 8. Date & time of opening of E-Tender : 08/08/2025 at 11:30 hrs. 9. Website particulars : http://www.ireps.gov.in (No manual tender will be accepted against e-tendering)

Sr. Div. Mech. Engineer (Co-ord)
East Central Railway, Dhanbad
PR/0626/DHN/MECH/T125-26/36

Pr. D.S.T.E./ECR/Dhanbad
PR/063/DHN/S&T/T125-26/36

GOVERNMENT OF MIZORAM URBAN DEVELOPMENT & POVERTY ALLEVIATION DEPARTMENT GOVERNMENT OF MIZORAM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Reference No.: A-45001/1/2023-TCP Date: 22/07/2025

The Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation Department (UD&PA), Government of Mizoram, invites proposals from eligible consulting firms/consortia for: "Preparation of Development Plan and Detailed Project Reports for Thenzawl Peace City". Detailed Request for Proposal (RFP) including Terms of Reference, eligibility criteria, and submission instructions can be downloaded from the e-Procurement Portal https://mizoramtenders.gov.in or https://udpa.mizoram.gov.in/ The Department reserves the right to cancel or amend this tender without assigning any reason.

Sd/- ZODUAILOVA ZOTE
Chief Town Planner
Town & Country Planning Office
Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation Department
Mizoram: Aizawl

OFFICE OF DIRECTOR SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE CHHAINSA, FARIDABAD, HARYANA, 121004

Tel. No. 0129 2840600, Emails: dirsabvgmc-fbd.mder@hry.gov.in, directorsabvgmcfaridabad@gmail.com, Website-www.sabvgmcfd.edu.in

Ref. No. SABVGM/PS/2025/1987 Dated: 19/07/2025

The Walk-in-interview for the vacant posts of Senior Residents to be recruited on yearly tenure basis extendable upto maximum 03 years at Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government Medical College, Chhainsa, Faridabad, Haryana will be conducted on every Tuesday of every week on working days. The interested candidates may visit website of institute i.e. https://www.sabvgmcfd.edu.in/ for further updates.

Sd/- Director
Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Govt. Medical College, Chhainsa, Faridabad, Haryana.

ADVERTISEMENT

The Walk-in-interview for the vacant posts of Senior Residents to be recruited on yearly tenure basis extendable upto maximum 03 years at Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government Medical College, Chhainsa, Faridabad, Haryana will be conducted on every Tuesday of every week on working days. The interested candidates may visit website of institute i.e. https://www.sabvgmcfd.edu.in/ for further updates.

Sd/- Director
Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Govt. Medical College, Chhainsa, Faridabad, Haryana.

Director

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Govt. Medical College, Chhainsa, Faridabad, Haryana.

Office of Director

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE CHHAINSA, FARIDABAD, HARYANA, 121004

Tel. No. 0129 2840600, Emails: dirsabvgmc-fbd.mder@hry.gov.in, directorsabvgmcfaridabad@gmail.com, Website-www.sabvgmcfd.edu.in

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Sd/- Director
Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Govt. Medical College, Chhainsa, Faridabad, Haryana.

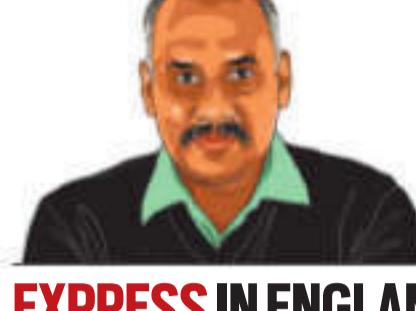
Advertisement

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ANDERSON-TENDULKAR TROPHY: 4TH TEST, MANCHESTER

Unlucky or preventable injuries?

Unhappy management urges players to improve fitness, plans better system to assess pre-tour conditioning

**EXPRESS IN ENGLAND****SANDEEP DWIVEDI**
MANCHESTER, JULY 21

A WEEK after the Lord's Test, the BCCI, through a press release, shared three things about all-rounder Nitish Reddy — he had a left-knee injury, he was flying home and the team had wished him a speedy recovery.

Few hours later, at the start of India's first full outdoor training session at Manchester, pacer Akash Deep was giving a fitness test and was watched by an anxious bunch of coaches and national selection committee chairman Ajit Agarkar. Akash Deep didn't bowl at the nets on Monday and is unlikely to play the crucial fourth Test of the India-England series that the home team leads 2-1.

Injuries to both Akash Deep and Reddy, after just two back-to-back Tests, haven't gone down well with the team management. After the Lord's Test, players had been asked to improve their fitness and wheels have already started moving to put in place a proper protocol for assessing the pre-tour fitness of players.

Going ahead, especially for a long tour, the information about niggles and injuries a player is carrying needs to be put on the table. The new leadership group is keen to have a transparent and robust fitness regime since these sudden and frequent breakdowns are impacting the team's plans and potentially the final result of Tests and the series.

Former Team India trainer Ramji Srinivasan, who was the Head Strength and Conditioning Coach with the 2011 World Cup winning team, says there is scope of improving the system. "I would definitely say it is very unfortunate these things happened in the middle of the tour. I think better precautionary measures could have been taken by the support staff," he says. "There needs to be predictability about non-match injuries. There should be protocols in place - testing and assessment prior to the tour."

At present at the National Cricket Academy, the destination for all wounded cricketers, there are protocols in place but they don't seem to be working and that has put a spanner in the planning.

After Birmingham, where Akash Deep took 6 wickets, India seemed to have cracked their pace combination. But the optimism didn't even last one full Test. In the middle of the Lord's Test, Akash Deep would walk gingerly out of the field, holding his hip.

Mohammed Siraj, at the press conference, did comment on his pace partner's fitness. "Akash Deep's groin has some issues, so he has to be with the physio. He bowled in the morning but I don't have any feedback from the physio yet," he said.

Akash Deep had a niggle at the start of the tour — coach Gautam Gambhir had said this at the press conference — and that was why Delhi pacer Harshit Rana was called as a back-up.

The Bengal pacer sat out for the first Test and only after a scan was done, he was declared match-fit. Rana was sent home. Now, another pacer has been flown in. Today Haryana pacer Anshul Kamboj trained with the team.

In Manchester, with the pitch looking damp from a distance and a heavy cloud cover overhead, the conditions seem ideal to unleash the best of Indian pacers. But it could well be an untested and debutant making the cut.



(Top) Jasprit Bumrah will play the fourth Test after missing the second in order to manage his workload. Akash Deep (below left) will miss out in Manchester due to injury while Nitish Reddy (below right) is out of the series.

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should be etched in stone and part of protocol before a series."

Along with the injuries that can be controlled are the ones that can't be. India, as luck would have it, have players who got wounded on the field. Just when it seemed that left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh would finally get a game, he got injured and got ruled out of the Test. This was confirmed by the BCCI in its press release.

It was while stopping a ball in follow-through in the nets that resulted in him getting a cut and subsequently stitches. The pitch and conditions would have aided Arshdeep's swing but for the fourth straight Test he will be on drinks duty.

Today at the nets, Rishabh Pant too seemed to have recovered from the hit he took on the index finger at Lord's. He was the keeper when the slip-cordon was taking catches. Once in a while he would show pain when holding a sharp catch but would continue to train.

Meanwhile, in the spin-net was the perpetual picture of the tour - left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav constantly testing batsmen. Will he finally get a Test? His getting into the team for the Manchester Test would be an irony. This would be the case of 'horses not for courses.'

Kuldeep should have played at Lord's but was sitting out. He should be sitting out in Manchester but because of injuries and multiple combination complications he might just play.

cover over-head, the conditions seem ideal to unleash the best of Indian pacers. But it could well be an untested and debutant making the cut. Kamboj can get into the team, in case the team management chose him over Prasidh Krishna, who hasn't been able to control his length on this tour.

The Indian team also might have liked to have Nitish in the mix at Manchester. At Lord's, the pace all-rounder got the important breakthrough, bowled 17 overs and also had a promising partnership with Ravindra Jadeja. For a management keen on a long batting line-up, Nitish was their ideal man.

Nitish is an intriguing case. Was he Test-series ready when he landed in England? All through the IPL, the all-rounder bowled just 5 overs. Daniel Vettori, the coach at SRH where Nitish plays, had explained how it was because of injuries he was being under-bowled.

"He brought a side-strain into the tournament, which obviously he has had throughout. That is the reason he missed a

lot of cricket prior to that and then it was just a slow, meticulous build-up," Vettori said. Was it the load of 17 overs being too much on the body of a player with a history of injuries?

Predicting setbacks

Expert trainers say that modern science can actually predict injuries but the assessment has to be scientific and the players also need to be honest about their initial fitness.

"There are various reasons for a player's breakdown. It could be the wrong movement pattern, muscle overload but take away suppleness, lack of athletic training, and workload management. It could also be the case of a player concealing fitness (concerns)," says an expert on condition of anonymity.

But despite these many reasons, the potential injuries to players can be predicted. "All joints, all muscles have to be tested for strength and power and other things. There is equipment available in the market to do the fitness testing. These are things that

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Kuldeep should have played at Lord's but was sitting out. He should be sitting out in Manchester but because of injuries and multiple combination complications he might just play.

It looked like it was 11 versus two out there while we were fielding. It was good fun... it was tiring but it made fielding a lot more enjoyable," Brook added.

Brydon Carse, as well as fast bowler Brydon Carse, would claim that was the moment when England decided to "give it back" to the hosts.

"We had a conversation on the evening of day three, when the Indian side was getting stuck into our two batters," Carse told ESPNcricinfo. "That shifted the mentality and the mood of our whole group, that we were going to be right up for this and get stuck in."

"We had a little chat and we thought, we're a team so we may as well get together and give it back at them," Brook said at a press conference in Manchester on Monday. "It put them under a little bit more pressure."

"I've had a lot of compliments. Everybody said it was awesome to watch.



Ravindra Jadeja unintentionally collided with Brydon Carse while running between the wickets on Day 5 of the third Test at Lord's.

And there were other moments where things came to a head too, from Mohammed Siraj's angry reaction after taking Ben Duckett's wicket on Day 4 to Carse himself colliding with Ravindra Jadeja — who was mounting a late comeback — while running

between the wickets on the fifth day.

Carse believes England needed the added fire to come out on top. "When you (are) playing Test cricket, with the crowd and the pressure and the emotion, and how much everyone wanted to win that game, I think

RASHFORD NEARS BARCA MOVE

Barcelona: Barcelona's already impressive front line is about to be boosted by the signing of Marcus Rashford. Rashford is in Barcelona to complete a move from Manchester United, a person with knowledge of the transfer told *The Associated Press* on Monday. AP

Siraj took time to get over Day 5 heartbreak

SANDEEP DWIVEDI
MANCHESTER, JULY 21

PRE-MATCH PRESS conferences are often mostly about rehearsed lines, stock phrases and clichéd sentiments that give no idea about the player, person or the upcoming game.

But once in a while, a Mohammed Siraj walks into the media hall casually, sits on the dais, lets out a random loud sigh, waits for a while, looks around to ask the media manager: "Sawal hi nahi hain, chale (there are no questions, shall we leave)?".

Siraj did stay back since there were many 'sawals' and refreshingly some straight-from-the-heart 'jawabs' too. His answers weren't those everyday sports arena utterances recorded and diligently relayed, but lost in the sea of inanities.

There is a reason why Siraj sounded so real. "Kya hai na, mai bahut emotional person hoon. (See the thing is, I am a very emotional person)." As he said this, there was a collective nodding of heads by the reporters. This answer was in context of his dismissal on the final day at Lord's that ended India's fight-back and reduced the ever-smiling always-joking cricketer to a picture of gloom.

India's last wicket partnership — Ravindra Jadeja and Siraj — had raised hopes of an improbable win. From the hopelessness of 112/8, chasing 193 for a 2-1 lead, India were just 23 runs away, all thanks to No.10 Jasprit Bumrah and No.11 Siraj and, of course, Jadeja.

At this stage of the game, when the impossible looked achievable, Siraj got out. His biggest regret — that took a long time to overcome — was him getting bowled even after connecting with the ball from the middle of his bat. To Siraj's horror, the ball took a deadly turn towards the stumps after falling to the ground from Siraj's bat.

Siraj didn't project himself as some ruthless pro who got over the setback within minutes of leaving the field. He said that it did impact him and it took a while to overcome it.

"It took a lot of time. Because that match was such that, in the last, in 2021 (at Lord's), I took the last wicket (of James Anderson). Then, in such a situation, when I was there, I thought I could do it again..... 'Kya hai na, mai bahut emotional person hoon.'

There is a simple comforting thought that Siraj often leans on to sleep peacefully at night. Several of his coaches say that the Hyderabad pacer's biggest attribute is his capacity to keep pushing his limits and never taking things easy — be it at a net session or in a match.

Often during the press conference, he spoke about giving his "100 percent" — a certified sporting cliché for sure but when uttered by Siraj, who just minutes back was running in at the nets and bowling with all his energy, sounded true. "Dekho, desh ke liye khelta hoon (I play for my country). I always give my 100 percent. And since I do that, when I sleep at night, there should be that feeling inside that I gave my 100 percent... even if I didn't get the result I wanted, it was fine."

Breath of fresh air

Siraj wasn't unduly paranoid about what he spoke to the media. He didn't guard team trivia as if it was classified information of national interest.

Someone asked if Jasprit Bumrah will play the fourth Test, now that England led 2-1 and this was a now-or-never game for India. This was no-brainer, India would surely carry its sharpest weapon on the field.

But still most pre-match press conference candidates would still keep it under wraps, and speak about deciding on the morning of the match. Siraj is different, he shot back instantly. "Jassi bhai toh khelenge hi na. (Jassibhai will surely play)." He also spoke about Akash



Mohammed Siraj has taken 13 wickets in the series so far and is the only Indian pacer to have played all three Test matches.

Deep's injury — "Groin mai kuchh hua hai. (There's a problem in his groin.)"

There was a query if the "workload management" principle doesn't apply to him, as he has played all Tests so far and there is no talk about him missing the next. Siraj broke into a smile and said: "Sir, upar wale ne muje itna sehatmund (fit, fine) rakha hai... touch wood. (The Almighty has kept me so healthy, touch wood!) This workload is what science ke log (science people) write in books. My goal is simple — I play as many matches for my country as I can."

While laughing through the press conference, Siraj would drop a profound line, giving an idea about his sharp analytical mind.

What is the problem with the Dukes ball?

"The ball loses shape and that's why bowlers can't back-spin the ball," he said.

One of the reasons batsmen find it hard to read Bumrah, is the 'back-spin' he puts on the ball. Not many pundits on TV have spoken about it.

An English reporter would try his luck, ask Siraj about the chatter on the pitch and the needle between the two sides. The pacer would smile and say that he does it to distract the batsmen. He gave an example about how when Joe Root was playing a very steady innings, he came up with the "Bazball, Bazball.. what happened to Bazball" chirp. It was this sledge that made Root change his style of play.

"It was to divert his mind. 'Where is Bazball?' — I reminded him. It suddenly came to his mind and he started batting differently. Root would soon get out."

Will he continue to talk? Before he blinked, Siraj said a firm "Yes". Towards the end came a tricky question. This is how the simple, but smart, Siraj handled it.

Q: Mohammed, at the weekend, there was a Legends game between India and Pakistan?

A: Is it? I don't know.

Q: Would you feel comfortable playing against Pakistan in an ICC event at the moment?

A: I don't know what to say.

He can hit the ball out of the park and also leave it.

WHEN TEMPERS FLARED

11 versus 2: Brook on England's combative approach in Lord's Test

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

JULY 21

TENSIONS ESCALATED between India and England in the third Test of the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy at Lord's last week. The confrontational atmosphere kicked off after a heated exchange between India skipper Shubman Gill and England opener Zak Crawley in the final moments of the third day, and stayed in the air throughout the final two days of England's thrilling 22-run victory, which allowed them to take a 2-1 lead in the five-match series.

Ahead of the fourth Test at Old Trafford, England batter Harry Brook said that the several different flashpoints and the combative mood within the camp allowed the team to put the opposition under more pressure and added an element of 'good fun' to the hosts' fielding efforts.

"We had a little chat and we thought, we're a team so we may as well get together and give it back at them," Brook said at a press conference in Manchester on Monday. "It put them under a little bit more pressure."

"I've had a lot of compliments. Everybody said it was awesome to watch.



Ravindra Jadeja unintentionally collided with Harry Brook while running between the wickets on Day 5 of the third Test at Lord's.

I've had a lot of compliments. Everybody said it was awesome to watch. It looked like it was 11 versus two out there while we were fielding. It was good fun... it was tiring but it made fielding a lot more enjoyable," Brook added.

HARRY BROOK
ON TENSIONS WITH INDIA AT LORD'S

it's great," he said. "There's always obviously a line, and you don't want to cross that line. But when you're out on that field, and there's 10 other blokes all fighting your corner, it's pretty cool. And it's what the game needed at that time."

Carse was particularly proud of his late burst on day four, when he picked up the wickets of both Karun Nair and Gill to put India under pressure which eventually proved vital.

"The atmosphere was incredible, the adrenaline was flowing. It was an incredibly crucial stage of the game that I was desperate to make an impact in, and I felt in good rhythm bowling that evening," he said.

Dawson returns to squad after 8 years

Manchester: England's Liam Dawson has been named in the team to play India in the fourth Test of the series at Old Trafford, England's cricket board (ECB) announced on Monday, marking the spinner's first Test appearance in eight years. The 35-year-old Hampshire left-armer, who replaces the injured Shaib Bashir, is the only change to the team for the fourth Test which begins on Wednesday. Dawson has not played a Test match since earning his third test cap in July 2017.

Official goof-up causes insult, injury at World University Games

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JULY 21

INDIA'S PROMINENT singles shuttler Tasnim Mir is battling a sore back and six others are devastated at the World University Games in Rhine-Ruhr, Germany, after an elderly Indian official seemingly forgot to enter names of half the badminton contingent for the mixed team event. As a result, only six members (two men, four women) ended up playing all five ties (25 matches) featuring men's singles, women's singles, women's doubles, men's doubles and mixed doubles.

After India landed a surprise bronze medal, what was a historic occasion of a first-ever podium finish in badminton ended in anger and dismay, as the six who couldn't participate will be denied not just medals, podium presence and certificates, but also cash prizes and job opportunities in a five percent quota, as per a Sports Ministry Incentive GR (government resolution).

At the managers' meeting prior to the start of the team event, the only names checked by the Indian official belonged to Saneeth Dayanand, Sathish Kumar Karunakaran, Devika Sihag, Tasnim Mir, Varshini Viswanath Sri, and Vaishnavi Khadkekar. Missing out were ARRK Anandas Raj Kumar, Darshan Pujari, Aditi Bhatt, Abhinash Mohanty, Viraj Kuvale, and Alisha Khan.

Still, the six shuttlers who played pulled off a bronze medal. India defeated Macau but lost to Hong Kong China in the group stage, then beat the USA in the round of 16 and Malaysia in the quarterfinals before losing to Chinese Taipei in the semifinals.

Twelve players had been chosen to represent India but only six could play and stand on the podium. In the aftermath, the players took it upon themselves to attend the managers' meeting before the start of the individual event, and ensured all 12 were entered for those draws. The Chef de Mission had informed the aggrieved players that there was no recourse available after the technical blunder.

Alisha Khan, one of the players left out, wrote on her Instagram handle that half the squad couldn't play because of an official's gaffe while submitting their names. "They only submitted 6, forgetting the rest," she wrote.

"As per FISU (International University Sports Federation) rules, 12 players are allowed — we were all eligible. We travelled, we trained, we sacrificed, and yet we were denied the chance to even participate."

Alisha further wrote that this was "career sabotage" and not just mismanagement.

"We demand answers, accountability, and that our voices be heard. We didn't lose a match — we lost our right to even participate," she rued.

Gross mismanagement

Association of Indian Universities (AIU) secretary Pankaj Mittal told PTI that the matter is being investigated but declined from making any further comment.

"We have been informed about this and the matter is being investigated," he was quoted as saying by the news agency, which further reports that this wasn't just an error but stemmed from systematic irregularities.

One of Saneeth Dayanand's parents was present as the official team manager, but she did not attend the initial meeting where entries were checked on a form. The tournament comes within AIU's ambit. Back home, Tushar Suveer, who won the University trials, did not mysteriously make the badminton squad at all. Darshan Pujari has written to the Badminton Association of India (BAI), demanding a thorough investigation.

"This level of mismanagement has caused significant emotional distress to the affected athletes, especially when Team India went on to win a historic medal at the Games. The players who were left out of the nomination list have been unfairly denied the chance to contribute on the field and be acknowledged as part of this achievement," he wrote in his email, according to PTI.

Divya, the tie-break queen

Defeats Harika to join Humpy in Chess World Cup semis, with chance to challenge Chinese stranglehold

MAYANK
NEW DELHI, JULY 21

The FIDE Women's World Cup 2025 will provide a double bill of India-China clashes in the semifinals after teenage sensation Divya Deshmukh triumphed over her more experienced compatriot Harika Dronavalli in the quarterfinal tie-breaks in Georgia's Batumi on Monday, becoming only the second Indian ever to reach that stage of the elite competition.

The third edition of the FIDE Women's World Cup 2025 will now feature two Indians - Koneru Humpy and Divya - taking on two Chinese opponents, Lei Tingjie and Tan Zhongyi respectively, for a place in the final. It also guarantees India at least one spot in next year's Candidates Tournament - that will decide the eventual challenger to women's world champion Ju Wenjun, who has held the title since 2018. The top three finishers from the ongoing tournament make it to the Candidates and even if both Humpy and Divya are defeated at the semi-final stage, they will face each other in a third-place playoff.

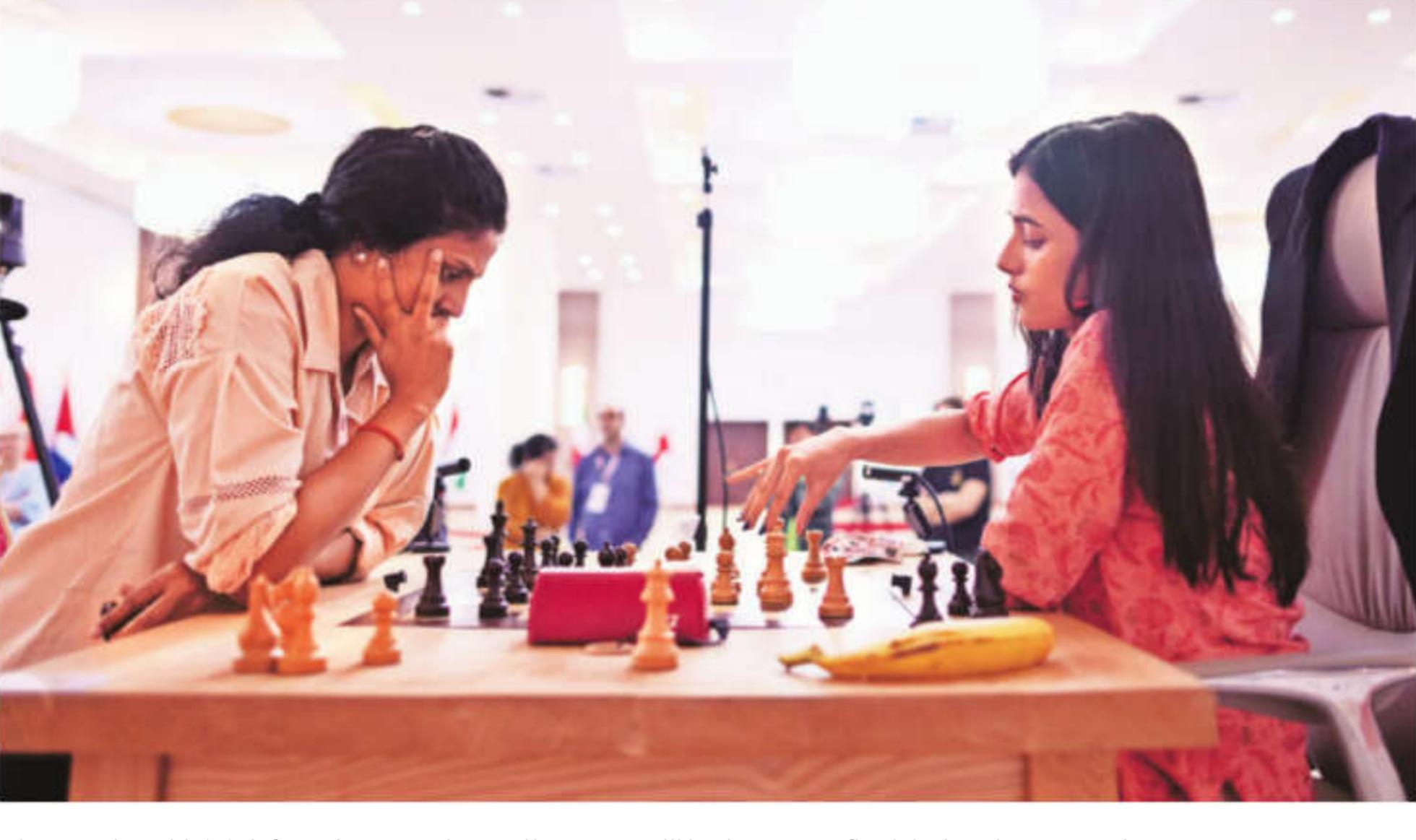
Hence, besides the individual glory beckoning the two Indians, Humpy and Divya also have an opportunity to challenge China's decades-long domination in the women's game. The 34-year-old Harika, who had already reached the quarterfinals in 2023 (the first Indian to make the top eight), was the slight favourite heading into the tie-breaks against Divya. But the 2024 World Junior Champion, 15 years her junior, relied on her innate confidence, which often belies her age, to pull off a stunning victory.

The first 15+10 Rapid tie-break was a work of art from Divya. Playing with white pieces, she executed a clear plan against her opponent. For an entire game in which 15 minutes are allotted with a 10-second increment per move, Divya had increased the time left at her disposal to 17 minutes and 20 seconds by the 17th move after blitzing out her opening moves. She lured Harika into exchanging a light-squared bishop, a pair of knights, and a pawn to set a trap.

Harika, the seasoned campaigner, fell for the bait, exchanging two more central pawns which allowed Divya's hyperactive queen to exploit the open space, and by the 27th move, the senior player was already staring down the barrel. Divya sacrificed her bishop to pin Harika's queen and let go her rook pair to gain superior compensation by keeping her queen. With no counterplay left, Harika resigned.

"I would have to say the preparation had a lot of role in that game (first tie-break), and I would like to thank my coach for that," she told the broadcasters.

The teenage sensation had earlier ousted second seed China's Zhu Jiner, also in tie-breaks. She described Zhu as her toughest



Divya Deshmukh (R) defeated compatriot Harika Dronavalli in the quarterfinal tie-breaks on Monday. FIDE/Anna Shtourman

All-or-nothing

The second 15+10 tie-break was a must-win for Harika. Divya, however, was in no mood to relent. She immediately offered a risky queen exchange, which Harika accepted, hoping to grind out a win and level the match.

The 19-year-old faced mounting pressure as Harika kept the position sharp, while piling on time pressure. At one point, Divya made a move with just four seconds left on the clock, and blundered twice in three moves after holding Harika to near-equality for 60 moves. She misplaced her king, handing Harika a massive advantage.

But Harika, the Indian No. 2, failed to capitalise on her opportunities, missing both chances to punish Divya's mistakes. Moments later, she lost a pawn, her position collapsed, and she was forced to concede.

An emotional Divya, still shaking after her victory, credited her preparation for the win in the first tie-break game.

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Lei Tingjie, the top seed, she said, "I'll also rest for some time and then prepare because it's going to be a very tough match in the semi-finals. Lei is one of the strongest opponents and also the top seed of the tournament."

The respect was mutual, with Lei acknowledging Humpy's strengths.

"Humpy is a well-known player, we played a lot and generally we know each other. She's very strong but I will try my best," the Chinese said.

The semi-finals will feature a battle of equals between Humpy and the active World No.1 Lei (current top-ranked player Hou Yifan is semi-retired and inactive). The two veterans have faced each other 17 times across all formats, with both players winning six games each with the other five ending in draws.

Humpy holds a slight edge in the Classical format, leading 4-3 in their nine encounters, with two games drawn.

For Divya, the challenge is markedly different. The teenage prodigy faces former World Champion Tan Zhongyi, who was also the World Championship challenger in the last cycle. The head-to-head record favours the 34-year-old Chinese. In their three previous meetings, Tan has won twice with Divya managing just one draw.

BRIEFLY

Pak tells FIH it is not willing to send team to India for Asia Cup

Karachi: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has informed the sport's global governing body FIH that it will be "difficult" for them to send a team to India for the Asia Cup next month because of "security concerns". Tariq Bugti, who heads the PHF, said they had written to the FIH and Asian Hockey Federation (AHF), expressing their reservations over sending the team to India. "We have informed them that in the existing scenario, our team will face security risks playing in India," he said. "We have informed them our players are also not keen to travel to India for the Asia Cup which is also a direct qualifying tournament," he added. The PHF chief said the ball is now in the court of the FIH and AHF to decide about the event and Pakistan's matches. "We have asked them to let us know what guarantee is there that our players will be safe in India and will be able to focus on the tournament," he said.

Agarwalla wins dressage event

Hofgeismar: India's Anush Agarwalla won the dressage event of the Jubilaumsturnier Hofgeismar Open to record his maiden victory with his mare Floriana here. Agarwalla, who represented the country at the Paris Olympics, recorded an impressive 69.891 per cent points to finish atop in the six-member field with each of the other competitors being from Germany. The win marked the first triumph for the pair at the S level.

India A ends Europe tour with 2-8 loss

Eindhoven: The India A men's hockey team ended its campaign in the Europe tour with a 2-8 loss against the Netherlands. Young Indian midfielder Rajinder Singh and forward Selvam Karthi scored the two goals for India A in the final match on Sunday. India A had lost their previous game against the Netherlands 0-3 last week. India A began the tour on July 8 and played a total of eight matches against Ireland, France, England, Belgium and the Netherlands during this exposure tour. They won three of their eight matches.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

After 3 podium finishes, Pranati braces for Chinese challenge on vault

SHIVANI NAIK
MUMBAI, JULY 21

SHE HAS A hat-trick of bronze medals on the vault at the Asian Gymnastics Championships, but it's the elusive gold that keeps Pranati Nayak pushing through pain, living a monkish, solitary existence with no social life in Bhubaneswar. She also has to make do with eating measured morsels to keep her weight down, so she can push through an extra half of a rotation, and do a 720 Tsukahara, rather than a 540.

"And now the Chinese have started showing up in vault which they didn't earlier," Pranati says in mock apocalyptic tones, laughing at her luck, a month after returning from Jecheon, South Korea, with a third bronze, after Ulaanbaatar 2019 and Doha 2022. It was much better before her qualification stumble at the continental championships when her three oversteppings cost her a penalty that she gleaned the competition and noticed her nemesis - the Chinese.

The global powerhouse in gymnastics aces the Floor exercise, uneven bars and balance beam, but have made headway into Vault at the Asian level, a novelty for Pranati who ad-

mits to being deflated at the literal leaps-and-bounds progress of the Chinese vaulters, who have not won a women's vault medal at the Olympics since their bronze at Beijing 2008. Sure enough, Paris Olympian Zhang Yinan took gold at Jecheon with 13.650 on the vault, closely followed by Ngyn Thi Quynh Nhur with 13.583. Pranati averaged 13.466.

"It was tough to digest. I didn't think Chinese vaulters would be a challenge, so I will have to prepare for that before the Asian Games. In qualification when I was 4th, there was the (Uzbek, 48-year-old) legend Oksana Chusovitina, and the Vietnamese. But the Chinese had me worried," she says. "Qualifying was not great, I was scared."

Attempting the Tsukahara 540 (Difficulty 5.2, like the Chinese and Vietnamese), Pranati stuttered with three oversteps and copped a penalty. "We train on Gymnova brand apparatus. There it was Tyson, a different make of springboard. With my ankle injury, take-off on this brand was a disaster," she explains, not as an excuse, but stating her inability on a lift-off, where she didn't gain the spring for elevation and rotations, affecting her landing.

In the finals, she had 13.666 on her first vault with Difficulty 5.2 (scoring 8.466 on Execution) and in the second, a handspring.



Pranati Nayak has a hat-trick of bronze medals in the Asian C'ships. Express

Though her D-Score of 4.4 was higher than everyone, her 12.866 (highest and equalising Chinese score, with execution at 8.466), could not push her beyond bronze.

"Gold and silver were there for the taking but I couldn't stick a clean landing. One

examinations for elbow and ankle issues. Thanks to her funding from Welspun, she can access the best medical facilities at a top hospital in Odisha and a curated diet, but Pranati is aware of the challenge.

"At 30, recovery is not easy. I'm maintaining a very strict diet, measuring food, so I can be fit to give optimum results," she says. All junk has been out of the picture and mildly salted dry fruits are her only indulgence. "The machines are expensive so that funding helps," she says, as does the guidance of Ashok Mishra. While she remains India's best-performing gymnast currently, ensuring her personal coach travels (he didn't to Korea) requires funds beyond her TOPS allocation. Being in the well-knit-out-of-home facility means Pranati can access the ABTP (Abhinav Bindra Targeting Performance) facility on campus, a huge help.

"But it's ice baths in the room and 2/3 rehab sessions at ABTP," she says. The Shockwave therapy for muscle pain is a huge addition she has availed, but getting the peak fitness/form/confidence and pushing technique barriers needs everything coming together. With the Chinese targeting the vault, Pranati literally has to raise her ambitions on higher Difficulty vaults with an eye on the Asian Games.

How dictatorship stifled cricket in Italy, Argentina & patronised football

SANDIP G
JULY 21

ITALY'S BENITO Mussolini and Argentina's Juan Peron were dictators in different ideological guises that broke their countries. The Italian instigated war and destruction; the Argentine inflation and bankruptcy. Both used football as a nation-unifying, propaganda tool; and indirectly stubbed out from their fields and consciousness the other major sport that arrived with the English traders and imperialists in their countries. Cricket — the second most watched sport in the world, but with its imprints limited to a dozen outposts of the Commonwealth.

A century later, Italy qualified for the T20 cricket World Cup, even as the probability of missing out on the World Cup that they really care for looms. But cricket in Italy was as old as football. Horatio Nelson's soldiers were the first to play a game on Italian soil, when they anchored in Naples in 1793. A century and unification of the country later, the British traders opened the Genoa Cricket and Football Club in 1893, which dropped cricket from its name but is a Serie A regular. Italy's cricket's grand old man Simone Gambino fishes out the history. "Italy was

unified in 1870 and the English helped a lot to unify. They did pour the mass of capital into industry in the north of Italy. Textile industry in particular. And in Milan, Genoa, and Turin, the three cities in the northwest of Italy, there were many Englishmen who started playing cricket and football. This was the beginning of football," he says.

The English names the English assigned to the cities remain. But cricket did not. "Mussolini hated the English. So everything that was English, he kicked it out, and obviously cricket disappeared," he says. He built grand football stadiums across the country, restructured the league, pumped in money, and hosted the 1934 edition of the World Cup that Italy won but under the shadow of rigging games. The story goes that Mussolini invited Ivan Eklind, the referee appointed to take charge of the hosts' semi-final with Austria, to an exclusive dinner. The next day he awarded a controversial penalty to Italy. Italians defended the crown the next edition, but Jonathan Wilson, in his seminal book Inverting the Pyramid wrote about the manager Vittorio Pozzo "made full use of the prevailing [fascist] militarism to dominate and motivate his side."

A decade later in Argentina, Peron too

recognised football's infinite powers to galvanise his political narrative. His government granted generous loans to football clubs to construct stadiums and infrastructure. His favourite club Racing received 16,700,000 pesos to build the Estadio Presidente Perón. His wife Eva, though, would play a bigger role

wiping the slate of cricket clean. In 1947, she sought the outfield of Buenos Aires Cricket Club for a fundraising function. The cricket body refused and she ordered the wooden pavilion to be razed down and burned. Cricket historians consider it a symbol of the era of British planters in the country, popular from the late 19th century, met a brutal death, as chronicled fabulously by journalists Timothy Abraham and James Coyne in the book *Evita Burned Down the Pavilion*.

Involved in the crossfire was Argentina's greatest cricketer, Clement Gibson, son of planters who settled in Argentina in the 19th century. He was a swing bowler with a devastating leg-cutter that pitched on leg-stump and hit the off-stick, and a celebrated figure in Cambridge and Sussex. In a tour game against the touring Australians in 1921, he grabbed six wickets in the second innings to mastermind a famous comeback after England XI were bundled out for 43 in the first innings. A decade later, Douglas Jardine summoned him to attend a camp for the Bodyline series. But he picked up an injury and shortly returned to Argentina with a healthy haul of 249 wickets at 28, to look after the wild sprawling ranches.

After a dispute over his brewery, the first lady commissioned two sets of hitmen to kill him. He had fled to the family's northernmost ranch. They never returned, assumed dead and Gibson lived till he was 76, making occasional visits to his son in England. Cricket, by then, was confined to the few English families that still lived in the country and survived as



Italy defied odds to qualify for next year's T20 World Cup. Back in the day, Benito Mussolini had severely restricted cricket's growth in the country. File

a relic of the era of British planters in the country. Argentina still plays cricket and in an expanded T20 World Cup format the ICC is envisioning could one day qualify.

But on the whims and vendettas of leaders and dictators hinged the fate of sports. Perhaps, cricket would not have thrived in Latin America or Italy or the Netherlands. Perhaps, the English did not stay long enough. Even if they were, cricket was never the sport of masses, confined to the gentry clubs, in all these countries. Football was the masses' opium in the barrios and favelas. The game did flourish in the nitrate mining communities of Atacama Desert in Chile as well as Mexico, Uruguay and Panama (where West Indies great George Headley was born). Maybe, cricket could not capture the local rhythms as football did, or capture its sensibilities. Or you could imagine, the subcontinent's sport of choice if the English had not lingered too long. Or if it were the Portuguese or the Dutch or the Spaniard. Perhaps it still could have been cricket. But Italy qualifying for the T20 World Cup makes you dwell on conjectures. What if Mussolini and Peron encouraged cricket? Or the princes of India's states patronised football? History of sports is thus the history of empires and emperors too.

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