

PM MODI: NATURAL PARTNERS, writing a new chapter in history | **PM STARMER: LANDMARK DEAL,** delivery of commitment by both sides | **GOYAL: MILESTONE IN TRADE** ties, setting an ambitious framework

India-UK: Deal's Done

Modi: Pact beneficial for India's youth, farmers, fishermen and MSME sector

SIDDHARTH UPASANI,
RAVI DUTTA MISHRA
& DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

INDIA AND the United Kingdom Thursday signed the much-awaited bilateral free trade agreement in the backdrop of a global trade environment that looks volatile with threats of reciprocal tariffs by the United States of America under President Donald Trump.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) promised to usher in "not just an economic partnership but a plan for shared prosperity" for both countries, said Prime

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

CLOSING THE DEAL

India-UK pact could serve as a template as Delhi presses ahead with agreements with others, including US and EU

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Minister Narendra Modi. Addressing the media after signing the deal at UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's country home 'Chequers', he called it a historic day as "after years of hard work, both nations have completed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement".

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer shake hands after Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal (right) and Britain's Secretary of State for Business and Trade Jonathan Reynolds (left) signed the agreement at Chequers Thursday. AP

ECONOMY

SCOTCH IMPORTS SET TO GET CHEAPER WITH TARIFFS HALVED TO 75%

'DEFINING MOMENT': INDIA INC HAILS AGREEMENT

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EXPLAINED

CULTURE THE STORY, HISTORY OF SCOTCH

PAGE 9

India gains big in food, footwear, textile; to cut tariffs in auto, liquor

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

INDIA HAS secured market access for key job-creating sectors such as textiles, footwear, gems and jewellery, and marine products – where the UK is set to eliminate duties of up to 20 per cent.

Negotiators have also man-



aged to push for eliminating duties for almost 99.7% of tariff lines in India's food sector. In most food items, the tariffs were as high as 70 per cent. New Delhi extracted enhanced market access in export-oriented sectors such as marine and animal products, including seafood, dairy, and meat products, with

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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Bank loan 'fraud' probe:
ED searches locations
linked to Anil Ambani



Anil Ambani's office at Ballard Estate in Mumbai was among the premises searched on Thursday. Ganesh Shirsekar PAGE 13

Mumbai linked to industrialist Anil Ambani, as part of a money laundering probe into an alleged Rs 3,000 crore bank loan fraud involving companies of the Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group. The central agency said it

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Data breach at
ICAR hits key
recruitment, agri
research projects

SHYAMLAL YADAV
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

THE INDIAN Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the country's apex research organisation in the sector, suffered a security breach earlier this year that led to the loss of "crucial data" related to a range of areas, from recruitment to research projects. The Indian Express has learnt.

Documents reviewed by this newspaper show that ICAR constituted a six-member committee this month to submit

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BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



SPORT

FIDE WORLD CUP: IN ALL-INDIA TITLE CLASH, HUMPY TO TAKE ON DIVYA PAGE 20

FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON
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• Data breach at ICAR hits key recruitment, agri research projects

"recommendations" regarding the "non-functionality of the DC (Data Centre) and DRC (Disaster Recovery Centre)". The panel was also asked to suggest "suitable measures" to ensure data security and "prevent recurrence of such incidents in future".

The committee, which was directed to submit its report by July 31, is yet to meet, one of its members told this newspaper.

According to sources, the breach occurred in April and affected the ICAR's website, its server in Delhi and its replication server at the National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM) in Hyderabad.

Data related to recruitment, from Technical Officers to Deputy Directors General (DDG) and job applications sought last year, is missing. The missing data also covers a large number of projects and related information submitted by scientists online and preserved in repositories. It includes email communications," sources said.

The Indian Express spoke to several ICAR scientists, from Lucknow, Karnal, Hyderabad, Pune and Delhi, and all of them said there were "problems on the portal" and that they have raised the issue several times. "It is not only our email communication system that is not working. The problem is that crucial data of recruitment, finances, scientists, research projects and administrative work has vanished from the server and replication server," said a senior scientist.

When contacted, M L Jat, Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education, and Director General of ICAR, told The Indian Express: "A few months back, there was some hacking of our website. Presently, everything is normal. The Ministry has constituted a committee in a follow-up of our

data policy. That is a continuous process."

A senior member of the Council's Knowledge Management division said: "Our website icar.org.in was restored in mid-May this year but another website icar.gov.in is still not working."

The ICAR, which marked its 97th Foundation Day in New Delhi on July 16, describes itself as an organisation that "has been spearheading agricultural research, education and extension activities for productivity enhancement and diversification of Indian agriculture".

Sources said the affected data was mainly related to Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board (ASRB), Indian Agricultural Statistics Research Institute (IASRI) and National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM), all of which function under ICAR.

R C Agrawal, who was also acting director at NAARM, said, "I am superannuated now. I cannot comment." IASRI director Rajendra Prasad declined to comment. An official in NAARM said, "We are aware of this data disruption and are facing problems. But I can't tell you anything else."

According to sources, the security breach was raised during the Annual General Meeting of the ICAR Society, chaired by Union Agriculture Minister Shrivraj Singh Chouhan, in Delhi on July 7. Chouhan subsequently directed the formation of the six-member committee to be headed by Dr K Yadava, DDG (Crop Sciences), ICAR.

Yadava did not respond to requests from The Indian Express for comment. A member of the committee said, "We are yet to hold a meeting as we are busy with several things. But we are planning to have one soon."

India-UK: Deal's Done

Starmer called it the most important deal after Brexit for the UK. Both the leaders had, on May 6, announced the successful conclusion of negotiations. The joint goal of the two countries is to double the bilateral trade in goods and services by 2030 from \$56 billion now, India's Commerce and Industry Ministry said.

The signing of the agreement comes weeks after the UK became the first country to finalise a trade deal with the US in early May. India is also aggressively pursuing a deal with the US. Just last week, commerce ministry officials concluded an extended round of talks in Washington D.C., with the next round scheduled for mid-August. India hopes to finalise an interim trade pact with the US by August 1, the date Trump's reciprocal tariffs will kick in.

Elaborating on what the deal means for India, Modi said, "For the people and industry of India, products made in the UK, such as medical devices and aerospace parts – will be available at accessible and affordable rates. The agreement will prove particularly beneficial for India's youth, farmers, fishermen, and MSME sector."

In a statement, the UK government said the deal would in-

crease bilateral trade between the two countries by nearly 39 per cent in the long run – this is equivalent to \$34.5 billion a year, when compared to 2040 projected levels of trade in the absence of an agreement.

India's merchandise exports to the UK rose by 12.6 per cent to \$14.5 billion in 2024–25, while imports grew 2.3 per cent to \$8.6 billion. The India-UK deal unlocks tariff-free access on 99 per cent of Indian exports to the UK, covering nearly 100 per cent of trade value – including labour-intensive sectors, the Indian Commerce and Industry Ministry said.

Consumers in India are expected to benefit from improved access to a variety of British products – from soft drinks and cosmetics to cars and medical devices – as average tariffs will drop from 15 per cent to 3 per cent.

Also, 45 per cent of India's merchandise exports to the UK will not attract any duty, giving a boost to labour-intensive sectors such as textiles and leather, according to New Delhi-based think-tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI).

In terms of concessions, India will first halve the duty on Scotch whisky from the UK to 75 per cent and then to 40 per cent over

10 years. In what is seen as a landmark move, duties on automobiles will be cut in a phased manner. As per the deal, India will lower import duties on British cars over 15 years to just 10 per cent from more than 100 per cent for luxury cars. However, the reduced rate of tariff will apply only to 10,000 units, which will rise to 19,000 in the fifth year.

India has excluded several high-sensitivity agricultural products from any tariff concessions. This includes dairy, fresh apples, walnuts, whey and modified whey, blue-veined cheese, and specific seed categories such as vegetable seeds and sugar beet seed. The UK had excluded various meat products and egg-based items, among others, from discussions.

"This CETA marks a milestone in the trade relations between two major economies, setting an ambitious and balanced framework," Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said.

Movement of people

Mobility of workers, which had been a bone of contention as India sought improved access for its services sector amid heightened sensitivities in a post-Brexit UK, saw both countries engaging in some give and take. The agree-

ment ensures no caps on the number of UK service providers, although India maintained some regulatory carve-outs, such as in legal services, taxation, and national security. New Delhi-based think-tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

"In contrast, the UK's services offer to India is more cautious and limited in scope. While it grants commercial presence rights in sectors like computer services, consultancy, and environmental services, its commitments on professional mobility are modest," GTRI said.

The UK has created an annual quota of 1,800 for temporary entry of traditional chefs, classical musicians, and yoga instructors, although no binding commitment has been made on broader visa categories, including business visitors or IT professionals, GTRI said.

In addition to the trade agreement, a consensus was also reached on the Double Contributions Convention, under which workers from India and the UK temporarily working in the other country for up to three years will only have to make social security contributions in their home countries. "This will inject new energy into the service sectors of both countries, especially in technology and finance. It will promote ease of doing business, reduce the cost of doing business, and increase the confidence of doing business," Modi said. The UK economy would benefit from India's skilled talent and enhance investment and generate

new employment opportunities in both countries.

India's services exports to the UK rose 16 per cent in 2024 to £14.7 billion, according to data from the Office of National Statistics, while services imports from the UK were flat at £10.1 billion.

Vision 2035, defence roadmap

India and the UK Thursday also unveiled a Vision 2035 document to give "new momentum and energy" to the strategic partnership between the two countries over the coming decade, Modi said. The roadmap will form the basis of a "strong, trustworthy, and ambitious partnership" in the fields of technology, defence, climate, education, and people-to-people connectivity, he added.

Defence industrial roadmap has also been drawn up for partnership in defence and security, with work to also continue on strengthening the technology security initiative, with the Indian Prime Minister saying the countries were committed to creating a future together in the fields of artificial intelligence to critical minerals and semiconductors to cybersecurity.

"I would be remiss not to mention cricket when India and the UK are coming together, especially during a Test series. For both of us, cricket is not just a game, but a passion and also a great metaphor for our partnership. There may be a swing, a miss at times, but we always play

with a straight bat. We are committed to building a high-scoring, solid partnership. The agreements concluded today and Vision 2035 are milestones which advance this very spirit."

United against terrorism

Modi and Starmer also shared views on peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, and the situation in West Asia.

Thanking Starmer for the British government's "strong condemnation" of the terrorist attack in Pahalgam on April 22, Modi said the two countries were united in their view that there was no place for double standards in the fight against terrorism and that extremist ideologies could not be allowed to mislead democratic freedoms. Modi also invited Starmer to India, saying he was looking forward to hosting him "very, very soon".

Commenting on the trade agreement, UK Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds said the deal puts the UK in the best position to partner with India over the next decade and promises to unlock thousands of jobs and boost growth across both economies.

"The nearly £6 billion in new investment and export wins announced today are a sign of things to come, as future collaboration expands into advanced technologies, critical minerals, green finance, and beyond," he said.

• **Social security**

Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) that covers nearly 100 per cent of trade value between India and the UK. The DCC ensures employees moving between the two countries and their employers will only have to pay social security contributions in one country at a time. For temporary workers, the DCC ensures that "fragmentation of their social security record" does not occur, the UK government said on Thursday.

According to PM Narendra Modi, the DCC will inject "new energy" into the Indian and UK services sectors, particularly in technology and finance. It will promote ease of doing business, reduce the cost of doing business, and increase the confidence of doing business. Additionally, UK's economy would benefit from India's skilled talent. These agreements will enhance investments and generate new employment opportunities in both countries.

India has finally opened its doors to high-end British cars and whisky, albeit in a phased manner. The India-UK Free Trade Agreement ensures comprehensive market access for goods across all sectors, covering all of India's export interests. India will benefit from tariff elimination on approximately 99 per cent of tariff lines, covering nearly 100 per cent of trade value – offering opportunities to boost bilateral trade between India and the UK, according to the Commerce and Industry Ministry.

The pact includes chapters on goods, services, innovation, government procurement, and intellectual property rights. The two countries have also concluded negotiations on the Double Contribution Convention or social security pact, which would help avoid double contributions to social security funds by Indian professionals working for a limited period in Britain. However, talks on the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) are still ongoing.

India's exports to the UK rose by 12.6 per cent to \$14.5 billion, while imports grew by 2.3 per cent to \$8.6 billion in 2024–25. Bilateral trade between India and the UK increased to \$21.34 billion in 2023–24 from \$20.36 billion in 2022–23.

The exemption on insurance payments to Indian employees temporarily working in the UK has been a source of friction in British politics for years. In 2022, the then Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, had expressed reservations about the trade deal with India, warning that it could lead to greater immigration to the UK, adding that Indians accounted for the largest number of those who overstayed their visas. More recently, after the deal was announced in May, shadow justice secretary Robert Jenrick said the social security contributions exemption was a sign that Starmer put British workers "last". This trade deal means Indian workers here for less than three years will not pay national insurance in the UK. Starmer has hiked national insurance on Brits while giving an exemption to Indian migrants. British workers "come last in Starmer's Britain," he had said on X. However, the UK government said Thursday that the net impact of the DCC on the British economy was "significantly positive" and the cost of the DCC agreement "is likely to be a fraction of the overall deal's economic benefit". It said the DCC will not make it cheaper for UK firms to hire Indian workers and is not seen to have a long-term impact on net migration.

ADCC does not cover access to social security benefits and does not change rules on access to benefits. The UK has agreements similar to the DCC with almost 50 countries. India, meanwhile, has such an understanding with 20 countries. According to British media reports, the exemption for India will cost the British government about £100 million.

As part of the trade deal, T and IT-enabled services, financial and legal services, professional and educational services, and digital trade will get greater access to the UK market. "Indian professionals, including those deployed by companies to work in the UK across all services sectors, professionals deployed on contracts such as archi-

ecture, engineers, chefs, yoga instructors and musicians, will benefit from simplified visa procedures and liberalised entry categories, making it easier for talents to work in the UK," the Commerce Ministry said.

Services trade is key for India as it enjoys a surplus, compared to a heavy deficit when it comes to merchandise trade. In 2024–25, while India had a total merchandise trade deficit of \$287 billion with the rest of the world, it had a services trade surplus of \$189 billion. India's services exports to the UK rose 16 per cent in 2024 to £14.7 billion, according to data from the Office of National Statistics, while services imports from the UK were flat at £10.1 billion.

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The money laundering case stems from at least two CBI FIRs and reports shared by the National Housing Bank, SEBI, the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFR), and Bank of Baroda with the ED, sources said.

Last year, SEBI banned Anil Ambani and 24 other entities – including former key managerial personnel of RHFL – from

the securities market for five years for diversion of funds from the company. SEBI also slapped a Rs 25 crore fine on Anil Ambani for allegedly orchestrating a fraudulent scheme that adversely affected RHFL's stakeholders, as well as confidence in the integrity of governance structures in regulated financial sector entities. The total penalty imposed on Anil Ambani and the other 24 entities works out to over Rs 625 crore.

SEBI is also learnt to have shared its findings with the ED in the case of RHFL. "A dramatic increase in corporate loans by RHFL – from Rs 3,742.60 crore in FY 2017–18 to Rs 8,670.80 crore in FY 2018–19 – is also under the ED lens. Issues of irregular and expedited approvals, process deviations and many other illegalities have been found," the source said.

In 2023, Anil Ambani was questioned by the ED in connection with alleged FEMA violations that surfaced during the Income Tax Department's investigation into his alleged undeclared offshore assets amounting to Rs 800 crore.

(WITH PTI INPUTS)

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source. "In violation of the loan terms, these loans were further diverted to many group companies and shell companies," the source said.

The central agency has also alleged that Reliance Mutual Fund invested around Rs 2,850 crore in AT1 bonds of Yes Bank in a suspected quid pro quo arrangement. "These bonds were eventually written down, and money was siphoned off. This was the money of the public – the mutual fund investors," the source said, adding that the CBI is also investigating this issue.

Another source said that based on information from SEBI, the ED has found that Reliance Infrastructure diverted large sums of money to the group's companies by disguising them as inter-corporate deposits (ICDs), using a related party called 'C Company' that was not previously disclosed. ICDs are short-term loans that companies within the same group often give each other. While legal, they can be used to route funds in ways that escape scrutiny – especially if the transactions aren't properly documented or

disclosed.

"Reliance Infra did not disclose C Company as its related party in order to avoid approval from shareholders and the audit committee. It was also hidden, presumably to circumvent checks and balances imposed on related party transactions as per laws. It has been found that R Infra has taken a haircut of Rs 5,480 crore and only Rs 4 crore has been received in cash. The remaining Rs 6,499 crore has been settled in the form of assignment/transfer of assets/economic rights, mainly in certain discoms. These discoms did not have any business for many years and are not operational. Therefore, there are zero chances of recovery of this amount. The loan diversion in this case is over Rs 10,000 crore," the source said.

The money laundering case stems from at least two CBI FIRs and reports shared by the National Housing Bank, SEBI, the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFR), and Bank of Baroda with the ED, sources said.

Last year, SEBI banned Anil Ambani and 24 other entities – including former key managerial personnel of RHFL – from

Ban on old vehicles: Govt to study impact, may move court for review

SC to decide on fate of Bharat Stage VI vehicles in NCR next week

GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

BASED ON the findings of the Transport and Environment departments on how a ban on end-of-life vehicles (ELVs) would affect the general public and all stakeholders, the Delhi government may move a review petition before the Supreme Court seeking a recall of the order that does not allow diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years to ply in the National Capital Region (NCR), Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsas has said.

"Environment and Transport departments are studying the guidelines, the impact on the public, benefits and consequences on ground and air quality levels... The departments are working on this separately... Once they complete their studies and submit reports, the government will study and take further deci-



During the fuel ban drive in July. File

sion on filing a petition in the court," the minister said.

According to officials, in their reports, the departments will also mention the measures they have undertaken in the last five months to curb air pollution in Delhi, how they have fared and their future plans.

To fight air pollution, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had in 2015 ordered that diesel vehicles older than 10 years and petrol vehicles older than 15 years should not be allowed to run in the NCR. This was subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court in 2018.

The Transport department, in 2021-2022, had started de-registering the old petrol and diesel

vehicles. In 2023, the department launched an enforcement drive against these vehicles that were found parked in public places or plying illegally on roads. However, several vehicle owners moved court, which asked the government to come up with proper guidelines to handle ELVs.

This July, the Delhi government tried to implement a fuel ban on ELVs, but the attempt was met with opposition from the public, following which the move was put on hold.

Citing "critical operational and infrastructural challenges", the government had asked the Centre's Commission for Air Quality Management to put the fuel ban "on hold with immediate effect". Sirsa had said that implementing the ban only in Delhi and not the whole of NCR would "dilute the impact and shift the burden unfairly".

Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena, too, had written to the chief minister, asking the government to move a review petition before the SC against its 2018 order. "How can a vehicle banned as unfit in Delhi run lawfully in other cities? This is against equal treatment," the L-G had said in his letter.

DELHI PROSECUTORS WELFARE ASSOCIATION DATA

Delhi's trial courts running with half the public prosecutors they require

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

DELHI'S TRIAL courts are functioning with just half the public prosecutors they need, data accessed by *The Indian Express* shows.

While 507 posts for public prosecutors, additional public prosecutors, and assistant public prosecutors are sanctioned, just 257 have been filled, i.e., 50.6% data furnished by the Delhi Prosecutors Welfare Association (DPWA) reveals.

This shortage in the number of lawyers who represent the state was flagged by the Delhi High Court a week ago when it directed the state government to start ad-hoc appointment of public prosecutors "to guarantee the smooth functioning of criminal courts".

As per DPWA data, while the sanctioned posts for public prosecutors, additional public prosecutors, and assistant public prosecutors stand at 32,210, and 265, respectively, the total number of posts filled is just 11,131, and 115. (see box)

Data also reveals that 54 assistant public prosecutors are working on a contractual basis.

A week ago, a HC division bench of Chief Justice D K Upadhyaya and Justice Anish Dayal had directed that "neces-

AVAILABILITY OF PROSECUTORS

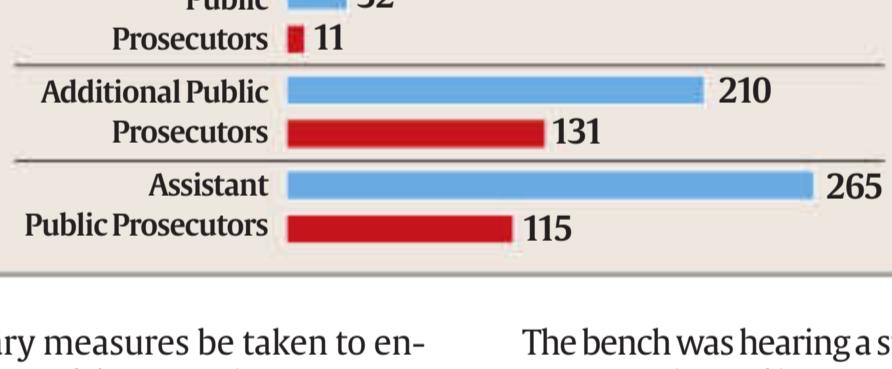
Court complexes	Courts of sessions judge/ASJ	Available Additional PPs	Courts of JMFC	Available additional PP
Tis Hazari	40	35	46	41
Saket	30	25	31	31
Patiala House	9	7	15	14
Karkardooma	34	27	37	33
Rohini	18	14	24	22
Dwarka	16	12	23	21
Rouse Avenue	8	5	5	3
TOTAL	155	124	181	165

ASJ: Additional Sessions Judge

JMFC: Judicial Magistrate First Class

PP: Public Prosecutor

THE GAP



sary measures be taken to ensure ad-hoc appointments are made, pending regular recruitments, to guarantee the smooth functioning of criminal courts and ensure the availability of one public prosecutor for each court".

The bench was hearing a suo motu case registered in 2009 on the prolonged incarceration of undertrial detainees.

DPWA data suggests that there is not even one public prosecutor available per court. While there are 155 courts of additional

sessions judges (Sessions Court), there are only 124 additional public prosecutors available for these. On the other hand, there are only 165 assistant public prosecutors for 181 magistrate (judicial magistrate first class) courts. (see box)

A public prosecutor, on the condition of anonymity, said: "Half of my day goes away in running from one court to the other. Sometimes, a bail hearing is cut short; sometimes, a witness returns unexamined.

"We are also scolded by the judges... it is not our fault that public prosecutors are not being appointed," he added.

"The government is ultimately losing money. They are the ones who spend money on getting witnesses to court. Each time a public prosecutor is unavailable, a witness is returned unexamined and an adjournment takes place... there are thousands of such cases," another public prosecutor told *The Indian Express*.

In December 2023, the then Delhi High Court acting Chief Justice Manmohan had commented on the paucity of prosecutors, saying, "Judges are sitting in chambers and not working because the prosecutor is in another court... The prosecutor goes and does bail in one court and then comes and does evidence in another."

DJB refuses 10% water bill rebate to 119 societies that don't have rainwater harvesting systems

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

THE DELHI JAL BOARD (DJB) informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Wednesday that it has withdrawn the 10% rebate on water bills that 119 cooperative group housing societies in the Capital were to receive, as they do not have functioning rainwater harvesting systems.

The DJB said that it had formally withdrawn the rebate benefit from the housing societies in March. The move came after the board, during its survey and sampling drive, found widespread violations and groundwater contamination in these societies, owing to faulty and neglected rainwater harvesting (RWH) pits.

In January, DJB had submitted a list of 176 societies in Dwarka whose RWH systems were inspected, to the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC). Among these, faecal coliform was detected in 115 societies' pits, and in four others, the RWH systems were found to be non-functional.

The DJB had written to the DPCC, recommending environmental compensation against the defaulting societies, citing violations under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. "In most of

the cases, the contamination is due to non-cleaning of the roof, improper maintenance of RWH structure and connection of surface drains in RWH structures," DJB had stated in its letter.

On March 24, when the DJB formally withdrew the 10% rebate benefit for 119 societies, water disconnection notices were also issued to defaulters. Of these, 55 societies submitted their replies to the board. DJB's subsequent analysis found faecal contamination in 19 of the 55 societies, dry pits in nine, and rectification work underway in five. Two societies lacked any RWH systems, while 12 requested more time or financial help to comply.

The DPCC, in a letter to the DJB in March, confirmed that its own water lab analysis found contamination in several RWH pits, indicating improper sewage discharge and design flaws. It urged the DJB to act against the defaulting societies.

While DJB has submitted an action taken report, the board informed the NGT that a final action report from the DPCC is still awaited. In 2019, the DJB had made RWHs mandatory in all properties above 100 sq m. It offers an additional 5% rebate for societies with functional wastewater recycling systems.

OBITUARY

Maj AD Surve, VrC (Retd), 3/9 GR (CHINDITS) (02 June 1939 – 24 July 2025)

The 9th Gorkha Rifles fraternity expresses deep sorrow on the sad demise of Maj AD Surve, VrC (Retd), the gallant hero of 1965 & 1971 Indo-Pak wars, on 24 July 2025. He was commissioned into 3/9 GR on 04 Jun 1962 and led the troops during both Indo-Pak Wars in 1965 and 1971. The Officer later was superannuated from service on 10 Jun 1973. We stand together with the family in this hour of grief and pray for eternal peace of the departed soul.

Lt Gen Zubin A Minwalla, UYSM, AVSM, YSM, Col 9 GR and All Members of 9th Gorkha Rifles Family

Chandigarh Power Distribution Limited, Chandigarh
SCO 33-35, 4th Floor, Sector 34-A, Chandigarh - 160022, India
CIN: U31200UP1992PLC014506

TENDER NOTICE Date: 25.07.2025

Bids are invited from the eligible bidders for the following tenders

Tender Enquiry No	Tender Description	EMD (in Lakhs)	Due Date & Time of Bid Submission
CPDL/FY25-26/11KV RMU/009	02 Years Rate Contract for the Supply of RMU in Chandigarh, CPDL	8.0	18.08.2025, Up to 17:00 Hr
CPDL/FY25-26/DTW/R/10	02 Years Rate Contract for the Supply of DTR in Chandigarh, CPDL	8.0	18.08.2025, Up to 17:00 Hr
CPDL/FY25-26/66KV CRP/011	02 Years Rate Contract for the Supply of CRP in Chandigarh, CPDL	5.0	18.08.2025, Up to 17:00 Hr

Tender fee of individual Tender Document Rs 1180/- (Incl. GST)

For tender details and further amendment/corrigendum, please visit our website www.chandigarhpower.com/Tenders

Manager (CMM)

Kुर्टेशन नोटिस

हरियाणा राज्य परिवहन, कैथल में वाहनों की सुरक्षा के लिए हार्डवेयर / पैटी आइटम / मिसनेजिंग अपार्टमेंट आइटम्स को अग्रणी एक वर्ष के लिए खरीद की जानी है। इच्छुक स्पष्टावय दिनांक 07-08-2025 तक अपनी सील बंद कुर्टेशन महाप्रबंधक, हरियाणा राज्य परिवहन, कैथल के नाम भेज सकते हैं। जिसके उपर स्ट्रोप आइटम कुर्टेशन लिंक होना अनिवार्य है। स्ट्रोप आइटम की लिंस व अन्य शर्तों के लिए महाप्रबंधक, कार्यालय में संपर्क कर सकते हैं। कुर्टेशन से सम्बंधित सभी दस्तावेज किसी भी कार्यालयों में आकर 100 रुपए मात्र करके उपरान्त उपरान्त राज्य परिवहन, कैथल की एस ०५००० शाखा में प्राप्त कर सकते हैं।

Email:- gmrkraitaal1@gmail.com

Mobile:- 97283-18246, 7015466586

Haryana - महाप्रबंधक,

No.36956/HRY

हरियाणा राज्य परिवहन, कैथल

'Will reduce opportunities for reels': Police request SC to set up special courts in jails to try gangsters

SOHINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

THE DELHI Police Thursday requested the Supreme Court to examine if dedicated court complexes can be established within jail premises to conduct trials in criminal gang-related offences, with charges yet to be framed in over 60% of cases.

In an affidavit filed Wednesday, DCP (Outer North) Hareeshwar V Swami said one of the reasons for the proposal is to reduce "opportunities for generation of reels and other social media content glamourising lives of criminals, which are observed when gang-related criminals are transported from jails to court complexes".

Police also said there would be fewer opportunities or grounds for these criminals to seek bail on grounds of delay, better control over safety and security measures – including for witnesses and accused persons – and "timely invocation of special statutes" such as the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), the National Security Act (NSA), etc, if dedicated court complexes are set up inside jail premises.

Additional Solicitor General S D Sanjay appeared on behalf of the Delhi Police during the hearing on Thursday. In March, the SC had suggested setting up special courts to try such criminals.

The Delhi Police, in its affidavit, said a total of 288 cases are pending against these gang members, with charges yet to be framed in 180 cases. Of the remaining 108 cases, where charges have been framed against criminal gang members, convictions have been secured in only 2% or three cases.

Ten cases have resulted in acquittal or discharge. Over 80% (89) of the 108 cases are currently at the stage of prosecution evidence.

According to the Delhi Police, the average time taken for disposal of 13 cases that resulted in an outcome – either conviction/acquittal/discharge – was two years.

The Delhi Police, in its affidavit, said the trial in cases involving hardened criminals is being delayed deliberately to make time to win over witnesses. It said "there should not be any misplaced sympathy with gangsters" and called for establishing more fast-track courts to expedite such cases.

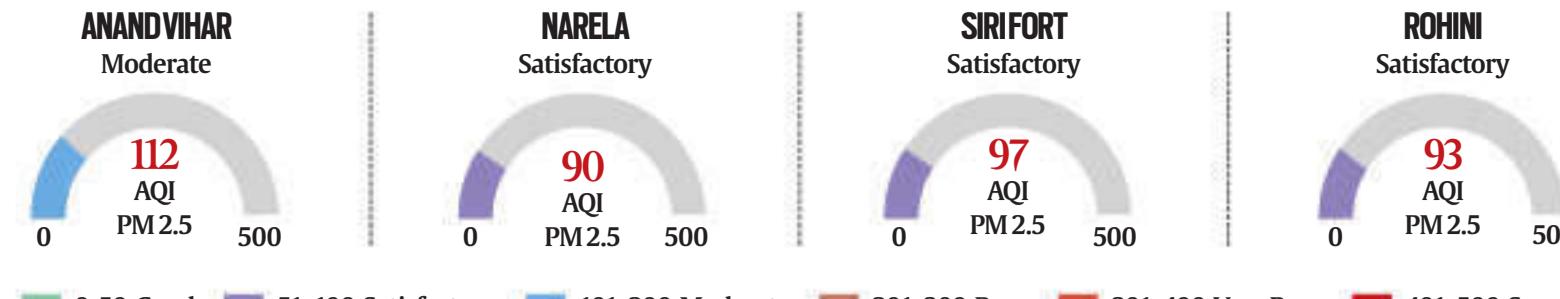
During the hearing, the bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi questioned the law and order scenario in the NCR outside Delhi. "In the NCR, just go out of the geographical belt of

PENDENCY IN TRIAL OF CRIMINAL CASES AGAINST GANGS OPERATING IN CAPITAL

Time	Cases in which charges framed	Cases in which charges not framed
Within 6 months	25	40
6 months to 1 year	15	33
1 year to 2 years	24	40
Above 2 years	44	67
TOTAL	108	180

after the charges were framed.

As per the affidavit, the primary reason for delays in conducting trial proceedings is that presently, "designated courts handle other routine matters such as IPC/BNS offences, EOW matters, ED cases, etc, burdening them with multiple sensitive matters".



SKY WATCH
FORECAST: July 25
Partly cloudy sky; very light to light rain with thunderstorm/lightning

MAX: 35-37
2.1°C above normal

MIN: 24-26
1.3°C below normal

SEVERAL CLAIM THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS DETAINED, ASK: 'WHY DO THEY THINK WE ARE BANGLADESHIS?'

Bengali-speaking migrant workers pack up, leave Gurgaon after police verification scare

ABHIMANYU HAZARIKA
GURGAON, JULY 24

"Hum log bangali bolte hain toh Bangladeshi ban gaye kya (If we speak Bengali, does that make us Bangladeshi)?" said Chavi Bibi (39) as she stared at the 'holding centre' where her husband has been allegedly detained for the last three days.

"Two days ago, I managed to get a glimpse of him, but they closed the gates and windows."

Like Bibi's husband, several families alleged their loved ones were rounded up by the Gurgaon Police as part of a 'routine verification' drive to identify Bangladeshis and Rohingyas living illegally in the city. The move has sparked fear among the Bengali-speaking migrant community — several have left the city or are preparing to leave.

The 'holding centre' was inside a community centre in Sector 40. Along the boundary walls were a few policemen — some sat on chairs, others were making rounds. Asked why people were being rounded up, one of the police officers said, "It is a routine check. All the facilities are there inside — food, water and shelter. They will be let go once the checks are complete."

Keeping vigil at the gate, Bibi recounted how her husband was picked up. "They came around 2 pm a week ago when we were eating. They did not even let him change into proper clothes. They did not tell us where he was for three days. Then I got a call from him saying he was in Badshahpur, then Sohna, then Subhash Chowk, then here. He was picked



At Bengali Market in Sector 49, migrant workers from West Bengal were leaving their slum in panic; (right) Chavi Bibi outside the 'holding centre' in Sector 40, where her husband has been kept for at least the last three days. Abhimanyu Hazarika

up because he had two Aadhaar cards, one with an updated address as he had to link it to a bank account here," she alleged.

"Our sarpanch back home called me, saying they have sought verification for your husband... We have all documents."

The family said they are from Maldia in West Bengal. Bibi works as a cook in homes while her husband does odd jobs, including walking dogs. The couple has two daughters, aged 17 and 9.

A police spokesperson said that eight Bangladeshis have been detected in the exercise so far and they will be deported.

Another resident said the raids have affected their children too. "We were first taken to a community centre near Shani Mandir, then to a station. If there is even one typo in our documents, they tag us Bangladeshis. For three days, our children have not gone to school once we got to know our community is being targeted," said Dholu Mia, 42.

Mehta Ali, 50, originally from Dakshin Dinajpur district, said migrant workers like him have lived here for at least three years.

"Pura darr ka mahaul hain (There is fear in the air). 150 of us

have already left. I have also booked train tickets for my family and I; we will leave today. No one was detained from here but still..."

Videos circulating online allegedly showing detainees being beaten have heightened fears among the community. "Have we come here to get beaten? We came here looking for work, not to fight over our documentary proof. We stay awake all night now, alert. My brother-in-law has been detained for nine days," alleged Farukh Sarkar, 26.

The slum's male residents are masons and labourers, while the women are domestic help.

Another resident said the raids have affected their children too. "We were first taken to a community centre near Shani Mandir, then to a station. If there is even one typo in our documents, they tag us Bangladeshis. For three days, our children have not gone to school once we got to know our community is being targeted," said Dholu Mia, 42.

At the Yadav Chaupal area in Sector 28 in Chakarpur, Adam Ali (38) said he was picked up late Sunday night and released early Wednesday morning. "Even though we had Aadhaar cards, they questioned and held us for three days, including at the Sector 40 community centre," he said.

Mansoora Khutun, 32, and Tumpa Bibi, 30, whose male family members were detained, said they haven't been able to rest peacefully at night: "We are from West Bengal. Why do the police think we are Bangladeshis?"

At Bengali Market in Sector 49, migrant workers from West Bengal were leaving their slum in panic, having packed their luggage and booked train tickets. The area hosts a sizeable num-

ber of migrants from the state; men work as sanitation workers and women as domestic help.

Police, however, maintained that the drive is being carried out based on government orders.

According to the police spokesperson, "We received directives from the Union Home Ministry for the verification exercise of suspected foreigners living illegally. We are verifying documents and antecedents of people from their local District Magistrate concerned."

"Genuine citizens need not fear or flee the city; there is no need to panic."

He also denied allegations of violence against those held. "We have CCTVs at all holding centres and stations where they are being questioned. We have not received any complaint from any family member or those held."

Gurgaon DCP (Headquarters) Dr Arpit Jain said due process is being thoroughly followed. "This is an all-India exercise. Many have already been released promptly after swift verification."

Gurgaon MLA and BJP leader Mukesh Sharma supported the verification drive. "The Rohingya have negatively affected the law and order situation in Gurgaon, we all know. They set up jhuggis (here) and their numbers increase, they have a system to get documents made."

Asked about domestic help who are genuine citizens belonging to West Bengal being picked up, he said, "See, as directions have come from the (Union) government, we have to support the drive. The government and police are working based on their intel; let the checking be thorough."

'52 from West Bengal detained in Haryana'

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
KOLKATA, JULY 24

AT LEAST 52 people from West Bengal have been detained in Haryana on suspicion of being illegal migrants from Bangladesh, sources in the state government said. Most of those detained hail from Nadia, Murshidabad, and Malda districts, they added.

"We had six to seven door-to-door collectors... They spoke Bengali and had all documents. Out of fear, they have stopped coming for the past 8-10 days; some have headed home. We are now struggling to train the new staff we had to hire, to get garbage cleared on time. It is like Covid all over again," said Kusum Sharma, Residents' Welfare Association (RWA) member of Suncity township in Sector 54 along the Golf Course Road.

"This arrangement has been in place for six years. Why was this sudden crackdown carried out without putting in place alternative measures?" she added.

"Even domestic help are scared to come to work now."

The situation is similar in Sector 23A. RWA General Secretary Bhawani Shankar Tripathy said door-to-door waste collection has been disrupted for more than a week now.

"The day the police operation began, they (workers) disappeared. The cart operators, who were Bengali speaking, are gone... the one remaining vehicle operator is overwhelmed and effectively works on alternate days now... Waste is piling up in vacant plots and greenbelts areas."

Meanwhile, TMC MPs plan to highlight the issue of detention of Bengali-speaking migrants in the ongoing Monsoon session of Parliament.



Garbage at Block F, Sector 23A. Express

newal, now comprises only two women. It is humanly impossible for two people to clean 2 km every day. They manage only 300-500m daily, alternating sections. Even the parkdustbins are overflowing now, as people have started dumping their waste there."

RWAs like Ardee City in Sector 52, which house 2,500 families, have arranged for their own pickup truck with four new workers. "Our 12 earlier door-to-door collectors have fled. We have now invested in a public announcement system, and coordinate through WhatsApp as to when the truck reaches a lane so people can come to give the garbage," said Chaitali Mandhotra, Ardee City RWA member.

Speaking with *The Indian Express*, Municipal Corporation of Gurugram Commissioner Pradeep Dahiya acknowledged that sanitation operations in some areas had initially been affected.

"We have been swiftly deploying alternative arrangements (in terms of workforce) that were already in place. The issue is being faced by those sectors that had arrangements with private players who would employ (migrant workers) from the informal sector," he said.

CM rolls out new health system for govt hospitals

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

PATIENTS CAN now make doctor's appointments, get lab reports, view and pay their medical bills at Delhi's government hospitals — all through a single digital platform, said Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta as she digitally inaugurated the Hospital Information Management System (HIMS) on Thursday.

"Appointments can be scheduled from home, eliminating long queues. Once a patient presents their health card, treatment can begin immediately," she said.

Along with the HIMS, Gupta also launched 34 new Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, and 8 new Jan Aushadhi Kendras (JAKs).

Addressing the event at the Delhi Secretariat, the CM said over 93 lakh ABHA IDs (Ayushman Bharat Health Account IDs) have also been created, providing every resident with a digital health card. "This card will allow citizens to access medical services in any hospital, anywhere, based on their medical history," she noted.

While inaugurating the Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, the CM said, the new centres will soon be dedicated to the public by MLAs in their respective constituencies.

The government is planning to open 15 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs in every constituency operating as primary health centres, offering multiple lab tests and essential services, she added.

The event also saw Health Minister Dr Pankaj Kumar Singh announcing the government's plans to establish 1,139 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs across the Capital.

The CM also claimed that corruption in medicine procurement has been effectively eliminated. "All purchases are now processed digitally. We addressed the issue of overpriced medicines earlier by opening Jan Aushadhi Kendras. To strengthen healthcare delivery, we have also initiated permanent recruitment. Over 1,350 nursing positions that had remained vacant for over a decade have now been filled," she added.

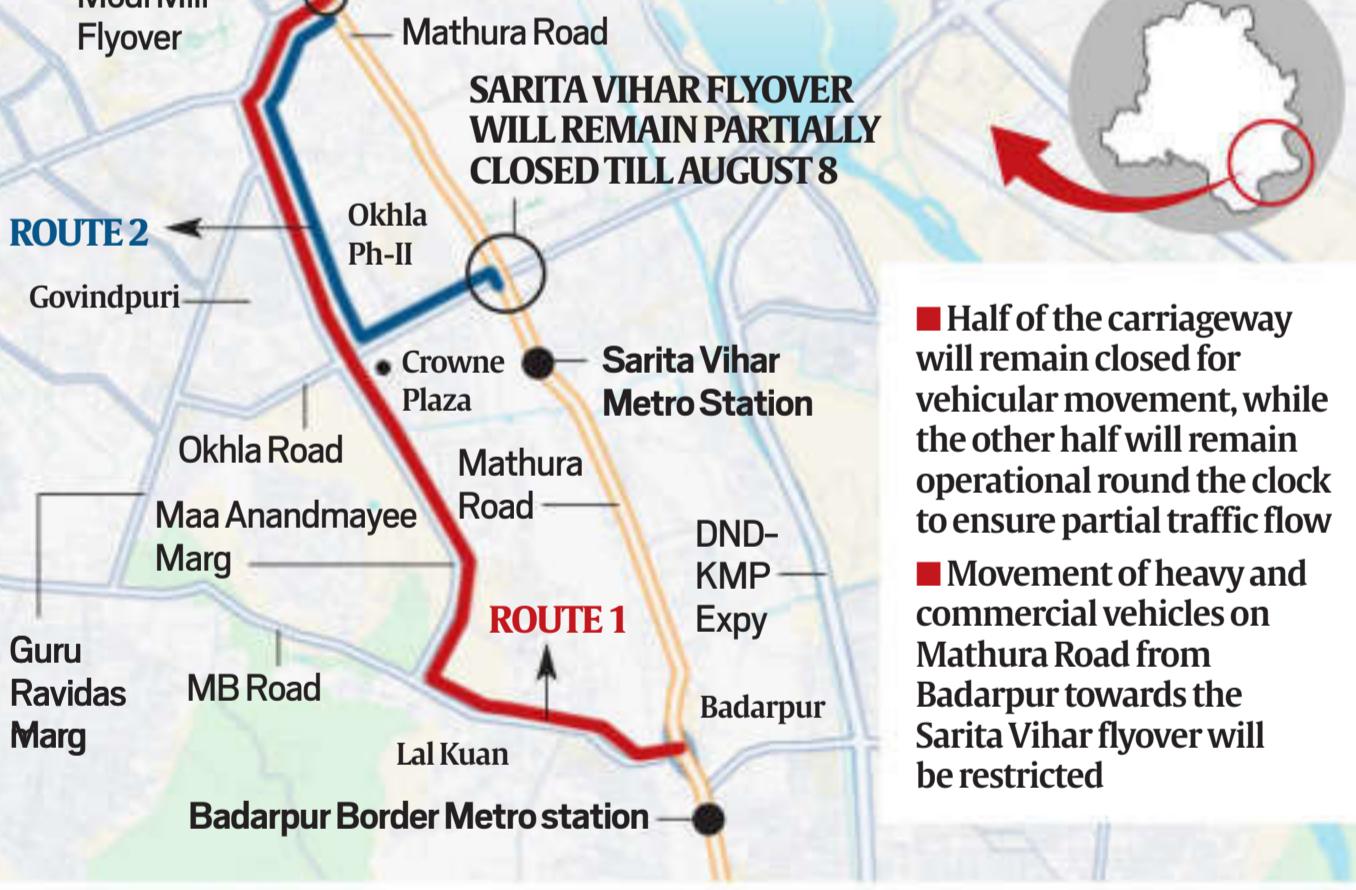
TRAFFIC CURBS STARTING TODAY

Sarita Vihar flyover repairs to finally begin

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES FOR COMMUTERS

Sarita Vihar flyover will remain partially closed till Aug 8. Vehicles coming from Badarpur border and heading towards Ashram via Mathura Road may use the following routes:



morning asking commuters to make prior arrangements and plan their journey in advance.

Traffic officials said move-

ment of heavy and commercial vehicles on Mathura Road from Badarpur towards the Sarita Vihar flyover will be restricted.

The Kalindi Kunj road and Sarita Vihar flyover had recently faced heavy traffic owing to the Kanwar Yatra.

Gole Market restoration set to begin, brace for traffic curbs for 6 months beginning today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

HERE IS THE ADVISORY

■ Traffic movement will be restricted in both directions between the Gole Market roundabout and Bhai Veer Singh Marg.

■ Access to Bhai Veer Singh Marg will still be available via Kali Bari Marg, GPO roundabout, and specific service lanes.

■ Vehicles coming from Shaheed Bhagat Singh Marg (Outer Connaught Circle) will be required to take a right at Gole Market roundabout and proceed via Peshwa Road or RK Ashram Marg.

■ Vehicles heading towards Gole Market roundabout via Gole Market roundabout from Mandir Marg must use Kali Bari Marg.

■ For heavy vehicles, the recommended alternative route is Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Road via Talkatora roundabout.

■ Traffic approaching the GPO roundabout from RK Ashram Marg must follow the Panchkuijan Marg-Bangla Lane-Peshwa Road route.

■ Vehicles will only be allowed in designated parking zones. Parking on service lanes near Gole Market roundabout and Udyam Marg will be prohibited.

achievers from different spheres. The market, which had fallen into disrepair after being closed for over a decade, will be retrofitted with conservation efforts at a projected cost of Rs 21.66 crore, an NDMC statement said last year.

Authorities have warned that additional traffic diversions or regulations may be implemented in accordance with evolving on-ground requirements and the progress of construction work.

Commuters are encouraged to avoid the affected stretches altogether and use public transport where possible to ease congestion.

The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) is also considering modifying certain bus routes to help bypass the construction zone and maintain the smooth flow of public transportation.

Passengers heading to crucial transit points like IGI Airport, New Delhi Railway Station, or ISBTs are urged to plan their journeys in advance, said officials.

At Miranda House — consistently ranked among DU's top five colleges by the National Institutional Ranking Framework — between 40% to 60% students of Science stu-

dents have chosen to exit the undergraduate programme after three years. In Humanities, the figure is notably lower, with only 25%-35% of students of Political Science and History choosing to leave.

In the Commerce stream, too, not many are opting for the fourth year.

At Shri Ram College of Commerce, the most-preferred DU college, only 170 of 900 BCom (Honours) and 74 of 210 Economics (Honours) students are opting for the fourth year. Archive

Mathematics (6). By comparison, in BSc Programme Physical Sciences (with Chemistry), 38 students have chosen to leave.

The contrast is sharper when Languages are considered. While Hindi and Sanskrit have seen two students each opting out, four students have decided not to pursue Urdu, suggesting a stronger interest in research among students.

Kiroli Mal College Principal Dinesh Khattar said the mixed response was understandable. "It is quite natural for students to have a little insecurity. This is the first batch. They are bound to have doubts," he said.

"So far, it looks like a 50-50 split across courses, but these numbers might change in the coming week."

At Ramjas College, Principal Ajay Arora said, "About 45-50 students would like to continue with the fourth year. This percentage is almost consistent across every course, including Humanities, Sciences, and Languages." He added that more than 50% of Chemistry students are staying on.

The principal from a prominent North Campus college admitted that students of Sciences are harder to retain for the fourth year.

Many of them are either taking up jobs or opting for MA programmes elsewhere... Interestingly, students of Languages are showing more interest in research."

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Join FREE Telegram Channel <https://t.me/+BuZenHpQdhIOdg1>

IN PARLIAMENT MONSOON SESSION

BRIEFLY

Rajya Sabha bids farewell to 6 members from TN

New Delhi: Rajya Sabha Thursday bid farewell to six members from Tamil Nadu who retired Thursday. DMK's M Mohamed Abdulla, M Shanmugam and P Wilson; AIADMK MP N Chandrasegharan, and MDMK MP Vaiko delivered their farewell speeches as party leaders in the House recalled their contributions. DMDK MP Anbumani Ramadoss who also retired was not present in the House. Wilson has been re-elected for a second term, which will start Friday. Deputy Chairman Harivansh said: "Each one of these members has contributed meaningfully to the deliberations of the House, bringing with them diverse experiences, perspectives and a deep sense of commitment to public service and democratic values." ENS

371 posts of judges vacant in various high courts: Govt

New Delhi: A total of 371 posts of judges are vacant in various HCs and HC collegiums have not sent any recommendation yet for more than 50% of these vacancies, RS was informed Thursday. The government said while HCs are required to make recommendations at least 6 months before occurrence of a vacancy, this time limit is "rarely observed". In a written reply to a question by Lop Mallikarjun Kharge, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said that as on July 18, against sanctioned strength of 1,122 judges, 751 are working and 178 proposals for appointment are at various stages of processing between government and the SC Collegium, Meghwal said. Recommendations for 193 vacancies are yet to be received from HC collegiums, he said. PTI

3 types of small modular reactors being developed

New Delhi: India is developing three types of small modular reactors mostly in the form of captive plants for energy-intensive industries, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said Thursday. "In-principle approval has been obtained for construction of these demonstration reactors. These demonstration reactors are likely to be constructed in 60 to 72 months after receipt of administrative sanction," he said in a written reply to RS. PTI

No plan to remove 'socialist', 'secular' from the Preamble, says Law Minister

Govt hasn't initiated any legal process to remove the words: Meghwal in RS

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

UNION Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal acknowledged in Rajya Sabha Thursday that "certain groups" were advocating for the removal of the words "socialist" and "secular" from the Preamble to the Constitution, but said that the government did not have any current plan or intention to do so.

In a written reply to a question raised by SP MP Ramji Lal Suman, Meghwal had sought Meghwal's response on whether "office-bearers of some social organisations" were creating an "atmosphere" for the removal of the two words from the Preamble.

Making a distinction between the call by the RSS leader and the government's position, Meghwal said: "The Indian government has not formally initiated any legal or constitutional process to remove the words 'socialist' and 'secular' from the Preamble of the Constitution. While there may be discussions or debates in certain public or political circles, no formal decision or proposal has been announced by the government regarding amendments to these terms."

REPLY IN LS TO QUESTIONS FROM SP, CONG MPs

Govt: Change in JJM guidelines in 2022 after states' request

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS seeking answers from the government over increase in the cost of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) works due to change in norms in June 2022, Union MoS for Jal Shakti V Somanna said Thursday that JJM operational guidelines were changed after considering requests from various states seeking central support for meeting additional cost of raw materials which increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

In a written reply to a question from SP member Anand Bhadauria, Somanna informed the LS, "Considering the requests from various states seeking central support for meeting additional cost of raw materials increased due to Covid-19 pandemic and Russia-Ukraine crisis, requisite amendments were made in operational guidelines of the mission with effect from 21.06.2022 for sustaining the pace of implementation during mission period."

Earlier, this month, Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil said that the Centre has stopped the payment of tender premium under the rural tap water scheme.

Responding to a question raised by The Indian Express during 'Idea Exchange', Patil said, "Tender premium ka bhugtan humne rok diya hai. Jo thha, jo gaya hogा woh alag baat hai, magar jo hain usse poori tarah hamne rok diya hai (We have stopped the payment of tender premium).

What was there, what has gone is a different matter, but what is new has been completely stopped."

In a written reply to a question from Congress MP Praniti Shinde, Somanna said that Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech 2025-26 has announced extension of JJM until 2028 with "enhanced total outlay". "A proposal for continuation of JJM until 2028 with enhanced total outlay is under consideration of the Government," Somanna said.

tions. This resulted in additional costs totalling ₹16,839 crore for 14,586 schemes, an increase of 14.58% from their estimated cost. At the time of the revision of the guidelines in June 2022, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat was heading the Jal Shakti Ministry.

The payment of tender premium – the additional amount a bidder quotes higher than the government's approved cost – was prohibited in the original JJM guidelines in 2019. However, on June 21, 2022, the Jal Shakti Ministry, with the approval of "competent authority", made a crucial change in these guidelines.

The ministry defined the "approved cost" and deleted two words "tender premium" from the suggestive list of inadmissible expenses. This paved the way for payment of tender premiums.

Earlier, this month, Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil said that the Centre has stopped the payment of tender premium under the rural tap water scheme.

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Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal in LS, Thursday. PTI

Join FREE Telegram Channel <https://t.me/+jUYKq0AFHBAwMGQ1> to get the official stance or actions of the government."

The minister also cited a Supreme Court decision in November 2024 in Dr Balram Singh and others Vs Union of India, in which the court dismissed petitions challenging the 42nd Constitutional amendment.

"The court clarified that 'socialism' in the Indian context signifies a welfare state and does not impede private sector growth, while 'secularism' is in-

as of now, the government has not initiated any formal process to change these provisions."

Though it was a starred question and Meghwal was present in the Upper House, it was not taken up as the proceedings were adjourned due to disruptions when Question Hour began.

On June 26, Hosabale, while speaking at the launch of a book on the 50th anniversary of the Emergency imposed by the Indira Gandhi government in 1975, called on the Congress to apologise for the Emergency and asserted that there should be a discussion on removing the words "socialist" and "secular" added to the Preamble through the 42nd amendment in 1976.

"No attempt was made to remove them (socialist and secular) later. So, there should be a discussion on whether they should remain. I say this in a building (Ambedkar International Centre) named after Babasaheb Ambedkar, whose Constitution did not have these words in the Preamble," he said at the event.



NIKAM ENTERS RS

Ujjwal Nikam, who was Special Public Prosecutor in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks case, with Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh after taking oath on Thursday. PTI



Opposition members protest in Lok Sabha on Thursday. PTI

As Opp keeps up protest against SIR, both Houses adjourned for day

Banging tables not tradition of your party, Birla tells Venugopal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

AMID PERSISTENT protests from Opposition against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar, both Houses of Parliament were adjourned for the fourth day Thursday.

In the morning, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla appealed to Opposition members to maintain decorum after they raised slogans and also displayed placards.

Birla said, "... You are members of such an old political party, which has contributed to this House and its decorum. The people from your party will see your behaviour in the House. You bring placards, raise slogans, bang tables. This is not as per decorum."

Mentioning Congress MP KC Venugopal, Birla said, "This is the biggest democracy. What kind of message are you sending to the country's democratic institutions? ... Bringing placards, banging tables, these are not traditions of your party... People have not sent you here to bring placards, and bang tables." Amid the din, Birla adjourned the proceedings in less than seven minutes.

When the LS reconvened at 2

pm, Krishna Prasad Tenneti, who was in the Chair, urged MPs to participate in a discussion on the Bill. The Readjustment of Representation of Scheduled Tribes in Assembly Constituencies of the State of Goa Bill, 2024, which seeks to provide seats for STs in the Goa Assembly.

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal questioned the Opposition for not allowing discussion. "The Opposition is not cooperating. It means they do not want to discuss the issues in the interests of STs," he said. As the protests continued, proceedings were adjourned for the day.

In the RS, Deputy Chairman Harivansh adjourned the House till 2 pm amid protests by Opposition. When the House sat again, Bhuvaneswar Kalita, who was in the Chair, urged the MPs to begin a discussion on the Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill but amid sloganising by Opposition members, proceedings were adjourned within 15 minutes.

AIADMK's Thambidurai and YSRCP's Alla Ayyodhya Ram Reddy spoke on the Bill but were barely audible amid slogans. BJP MP Laxmikant Bajpai urged the Chair to take action against the Opposition MPs under Rule 235 (ii). Congress's Pramod Tiwari said LoP Mallikarjun Kharge should be allowed to speak. "... The LoP is on his feet but you are not giving him a chance to speak, nor are you giving any assurance..." The Chair then adjourned the House.

5 QUESTIONS
BJP LOK SABHA MP RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD TALKS TO VIKAS PATHAK ABOUT THE RUCKUS IN PARLIAMENT OVER S.I.R IN BIHAR

Why Congress, Opp shying away from a debate?

What do you have to say about the Opposition's uproar over Bihar voter rolls revision?

The Opposition has the right to ask questions, including occasionally creating ruckus as well. But how long will it continue? (LoP, Lok Sabha) Rahul Gandhi says he is not being allowed to speak but his party is in the forefront of creating chaos in the House. Why is Congress and the Opposition shying away from a debate on any issue?... We go and sit and come back. It is agonising, painful and disgusting, to say the least. The whole nation watches us. You can question us in any powerful debate and make us uncomfortable, and we are

equally competent to reply to all your debates to make you uncomfortable. Why don't you allow the debate to happen? And then you complain – 'meri awaaz shaant ki jaati hai' (my voice is being silenced).

Why is the debate not being taken up?

The larger question is: are they interested in debate? Every debate has to be structured as per Parliamentary rules. Has 16 hours not been allocated for the Operation Sindo debate, with nine hours in the Rajya Sabha? That is the way the House functions. You ask for a debate, it will be accepted, it will be prepared. You unleash a big attack, we will respond... As far as SIR is concerned, I will

raise some questions. To be a voter you have to be a citizen of India – can the EC examine it or not? To be a voter you have to be an ordinary resident of an area. Can the EC examine that or not? Today there are lakhs of votes of people who are dead or have migrated to other areas... What is the problem if these things are being examined by the EC? They (Opposition) sometimes claim

there is a faulty voter list. And now when revision is being done, they have a problem. Once the draft publication is done, you have a right to file objections, to appeal to the collector, to file a second appeal for revision before the Chief Electoral Officer. So many mechanisms are available.

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav has said the Mahagathbandhan may take a call to 'boycott Bihar polls' in view of the SIR exercise?

I believe that is a casual comment. I will only tell him, 'young man, don't shy away from a fight'. As for Rahul Gandhi's venomous attack on EC, I will say one thing in Hindi: 'Agar aap ko vote nahn milta to hum'

kya karen (What do we do if people don't vote for you)?

Even JD(U) MP Giridhar Yadav has questioned the SIR exercise...

I don't want to make any comments on individual members. I know that Nitish Kumar, the whole JD(U) and the entire NDA is one.

Some critics say in a state like Bihar the exercise can be a huge inconvenience and end up disenfranchising many voters.

Haven't 98% of people already filled out the form? Or maybe 99%? Just tell me. People know their rights, people know their obligations and they are following it.

As Jagdeep Dhankhar exits as Vice-President, where will the chips fall?

THE NEERJA CHOWDHURY COLUMN

Weekly insight into what's changing in national politics – and why

THE MORE you look at it, the clearer it becomes. The resignation of Jagdeep Dhankhar as Vice-President is for reasons other than indifferent health.

Though the now former Vice-President has had health problems of late – he fainted in Uttarakhand in June and was hospitalised with a heart ailment in March – had medical reasons been the decisive factor, the announcement would have been made differently and not on the V-P's X-handle at the end of an action-packed day that saw him preside over the Rajya Sabha and the Business Advisory Council.

As information filters in, it is evident that the resignation would not have come about had there not been serious differences between Dhankhar and the top government leadership. This was a big shift from last December, when the Opposition, accusing him of being partisan in his impossibly outspoken and sometimes brash manner, filed a notice to move an impeachment resolution against him.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's words of farewell to Dhankhar also told their own story. In a concise statement, the PM, wishing him well, spoke of the "many opportunities" Dhankhar had received to serve the country in "various capacities". There was no mention of his contributions.

Unlike the Congress that suddenly found a new love for Dhankhar – the party's communications chief Jairam Ramesh urged him to reconsider the decision, though senior leader P

Chidambaram clarified it was not the official position – the government lost no time in accepting his resignation and formally notifying it within hours. There was also no intimation of a farewell for the man whom the ruling alliance had effusively welcomed as "kisan putra (farmer's son)" after his election in 2022.

The alacrity with which Dhankhar, as Rajya Sabha Chairman, accepted the Opposition's notice on July 20 to remove Justice Yashwant Varma – wads of cash were found at the High Court judge's Delhi home in March – is said to have not sat well with the government. Dhankhar's decision, about which he is learnt to have not consulted the government, was seen as an attempt to upstage the BJP's plan to bring the motion in the Lok Sabha along with Opposition MPs. Though the motion to remove a judge can be initiated in either House of Parliament, the government had hoped that the removal



Jagdeep Dhankhar resigned on July 21

of the judge would be by "consensus" and not viewed as partisan.

Dhankhar accepting the Opposition notice had the fat in the fire. On the evening of July 21, BJP leaders met groups of ruling party MPs, with murmurs abound that Dhankhar had exceeded his brief. The day ended with his resignation.

Perhaps not the sole reason for Dhankhar's exit, this was probably the last straw that broke the camel's back. Some who met the now former V-P in recent weeks say he spoke critically of the ruling party's leadership, and the words must have reached them. The larger-than-life profile he had acquired with his outspo

kenness, particularly his criticism of the judiciary, and the tendency to be frequently in the headlines, are also said to have not gone down well with the BJP brass.

At the end of the day, it is believed that the BJP could not risk the Rajya Sabha slipping out of its control with important legislation on the cards. As the Rajya Sabha Chairman, the V-P has enormous powers even as he is required to move in step with the ruling party. The Chairman cannot be in conflict with the government and also has to take the Opposition along.

This became increasingly difficult for Dhankhar to navigate as time went on, as he was seen as partis and polarising. Since the Opposition's attempt to introduce the no-confidence motion, Dhankhar tried to reach out to them. He was photographed with leading Opposition figures, including Arvind Kejriwal, and having meetings with Mallikarjun Kharge. On what turned out to be Dhankhar's

last day in the job, the Congress president was allowed to address the House on Pahalgam and Operation Sindo even though the discussion was billed for a later date. All of this also likely did not sit well with the ruling side.

It is not as if there have been differences between the government and the V-P before. It was sometime in 2001 when the House stalled for a day after L K Advani urged then V-P Krishan Kant to adjourn proceedings sine die. Kant told the then Home Minister that it was a political decision for the government to take, and would do the needful if both the Centre and the Opposition felt it had become impossible to run the House. The government did not pursue the matter.

Kant did not make it to Rashtrapati Bhavan in 2002 even though there was a consensus on his name between the BJP and the Opposition Congress, with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee per-

sonally conveying to Kant that his name had been finalised. It is believed he lost out because, on several occasions, he took a stand different from what those in power wanted.

While it is not fully clear what the political ramifications of Dhankhar's exit will be, it is apparent that it is not a happy situation for the BJP: admitting they could not manage someone they had chosen for the second-highest Constitutional position. Then there are some voices from the Jat community, to which Dhankhar belongs, saying how their leaders cannot complete their terms in office. The first was Chaudh

Those misusing democratic freedoms must be held to account: PM

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

INDIA AND the UK reaffirmed cooperation in a number of fields, including defence, people-to-people ties, strengthening co-operation against extremist elements and repatriation of economic offenders, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with his British counterpart Keir Starmer at Chequers, the countryside residence of the UK Prime Minister.

Addressing the media alongside Starmer, Modi raised India's concern over increasing activities of pro-Khalistani elements in the UK and said that forces with extremist ideologies must not be allowed to misuse democratic freedoms.

Misri also said that Modi and Starmer expressed a commitment to strengthening the global fight against terrorism.

"It was noted that extremism and radicalism pose a threat to both societies and that there is a need to further enhance bilateral collaboration and coop-

eration for its "strong" condemnation of the Pahalgam terror attack.

"Those who misuse democratic freedoms to undermine democracy itself must be held to account," the Prime Minister said in his media statement.

India has been flagging its concerns to the UK over the activities of pro-Khalistan elements on British soil, especially after the attack on the Indian High Commission in London in March 2023. Later, during a media briefing, Foreign Secretary

Vikram Misri said the issue figured in the delegation-level talks, and that the UK has assured cooperation in this regard.

Modi and Starmer also decided to build on the Technology Security Initiative, focused on future telecoms, AI and critical minerals, laying the ground for future collaboration on semi-conductors, quantum, bio-technology and advanced materials.

The two also decided to build on the Technology Security Initiative, focused on future telecoms, AI and critical minerals,



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Britain's King Charles III at the Sandringham Estate in Norfolk. PTI

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eration to deal with the scourges of terrorism, extremism and radicalisation," he said.

The Prime Ministers of India and the United Kingdom, during their meeting in London, endorsed the new "India-UK Vision 2035" that reaffirms their shared commitment to unlocking the

sustainable world in a time of rapid global change, it said.

The India-UK Vision 2035 sets clear strategic goals and milestones, tracking a path for sustained collaboration. PM

Modi mentioned an education and skills partnership to deepen transnational collaborations between the UK and Indian universities, including the establishment of campuses of leading universities in each other's countries.

The two also decided to build on the Technology Security Initiative, focused on future telecoms, AI and critical minerals, laying the ground for future collaboration on semi-conductors, quantum, bio-technology and advanced materials.

Later, PM Modi called upon King Charles III at his Sandringham Estate in Norfolk, eastern England. He presented a tree sapling to the King as part of his "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" environmental initiative.

Modi said both also covered aspects such as Yoga and Ayurveda as well as the India-UK Free Trade Agreement signed between him and PM Starmer.

"Had a very good meeting with His Majesty King Charles III," PM Modi posted on X.

"We discussed different aspects of India-UK relations, including the ground covered in trade and investment in the wake of CETA and Vision 2035. Other subjects of discussion included education, health and wellness, particularly Yoga and Ayurveda, which are subjects His Majesty is very passionate about. We also talked about environmental protection and sustainability," he said.

The sapling he presented to the King will be planted on the estate during planting season in the autumn, Foreign Secretary

Vikram Misri told reporters during a Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) briefing around the Prime Minister's visit.

Muslim clerics, Bhagwat agree on interfaith dialogue at meet

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

AMID GROWING discontent among Muslims against the NDA government over Waqf Amendment Act and other issues, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat and other senior functionaries of the organisation met prominent Muslim clerics and scholars in New Delhi on Thursday. In the meeting, a host of "national issues" were discussed and the two sides stressed upon the need to start a series of dialogue between representatives of Hindu and Muslim communities to clear the "misunderstandings".

The All India Imam Organisation (AIIO) had organised the meeting titled – 'Samvaad' – at Haryana Bhawan. Along with Bhagwat, senior functionaries, including Krishnarao Gopal, Ramal and Indresh Kumar, were present in the meeting.

AIIO chief Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi said the meeting lasted for about three-and-a-half hours and was attended by 60 prominent imams, muftis and representatives of prominent Islamic seminaries like Deoband and Nadwa.

The RSS described the discussion in the meeting as "positive" and said it was part of a continuous process of holding an extensive dialogue with all the sections of society. "The main objective is to explore how everyone can work together in the interest of the country. Today's discussion was also positive," said Sunil Ambekar, the head of the national publicity and media department of the RSS.

A detailed discussion on national issues took place at the meeting. It was decided that there should be a dialogue between mandirs and masjids, imams and pujaris, gurukuls and madrasas so that misconceptions and confusions about each other are removed and a positive atmosphere of har-



Members of the All India Imam Organisation during a gathering ahead of their meeting with RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat in New Delhi on Thursday. PTI

mony and brotherhood is developed," Ilyasi told The Indian Express.

He said it was discussed that everyone from across the castes, faiths and religions should have the sentiment of "rashtra saroopari" ("nation is supreme") and contribute in nation building.

Possible roles and responsibilities of imams and muftis in taking the nation forward were also discussed in the meeting, he said.

Asked about the RSS chief's view on the decision, he said Bhagwat appreciated the idea of continuous dialogue to clear the misunderstandings and misconceptions.

"A consensus was reached to take this forward... Similar meetings will be held in different parts of the country. The schedule will be decided soon," Ilyasi said. When asked about the "national issues" discussed in the meeting, Ilyasi refused to share details.

When asked if any "concern" was expressed by the clerics on the contentious issues like new Waqf Act and survey of mosques, Ilyasi said, "It was not a meeting about concerns but for building trust and a good atmosphere."

President's Rule for another 6 months in Manipur: Shah to move resolution in RS today

SUKRITA BARUAH
GUWAHATI, JULY 24

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah will on Friday move a resolution in Rajya Sabha to extend President's Rule in Manipur for another six months.

It states: "That this House approves the continuance in force of the Proclamation dated the February 13, 2025 in respect of Manipur, issued under article 356 of the Constitution by the President, for a further period of six months with effect from August 13, 2025."

This move to extend President's Rule comes even as the state's Meitei and Naga NDA MLAs have been conducting a months-long campaign pushing for the restoration of a popular government in the state.

President's Rule had been imposed in Manipur on February 13, days after former Chief Minister N Biren Singh stepped down from the position, primarily as a result of political pressure from other BJP MLAs from the Meitei community who were dissenting against his leadership.

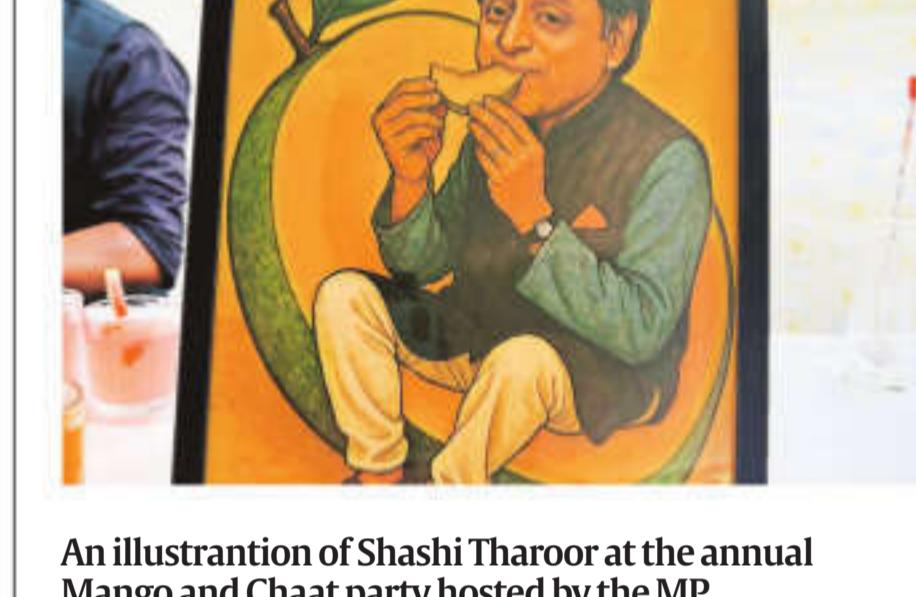
In the last Parliament session, Shah had said that the move to introduce President's Rule had been taken as no one had staked a claim to lead the government after Singh's resignation.

However, since April, NDA MLAs – including Singh, legislators close to him, as well as those who dissented against him – have been pushing for the restoration of a "popular" government, citing the lack of support for President's Rule and the perception that there has not been enough movement towards the restoration of normalcy in the state.



Home Minister Amit Shah

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



An illustration of Shashi Tharoor at the annual Mango and Chaat party hosted by the MP.

AAM & KHAAS

CONGRESS LEADER Shashi Tharoor's annual 'mango and chaat party', a get-together of MPs and other leaders on the lawns of his official residence in the Capital, went international this year with the presence of a large number of diplomats, reflecting the MP's recent engagements with foreign countries as part of the outreach programme post-Operation Sindoor. Another big difference from previous years was the absence of senior Congress leaders who used to be among prominent guests at the event. Some of Tharoor's colleagues from Kerala – Benny Behanan, Hibi Eden and Dean Kuriakose (Congress), John Brittas and V Sivadasan (CPM) and NK Premachandran (RSP) – showed up at his party. Also present were Mahua Moitra (TMC) along with her husband and former MP Pinaki Misra, T Sumanth (DMK), Milind Deora (Shiv Sena-Shinde) with his wife Pooja Shetty, K Laxman and Rekha Sharma (BJP), among others.

AT LOSS OF WORDS

AMID THE ongoing Hindi-Marathi row, senior BJP MP Nishikant Dubey had to face the ire of angry Maharashtra women MPs outside the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. The women MPs, led by Congress's Varsha Gaikwad, surrounded Dubey as he was coming out of the Lower House and shouted at him: "You are against Maharashtra? Who are you planning to thrash?" Dubey walked away calmly but the group followed him to the MP's canteen. Varsha again shouted at the BJP MP as he came out of the canteen. A visibly embarrassed Dubey was seen trying to pacify the Congress leader saying "it's not like that..." The Maharashtra MPs were angry about Dubey's reported remark that "those who beat up Hindi speakers would be thrashed by the public wherever they go".

At UNSC, India seeks immediate ceasefire, aid to end Gaza crisis

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

VOICING STRONG concern over the current situation in Gaza, India has called for an immediate ceasefire, uninterrupted humanitarian aid into Gaza and release of Israeli hostages by Hamas to address the deepening humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territory.

Speaking at the UN Security Council, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish said that mere pauses in hostilities are not enough.

"Intermittent pauses in hostilities are not enough to address the scale of humanitarian challenges confronting the people, who grapple daily with acute shortages of food and fuel, inadequate medical services and lack of access to education," Harish said.

Last month, India had abstained from voting during the resolution at the UNGA for a ceasefire in Gaza. On June 13, the UNGA had backed a resolution

RJD says 'can consider boycott', Congress adds 'all options' open

ASAD REHMAN & DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

A DAY after RJD leader Tejaswi Yadav said his party could "consider boycotting" the coming Assembly polls in Bihar over the last-minute Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls being held in the state, the Congress said "every option" is open.

Krishna Allavar, the Congress in-charge for Bihar, made the remarks at a press interaction at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters in Delhi.

"From day one, the INDIA bloc's stand has been very clear. This process (of SIR) is a theft of elections. And the Opposition is standing with the people in every possible way. Talks on every option are ongoing. One thing is clear – through this process, the votes of the people of Bihar are being snatched away... Elections are being stolen from them and this is not just about Bihar... This is about the country and clearly all av-



RJD leader Tejaswi Yadav

enues are open... Everything is being discussed. When a decision is taken, you will be informed," said Allavar.

On Wednesday, in response to a question outside the Assembly on whether the Opposition could boycott the polls, Tejaswi said, "We can discuss this. We will discuss this with allies and people. If such is the situation when (it is decided) who gets how many seats, there is no need to hold elections."

Allavar said he challenged Chief Election Commissioner Ganesh Kumar "to pick a thousand random people in every constituency in Bihar and scrutinise if the laid-down processes (on SIR revision) are being followed or not".

"Even if 25% turns out to be genuine, then we will accept this procedure. The truth is this voter list is of the BJP and Ganesh Kumar. We do not accept it."

Lok Sabha Leader of the

Opposition Rahul Gandhi repeated his claim Thursday that the Congress has "concrete 100% proof" of "cheating" in a constituency in Karnataka during the general elections last year. He warned the poll panel that it will not get away with this, "because we are going to come for you".

"We just looked at one constituency and we found this. I am absolutely convinced that, constituency after constituency, this is the drama that is taking place. Thousands and thousands of new voters – 45, 50, 60, 65, thousands and thousands of them in one constituency – voter deletion, voter addition, new voters who are way above 18 (is going on)... We have caught them," Gandhi said.

The EC responded strongly to Gandhi's allegations. "As far as the Karnataka elections are concerned, it is highly unfortunate that rather than filing election petition as per Section 80 of the Representation of the People Act – or if filed, awaiting the verdict of Hon'ble HC – he (Gandhi) has made baseless allegations and chosen to threaten the ECI, which is a Constitutional body," it said.

According to the FIR, authorities received information regarding Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor, eight other leaders of the outfit and 2,000 unidentified supporters have been booked for assault, rioting and violating curfew orders amid a protest march in Patna

Assembly protest: FIR filed against Prashant Kishor, 2,000 supporters

Patna: Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor, eight other leaders of the outfit and 2,000 unidentified supporters have been booked for assault, rioting and violating curfew orders amid a protest march in Patna

Wednesday.

Apart from Kishor, the FIR at Patna's Secretariat Police Station names Jan Suraj's state president Manoj Bharti, spokesperson Vivek Kumar, N.P. Mandal, Kishor Kumar, Arvind Singh, Lalit Yadav, Jitendra Yadav, and YouTuber-politician Manish Kashyap.

According to the FIR, authorities received information regarding Jan Suraj's plan to gherao the Vidhan Sabha the day before the June 23 protest and barricaded all routes to the Assembly. Jan Suraj had decided to gherao the Assembly over three demands – disbursing ₹2 lakh to poor families, allocation of three decimals of land to landless Dalit families, and action against alleged corruption in land surveys.

ENS

Day before deadline, EC says about 7 L forms not received

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

THE ELECTION Commission Thursday said "99%" of the 7.89 crore registered electors of Bihar had been "covered" during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls and less than 7 lakh forms were yet to be received, with one day to go for the deadline to submit forms.

According to the EC's June 24 order, all existing electors were required to submit enumeration forms by Friday, July 25, in order to remain on the draft electoral roll to be published on August 1, 2025, and printed as well as digital copies will be provided to all 12 political parties [national and state parties in Bihar]..." the EC said in a statement.

to submit documents establishing their eligibility.

As on Thursday, the EC said the forms of 7.21 crore electors (91.32%) had been received and digitised. The EC said 21.6 lakh electors were reported by the Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and Booth Level Agents (BLAs) of political parties as dead, 31.5 lakh permanently migrated and 7 lakh registered at more than one place.

"Despite door-to-door visits by local BLOs/BLAs, forms of fewer than 7 lakh electors have still not been received. As per the SIR order, the draft electoral roll will be published on August 1, 2025, and printed as well as digital copies will be provided to all 12 political parties [national and state parties in Bihar]..." the EC said in a statement.

"It took 10 days for me to arrange all the documents," the parliamentarian said, adding that his son lives in America.

JD(U) MP who spoke against SIR gets show-cause notice

HIMANSHU HARSH
PATNA, JULY 24

THE JD(U) has issued a show-cause notice to its MP Giridhari Yadav, who had on Wednesday

called the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar a "Tughlaqi farman" (ill-conceived diktat).

Yadav, the Banka MP from JD(U), Bihar's ruling party and a BJP ally, had said outside the Parliament, "Electoral Commission has no practical knowledge. It neither knows the history nor the geography of Bihar: it knows nothing."

"It took 10 days for me to

arrange all the documents," the parliamentarian said, adding that his son lives in America.

"How will he do the signature in just a month?" he said. "This (SIR) has been imposed on us forcefully. Ye Tughlaqi farman hai chunav aayog ka."

The MP had clarified that he was giving his "personal opinion" and it "doesn't matter what his party is saying".

The show-cause notice signed by Afaque Ahmad Khan, the party's national general secretary,

BJP-ruled states have unleashed linguistic terror against Bangla speakers, says Mamata

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JULY 24

CLAIMING THAT the West Bengal government has been receiving reports of Bengali-speaking migrants being "detained and tortured" in Haryana and Rajasthan, CM Mamata Banerjee Thursday accused the BJP of "unleashing linguistic terror" in the country.

In a post on X, the TMC supremo wrote: "Have been increasingly receiving reports of detentions and atrocities on our Bengali-speaking people from different districts of West Bengal in Gurgaon, Haryana. West Bengal Police is receiving these reports from Haryana police in the name of requests for identity searches... Have been separately and increasingly receiving reports from other states like Rajasthan etc about illegal 'pushbacks' of West Bengal citizens with all proper documents to Bangladesh directly!! Our officers have received copies of their appropriate documents!.. There are tortures and tortures on hapless poor Bengali workers from West Bengal in these states."

Hitting out at the BJP and their government in those states, she said: "I am shocked to see these terrible atrocities of the double-engine governments on



CM Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata on Thursday. Partha Paul

Bengalis in India. What do you want to prove?"

Calling it "atrocious and terrible", the CM said that her government and party would not "tolerate this". "Stop this linguistic terror," Mamata added.

Later in the day, at a film award ceremony in memory of legendary Bengali actor Uttam Kumar in Kolkata, the CM urged Bengali film personalities to oppose the "targeting of Bangla-speaking people" and asked them to take part in protests against "linguistic terrorism".

Banerjee said: "A kind of linguistic terrorism has been declared against the Bangla language. Another Bhasha Andolan is needed to awaken everyone. People are being harassed for speaking Bangla in many places.

Bangla is the fifth most spoken language in the world, and second in Asia. Around 30 crore people speak Bangla. And today, Bangla-speaking people are being sent to jail. I cannot accept this, and I believe you cannot either. People cannot be detained just for speaking Bangla."

On Monday, during the Martyrs' Day rally, the TMC supremo had called for a mass movement from July 27 against the alleged harassment of Bangla-speaking people in several states.

Sources in the government said that at least 52 people from West Bengal have been detained in Haryana on suspicion of being illegal migrants from Bangladesh. Most of those detained hail from Nadia, Murshidabad, and Malda districts, they added.

TN: 4 from Bengal 'beaten up for 'speaking in Bangla'

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
KOLKATA, JULY 24

A POLICE complaint has been filed in Murshidabad district alleging that four youths from West Bengal were beaten up by locals in Thiruvallur in Tamil Nadu on suspicion of being Bangladeshi.

According to the complaint, lodged on July 17, Sujan Sheikh, his brother Milan Sheikh, Sahil Sheikh, and Babu Sheikh had travelled to Chennai three weeks ago for construction work.

On evening of July 15, they were in Thiruvallur when a group of people asked their names and where they were from. "After hearing us speaking in Bangla, they started beating us with iron rods and lathis, suspecting us to be from Bangladesh," read the complaint lodged by Sujan's father.

The four immediately returned to Murshidabad after getting primary treatment at a government medical college in Thiruvallur.

"They beat my two sons and two others only because they spoke in Bangla. They thought they were illegal Bangladeshi. My

younger son's left hand was broken. After he arrived here, he underwent surgery. He is still admitted at the nursing home. My elder son is also injured. They will be on bed rest for weeks," Ashabul Sheikh, Sujan and Milan's father, told *The Indian Express* over phone from Murshidabad.

Milan said, "Locals beat us up after questioning our language. We were very scared. We did not even get our wages for 11 days of work. This was the first time we had gone to Chennai for work. I had to ask my father to send Rs 12,000 to get back home."

TMC MLA sets up helpdesk

TMC MLA from Itahar in Uttar Dinajpur has opened a helpdesk in his constituency to help families of migrant workers who have been allegedly detained in other states. "A large number of migrant workers from my area are being detained in Haryana. So we have opened a helpdesk. We are helping and guiding families regarding the documents they need for residential proof. After verifying the documents, I am giving them residential certificates as an MLA," said MLA Mosaraf Hussain.

Pune: Bangladesh Matuas family submit papers under CAA

CHANDAN HAYGUNDE
PUNE, JULY 14

A MATUA family from Bangladesh has applied for Indian citizenship under CAA, after they were taken in by Pune's Pimpri Chinchwad police earlier this month for inquiry.

"We are afraid of going to Bangladesh due to the violence against Hindus. We are safe in India," said Kishor Biswas, a member of family who has applied for citizenship.

In first week of July, 40-year-old Kishor, his wife Bonita, brother-in-law Arush alias Bonomali Adhikary and Arush's wife Priyanka were held for inquiry in Wakad by police on suspicion they were Bangladeshi nationals.

The family belongs to the Matua community, a Hindu religious sect. A police officer said action was initiated against them. FRO of Pimpri Chinchwad police issued a restriction order for Arush, Priyanka and Bonita. But the police did not deport the family because Kishor submitted an application under the CAA.

said after the meeting.

Nagaland CM Neiphiu Rio also held a meeting with top state officials. "Convened a high-level meeting with @NagalandCS, @DGP_Nagaland, and other senior officials to strengthen vigilance mechanisms along the Assam-Nagaland border. The State Govt. is actively engaging with all stakeholders to prevent illegal infiltration," he said on X.

On Wednesday, Manipur, which is currently under President's Rule, issued an order, but without explicitly mentioning eviction drives in Assam. In the order, the administration directed all District Collectors and SPs to ensure vigil at inter-state and inter-district boundaries to "prevent anyone from crossing into the state's boundaries illegally".

Over the past two months, more than 3,300 families, mostly Muslims of Bengali origin, have been evicted from forest, grazing and government revenue lands in Assam.

While the political narrative around the eviction drives is seen as polarising, with CM Himanta Biswa Sarma claiming they were being undertaken to mainly stem "demographic invasion by people of one religion", the crackdowns are against encroachment and not against "illegal immigrants" as the orders by the Manipur and Meghalaya dispensations suggest.

Nagaland Deputy CM Y

Patton said the state would deploy additional forces in all areas bordering Assam, while the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Nuland district, which borders Assam, claimed to have sent back evicted illegal immigrants who were intercepted in "200 vehicles on Tuesday".

Amid Assam eviction drives, neighbouring states on alert against 'influx', step up vigil

SUKRITA BARUAH
GUWAHATI, JULY 24

WITH THOUSANDS in Assam displaced during the state government's recent spate of evictions, and with more planned, the Northeastern state's neighbours are on tenterhooks.

Days after the Nagaland government referred to displaced people as "illegal immigrants" and ordered "heightened vigilance" on its border with Assam, Meghalaya and Manipur have now issued similar directions to check their influx.

The Nagaland government's move was triggered by an upcoming eviction drive in Urianghat of Assam's Golaghat district, which borders the state.

"In view of the ongoing eviction drive against the illegal immigrants undertaken by the government of Assam and to prevent possible influx of the displaced individuals to the state as consequence, all Deputy Commissioners are hereby directed to keep vigilance and take necessary measures to ensure the potential influx is kept in check, and law and order is maintained," read the order issued by the Meghalaya government on Wednesday.

CM Conrad Sangma Thursday met all District Collectors and senior officials, including the DGP and Chief Secretary, to "strengthen vigilance and security" along the Assam border, to ensure there is no "infiltration" into the state.

"There are certain vulnerable districts, especially bordering Assam and closer to areas where the eviction drives are going on. Hence, special attention is being given in those districts," Sangma

plea was listed was on December 5, 2023, before a bench presided by Justice S K Kaul. However, it was deleted from the cause list, they said.

Datar said some of the pending names were recommended in 2019, and reiterated in 2021 and 2022.

He said they were also losing out on seniority due to the pendency, adding that two lawyers, one from Mumbai and another from Delhi, had withdrawn their consent for their elevation as judges.

CJI Gavai said he is aware of the issue, and referred to one of them, a woman advocate from Delhi who has withdrawn consent. "The lady from Delhi... she was extraordinary," said the CJI.

Bhushan added that she was the topper at National Law School. The court said it will list the matter for a hearing.

'We are also trying to pursue': SC on govt delay in judicial appointments

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

CHIEF JUSTICE of India B R Gavai said Thursday the Supreme Court is following up the question of pending appointments of high court judges with the Centre on its administrative side.

CJI Gavai said this as a pending plea to direct the Central Government to clear the recommendations by the Supreme Court Collegium without delay was mentioned before a bench also comprising Justice Vinod Chandran.

"We are also trying to pursue on the administrative side. Quite a few names have been cleared," said CJI Gavai.

Appearing for the petitioner, Senior Advocate Arvind Datar and Advocate Prashant Bhushan pointed out that the last time the

SC stays Bombay HC verdict acquitting 12 in 7/11 blasts case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

THE SUPREME Court on Thursday stayed the July 21 Bombay High Court judgment acquitting all 12 accused in the 2006 Mumbai train blasts case even as the Maharashtra Government, which filed the appeal challenging the verdict, said it was not seeking to cancel their release.

Issuing notice on the Maharashtra Government's appeal, a bench of Justices M M Nagresh and N K Singh said the judgment will not be treated as a precedent in any other case.

Appearing for the state, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said, "I am seeking a stay not to

bring them back to jail. That's not the intention... They are released. Your Lordships may even clarify."

"These are certain findings of law given by the court which would be affecting all our MCOCA trials which are going on... Your Lordships may consider saying, judgment is stayed, however... their release is not..."

The bench said they have been informed that all 7/11 Mumbai train blasts convicts have been released.

"Therefore, there is no question of bringing them back to the prison. However, taking note of the submissions made by the SG on the question of law, we are entitled to hold that the impugned judgment shall not be

treated as a precedent... To that extent, it is stayed," it said.

On Monday, the Bombay High Court overturned the September 2015 judgment of a special court designated under Maharashtra Control of Organised Crimes Act (MCOCA), which sentenced five of the accused to death and handed life term to seven. The special court had acquitted one person.

The special bench of Justices Anil S Kilar and Shyam C Chandak questioned the trustworthiness of certain prosecution witnesses and the Test Identification Parade of some of the accused.

On July 11, 2006, 189 people were killed as a series of blasts ripped through coaches of seven local trains.

Right of society to watch a movie or not: SC on release of *Udaipur Files*

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

THE SUPREME Court Thursday said "it is the right of the society to watch or not watch" a movie and that it will only lead to complications if every creative work is sought to be connected or identified with someone or something.

Appearing for the state, Justice Surya Kant, presiding

over a two-judge bench which took up pleas for and against allowing release of *Udaipur Files: Kanhaiya Lal Tailor Murder*, said what happens in society becomes theme for the film industry.

The two-judge bench, also comprising Justice Joymoy Bhattacharya, told the counsel for petitioners opposing the film's release, "Your right can also be safeguarded by permitting people to

watch a movie of their choice. You have a right to challenge a revisional decision."

The court's reference was to the July 21 order by a Centre-appointed committee, given after reviewing the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) certificate granted to the film. Section 6 of the Cinematograph Act, 1952, gives the Centre revision powers over the decisions of the CBFC.

"We are also trying to pursue on the administrative side. Quite a few names have been cleared," said CJI Gavai.

Appearing for the petitioner, Senior Advocate Arvind Datar and Advocate Prashant Bhushan pointed out that the last time the

1993 fake encounter case: 10-yr jail for Punjab ex-cop

JASBIR MALHI
MOHALI, JULY 24

A CBI court in Mohali has sentenced a retired Punjab Police officer to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment for abducting two constables who were later killed in a staged encounter in 1993.

The court of special CBI Judge Baljinder Singh Sra also imposed a fine of ₹50,000 on Paramjit Singh, who was then the SHO of Beas in Amritsar. Baljinder Singh (67) retired as an SP.

In its verdict, the court Wednesday acquitted three other accused – the then SHO of Lopoke, Inspector Dharam Singh (77), the then ASI Kashmire Singh (69) and the then ASI Darbara Singh (71) – due to lack of concrete evidence. Another accused, then sub SI Ram Lubhia (in-charge, Beas police post) died during the trial.

Acting on the Supreme Court's orders, the CBI began its probe on December 26, 1995, and found that the encounter was staged and police fabricated documents to make it appear genuine. The CBI also found that the two unidentified militants who were killed in the encounter were actually the two police constables. An FIR was registered on February 28, 1997, and a charge sheet was filed in 1999 against five officers.

Referring to the families of the deceased constables, the court said, "The court can very well imagine the plight of the family members who have been running from pillar to post since 1993 to seek justice. They must have incurred a lot of expenses for that and need monetary compensation for their rehabilitation."

The court directed the secretary, district legal service authority Mohali, to consider the case of the victims' families for award of compensation.

On April 18, 1993, Constables Surmukh Singh (Muchhal village, Baba Bakala) and Constable Sukhwinder Singh (Khiala village, Amritsar), both in their early 20s,

were picked up by the police and illegally detained. CBI Public Prosecutor Anmol Narang said, "Surmukh Singh was picked up from his home by a team led by then SHO Paramjit Singh around 6 pm, while Sukhwinder Singh was picked by SI Ram Lubhia the same day at 2 pm in a scooter theft case".

At the Beas police station, Sukhwinder's parents were not allowed to meet their son.

Later, the Majitha police claimed that two "two unidentified militants" had been killed in an encounter. Their bodies were cremated without identification, according to the CBI.

Four days later, the Majitha police, under SHO Dharam Singh, filed an untraced report claiming that there was no need for further investigation in the matter.

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3 navigation satellites to be launched by 2026

ANONNA DUTT
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

ISRO will launch three navigation satellites for its Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) by next year, according to a reply in Parliament by the Union MoS for Space Dr Jitendra Singh.

The first of the three, NVS-03, is scheduled to be launched by year-end. The other two, NVS-04 and NVS-05, will be launched after that "with a gap of six months," as per data.

Only four of India's seven satellite navigation systems continue to provide location data, the reply said. The IRNSS was envisioned as a seven-satellite constellation that could provide navigation services over the Indian

landmass and a radius of 1,500 km around it.

So far, 11 satellites have been launched for the IRNSS constellation. Of these, two failed to reach the intended orbit. In what was IRNSS's 100th launch, NVS-02 was sent to space in January this year, but the further orbit raising manoeuvres needed to put the satellite in the proper orbit could not be completed because of a technical glitch.

The other IRNSS

EXPRESS NETWORK

After 23 yrs, Shah's ministry resets cooperative vision

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

WHEN UNION Home Minister Amit Shah unveiled a new national cooperative policy Thursday, replacing one in place for the past 23 years, it marked another milestone for the department whose role has been expanding under the Narendra Modi government.

As per the statement issued by the Cooperation Ministry, the new policy is part of the Centre's aim to strengthen cooperatives in the country, and "will prove to be a milestone in the cooperative movement of India for the next two decades from 2025-45".

The ministry said a new policy was needed because of globalisation and technological advancements in the past two decades.

The Ministry of Cooperation was formed as a separate ministry by the Modi government four years ago, with Shah given the charge of it. From 1979 till then, the cooperatives department fell under the Agriculture Ministry.

The new ministry, Sahakar Mantralaya, was announced via a two-page notification in the official gazette, a day before Modi effected the biggest reshuffle of his second term, on July 7, 2021. Its vision was stated to be 'Sahakar se Samridhi (Prosperity through Cooperation)'.

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MNS workers beat up man at bus stand for not speaking in Marathi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, JULY 24

A TOILET attendant at the Nanded state transport bus stand was allegedly assaulted by MNS workers on Wednesday after he reportedly refused to speak Marathi. The attendant was a Hindi-speaking person.

While videos of the alleged incident, and the man issuing an apology later, have surfaced on social media, no FIR was registered in the matter until Wednesday evening.

In one of the purported videos, the man working as an attendant outside the ladies' toilet at the bus stand is confronted by a local who questions why he was collecting Rs 5 from women for using the facilities – a service that is typically free. The man is heard asking the attendant to respond in Marathi. The attendant, however, purportedly refuses to do so, saying, "I will not speak Marathi, do what you want to do."

In another purported video, several men wearing MNS scarves can be seen slapping and punching the attendant, demanding he apologise for not speaking in Marathi. They are also heard accusing him of misbehaving with women and speaking rudely and arrogantly.

Govt will not tolerate violence in the name of language dispute, says CM Fadnavis

New Delhi, Mumbai, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Thursday said violence in the name of language dispute will not be tolerated and dealt firmly. Speaking in Marathi at the JNU in Delhi, Fadnavis said, "There is no dispute between Hindi and Marathi. While one should be proud of Marathi, which is not only the mother tongue of Marathi people but also a classical language, one cannot ignore other Indian languages."

The CM laid the foundation stone for the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Special Centre for Security and Strategic Studies, planned under the School of International Studies.

Meanwhile, Deputy CM Ajit Pawar called for greater respect for the state's language and culture, particularly from those who have migrated from other parts of India. Pawar emphasised that every state has its own linguistic identity. "In every state, the language of that particular region is important and should be respected and given priority," he said. ENS

The notification laid out the wide jurisdiction of the new Cooperation Ministry: Framing policy to coordinating cooperation activities across sectors; strengthening the cooperative movement and deepening its reach; promoting a "cooperative-based economic development model"; winding up of cooperative societies with objects not confined to one state; and training of personnel of cooperative departments and institutions.

Addressing an event to mark four years of the Cooperation Ministry at Anand in Gujarat on July 6, Shah said that PM Modi had "breathed new life" into more than 8.4 lakh cooperative societies, connecting about 31 crore people.

The growth

The government's emphasis on cooperatives, also reflected in the choice of Shah to lead it, is understandable from the perspective of the sector's significant contribution to the economy, and as a source of employment for millions of people.

In the last four years, the ministry has seen several big initiatives, including the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2023, that ushered in three new cooperative bodies, including National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), with plans for "the world's largest grain storage



Union Home Minister Amit Shah unveils the National Cooperation Policy-2025 at the Atal Akshay Urja Bhawan in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

Join FREE Telegram Channel <https://t.me/+jUYKq0AFHBAwMGQ1> scheme" and two lakh new Multi-Purpose Primary Agricultural Credit Societies.

Earlier this month, Shah laid the foundation stone of India's first national cooperative university, and advocated that cooperative education be included in the secondary school curricula.

In a statement on September 8, 2022, the Cooperation Ministry said: "The cooperative sector gives 20% of the total agricultural credit of the country, 35% of the fertilizer distribution is done by the cooperative sector, 25% of fertilizer production, 31% of sugar production, more

than 10% of milk production is done through cooperatives, more than 13% procurement of wheat and more than 20% of the procurement of paddy is done by the cooperative sector, and more than 21% of the fishermen's business is done by cooperative societies."

The formation of the NCEL has also opened up the export sector for cooperatives. Within months of its establishment, the NCEL received orders of rice and wheat from several countries, amounting to a total of Rs 5,000 crore.

With Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies allowed to diversify, their business activities now cover more than 25 fields, including dairy, fishery, floriculture, setting up of godowns, procurement of foodgrains, fertilizers, seeds, LPG/CNG/petrol/diesel distributorship, short-term and long-term credit, fair price shops, and Common Service Centres which help people access government benefits.

Former Kerala-cadre IAS officer Devendra Kumar Singh, who served as the first Secretary of the Cooperation Ministry in 2021-22, and is now the chairperson of the Cooperative Election Authority says it has helped bring transparency into the system – "in conduct of elections, increasing accountability of elected members to reforms and aligning bye-laws of societies with the Act and Rules".

The evolution

The history of the cooperative sector dates back to before Independence, with a Cooperative Credit Societies Act enacted in 1904. Within a few years, there was an exponential expansion in the sector, with the number of societies registered under it increasing to 5,300 and their membership to over 3 lakh by 1911.

On December 14, 1946, eight months before the country got Independence, the Khera District Cooperative Milk Producers Milk Union, or Amul, was registered.

After Independence, the cooperative sector retained a prominent place in Five Year Plans. The year 2002, when the NDA was in power under A B Vajpayee, saw a new focus on the cooperative sector, with the government modifying the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act and releasing a National Cooperative Policy. The same year, the law was amended for direct funding of cooperatives.

In 2011, under the UPA government, the 97th Constitutional amendment was passed, providing constitutional status to cooperative societies. The new cooperative policy is another step in the right direction, said Dr K K Tripathy, Joint Secretary, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, who earlier worked with the Cooperation Ministry. "It is expected to help achieve goals for all-round cooperative development."

Cooperatives & politics

Cooperatives have long played an important role in the country's rural economy, and political parties that control these have traditionally held a hold on the region electorally.

One of the focus areas of the Cooperation Ministry under Shah, in fact, has been expanding the network to states like UP and Bihar. **FULL REPORT ON** www.indianexpress.com

RENUKASWAMY MURDER CASE

SC reserves order on plea against actor Darshan's bail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 24



court judge committing such a mistake!" the judge added.

Though Dave tried to defend the HC order, saying the findings are only preliminary, Justice Pardiwala said, "It is a question of perverse prima facie exercise of discretion. We are trying to examine, while exercising discretion, whether the high court has applied its mind judiciously. That's a matter of concern. We will not commit the same mistake as the high court did. We

will not give any judgment for conviction or acquittal."

Eyewitness statement

Appearing for the state, Senior Advocate Siddharth Pardiwala narrated the sequence of events and the nature of evidence against the accused actor. Luthra added that while Darshan was in jail, two more cases were registered against him, and after coming out on bail, he was seen in the company of prosecution witnesses. The court referred to the two eyewitnesses in the case and asked if their statements were corroborated.

"

"

There are ways and ways of assigning reasons. The manner in which the high court has dictated the order, very sorry to say, but does the high court dictate the same type of orders in all bail applications? What is troubling us is the approach of the high court!... That is the understanding of the learned judge? And that too from the high court? We can understand a session judge committing such mistakes. A high

court asked when the photograph was taken, to which Luthra said it was taken immediately after the assault. "So after the assault, the person clicks a photo with the actor?" asked Justice Pardiwala, adding it's "unbelievable." Luthra attributed it to a kind of cult worship for actors.



READY FOR VIJAY DIWAS

Preparations underway ahead of the Kargil Vijay Diwas celebrations on July 26, at Kargil War Memorial on Thursday. PTI

Bombay HC orders 'mandatory' immersion of PoP idols up to 6 feet in artificial tanks across Maharashtra

OMKAR GOKHALE
MUMBAI, JULY 24

THE BOMBAY High Court on Thursday directed that Ganesh idols made of Plaster of Paris (PoP), and those less than 6 feet in height, will "necessarily" and "mandatorily" be immersed in artificial water bodies across Maharashtra.

This paves the way for the immersion of larger idols in natural water bodies during the Ganesh Utsav next month as permitted under the state's new policy.

The high court was hearing a PIL against the immersion of PoP

idols in natural water sources, along with pleas filed by associations of Ganesh idol makers challenging the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) guidelines banning the immersion of such idols in natural water bodies.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Alok Adarhe and Justice Sandeep V Marne noted in the order that the interim arrangement will also be applicable to Navratri celebrations, the Maghi Ganesh festival, as well as all festivals involving idol immersions, until March 2026.

On Wednesday, the state government informed the high court about its July 21 policy guidelines for the immersion of

PoP idols. Under the new policy, idols less than five feet will be mandatorily immersed in artificial water bodies. The government also said that those exceeding five feet in height may be permitted to be immersed in natural water bodies such as lakes, rivers, and the sea in case no alternative immersion facility is available.

"The policy of the state government can be said to be a step in the right direction. However, we cannot lose sight of the fact that over 7,000 PoP idols above 5 feet will be immersed in natural bodies. The court has to make an endeavour that the impact on immersion of idols on the envi-

ronment is reduced to a bare minimum. We therefore direct that instead of 5 feet, idols up to 6 feet shall necessarily be immersed in artificial water bodies," the bench said in the order.

New arrangements, logistical issues

After being informed that, according to the CPCB's expert committee, its guidelines were "always advisory in nature," the Bombay High Court on June 9 lifted the ban on the manufacture and sale of idols made of PoP. However, the court stated that the idols would not be immersed in natural bodies without obtaining permission from

37 years after raping a minor, Rajasthan man declared juvenile

The man, now 53, was convicted in February 1993

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAIPUR, JULY 24

THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS after he raped an 11-year-old girl in Rajasthan's Ajmer, a man was declared a juvenile by the Supreme Court, which upheld his conviction by lower courts but directed him to appear before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) instead.

The man, now almost 53, was convicted and sentenced in February 1993 by the Additional Sessions Judge, Kishangarh, Ajmer, for rape and wrongful confinement. This was upheld by the Rajasthan HC in July last year.

However, his lawyers claimed before the SC bench, comprising Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justice Augustine George Masih, that he was a juvenile at the time of the incident in November 1988. They said that his date of birth is September 14, 1972, and therefore, on the date of the incident, his age would be 16 years 2 months and 3 days. Since he was a juvenile, the proceedings as held cannot sustain, especially the sentence, they said.

They had also prayed that an inquiry be held to determine his age "so that he may get the benefits of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Rules, 2007." In January this year, the SC directed the Ajmer District and Sessions Judge to conduct an inquiry into the claims of the petitioner, complete its findings in eight weeks and report to the SC. After the school admission and

other documents confirmed his date of birth in September 1972, the SC ruled, "The Appellant was therefore a juvenile on the date of commission of the crime."

With the issue of age not being raised in earlier courts, the SC said that "authoritative judgments passed by this Court ... (have) categorically held that the plea of juvenility can be raised before any court and has to be recognised at any stage, even after disposal of the case."

Consequently, the sentence as imposed by the Trial Court and upheld by the HC will have to be set aside, as the same cannot sustain. We order accordingly," the SC said, referring the case to the Board for passing appropriate orders and directed the man to appear before the Board on September 15, 2025.

JAYPRAKASH NAIDU
RAIPUR, JULY 24

AS MANY as 66 Maoists, including 49 with a combined bounty of Rs 2.54 crore, surrendered before the police in five districts of Chhattisgarh's Bastar region on Thursday.

With this, the total number of surrendered Maoists in the last 18 months, which saw an unprecedented number of anti-Maoist operations, rose to 1,570 – a significant increase when compared to the 2022-2023 period, when 813 had surrendered.

Thursday's surrenders comes amid a new initiative from the security forces, called 'Poona Margham', a Gondi term that means "new path". Under this initiative, the security forces will

focus more on reaching out to families of Maoists for help in persuading them to surrender. The senior-most Maoist cadre to surrender on Thursday was 37-year-old Rammanna Iarpa, alias Jagdish, alias Vikesh, who was a Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee (DKSZC) member carrying a reward of Rs 25 lakh. A resident of Basuguda in Bijapur district, Rammanna had been active for two decades and has at least 30 cases against him, including murders. On the effort that went into getting him to surrender, a police source said, "We were trying to get him to surrender for three months. We had contacted his family and were persuading them to get him to surrender, and finally, he surrendered with his family's help."

Giving credit to the Poona Margham initiative for the large number of surrenders on Thursday, Inspector General of Police for Bastar range, Sundarraj P said, "Our repeated appeals to Maoist cadres to give up violence and return to the mainstream are showing encouraging results. The surrender of 66 cadres, including a state-level committee member, across five districts in a single day is a strong indication that the Naxal outfit is approaching its end."

Bijapur SP Jitendra Yadav said, "With the establishment of new security camps in interior regions and improved access to roads, transport, drinking water, electricity, and other public welfare schemes, development is now reaching the remotest villages. Widespread disillusion-

SECURITY FORCES' NEW STRATEGY BEARS FRUIT

66 Maoists with combined bounty of ₹2.54 crore surrender in a day in Bastar

JAYPRAKASH NAIDU
RAIPUR, JULY 24

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Unpacking National Sports Governance Bill, now in LS

An eminent sports lawyer explains the significance and key aspects of the proposed legislation and flags some areas of caution to **Mihir Vasavda**



EXPLAINED INTERVIEW

NANDAN KAMATH

THE NATIONAL Sports Governance Bill introduced by Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya in Lok Sabha on Wednesday proposes two major changes in the way sport is governed in the country.

One, formation of a National Sports Board with sweeping powers to lay down rules and oversee the functioning of federations, including the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Two, setting up a National Sports Tribunal with powers of a civil court to decide a range of disputes from selections of athletes to federation elections. Appeals against Tribunal decisions shall lie to the Supreme Court.

Why was a Bill like this needed?

The need for a sports regulator was mentioned by the Draft Comprehensive

National Sports Policy 2007. The National Sports Board has proposed a SEBI-type body to establish a unified national structure for sport. (The Securities and Exchange Board of India is the statutory regulatory body for the securities market.)

Many of the provisions and structures in the Bill owe their origin to the National Sports Development Bills that were drafted, but not passed, in the early part of the last decade. You can draw a straight line from these to significant portions of the Bill.

With a National Sports Board, the regulatory capacity of the government in sports will increase. The institution will have a budget and can hire specialised staff with legal and auditing expertise, for instance, to evaluate how the 56 National Sports Federations and their affiliates are being run.

In the absence of legislation, the Sports Code of 2011 has been the administrative instrument to establish standards for the government's recognition of National Sports Federations. In the absence of statutory backing and regulatory institutions, this was always going to be a stopgap measure, and the history of its implementation has been chequered.

This regulatory failure led to extensive ju-

dicial intervention in the affairs of sports bodies, especially with many federations being obviously run quite poorly. However, many court cases have remained unresolved for years; in some cases, courts have themselves walked back judgments.

Numerous federations are being run by ad hoc bodies, and almost every federation election is now challenged in court. This is not sustainable.

The end goal of judicial intervention is public interest. While cleaning the [Augean] stables is a means, the desired end must always be healthier sports institutions.

We are presuming that the Tribunal will stay independent and free of conflicts.

Indeed, many will say 'oh, not one more tribunal!' when many of our tribunals have not been successful. But while this will be a first for sport in India, standalone dispute resolution chambers and tribunals is the model followed in sport globally.

Having time-bound procedures and sports-aware people in dispute resolution is preferable to keep sport healthy and moving forward.

Of course, any tribunal will need well-qualified, independent-minded members.

Is there a similar concern for the National Sports Board?

The powers proposed to be vested in the Board have always been there with the Sports Ministry. Having the Board as a statutory public institution with a defined role

and obligations will increase public scrutiny and transparency on how these powers are exercised.

The other type of public transparency comes through information about sports bodies. It is currently not easy to identify the appropriate district sports federation for a particular sport. For someone who wants to play the sport competitively, or someone who would like to hold an event or sponsor or partner, it is often difficult to determine which body to deal with.

The Bill proposes that the Board will register all affiliated units of the NSFs. This step of 'governance through information' by the Board can lead to 'governance through standard-setting' – like SEBI does with listing standards – and 'governance through frame-

work alignment' whereby the system comes together to work in unison.

Why has the age limit for administrators been raised to 75, and tenures done away with?

It has been argued that various concessions are needed to enable more Indian administrators to be on international sports bodies, in leadership positions. It has been suggested that it takes time and experience to understand the administration locally, and to then establish oneself internationally.

Such perceived benefits must be balanced with the obvious risks of entrenchment and institutional capture. It is important to tread carefully.

The BCCI has so far not been under the government. How does that change?

I don't know the government's formal position on this, but it has been reported that the intention is for the BCCI to also come under the ambit of the law, even though it has never been recognised as an NSF thus far.

A material change will be with regard to existing age and tenure clauses. The BCCI constitution allows a maximum of three

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EXPLAINED ECONOMICS

WHY A STRONG ROUBLE IS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD FOR RUSSIA



Elvira Nabiullina is the Governor of the Bank of Russia. Reuters

THE RUSSIAN rouble's 45% rise against the US dollar since the start of the year has made it one of the world's best performing currencies – but the sharp appreciation is proving to be a double-edged sword for the heavily sanctioned Russian economy. Here's why.

Why has the rouble risen so much against the dollar?

The rise is driven primarily by the Russian central bank's tight monetary policy and optimism after US-Russia talks in February raised hopes for a peace settlement in Ukraine.

Interest rates on rouble deposits have also soared above 20%, making the currency attractive to savers and as a speculative trade for its yield. At the same time, high borrowing costs have slowed imports, reducing demand for foreign currency.

The weakness of the US currency, whose index lost 6.6% since President Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" tariff announcement on April 2, has also helped the rouble.

Although the central bank says there is a freely floating exchange rate, it has been selling the Chinese yuan, its only major intervention tool, to support the rouble. When the rouble strengthens against the yuan, its rate against the dollar strengthens as well to avoid arbitrage.

Why is a strong rouble a 'double-edged' sword?

The strength of the rouble means that dollar-denominated energy revenues generate fewer roubles for the Russian budget. A weaker rouble would boost budget revenues. The 2025 budget assumes an average rate of 94.3 roubles per dollar, but the current rate is around 78. If the rouble stays strong, analysts estimate the budget could lose 2.4% of its revenues this year.

Russian businesses also argue a strong rouble is making exports more expensive to buyers in dollars and other currencies. Exporters, from oil to metals to agriculture, are hurting. A stronger rouble makes their revenues shrink. Many officials and business leaders say they would prefer a rate of 100 to the dollar.

However, Elvira Nabiullina, the governor of the central bank, argues that a

softer currency would be a sign of economic vulnerability.

Nabiullina, who on Friday announces the latest interest rate decision, says the exchange rate is not just there to please exporters, stressing that the strong rouble is a product of the tight monetary policy needed to fight stubbornly high inflation.

What lies ahead?

Analysts have warned for months that the rouble is overvalued, but the currency has defied their forecasts so far. The central bank is widely expected to cut interest rates at its upcoming meeting. If it does, market rates will fall as well, prompting savers to pull money from rouble deposits. That could weaken the currency.

A bigger test looms in early September, when a 50-day deadline set by US President Donald Trump for Russia to show progress toward peace in Ukraine expires. If new US sanctions targeting buyers of Russian oil follow, the rouble could come under renewed pressure.

The last time the rouble weakened significantly was in November 2024, after Washington sanctioned Gazprombank, which had handled oil and gas payments.

A source close to the central bank pointed to Reuters that when the regulator cut the key rate from 17% to 11% between February and July 2015, the rouble took several months to weaken gradually. This is the regulator's expectation this time.

REUTERS

John of Rupecissa recorded the preservative properties of the distillate of wine, which he called *aqua vitae*. "John...notes how meat left in the open air quickly begins to rot, but when immersed in alcohol it is preserved indefinitely..." John Hopkins University professor Lawrence M Principe wrote in *The Secrets of Alchemy* (2012).

In the 15th century, *aqua vitae* "might be drunk by royalty and the nobility but it was not yet by any means the drink of the people", Michael Brander wrote in *The Original Scotch: A History of Scotch Whisky from the Earliest Days* (1975).

Whisky becomes whisky

As techniques of distillation improved and became widespread in Scotland during the 16th century, the production of *aqua vitae* grew, and so did its reputation of having medicinal properties. Raphael Holinshed's 1578 text *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* said: "Beyng moderateli taken, it sloweth age; it strengtheneth youthe; it helpeth di-

AMITABH SINHA

NEW DELHI, JULY 24

THE INTERNATIONAL Court of Justice (ICJ) delivered a landmark ruling on Wednesday that can breathe new life into the climate movement, and potentially open the floodgates for litigation seeking greater accountability from countries on climate action.

The Hague-based court, which is the main judicial branch of the United Nations, has held that countries are under a legal obligation to take steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and could be held liable to pay compensation if they failed to do so.

The ruling has come in the form of an advisory opinion of the court, and does not on its own impact any country immediately. It can nonetheless have significant implications for the global fight against climate change.

By making it clear that climate action is not just a policy imperative for countries but a legally-binding commitment under international law, the ruling strengthens the position of developing countries and everyone else advocating enhanced climate action from the rich and industrialised world.

The ruling was delivered in a case resulting from a resolution passed by the UN General Assembly in March 2022, seeking the advisory opinion of the court on climate change.

The UNGA wanted the ICJ to address two very specific questions: (i) what are the obligations of countries under international law to protect the climate system and, (ii) what are the legal consequences for countries that do not fulfil their obligations.

Ruling of the court

The court examined the provisions of the three climate treaties — the 1994 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, and the 2015 Paris Agreement — and several other environment-related international laws that have a bearing on the climate system.

These include the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the 1987 Montreal Protocol for protecting ozone, the 1992 Convention on Biodiversity and the 1994 Convention to Combat Desertification.



Activists demonstrate outside the ICJ in The Hague on Wednesday. AP

The court concluded that climate action was not a matter of choice or preference, but a legal obligation: countries were obligated to take measures that contributed to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, rich and industrialised countries in Annexure I of the UNFCCC had an obligation to take the lead on emissions reduction, and facilitate technology and financial transfers to developing countries.

It identified several other obligations of countries, and said that failure to fulfil them would constitute an "internationally wrongful act" which could have legal consequences. These could include being held liable to provide full reparation to countries that suffer on account of climate disasters, or other impacts of climate change. Countries could be held liable even for the irresponsible actions of private businesses or corporations, if they had failed to exercise due diligence and not taken adequate regulatory or legislative measures to prevent the irresponsible behaviour of private actors, the court held.

Significance of ruling

The advisory opinion of the ICJ is not international law, and it is not binding on countries. However, it is the most authoritative interpretation of international law on the subject, and it is likely to be relied upon by

courts around the world in deciding matters that come before them.

This ruling is expected to put the spotlight back on climate change. In recent years, progress on the global fight against climate change has been severely undermined by the lack of adequate action by countries, particularly those in the developed world. The emissions reduction targets for 2030 will almost certainly be missed.

The withdrawal of the US, the world's biggest historical emitter and a major laggard on climate action, from the Paris Agreement has put a question mark on the future of cooperative global action on climate. The credibility of international climate negotiations is at stake, with developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable ones, very upset over their concerns being ignored.

The ICJ's advisory opinion does not directly set right any of these. Several parts of the ruling could be difficult or impractical to implement, and these are likely to be hotly contested in courts. What the opinion has done though, is to reaffirm the legal sanctity of the provisions and principles mentioned in international law on climate change, and declared that non-adherence to these could be reason to impose penalties on countries.

This is important because the climate actions mandated under the UNFCCC or the

Paris Agreement are, barring a few, largely suggestive in nature, and there are no consequences for countries for non-compliance.

For example, the US suffered no consequences for pulling out of the Paris Agreement, and the developed countries as a whole got away with not meeting their finance obligations. Most developed countries did not meet their emissions reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol either, and some of them walked out of the treaty again without any consequences.

The ICJ has not spelt out the consequences for any of these countries. That will be for other courts to decide, if any such matter comes before them.

The ICJ's opinion that countries that suffer from climate impacts — it calls them "injured states" — are entitled not just to compensation, but full reparation, is a major development. Developed nations reluctantly acknowledge that small and vulnerable countries require assistance, financial and otherwise, to deal with climate disasters, but reject any suggestion of liability, compensation, or reparations.

With this, the ICJ has strongly endorsed the concept of loss and damage in climate laws, which call upon developed countries to take the lead in raising financial and other support to help countries recover from impacts of climate change. This is likely to trigger a wave of litigation seeking compensation from the developed countries. Corporate polluters too are likely to be taken to court.

The advisory opinion is likely to be contested — and not just by the developed world.

For example, the ICJ has opined that merely initiating some climate actions is not sufficient compliance with the obligations of countries — the scale or magnitude of these actions is open to scrutiny. However, under the Paris Agreement, countries are free to decide their climate actions, and the only requirement is that every subsequent set of actions must be a progression on the previous ones. There is no provision to ascertain the sufficiency of a country's climate action, or the lack thereof.

The actual impact of the ruling will become evident only when it begins to be cited as precedent in individual cases on climate-related disputes, and from the treatment that it receives from governments.

India-UK FTA promises a cheaper peg: the story and history of Scotch whisky

ARJUN SENGUPTA

NEW DELHI, JULY 24

INDIA AND the UK signed a landmark Free Trade Agreement (FTA) on Thursday which will, among other things, bring down tariffs on Scotch whisky from 150% to 75% immediately, and to 40% over the next 10 years.

India is a "priority growth market" for the industry, according to trade group Scotch Whisky Association. What is Scotch, and what is its history?

EXPLAINED CULTURE

John of Rupecissa recorded the preservative properties of the distillate of wine, which he called *aqua vitae*. "John...notes how meat left in the open air quickly begins to rot, but when immersed in alcohol it is preserved indefinitely..." John Hopkins University professor Lawrence M Principe wrote in *The Secrets of Alchemy* (2012).

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Whisky becomes whisky

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A FEW WHISKY WORDS

SCOTCH WHISKY is defined as "a spirit distilled in Scotland from water and malted barley (to which only whole grains of other cereals may be added), fermented by the action of yeast and matured for at least three years in oak casks in Scotland", by the Scotch Whisky Regulations, 2009.

THE AGE statement on a bottle of Scotch refers to the youngest whisky in the blend or batch. A bottle with no age statement has been matured for three years.

gestion... it abandoneth melancholie; it relisheth the harte; it lightenth the mynde; it quickeneth the spirites... trulie it is a souera

10

The Indian **EXPRESS**

 ↵ FOUNDED BY ↵
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

CLOSING THE DEAL

India-UK trade pact could serve as a template as Delhi presses ahead with agreements with others, including US and EU

ONTHURSDAY, INDIA and the UK signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement that has been many years in the making. Leaders of both countries exuded confidence that the agreement would open up markets and bring enormous benefits to their countries. The goal is to double bilateral trade between the nations from roughly \$56 billion now. The signing of the deal was accompanied by the unveiling of the UK-India Vision 2035 — which envisages greater engagement in areas such as defence, tech and education, indicating a desire to deepen the relationship between the two countries.

Through this trade agreement, said to be one of the most comprehensive deals that Delhi has entered into, India has indicated its willingness to bring down its tariffs substantially as it seeks to integrate more closely with developed countries and encourage more investment into the country. Delhi's high tariff walls have been criticised by others, including the US. The Office of the United States Trade Representative had recently noted that India's average applied tariff rate was 17 per cent, while that on agricultural products was even higher at 39 per cent. As per reports, under this new deal, the average tariffs on British products will fall from 15 per cent to 3 per cent, which could potentially lead to a large increase in UK exports. On the other hand, the agreement paves the way for "unprecedented duty free access for 99 per cent of India's exports to the UK", covering almost the entire trade basket. This includes labour intensive segments such as textiles, leather, footwear and gems and jewellery, as well as sectors like engineering goods and auto components. Alongside, India has secured significant commitments on services and labour mobility. The agreement increases market access in critical areas such as IT and IT-enabled services as well as financial, legal, professional and educational services. The double contribution convention agreement will help Indian professionals and their employers avoid making social security payments in the UK, thereby bringing down the costs of doing business.

The India-UK deal comes at a time when the global trading architecture has been upended by US President Donald Trump's tariff policies. Trump has over the past few days announced new deals with countries such as Japan, the Philippines and Indonesia, after similar agreements with Britain and Vietnam, with the tariffs ranging between 10 and 20 per cent. In the case of India, even as talks continue, a deal remains elusive. India is also negotiating a deal with the EU — as this paper has reported, the two sides have agreed to seven out of 23 chapters in the agreement. The deal with the UK could serve as a template for some of the issues, especially the more contentious ones. Delhi must press ahead with these trade agreements as it seeks to integrate with global supply chains more closely.

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STARVING GAZA

If Israel continues its starvation policy with impunity, it will be a severe blow to rules-based global order; its legitimacy

ACCORDING TO GAZA'S Health Ministry, out of more than 55,000 people killed since the war began in October 2023, at least 111 — most of them children — have died from malnutrition. Over 40 of those deaths occurred in just the past week. The head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees has reported that aid workers, including doctors, are collapsing from hunger while on duty. For months, UN officials, humanitarian groups, and independent experts have been flagging that Gaza's more than two million residents stand on the brink of famine. This catastrophe is neither natural nor inevitable — it is man-made and entirely preventable. A joint letter signed this week by 109 aid agencies, including Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam and Amnesty, has accused the Israeli government of deliberately obstructing the flow of aid. The only aid points now operating in Gaza are four militarised hubs run by the US- and Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. These replaced the 400 UN-run sites shut down by Israel over unproven claims that aid is being diverted by Hamas. In the past month, more than 1,000 Palestinians have been killed while trying to access food at these sites due to shelling and firing. Gazans are being forced to make a choice between starving to death and risking being shot in a desperate attempt to feed themselves and their families. This, while Israeli air strikes continue unabated.

Israel's military objective is evidently to defeat Hamas. But the most vulnerable in Israel's war, and on whom it is inflicting the greatest suffering, are the innocent men, women and children of Gaza. Deliberately inflicting starvation on a people does much more than violate international law — Israel is obligated to ensure that aid reaches the population. If it continues its starvation policy with impunity, it will be a severe blow to the rules-based global order, its legitimacy.

International condemnation against Israel is rising, albeit belatedly. Earlier this week, 28 countries, including staunch allies like the UK, Australia, Canada and France, issued a statement that deemed its "denial of essential humanitarian assistance" to be "unacceptable". US Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff is in Italy this week, and will perhaps fly to Qatar as well, in a renewed push for a ceasefire. But the world must do more. Notwithstanding geopolitical rivalries over trade or territory, the international community must urgently unite to put pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to open Gaza's border crossings, and allow aid in.

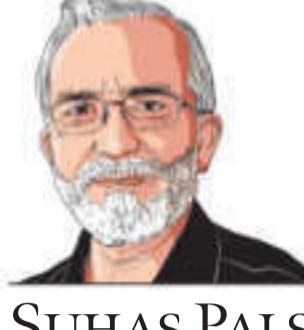
BRINGING CENTRESTAGE

As artist and storyteller, Ratan Thiyam always came back to Manipur

WHAT IS IT like to be a storyteller in a state torn by conflict? Ratan Thiyam, the doyen of Manipuri theatre who died on July 23 at the age of 76, used to say, "I don't want to be a politician. I am a theatre person and doing a production is enough for me." He made plays based on myths, wrapping his protest in metaphors of epic proportions. The audiences who crowded the theatres to watch Thiyam's plays had heard the stories of Abhimanyu, Antigone and Ashoka before — and then, they heard them from him.

Chakravyuh, a 1984 play that propelled Thiyam to international acclaim, revolves around Abhimanyu, who is trapped in a labyrinth created by hardened warriors. He dies fighting a war he had not started. Thiyam, skilled in uniting every element of drama, from visual and sound to costumes and lights, put out a spectacular narrative of war. He drew audience attention to a less-discussed aspect of Manipur — how young people, as confident and courageous as Abhimanyu, were caught in a maze of political violence and insurgency. "I have to make plays based on myths, or nobody will take notice of me or my work," Thiyam once said. His plays were searing political commentaries that made audiences in the region, the country and in international forums understand the Manipuri situation as a human tragedy.

In 1987, Thiyam was appointed director of the prestigious National School of Drama in Delhi, his alma mater. A year later, he quit and returned to Imphal to work with his group, Chorus Repertory Theatre, to tell stories. Though he travelled the world with his theatre group, Thiyam always came back to Manipur. His plays were in Manipuri. His aesthetics showcased the culture of the state — traditions such as the Wari Liba, a Manipuri storytelling form, Thang-Ta, a martial arts style, and pung or the Manipuri drum. He kept Manipur in the imagination, his own and that of his audiences.

**SUHAS PALSHIKAR**

WHAT YOU REQUIRE is a dictionary, the Supreme Court is reported to have told the SIT in the Ali Khan Mahmudabad case recently. Very soon, the courts may have to say, what you need is a set of Political Science books. The need to read Political Science literature may be necessitated by the mention of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in a bill passed by the Maharashtra legislature in the name of protecting public security.

Indeed, there is a separate section under the Ministry of Home Affairs that deals with LWE but one is not sure that there is a clear legal definition of LWE. The MHA portal says that LWE refers to organisations that are banned and listed as an appendix to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. But that hardly satisfies the test of what conceptually constitutes LWE. Broad innuendos making the rounds in the public domain refer to Maoism. In operational terms, the provisions refer to the use of violence for the overthrow of the state. But since the Maharashtra government now intends to incriminate Left Wing ideology, the onus is on the government to specify what it means by it.

In the absence of clarity, anyone can be accused of subscribing to Left Wing ideology, and then the police will be running from one library to another for material on what constitutes Left Wing ideas. The current dispensation in Maharashtra and nationally is allergic to the idea of the "Left". Therefore, it will do well to come forward and define for legal purposes which ideas are construed as Left and are hence liable to be proscribed.

Maoist violence in many parts of the country has invited a reaction of repulsion even among those who may have a leftward leaning. That repulsion is tactfully utilised intellectually and cinematically by some who employ the term "urban Naxal". Even the Maharashtra Chief Minister has repeatedly referred to urban Maoism. What is overlooked is the distinction between those who actively mobilise Maoist violence against the state, those who sympathise with such organisations and those who do not endorse such violence but subscribe to the idea that the stranglehold of capital over state authority needs to be removed.

The other problem with the Maharashtra law is that it incriminates a number of ac-

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Spell out LWE

Left Wing Extremism is a smokescreen. Maharashtra's new law could criminalise dissent in democracy

tivities that are already proscribed by various laws and thus there is a vicious duplication of legal instruments giving the executive and the police unseemly discretionary powers on whether to book someone under this law, under UAPA or a more routine law penalising crime and violence. We regularly witness instances of how executive discretion results in overenthusiasm and even partisan vendetta. The new law will be an additional instrument to harass civil society. Given that it precludes the bail provision and recourse to lower courts, one can only imagine its likely draconian effects.

Perhaps the most worrisome provisions in this law pertain to freedom of speech and expression. True, we routinely get a dose of pontification from the judiciary that freedom — and freedom of expression, in particular — is not absolute. It is nobody's case that in the Indian context, this freedom is absolute or without constraints. But the central question that law-makers and the judiciary must answer is not whether freedom of expression is or should be absolute. The question is whether restraints on freedom of expression can be random and arbitrary.

Scholars of the Indian Constitution have argued that writing down the restrictions on the freedom of expression produces a concrete limiting effect on the executive and legislature. The written restrictions guarantee that governments or state authorities will not have unlimited powers to curb the freedom of expression. Also, the constitutional scheme of things requires the test of reasonableness. Restrictions have to be reasonable. Courts are therefore not to tell a citizen what she should reasonably express but to examine if the enforced limitations are reasonable. In the backdrop of the judiciary's abdication of this sacrosanct duty, the provisions in Maharashtra's bill could be dangerous and ill-intended.

Under this new law, "unlawful" activities are defined as activities "by act or words... or by sign or by visible representation". In other words, freedom of expression, besides actual acts, is intended to be criminalised. As a member of the legislature publicly stated after the passage of the bill, holding seminars (purportedly on objectionable matters, in that lawmaker's view) will be punished

by the new law. Therein exists a dual danger. One, any dog-whistling can easily activate the police machinery, and there is no mechanism to first examine such random complaints emanating from ideological or political rivals before action is taken; the Advisory Board comes into the picture only after action is taken by the police. Two, any intelligent activity can easily be brought under the purview of unlawful activity.

What constitutes incitement to violence will always be a ticklish issue legally, morally and politically. For the sake of argument, let us admit that "incitement" may be legitimately criminalised. In that case, incitement against minorities — indulged in even by some members of the state government — should also be criminalised. But since such perpetrators are not Left Wing, this law would turn a blind eye towards that incitement. As the new law says, any acts through words that "constitute danger to peace and tranquility", "acts of generating fear and apprehension in the public", "preaching disobedience of law and its institutions" are construed as unlawful.

A plain reading of these phrases should alert any citizen. Because, while the law mentions LWE, these political acts are the common language of democratic mobilisation and as such practically any social worker can be booked for extending a verbal criticism of authorities and appealing to citizens to protest. Any stringent criticism can be construed as endangering tranquillity. Thus, the language of "urban Naxal" is a smokescreen. The tameness and intellectual laziness of the Opposition in Maharashtra is such that it is content with limiting the powers under this law to LWE. In its abject muteness, the Opposition in Maharashtra has shown that it is following in the footsteps of the loyal Opposition in Gujarat.

Following legislation in Chhattisgarh, Odisha etc, this law raises wider issues beyond being Left or non-Left. It is about the idea of the state and protests: Whether the state can be critiqued in a democracy and whether a self-proclaimed democratic state should be criminalising protest, dissent and difference of opinion.

The writer, based in Pune, taught Political Science

**HIRANMAY KARLEKAR**

MEDIA REPORTS OF some of the questions asked and observations made by a Supreme Court (SC) bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta on July 15 have created a flutter. The bench was hearing a petition by a Noida resident, Reema Shah, against an order by the Allahabad High Court on March 3. She reportedly approached the Court seeking directions to the Noida Authority and others not to harass her, other feeders, as well as any other institution that feeds community dogs and animals, both in her society and outside it in Noida. The petitioner, the counsel said, was subjected to harassment and was unable to feed community dogs in line with the Animal Birth Control Rules.

Rule 20 of the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 (popularly known as ABC Rules) states, "It shall be [the] responsibility of the Resident Welfare Association or Apartment Owner Association or Local Body's representative of that area to make necessary arrangement for feeding of community animals residing in the premises or that area involving the person residing in that area or premises as the case may be, who feeds those animals or intends to feed those animals and provides care to street animals as a compassionate gesture." It also contains provisions seeking the safety and well-being of human beings in the area in the context of feeding. Several judgments of the SC

Feeding ensures that dogs are healthy and capable of undergoing sterilisation. The ABC Rules also mandate sterilisation, which, as experience in India and abroad shows, is the only way to stabilise the population of street dogs. Moreover, unlike dogs that are fed and vaccinated, hungry dogs are prone to turning violent. Hence, the petitioner in this case was asserting a statutory right as well as performing a constitutional duty.

and high courts have upheld the validity of the ABC Rules.

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To prevent conflict, the petitioner sought directions for identifying open, designated areas in Noida where community dogs could be fed without triggering disputes. These are referred to in the ABC Rules as "feeding spots", which are for the RWAs to designate. It was reported that the SC, while hearing her appeal, made certain remarks, including asking, "Why don't you feed them in your own house? Nobody is stopping you." The bench had also stated, "We give you a suggestion to open a shelter in your own house."

Earlier, similar remarks of the Nagpur Bench of the High Court of Bombay were expunged by the SC. On November 16, 2022, a bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna (subsequently Chief Justice of India) and J K Maheshwari stayed a Bombay High Court order (Nagpur Bench) banning public feeding of street dogs and directed the authorities not to take any coercive step against any-

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DOG

Animal Birth Control Rules are clear: They can be fed and need sterilisation



JULY 25, 1985, FORTY YEARS AGO

HISTORIC ACCORD

THE PROBLEM OF Punjab, which has spawned some of the bloodiest events in the country's history in the last four years, has at long last been solved. PM Rajiv Gandhi and Akali Dal chief Harchand Singh Longowal signed an agreement that includes the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab and some Hindi-speaking areas to Haryana, rehabilitation of those discharged from the Army and reference of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution to the Sarkaria Commission.

SCENES OF JOY

PRIME MINISTER RAJIV Gandhi's announce-

ment regarding the Punjab accord was generally welcomed by the common man. Scenes of jubilation were witnessed outside the Indian Express office, where Sikhs were seen embracing Hindus with joy. There were reports from different parts of the Capital of people distributing sweets after the announcement.

LEADERS HAIL ACCORD

LEADERS OF SEVERAL political parties, parliamentarians and eminent citizens hailed the accord. Punjab Governor Arjun Singh, who was present in the Speaker's gallery when the announcement was made, expressed his "deepest pleasure". More than 50 MPs from different

parts of the country in a joint statement said the accord would put an end to the era of confrontation and uncertainty and usher in an era of peace, prosperity and progress.

SACKING STAFF

THE SUPREME COURT has held that a government servant can be dismissed, removed or demoted without an opportunity to explain his case under Article 311(2)(b) of the Constitution if it was in public interest. The principle that a person should get an opportunity to be heard before action is taken against him ("natural justice") can be modified and in exceptional cases even excluded, a Constitution bench has ruled.

THE IDEAS PAGE

DIS/AGREE

THE BEST OF BOTH SIDES

A fortnightly column, which offers not this-versus-that, but the best of both sides, to inform the debate



C.R. Sasikumar

CBSE's decision to introduce two levels of examinations in Mathematics at the senior secondary level has stirred controversy. Will it come in the way of making students more future-ready?

Two levels of Maths is a bad idea

At a time when mathematical literacy determines economic opportunity, India cannot afford to create artificial barriers to achievement



SUBIMAL BHATTACHARJEE

THE CENTRAL BOARD of Secondary Education's (CBSE) decision to introduce two levels of Mathematics for higher secondary students — basic Maths and Advanced or standard Maths — from 2026-27 represents a misunderstanding of educational equity and excellence. While ostensibly designed to accommodate different student abilities, this bifurcated approach undermines the foundation of comprehensive education and should be reconsidered.

CBSE currently offers Mathematics at two levels in Class X, where both basic and standard levels follow the same syllabus, but the examination for the former is easier. This model, now being extended to higher secondary classes, creates artificial barriers that limit student potential rather than nurture it. The premise that students need "easier" maths fundamentally misunderstands how mathematical competence develops — through challenge, struggle, and eventual mastery, not through diluted content.

The first flaw lies in the psychological impact of labelling. When students choose "basic" Mathematics, they internalise a message about their limitations. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, where reduced expectations lead to reduced achievement.

Research consistently shows that high expectations coupled with appropriate support yield better outcomes than lowered standards disguised as accommodation.

As AI and technology permeate every sector — from agriculture to healthcare, finance to creative industries — mathematical literacy has never been more crucial. Today's students will enter a workforce where algorithmic thinking, data interpretation, and quantitative reasoning are fundamental skills, not optional extras. The CBSE's two-tier system creates a generation of artificially segregated students, leaving many unprepared for an increasingly quantitative world.

While India positions itself as a global technology hub, its premier educational board is creating pathways that detracts from mathematical proficiency. The "basic" maths track reduces chances of a career in STEM, data science, economics and numerous other fields. This is particularly problematic given that many students will make these choices at 15-16 years of age, before they fully understand career implications or develop mature mathematical thinking.

The argument that students not pursuing Mathematics beyond Class X need only basic skills is flawed in our current context. Whether analysing insurance policies, understanding loan calculations, evaluating investment options, or simply being an informed citizen capable of interpreting statistical claims, comprehensive mathematical literacy is essential for everyone.

Mathematics assessments take notably different approaches. Singapore maintains a unified maths curriculum through secondary education. It teaches students mathematical concepts in a three-step learning process: Concrete, pictorial, and abstract, based on the work of American psychologist Jerome Bruner. Finland maintains a comprehensive Mathematics education without artificial streaming. Its approach focuses on collaborative learning environments where stronger students help weaker ones. The Korean revised school curriculum emphasises contextual learning so that students can grasp basic mathematical concepts and make connections with their everyday lives.

These countries understand that mathematical competence isn't fixed but develops through quality instruction, peer interaction, and persistent effort. Their success suggests that India's approach may be solving the wrong problem.

Building on a system already in place for Mathematics, CBSE will expand its dual-level subject options to Science for Class XI. The existing implementation in classes IX and X provides valuable insights into this policy's shortcomings. Rather than improving mathematical achievement broadly, it has created a two-tier system where students in the "basic" track often struggle when attempting to transition to higher mathematics.

Under new guidelines, students who completed basic Mathematics will now be permitted to take Mathematics in Class XI, but the head of the institution must ensure that the student has the aptitude and ability. This requirement reveals the system's fundamental flaw — if students completing "basic" Mathematics need special assessment to continue with standard Mathematics, the former is failing to prepare them adequately.

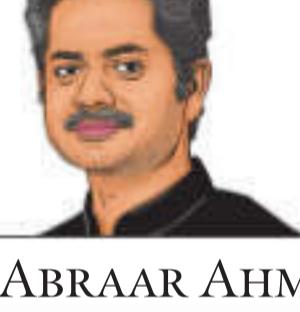
The argument that students not pursuing Mathematics beyond Class X need only basic skills is flawed in our current context. Whether analysing insurance policies, understanding loan calculations, evaluating investment options, or simply being an informed citizen capable of interpreting statistical claims, comprehensive mathematical literacy is essential for everyone.

Mathematical education should prepare students for an uncertain future where quantitative literacy will be essential across professions. Creating artificial barriers through two-tier systems contradicts this imperative. In an era where mathematical literacy determines economic opportunity, India cannot afford to create artificial barriers to achievement. As a postgraduate in Mathematics, it is my conviction that it will be more prudent to abandon this misguided policy and commit to universal mathematical excellence.

The writer, a defence and cyber security analyst, is former country head of General Dynamics

Gives students more options

CBSE's move will draw more students to Mathematics by letting them choose how to engage with the subject



ABRAAR AHMED

THE CENTRAL BOARD of Secondary Education (CBSE) has been entrusted to come up with and apply novel and robust methods to assess and evaluate students. For students in Class XII, evaluation takes the form of board examinations. The classroom experience, no doubt, is a critical part of a young person's academic experience. But so is the examination system. Despite the introduction of CUET in recent years, the board examinations remain a cause for anxiety for a large section of students. In Mathematics especially, the fear of examinations often comes in the way of enjoying the intricacies of the subject.

With a keen eye on students' welfare — as well as the requirements of the knowledge economy — the CBSE has announced the implementation of a two-tier examination system in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects at the senior secondary school level.

At present, a Class XI student may choose to study Standard Mathematics or Applied Mathematics. However, both are flat, dense subjects with scarcely any room for flexibility in the syllabus. In the two-tier system, however, the scenario will be different. A student who chooses to pursue the subject may opt for either basic-level or advanced-level Mathematics. She can take the latter option if she aspires to study Maths at university later, or any other course where Mathematics is expected to play a deep auxiliary role — say, Economics or Engineering. If, however, the student wants to pursue a career in the Humanities, Theatre or Sports, but has an affinity for Mathematics, she can opt for the basic level. The CBSE aims to ensure this choice is available to students no later than the academic year 2026-27. Reportedly, NCERT has already started working on books to meet the intellectual needs of this curriculum.

The idea of offering subjects at two levels is not entirely new. In several Western countries as well as Singapore and Japan, senior secondary students have been exercising these choices for at least a few decades. Since 1975, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme has been the major example of this idea in practice. At the

Diploma level (equivalent to classes XI and XII), students typically study six subjects — three at the standard level and three at a higher level. The higher-level course allows one to dive deeper into the subject. The standard level offers breadth, but not much depth. The final exams are designed to go in tandem with the student's choice. The IB is now relatively established in India, with more than 200 schools having adopted it.

The CBSE's attempt to implement a two-tier curriculum is a much-needed move given the country's diversity and the different learning experiences of students. By reducing the fear of examinations, a two-tiered evaluation is likely to make the subject more amenable to a large number of students. If the purpose of a progressive education system is to draw more young people to a subject, the CBSE's latest move fits this requirement. In addition, STEM subjects are notorious for being intellectually demanding. A Science student in India who passes the Board exam without taking tuition in at least one subject is quite unusual. There is hope that the two-tier curriculum will reduce students' dependence on coaching classes.

The new scheme opens up new possibilities, allowing students to explore some advanced-level subjects in greater depth while still leaving significant scope for them to learn new things in basic-level subjects; those designing the two-tier curriculum should take such possibilities into account.

The CBSE is not making drastic changes in the reading materials. The significant change will be in the degree of difficulty of the examination. This is not to say there will not be challenges. It is not clear how the examination agency is going to evaluate students taking the same subject at different levels. It's also not certain that this move won't create a divide between teachers who handle advanced-level subjects and those who teach at the basic level. Will the student be permitted to change the level of a subject based on her emotional connect with it? Will the student opting for the basic level of a subject feel inferior to another who has opted for the advanced level?

Making a subject more interesting for students is a work in progress and all concerns should be addressed. Even then, a step in the right direction has to be applauded. As Physics Nobel laureate Richard Feynman once said, "I would rather have questions that can't be answered than answers that can't be questioned."

The writer has taught Mathematics in the NCR for almost two decades. Views are personal

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Faced with the systematic destruction of Palestinian life in Gaza, other states must together produce a systematic, comprehensive and concrete response. If not now, when? What more would it take to convince them?" — THE GUARDIAN

Beyond the brain drain

Countries exporting healthcare workers overlook domestic needs. They also need to intervene to increase bargaining power of doctors and nurses



SANDHYA
VENKATESWARAN AND
NADINE MONTEIRO

through remittances and investments, enhance its global influence in health sectors, and manage the challenges of the brain drain through policies encouraging circular migration and bilateral cooperation. It enhanced medical diplomacy during the Covid pandemic by deploying medical professionals to neighbouring and African countries. What is needed now is a greater focus on negotiating more comprehensive — and enforceable — bilateral agreements between source and destination countries, which can potentially include compensation mechanisms, targeted investments in medical education, health infrastructure, or technology transfer, to offset the loss of skilled workers. The WHO code is a starting point in rebuilding such agreements.

Ageing populations alongside declining birth rates are leading to growing demands and acute shortages of healthcare professionals in developed countries. India and other countries hold the potential to supply healthcare professionals. India could maximise gains through improved institutional mechanisms, such as establishing a centralised agency to manage workforce mobility. Kerala's experience with setting up agencies to coordinate overseas employment, address grievances, and support returnees can inform national approaches. So can the experiences of the Philippines' Department of Migrant Workers.

Diplomacy or economic gains cannot override the workforce agenda of individual countries or take priority over the strength of their health system. Countries exporting health workforce could benefit from greater attention to building a cadre of health professionals, developing the health workforce industry and addressing the need for retaining professionals. This will require expanding the health education infrastructure and increasing its economic viability, improving working conditions and providing incentives to retain talent and encourage circular migration, rather than permanent outflow, leveraging digital tools to enable Indian health professionals to provide services globally, where possible, without physical migration, ensuring accountability of international agreements and exploring regional approaches towards enhancing production capacity such as jointly developed and owned mechanisms of workforce production.

Economics and geopolitics influence the extent and nature of such migration through a combination of push and pull factors. Limited career growth and lower wages are key economic push factors. Political instability and conflict in the source country are often political push factors. Trade agreements that encourage migration, health crises that pull health workers to some areas and international recruitment policies are all pull factors, which, in turn, contribute to shortages in source countries. Countries like the Philippines and India have formalised policies to encourage the export of health workers, viewing them as sources of remittances and economic benefit. Yet, both countries have an acute shortage of health professionals.

Despite potential gains in the form of remittances and skill development, the loss of workforce capacity in countries already facing shortages outweighs the gains. What is needed, therefore, is a balanced domestic and international policy response that focuses on the needs of the individual, the national health system and global equity.

Cross-country migration is often leveraged for diplomatic gains. India, already known as the pharmacy of the world, leverages such migration to foster international partnerships, promote economic gains and join FREE Telegram Channel <https://t.me/+jUYKq0AFHBAwMgQ1>

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DAM'S DANGERS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial 'The water front' (IE, July 24). China's construction of a \$170 billion hydropower project on the Yarlung Tsangpo has significant implications for downstream riparian states. Given the Himalayan region's seismic activity, the project raises serious concerns about seismic stability and the potential for dam bursts. While dialogue among riparian countries and transparent data sharing are indispensable, merely assigning tasks to entities like Water and Power Consultancy Services is insufficient. Instead, a proactive, time-bound strategy is imperative to mitigate threats.

Krishan Kumar Chug, New Delhi

DELIBERATE ERASURE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Only brute power rules' (IE, July 24). No foreign press is allowed inside Israel-controlled Gaza. Local journalists have become victims. Israel's blockade has systematically denied baby formula, clean water and food, forcing nursing mothers to stop lactating. The editorial rightly names silence as complicity but this silence is engineered: Aid routes are bombed, ambulances denied access, and journalists erased. This is not merely war; it is the deliberate erasure of a people. If we don't speak up now, we are complicit.

Zainab Irshad, Patna

MASS STARVATION

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Dozens in Gaza dying of starvation: Palestinian officials & aid agencies' (IE, July 24). Thirty-three lives have been lost to hunger in Gaza in just two days, taking the toll to 101 by Tuesday. More than 100 humanitarian organisations have sounded alarms over 'mass starvation'. The WHO warns that famine is already here, and worsening. Starvation as a weapon is a war crime under international law. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and UN fact-finding missions now assert that Israel's actions may amount to genocide. Israel must open all crossings immediately and allow unfettered access to aid.

Khokan Das, Kolkata

TACKLING OBESITY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The silent epidemic' (IE, July 24). Today, obesity is a major public health challenge in India. Sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy diets, a shift towards processed foods, reduced physical activity, and environmental factors contribute to the rise of obesity and increase the risk of non-communicable diseases, including heart disease. There is a need to recognise obesity as a public health concern.

Vaibhav Goyal, Chandigarh

TOP OF THE WORLD



Former Labour party chief Jeremy Corbyn

UNITED KINGDOM
Redistribution of wealth, power aim of new party, says Corbyn

London: Former British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn said Thursday he is forming a new left-leaning political party to advocate "mass redistribution of wealth and power" and take on his former colleagues at the ballot box. The new formation has a website — yourparty.uk — but does not yet have a name. "It's your party," Corbyn said. "We're going to decide (a name) when we've had all the responses, and so far the response rate has been massive." Corbyn said he hoped the new party would have its inaugural conference in the fall. Corbyn remains popular with many grassroots supporters. **REUTERS**

BANGLADESH
Ex-CJ detained in sedition and forgery cases

Dhaka: Bangladesh's former chief justice ABM Khairul Haque was detained here on Thursday in connection with three criminal cases, including a sedition charge, officials said. Haque, who served as the country's 19th chief justice from 2010 to 2011, was known for presiding over landmark verdicts, including the 2011 ruling that declared Bangladesh's nonpartisan caretaker government system unconstitutional. Detective branch officers picked up the 81-year-old former judge from his residence in Dhanmondi area of the capital, Dhaka Metropolitan Police deputy commissioner Talebir Rahman told reporters. **PTI**

AFGHANISTAN
Taliban tortured Afghans expelled from Pak, Iran: UN

Islamabad: The Taliban have tortured and threatened Afghans forcibly returned from Iran and Pakistan because of their identity or personal history, a UN report said Thursday. Pakistan and Iran are expelling millions of Afghans who they say are living in their countries illegally. Rights groups and the UN have repeatedly warned that some of those returning are at risk of persecution because of their gender, links to the former Western-backed administration or profession. **AP**

4 major media houses say Gaza staff starving; malnutrition kills 48 in July

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JULY 24

FOUR LEADING news organizations said Thursday their journalists in Gaza are facing the threat of starvation as the Israel-Hamas war grinds on, while top U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff was to meet with key negotiators from the Middle East for talks on the latest ceasefire proposal and the release of hostages.

"We are desperately concerned for our journalists in Gaza, who are increasingly unable to feed themselves and their families," said a joint statement by The Associated Press, Agence France-Presse, Reuters and the BBC. "For many months, these independent journalists have been the world's eyes and ears on the ground in Gaza. They are now facing the same dire circumstances as those they are covering."

The statement called on Join FREE WhatsApp Channel <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6o8d0F>

Reuters
Palestinians at a charity kitchen in Gaza City on Thursday

Israel to allow journalists in and out of Gaza and allow adequate food supplies into the territory.

The statement came a day after more than 100 charity and human rights groups said that Israel's blockade and ongoing

military offensive are pushing Palestinians in the Gaza Strip toward starvation.

Also Thursday, Hamas confirmed it had sent its latest ceasefire proposal to Israel, with an Israeli official calling it "work-

able," although no details were provided. The official spoke on condition of anonymity.

Israel's war in Gaza, launched in response to Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack, has killed more than 59,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Its count doesn't distinguish between militants and civilians, but the ministry says that more than half of the dead are women and children.

Gaza's Health Ministry said 48 Palestinians have died of malnutrition this past month, adding that 59 Palestinians died of malnutrition so far in 2025, up from 50 in 2024, and four in 2023 when Israel started its war against the Hamas militant group in Gaza after its rampage in southern Israel on Oct. 7.

In the most recent cases, a man and a woman died of malnutrition Wednesday, the Shifa Hospital told The Associated Press.

Ahead of E-3 talks, Iran says ready for US talks but only if it rebuilds trust

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEHRAN, JULY 24

IRAN IS ready to engage in talks on its nuclear programme with the United States, but only if Washington takes meaningful steps to rebuild trust, Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said Thursday.

Iran is set to meet Friday in Istanbul with Britain, France and Germany, known as the E3 nations, and the European Union's deputy foreign policy commissioner. They will be the first talks since Iran's 12-day war with Israel in June, which involved US B-52 bombers striking nuclear-related facilities in Iran. Gharibabadi said in a post Thursday that to enter negotiations, Iran sought "several key principles" to be upheld.

He said those included "rebuilding Iran's trust avoiding the use of talks as a platform for hidden agendas such as military action, though Iran remains fully prepared for any scenario; respecting and recognising Iran's rights under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, including enrichment in line with its legitimate needs; and the lifting of sanctions".

Friday's talks will be held at the deputy ministerial level, with Iran sending Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-e Ravanchi.

Reuters
A shelter set up in Buriram, Thailand, amid border clashes with Cambodia, on Thursday

Thailand jet bombs Cambodian targets as border clash escalates

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BANGKOK, JULY 24

THAI AND Cambodian soldiers clashed in several areas along their border Thursday in a major escalation of their conflict that left at least 11 people dead, mostly civilians. The two sides fired small arms, artillery and rockets, and Thailand also called in airstrikes.

Thai villagers could be seen on video fleeing their homes to seek shelter as the clashes began in the morning. Fighting was ongoing in at least six areas along the border, Thai Defense

Ministry spokesperson Surasant Kongsi said. The trigger for the clashes was a mine explosion along the border Wednesday that wounded five Thai soldiers and led Bangkok to withdraw its ambassador to Cambodia and expelled Cambodia's.

Thailand has also sealed all land border crossings while urging its citizens to leave Cambodia.

The Southeast Asian neighbours have longstanding border disputes that periodically flare along their 800-kilometer frontier and usually result in brief confrontations that sometimes in-

volve exchanges of gunfire.

The Thai army said its forces heard a drone before seeing six armed Cambodian soldiers moving closer to Thai military positions. It said Thai soldiers tried to shout at them to defuse the situation, but the Cambodian side started to open fire.

Cambodia's Defense Ministry, however, said Thailand deployed a drone first before opening fire, and that Cambodia "acted strictly within the bounds of self-defense, responding to an unprovoked incursion by Thai troops that violated our territorial integrity."

48 die in plane crash in Russia's Far East: Officials

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW, JULY 24

ALL 48 passengers and crew onboard a passenger plane that crashed in Russia's Far East have died, the head of the country's Amur region said Thursday.

Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry said earlier that it had found the burning fuselage of the Soviet-designed twin turbo prop plane on a hillside south of its planned destination in the town of Tynda, more than 7,000 km east of Moscow.

The plane, which was operated by the Siberia-based Angara

Reuters
The crash site near Tynda in the Amur region

Airlines, had initially departed from Khabarovsk before making its way to Blagoveshchensk on

the Russian-Chinese border and onwards to Tynda. It wasn't immediately clear

what caused the crash.

Russia's Interfax news agency said there were adverse weather conditions at the time of the crash, citing unnamed official sources. Russian news outlets also reported that the aircraft was almost 50 years old, citing data taken from the plane's tail number.

Regional Gov Vasily Orlov said rescuers struggled to reach the site due to its remote location, 15 km south of Tynda. The transport prosecutor's office in the Far East said that the plane was attempting to land for a second time when it lost contact with air traffic control and disappeared from radars.

Xi earlier told von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa that the challenges facing Europe do not come from China, urging the bloc to "properly handle differences and frictions."

"It is hoped that the European side will keep the

trade and investment market

open and refrain from using re-

strictive economic and trade poli-

cies," Xi said.

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FOR CLAIMING FRANCE FIRST LADY WAS BORN MAN

MACRON, WIFE SUE US RIGHT-WING PODCASTER

FRENCH PRESIDENT Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte filed a defamation lawsuit in the US Wednesday against right-wing podcaster Candace Owens, centered on her claim that France's first lady is male. The Macrons said in a complaint filed in Delaware Superior Court that Owens has waged a lie-filled "campaign of global humiliation" to promote her podcast and expand her "frenzied" fan base. **REUTERS**

WHITE HOUSE SAYS 'FAKE NEWS'

A-G Bondi told Trump his name is in Epstein files, says WSJ report

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, JULY 24

ATTORNEY GENERAL Pam Bondi is facing Democratic calls to testify before Congress following a newspaper's revelation that she told President Donald Trump that his name appeared in the files of the Jeffrey Epstein sex-trafficking investigation.

The Wall Street Journal reported Wednesday that Bondi told Trump his name was among many high-profile figures mentioned in the files, which the Justice Department this month said it would not be releasing despite a clamor from online sleuths, conspiracy theorists and members of Trump's base.

Trump's personal ties to Epstein are well-established and his name is already known to have been included in records related to the wealthy financier, who killed himself in jail in 2019 as he awaited trial on sex trafficking charges. Sen Adam Schiff, a California Democrat, responded to the report by calling on Bondi and FBI Director Kash Patel to appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"We need to bring Bondi and Patel into the Judiciary Committee to testify about this now," Schiff said in a video posted on X.

The Justice Department declined to comment on the report but issued a joint statement from Bondi and Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche saying that investigators had reviewed the records and "nothing in the files warranted further investigation or prosecution." As part of our routine briefing, we made the president aware of the findings," the statement said.

Justice Department officials were set to meet Thursday with Ghislaine Maxwell, the imprisoned girlfriend of Jeffrey Epstein, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Reuters
US President Donald Trump at the 'Winning the AI Race' summit in Washington DC on Wednesday.

Over the years, thousands of pages of records have been released through lawsuits, Epstein's criminal dockets, public disclosures and Freedom of Information Act requests.

They include a 2016 deposition in which an accuser recounted she spent several hours with Epstein at Trump's Atlantic City casino but didn't say if she met Trump and did not accuse him of any wrongdoing.

White House spokesman Steven Cheung Wednesday said the reports were "nothing more than a continuation of the fake news stories concocted by the Democrats and the liberal media."

Top EU officials meet Xi in Beijing, say ties at 'inflection point'

Chinese President asks bloc to 'handle differences and frictions properly'

REUTERS

BEIJING, JULY 24

EU-CHINA trade ties have hit a "clear inflection point." European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Thursday in Beijing, capping a tense summit with top Chinese leaders dominated by concerns on commerce and the Ukraine war.

Expectations were low for the summit in the Chinese capital marking 50 years of diplomatic ties after weeks of escalating tension and wrangling that led to the duration being abruptly halved to a single day at Beijing's request.

"We have very frankly and openly raised our concerns... on the trade, investment and geopolitical issues... We have partially identified solutions," von der Leyen told a press conference after meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang. When asked about a potential trade deal with the United States, the EU chief said the bloc's focus has been on achieving a negotiated solution, but all other instruments are on the table until a satisfactory result.

Xi earlier told von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa that the challenges facing Europe do not come from China, urging the bloc to "properly handle differences and frictions."

"It is hoped that the European side will keep the trade and investment market open and refrain from using restrictive economic and trade policies," Xi said.

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AP
Xiaoming with European Union's Antonio Costa and Ursula von der Leyen in Beijing, Thursday.

BUFFETED BETWEEN a combative Washington and a hardline Beijing, the European Union has more publicly sought new alliances elsewhere, inking trade pacts with Indonesia and drafting deals with South America and Mexico. The leaders visited Tokyo the day before their meetings in Beijing, launching an alliance with Japan to boost economic ties and defend free trade.

This agreement marks an important step forward after a period of sustained federal scrutiny and institutional uncertainty," acting University President Claire Shipman said. The school had been threatened with the potential loss of billions of dollars in government support, including more than \$400 million in grants canceled earlier this year. The administration pulled the funding because of what it described as the university's failure to squelch antisemitism on campus.

Under the agreement, the Ivy League school will pay a \$200 million settlement over three years, the university said. It will also pay \$21 million to resolve alleged civil rights violations against Jewish employees that occurred following the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel, the White House said.

Columbia has since agreed to a series of demands laid out by the administration, including applying a contentious, federally endorsed definition of antisemitism not only to teaching but to a disciplinary committee that has been investigating students critical of Israel.

Columbia has since agreed to a series of demands laid out by the administration, including applying a contentious, federally endorsed definition of antisemitism not only to teaching but to a disciplinary committee that has been investigating students critical of Israel.

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BLEACH-BLOND, MAHOGANY-TANNED BEHEMOTH BECAME FACE OF PROFESSIONAL WRESTLING IN 1980s

Hulk Hogan, who helped turn pro-wrestling into billion-dollar spectacle, dies at 71

ROCKY SWIFT

JULY 24

HULK HOGAN, the American sports and entertainment star who made professional wrestling a global phenomenon and loudly supported Donald Trump for president, has died at the age of 71, World Wrestling Entertainment said on Thursday.

"WWE is saddened to learn WWE Hall of Famer Hulk Hogan has passed away. One of pop culture's most recognizable figures, Hogan helped WWE achieve global recognition in the 1980s," WWE said on X. It gave no cause of death.

Reuters
Hulk Hogan at a Trump campaign rally at Madison Square Garden in New York in 2024.

soon moved to the Tampa, Florida.

After high school, he played bass guitar for area rock bands, but felt a pull to the red-hot wrestling scene in Florida in the 1970s.

Many of the details of his career were showbusiness exaggerations, representative of the blurred lines between fact and fiction in wrestling. His first trainer reportedly broke Hogan's leg to dissuade him from entering the business, but he kept at wrestling, weight training, and — he later admitted — anabolic steroids.

The "Hulk" moniker came from comparisons to the comic-book hero portrayed on TV at the time. "Hogan" was the invention of Vincent McMahon, the head of the New World Order. The gimmick reinvigorated his career. Hogan eventually returned to the WWF, now known as WWE, and faced Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson

at WrestleMania in 2002. Hogan was inducted twice into the WWE Hall of Fame, and referred to himself as the "Babe Ruth" of

wrestling — after the New York Yankees' famed baseball player.

But Hogan's support of Trump in 2024 did not go down well with all wrestling fans, and he also faced other controversies. Gossip website Gawker was shattered after it posted parts of a sex tape between him and a friend's wife and Hogan sued on privacy grounds, winning a \$140 million judgment.

He was married three times and had two children, who starred alongside him and first wife Linda in a 2005-2007 reality TV show, *Hogan*

SENSEX: 82,184.17 ▼ 542.47 (0.66%) NIFTY: 25,062.10 ▼ 157.80 (0.63%) NIKKEI: 41,826.34 ▲ 655.02 HANG SENG: 25,667.18 ▲ 129.11 FTSE: 9,147.42 ▲ 85.93 DAX: 24,326.98 ▲ 86.16

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) per barrel as of July 23
International market data till 1900 IST

INDIA-UK COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC AND TRADE AGREEMENT

Scotch imports into India set to get cheaper with tariffs halved to 75%

AGGAM WALIA
NEW DELHI, JULY 24

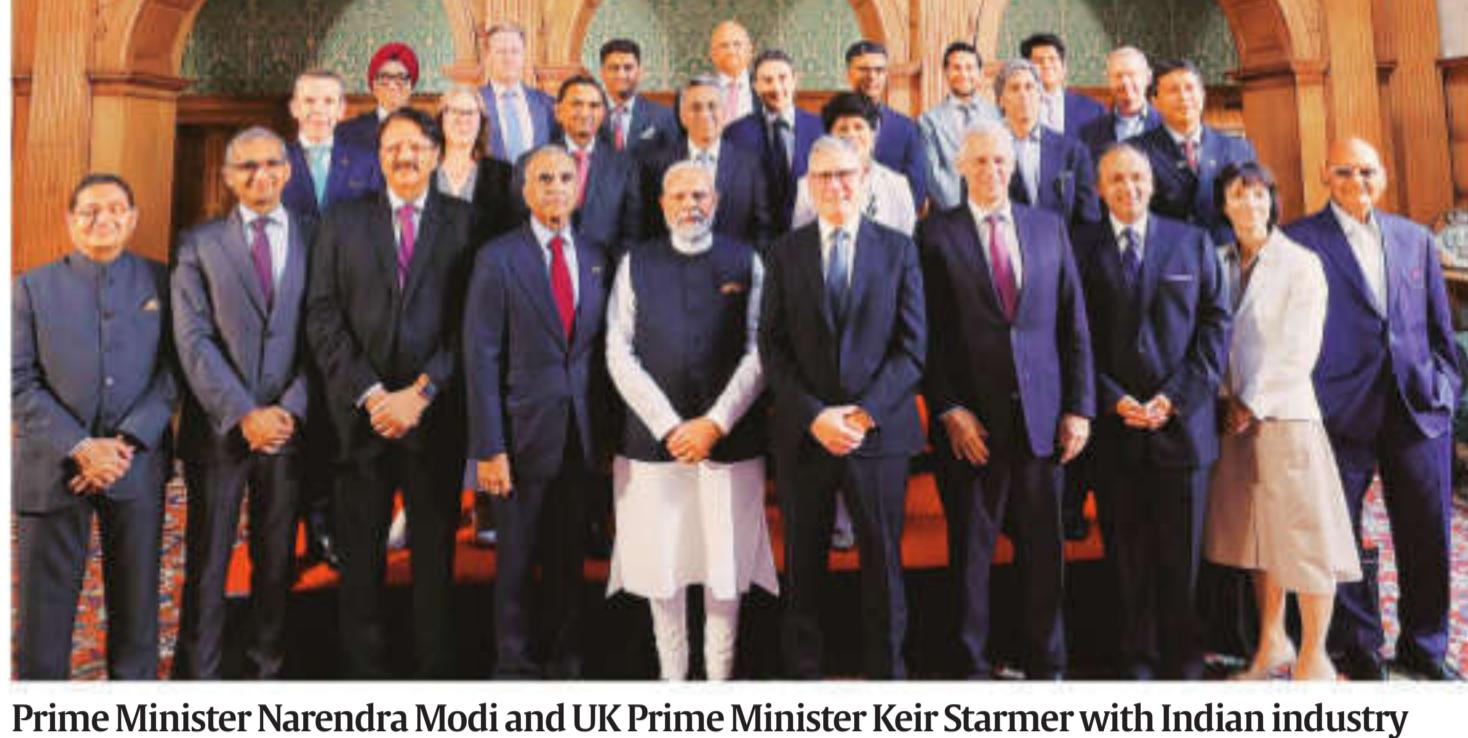
AFTER THE India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) signed on Thursday, scotch whisky imports from the UK are set to get cheaper for Indian consumers, with tariffs slashed from 150 per cent to 75 per cent. The landmark agreement does not impose minimum import price (MIP) rules on scotch imports, which had been a key demand of India's domestic industry. British scotch brands including Chivas Regal, Ballantine's, Glenlivet, Glenfiddich, and Johnnie Walker could benefit from the tariff reduction.

Under the agreement, India will immediately cut tariffs by 75 per cent, and then to 40 per cent over ten years, once the deal is ratified domestically by the two countries.

Scotch distillers in the UK have welcomed the reduction in tariffs, which will give them greater access to the world's biggest whisky market by volume. Whisky was the UK's fifth-largest export product to India in 2024-25, valued at roughly \$260 million.

The deal will support long-term investment and jobs in our distilleries in Speyside and our bottling plant at Kilmalid and help deliver growth in both Scotland and India over the next decade,"

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer with Indian industry delegation at the UK-India Reception on the occasion of the signing of the India-UK CETA at Chequers, UK.

EXPLAINED **E** Tariffs to be cut to 75% now & to 40% over ten years

INDIA WILL immediately cut tariffs by half to 75%, and then to 40% over ten years. The reduction will benefit British scotch brands including Chivas Regal, Ballantine's, Glenlivet, Glenfiddich, and Johnnie Walker. The deal does not include minimum import price rules for scotch earlier recommended by India's alcoholic beverage industry, which has flagged concerns over potential dumping.

cut drastically, it is high time that a number of state governments end all concessions — such as lower brand registration fees, reduced excise duties, etc. — currently extended to BIO brands," Iyer said.

"This has created a situation where importing Alcové products is becoming cheaper than producing it in India. With lower import duties, it will now become even more economical for MNCs to import their products. State governments should end all discrimination against India-made alcoholic beverages," he added in a media note.

"With the import duty being

cut drastically, it is high time that a number of state governments end all concessions — such as lower brand registration fees, reduced excise duties, etc. — currently extended to BIO brands," Iyer said.

Iyer also flagged lack of market access for Indian-made foreign liquor in the UK and EU due to non-tariff barriers related to maturation and ingredients. "Though Indian whiskies, rum, gins, wines, etc., have been winning accolades globally, the lack of removal of non-tariff barriers and absence of reciprocal market access will make this export target hard to achieve," he said. While tariffs on Indian exports of beverages, spirits, and vinegar have been eliminated entirely, non-tariff barriers are likely to remain.

FULL REPORT ON

www.indianexpress.com

DEFINING MOMENT: INDIA INC

THIS FTA marks a defining moment in our bilateral relationship, reflecting a shared commitment to inclusive growth, economic resilience, and industrial transformation."

CHANDRAJIT BANERJEE, CII DIRECTOR GENERAL

IT COMPLEMENTS the objectives of Atmanirbhar Bharat by empowering domestic industries to scale globally, engage competitively, and leverage value chains more effectively."

HARSHA VARDHAN AGARWAL, FICCI PRESIDENT

INDIAN INDUSTRY across all sectors welcomes the India-UK FTA with great optimism. This agreement establishes a modern, forward-looking partnership that will stimulate innovation, ease market access, and foster investment."

SUNIL BHARTI MITTAL, FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN OF BHARTI ENTERPRISES & CO-CHAIR OF INDIA-UK CEO FORUM

THIS FREE trade agreement is expected to lend positive momentum to the ongoing India-EU FTA negotiations, as EU stakeholders have indicated interest in leveraging the UK-India model..."

RUDRA KUMAR PANDEY, PARTNER AT SHARDUL AMARCHAND MANGALDAS & CO

THE CETA is expected to benefit the Indian auto component sector through enhanced opportunities for exports, streamlined regulatory processes, particularly in key areas such as electric mobility, precision engineering, and lightweight materials."

SHRADHA SURI MARWAH, ACMA PRESIDENT

... WILL BOOST bilateral trade and positively impact the accessibility of premium Scotch whisky in India, reigniting growth and increased choice for Indian consumers."

PRAVEEN SOMESHWAR, DIAGEO INDIA MD AND CEO

Import of Britain-made luxury cars to get cheaper

66%-110%: CURRENT IMPORT TARIFFS ON PVs

■ Currently, India's import tariffs on passenger vehicles range from 66%-110% while those on trucks stand at 44%. Industry executives said that import quotas have been implemented

quotas of 4,000 units, which from the fifteenth year will become 10 per cent and 20,000 respectively. The new tariff rates are likely to benefit automakers such as Jaguar Land Rover. It is worth noting that the agreement does not provide for reduced out-of-quota duties on zero-emission vehicles, a decision that will provide some relief to domestic EV and hybrid players. In 2024-25, India's car imports from the UK fell by 46 per cent to \$72 million from \$134 million in 2023-24. For ICE trucks, the tariffs are slashed to 37 per cent for the first year, with a quota of 2,500. From the tenth year onwards, tariffs drop further to 8.8 per cent, with the quota set at 3,500. The agreement does not reduce duties for electric or hydrogen-based trucks.

"The substantial reduction of import duties to 10 per cent in 5 years for UK cars represents one of the most significant outcomes of the FTA and is poised to transform the car market in India, particularly for Completely Built Units (CBUs) due to the drastic duty cut.

However, it is crucial that the cars meet the originating criteria of 35 per cent of Qualifying Value Content (QVC), i.e. the material of UK origin is 35 per cent of total material used," said Saurabh Agarwal, partner and automotive tax leader at EY India.

As the financial empire crumbled, the group sought to restructure its remaining assets under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code. Some businesses were wound up, others dissolved or sold off, while a few found breathing room to regroup. Anil Ambani himself quit from the boards of various group companies.

In August 2024, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) too imposed a five-year ban on Anil Ambani and 24 other entities from participating in the securities market. He was also hit with a Rs 25 crore penalty over an alleged scheme to siphon off funds from Reliance Home Finance Ltd (RHFL) via unsafe general-purpose working capital loans to entities linked to the promoters.

Infra, power revival plans

Earn taxpayer trust: FM to I-T officers

New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday asked income tax officers to raise their benchmark in the timely execution of policies and earn taxpayer trust. Speaking at the 166th Income Tax Day event, Sitharaman strongly advocated for faster issuance of OGEs (Order Giving Effect) and said such delays are unpardonable from the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) which could draft the new Income Tax Bill within just 3 months.

OGE — or order giving effect — refers to an order that an I-T officer has to pass when a taxpayer wins a case against the department in an appeal against assessment.

"Good policies alone are not enough, what matters actually is timely execution... I think all these years you (tax officer)

have done your maximum best.

Now is the time to raise the benchmark," she said at the 166th Income Tax Day event here.

Sitharaman lauded I-T officers for their nimbleness in adapting to newer technologies and drafting the new Income Tax Bill.

PTI



US President Donald Trump at an AI summit in Washington on Wednesday.

AP File

benchmark interest rate in the 4.25-4.50 per cent range where it has been since December, as they wait to see how the economy performs in the face of the administration's tariffs and other economic policies.

The White House did not say if Trump will be meeting with Powell on Thursday, and the Fed referred questions on the matter to the White House. Powell typi-

cally spends the Thursday afternoon before a rate-setting meeting doing back-to-back calls with Fed bank presidents as part of his preparations for the session.

The visit on Thursday also is taking place as Trump battles to deflect attention from a political crisis over his administration's refusal to release files related to convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, reversing a campaign promise.

"Good policies alone are not enough, what matters actually is timely execution... I think all these years you (tax officer) have done your maximum best. Now is the time to raise the benchmark," she said at the 166th Income Tax Day event here. Sitharaman lauded I-T officers for their nimbleness in adapting to newer technologies and drafting the new Income Tax Bill.

PTI

Enforcement Directorate raids: Anil Ambani's fall & the flicker of a comeback



Anil Ambani, Reliance Group chairman.

ANI File Photo

ees, or any other stakeholders", and that the companies have no business or financial linkage to Reliance Communications and Reliance Home Finance, which are purportedly at the centre of the ED's action.

Aerospace & defence: big plans but miles to go

In the aerospace sector, the group had earlier formed Dassault Reliance Aerospace Ltd (DRAL) in 2017, a joint venture with France's Dassault Aviation under the offset obligations of the Rafale fighter jet deal. While DRAL did deliver aerostructure components — such as cockpit assemblies — for Falcon 2000 business jets, its role remained modest, accounting for only a small part of the total offset value. Plans are now afoot to deepen the partnership.

Dassault and Reliance Group announced last month that DRAL will set up a final assembly line (FAL) for manufacturing the Falcon 2000 jets at Nagpur. The first made-in-India Falcon 2000s expected to be ready by 2028. This would be the first-ever instance of a foreign aircraft manufacturer setting up an FAL in India for fixed-wing civilian aircraft.

At Mihani, Nagpur, DRAL has a manufacturing facility for making various sections of Dassault's best-selling business executive jet—the Falcon 2000. Since delivering its first Falcon 2000 front section in 2019, DRAL has assembled over 100 major sub-sections for the Falcon 2000. Over time, however, Dassault's newer defence partnerships have increasingly leaned towards other Indian players like Tata.

The group recently announced big plans in the ammunition segment also. In June 2025, Reliance Defence formed a strategic partnership with Diehl Defence of Germany to manufacture Vulcano 155 mm precision-guided artillery shells. In May 2025, the group signed an agreement with Rheinmetall AG, another major German defence manufacturer to supply explosives and propellants for medium and large-calibre ammunition.

Despite years of financial turbulence, the group has shown signs of resilience and reinvention. Though much of the original empire lies dismantled, a leaner, more focused Anil Ambani Group is trying to chart a comeback — anchored in energy, infrastructure, and defence, yet still shadowed by its legacy of debt and regulatory scrutiny.

FULL REPORT ON

www.indianexpress.com

BRIEFLY

Ajay Seth to be new IRDAI chief

Mumbai: The government has appointed Ajay Seth, former Finance Secretary and Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), as the new Chairman of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI). The position had remained vacant since March 2025, after Debasish Panda's tenure ended in March 2025. A 1987-batch IAS officer from the Karnataka cadre, Seth has held several key roles in Finance Ministry. ENDS

Canara Bank Q1 net rises 22%

New Delhi: Canara Bank on Thursday posted a 22 per cent growth in standalone net profit to Rs 4,752 crore during the first quarter of the current financial year, supported by a decline in bad loans. The bank had earned a net profit of Rs 3,905 crore in the same quarter of previous fiscal.

PTI

RBI Governor, DFS Secretary at FE BFSI Summit today



ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

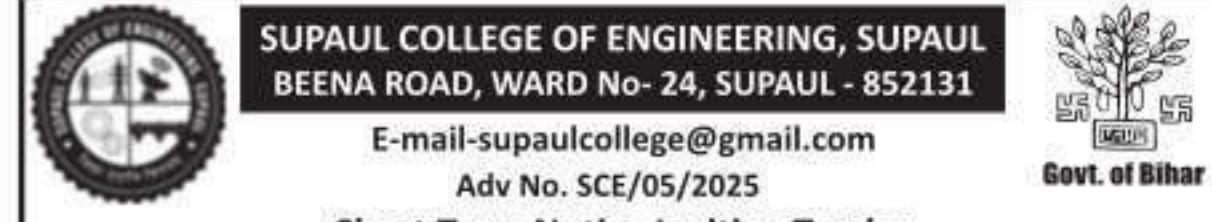
MUMBAI, JULY 24

THE FOURTH edition of the FE Modern BFSI Summit, aptly titled "Finance for a \$5trillion economy" will be held in Mumbai on Friday. The day-long summit will see some of the finest minds from India's financial sector participating in various formats including panel discussions, fireside chats and keynote speeches to share insights, swap ideas and brainstorm on the options to deepen the capital pool needed for India.

The event will begin with a fireside conversation with Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra. Six months ago, he inherited a challenging economic landscape marked by slowing growth and inflationary pressures. The rest is history — in a short span of time, RBI has unleashed a 100 basis point cut in repo rate, 100 bps cut in CRR, stumping everybody. The keynote address will be delivered by M Nagaraju, Secretary, Department

the finance arena — Nilesh Shah, group president & MD, Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company, Navneet Munot, MD & CEO, HDFC Asset Management Company, Soumya Rajan, founder & CEO, Waterfield Advisors, V Laxmikanth, managing partner, Pavestone, apart from the regulator's perspective shared by Aparna Thyagarajan from the Securities and Exchange Board of India. As the CGM at the Alternative Funds and Foreign Portfolio Investors Department in SEBI, she is best placed to enlighten on the policy aspects with respect to foreign portfolio investors and alternative investment funds.

The summit will also have experts such as Amisha Vora, MD, PL Capital, Jairam Sridharan, MD, Piramal Finance, Prateek Agrawal, CEO, Motilal Oswal AMC, looking at growth strategies and investment pathways. In a separate fireside chat, Sohini Rajola, executive director, National Payments Corporation of India will share the ground covered and the vision ahead.

**Short Term Notice Inviting Tender**

1. Supaul College of Engineering, Supaul has been constituted under the Department of Science, Technology and Technical Education, Government of Bihar to cater to the needs of technical education. The Supaul College of Engineering, Supaul intends to invite bids from eligible entities for Quotation for Lab Equipment for Mechanical Engineering, Supaul College of Engineering, Supaul in the tender document.

2. The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) amount is Rs. 80,000.

3. Schedule of Events:

S. No.	Event Description	Timeline
3.1	Last date & time of downloading the RFP	Till 19.08.2025 upto 04:00 PM, on eproc2.bihar.gov.in
3.2	Pre-bid meeting	30.07.2025 at 11:00 AM
3.3	Submission (upload) of online bidding document.	Till 19.08.2025 upto 05:00PM, on eproc2.bihar.gov.in
3.4	Submission of EMD	Till 19.08.2025 upto 05:00 PM, on eproc2.bihar.gov.in
3.5	Bid Opening Date	20.08.2025 at 11:00 AM on the eproc2.bihar.gov.in
3.6	Pre-bid meeting venue	Supaul College of Engineering, Supaul Beena Road, Ward no- 24 Supaul, Bihar - 852131
3.7	Contact person	Buyer, Supaul College of Engineering, Supaul Beena Road, Ward no- 24, Supaul, Bihar - 852131 Mobile no : +919163020573 Email ID: supaulcollege@gmail.com

Note: No tender will be accepted after closing date and time in any circumstances.

1. Bidder may download the tender document available from eproc2.bihar.gov.in and from 26.07.2025 submit the tender by using the downloaded document by 19.08.2025.

For further details please visit website state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

PR- 009319 (Sci & Tech) 2025-26

Principal
नशे की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार | Supaul College of Engineering, Supaul

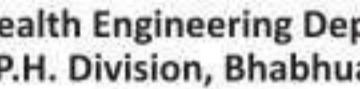


1. विकासन वाताका नाम एवं पाता : परियोजना निदेशक, बुड़को, दरभंगा।
2. निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना निर्गत की तिथि : दिनांक- 22.07.2025
3. निविदा कागजात डाउनलोड करने की अवधि : दिनांक 29.07.2025 से 12.08.2025 तक 05:00 PM वर्ते तक (Through website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
4. प्री बोल मीटिंग का समय रखाने / तिथि : दिनांक- 31.07.2025 समय 03:30 PM वर्ते स्थान- बुड़को, दरभंगा का कार्यालय वाहा।
5. संवेदक द्वारा निविदा अपलोड करने की अदिन तिथि / समय : दिनांक- 12.08.2025 वर्ते 05:00 PM (on website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
6. तकनीकी बोल खोलने की तिथि / समय : दिनांक- 13.08.2025 05:30 PM (on website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in) तकनीकी बोल के नियमकों के परिवार।
7. चिठ्ठी बोल खोलने की तिथि / समय : (on website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
8. अवधान, सभी स्पष्ट-पत्र, Existing Commitment (पुल में), परियोजना विषय के मूल का बैक छापट जमा करने की अदिन तिथि / समय एवं रखाने : 1. मुख्य मानवाधिकारक, विहार शहरी आधारसूत्र संरचना विकास नियम लिंग (बुड़को) बोल बोरिके नियमकों के परिवार, राज्यानुरुप बुल. पटना- 800001, विहार, पटना का कार्यालय।
2. परियोजना निदेशक, बुड़को, दरभंगा का कार्यालय, लघुरियासाथ टावर पेट्रोलपथ नियर पश्चि. विकितसालय दरभंगा- 846001

क्रम संखा	कार्य का विवरण-	प्राप्तकर्ता वार्षिक राशि (लाख में)	अप्रयोग की राशि (लाख में)	परियोजना विषय के मूल का बैक छापट (लाख में)	Bid Processing Fee (Through online payment) (लाख में)	कार्य सम्बन्धी की अवधि (इन्विटेशन नियम संस्कृती माह में)
1	वार्ड नं 10 गोहला गांववारा बोक तीनवटीय हनुमान मंदिर से आरसोंठोंगो पुल तक दरडक के दोनों तरफ नाला निर्माण कार्य।	1,13,44,036.00	2,26,900.00	17,700.00	As per Eproc-2	6 माह

विस्तृत जानकारी state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar से प्राप्त की जा सकती है। परियोजना निदेशक, बुड़को, दरभंगा।
PR. No.009270 (BBC) 2025-26

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से घार।

**Public Health Engineering Department**

P.H. Division, Bhabhua

e-TENDER NOTICE

TENDER NIT NO –03/2025-26/MVS/BHABHUA

National Competitive Bidding

(Through e-procurement mode on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

1.	Designation and Address of Advertiser	Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhabhua.
2.	Date of issue of Tender Notice	21.07.2025
3.	Period of sale (downloading) of tender Bid Document	30.07.2025 to 14.08.2025 up to 15:00 hrs. through www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
4.	Date, time & place of pre-bid meeting	09.08.2025 at 11:30 hrs. in the Office of Executive Engineer, P.H. Division, Bhabhua.
5.	Last date and time of receipt (uploading) of tender	14.08.2025 up to 16:00 hrs on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
6.	Date and time of opening of technical bid	14.08.2025 at 17:00 hrs on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
7.	Date and time of opening of financial bid	To be informed later after the approval of technical bid.

8. DETAILS OF WORK :- ADHAURA MULTI VILLAGE PIPED WATER SUPPLY SCHEME IN BLOCK-ADHAURA, DISTRICT-KAIMUR UNDER P.H. DIVISION,

Gro up No.	Name of Work	Nos. of schemes in a Group.	Estimate d Cost in Lakh	Amount of Ernest Money (in Lakh)	Cost of Tender Document (non-refundable) in Rs.	BSEDC Bid Processing Fee (in Rs.)	Completion Period (in months)
1	Surveying, Collection of Hydrological data, Design, Detailed Engineering, Construction, Supply, Installation and commissioning of Ground Water based Multi-Village piped water supply scheme having 7.85 MLD (Million Liter Per Day) Capacity, 09 nos. of Tube Well (including 03 Nos. of Stand by Tube Well), Clean water MGSR (Master Ground Storage Reservoir)- 01 No., GSR- 06 Nos., Zonal ESR-07 Nos., MS/DI/HDPE Distribution Pipeline Network etc. in Panchayat Sadik, Athan, Sarodag, Adhaura, Badwankala, Durnrava & Chainpura under Adhaura Block of Kaimur District, Bihar State with minimum six months of Trial Run and thereafter operation & Maintenance of the Entire System for the next seven years.	01	28829.792	298.30	10000.00	5900.00	24 Months

For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

PR. No. 009163 (PHED) 25-26

Executive Engineer
P.H. Division, Bhabhua

नशे की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार |

**NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER**

Through e-procurement mode only over (<https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in>)

Very Short e-Tender for empanelment for Supply and Installation of Poly House, Shade Net and Mulch Film in 2025-26 in the State of Bihar.

Bihar Horticulture Development Society (BHDS) invites online bids from reputed and experienced organizations for empanelment for supply and installation of the Poly House, Shade Net and Mulch Film from reputed Manufacturers/Authorized Dealers/ Firms/ Agencies/Govt. /Companies. The interested specialized organizations/firms/companies, which are involved and having experience of Supply and Installation of Poly House, Shade Net and Mulch Film or related activities may apply. Empaneled firms will be eligible for supply and installation of the different components mentioned above in the state.

The filled e-tender for technical & financial bid should be uploaded on the website: eproc2.bihar.gov.in by the bidder. EMD and tender feemust be sent through online mode (NEFT/RTGS).

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The filled e-tender for technical &

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, DURG CIRCLE DURG (C.G.)**

Durg, Dated: 15.07.2025

e-Procurement Tender Notice

(1st Call)

NIT No.	Name of Work	P.A.C. (Rs. In lacs.)
130/Durg(Durg)/2025	DEPOSITE WORK OF CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR MEMORIAL GOVT. MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL BUILDING KACHANDUR DURG	30.87
131/Durg(Durg)/2025	Construction Of Higher Secondary School Building at Devri Block Dhandha, Distt. Durg	104.07
132/Durg(Durg)/2025	Construction Of Higher Secondary School Building at Khilorakala, Block Dhandha, Distt. Durg (C.G.)	104.50
133/Durg(Balod)/2025	SPECIAL REPAIR OF BRIDGE & CULVERT UNDER SUB DIVISION GUNDERDEHI	29.90
134/Durg(Balod)/2025	Special Repairs & MOW of Res. And Non Res. Building Under Sub Div. No. - 02 Balod	22.00
135/Durg(Balod)/2025	CONSTRUCTION OF P.W.D. (B&R) SUB DIVISIONAL OFFICE NO. 01 BALOD	61.84
136/Durg(Balod)/2025	CONSTRUCTION OF P.W.D. DIVISION OFFICE BUILDING AT BALOD, DISTT. BALOD	174.71
137/Durg(Bemetara)/2025	B.T. Patch Repair in Various Roads under Sub Division Nawagarh	25.00
138/Durg(Rajnand./2025	Construction of High School Building at Maditarai, Block Dongargarh, Distt. Rajnandgaon (C.G.)	69.33
139/Durg(Khairagarh.)/2025	CONSTRUCTION OF DISTRICT VETERINARY OFFICE BUILDING AT KHAIRAGARH, DISTT. KHAIRAGARH-CHHUKHADAN-GANDAI	62.95

Note :-
 1. General Conditions, detailed NIT, Tender documents & other information of the above construction work downloaded from the Eprocurement web portal or departmental website <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>.
 2. NIT No. & Name of the Work should be essentially mentioned on the envelope through the Registered Post/Speed Post in this office.

Sd/-
 Superintending Engineer
 P.W.D., Durg Circle Durg (C.G.)
 Tel. 0788-2210876
 Ro. No. 252602348/5

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
PUBLIC WORKS ROADS DEPARTMENT
O/O THE CHIEF ENGINEER (EAP)**
ARRTI CAMPUS, FATASIL AMBARI, GUWAHATI -25, Email-id: as-ce.asbip@assam.gov.in

RFB No. CE/EAP/ARRBP/01/Tenders/2024/71

**REQUEST FOR BIDS (RFB) (Fresh & Re-Bid)
E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE - Open Competitive Bidding
(Two-Envelope Bidding Process with e-Procurement)**

The Government of Assam through Government of India has applied for financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the Assam Resilient Rural Bridges Program (ARRBP) and intends to apply part of the proceeds to the eligible payment under the contract. Bids are invited online from the eligible bidders from India for the 18 packages in the district of i) Sonitpur, Darrang, Udalguri, Golaghat, Charaideo and Dibrugarh district and ii) Biswanath, Sonitpur, Morigaon, Cachar and Karbi-Anglong district for (Re-Bid). Details may be seen at website <http://assamtenders.gov.in> and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The bidding documents are available online on <http://www.assamtenders.gov.in> from i) 01/08/2025 to 02/09/2025 and ii) 30/07/2025 to 19/08/2025. Bidders will be required to register on the website which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC). Bids must be submitted online on <http://www.assamtenders.gov.in> or before i) 14:00 Hours on 02/09/2025 & ii) 14:00 Hours on 19/08/2025. Other details can be seen in the bidding document. The method of paying Bid Security, Tender Processing fees as indicated in the table above of this e-procurement shall be required to be submitted online on <http://www.assamtenders.gov.in> by selecting "Pay Online" option.

Sd/-

Chief Engineer, (EAP) PWRD
Assam, Fatasil Ambari, Guwahati-25

DIPR/CF/IXP/1174/25-JUL-25

**MINERAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
DIRECTORATE OF GEOLOGY AND MINING, MADHYA PRADESH**
29- A Khanji Bhawan, Atera Hills Bhopal
Phone and fax: 0755-2551705 Email: geology_dgma@mp.gov.in

No- 7030/Auction-16/Geology/F. No.- 16/2025-26

July 17, 2025
Notice Inviting Tender

"Invitation of bids for grant of Mining Lease for Limestone minerals and for grant of Composite Licence for Bauxite and Aluminous Laterite, Copper and associated minerals, Basemetal (Zinc), Aluminous Laterite, Limestone and Bauxite, Gold and Basemetal (Lead, Silver and associated minerals), Iron & Manganese and associated minerals, Manganese Ore, Basemetal (Copper, Lead & Zinc), Basemetal (Lead, Copper and Associated Minerals), Basemetal (Lead, Copper, Silver and associated minerals), Basemetal (Lead, Zinc, Copper, Silver and associated minerals), and Limestone."

In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 10B and Section 11 of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and in accordance with the Mineral (Auction) Rules, 2015 notified thereunder, as amended from time to time, the Government of Madhya Pradesh has identified:

a) 8 mineral blocks (8 blocks of Limestone) for Electronic Auction and hereby invites tenders for the purposes of grant of Mining Lease.
 b) 16 mineral blocks (1 block of Aluminous Laterite, 1 block of Basemetal (Lead, Copper, and Associated minerals), 1 block of Basemetal (Lead, Copper, Silver, and associated minerals), 1 block of Basemetal (Lead, Zinc, Copper, Silver, and associated minerals), 1 block of Gold and Basemetal (Lead & Silver and associated minerals), 1 block Basemetal (Zinc), 1 block of Limestone & Bauxite, 1 block of Limestone, 1 block of Basemetal (Copper, Lead & Zinc), 3 block of Bauxite & Aluminous Laterite, 1 block of Copper, 1 block of Iron & Manganese and associated minerals, and 2 blocks of Manganese Ore) for electronic auction and hereby invites tenders for the purposes of grant of Composite Licence.

Accordingly, financial bids are invited in digital format only and technical bids are invited both in digital and physical format from eligible bidders.

Eligibility conditions, date and time, terms, and conditions etc. for participating in the electronic auction are provided in the Tender Document. Detailed Tender Documents along with timelines, notifications, updates and other details for the e-auction process for the mineral blocks are available in electronic form only and can be downloaded from the e-auction portal of MSTC Limited [Mineral Block Auction (mstccommerce.com)].

Interested and eligible bidders can register themselves on the above e-auction portal. On successful registration, eligible bidders will obtain login ID and password necessary for participation in the e-auction process. Interested and eligible bidders can participate in the bidding only after online purchase of the Tender Document on payment of the Tender fee from the above e-auction portal. The Tender Fee shall be waived for bidders who have previously purchased the Tender Document for any specific block in prior auction attempts. Any revision, clarifications, addendum, corrigendum, time extensions, etc. to the tender document will be hosted on the above e-auction portal only and no separate notifications shall be issued in the press.

Geological Reports, Part IV A, Plates, Model Tender Document, Mineral Block Summaries, and other technical documents are available free of cost on the e-auction portal of MSTC Limited website [Mineral Block Auction (mstccommerce.com) and Directorate of geology and mining].

List of Mineral Blocks for Auction

Sr No.	Name of the Block	District	Mineral	M/CL	Price of Tender Document without GST (in Rs.)
First Attempt Blocks					
1.	Piprahat Kubri Limestone Block	Malhar	Limestone	ML	5,00,000
2.	West of lantert Bauxite and Aluminous Laterite Block	Dindori	Bauxite and aluminous Laterite	CL	5,00,000
3.	Bagliwari-Khirkhori Copper and Associated Mineral Block	Sidhi	Copper and Associated Mineral	CL	5,00,000
4.	Sukhi Block-B Manganese Ore Block	Balaghat	Managanese Ore	CL	5,00,000
5.	Kesharpura Limestone Block	Neemuch	Limestone	CL	5,00,000
6.	Talwa Iron, Manganese and Associated Mineral Ore Block	Jabalpur	Iron, Manganese and Associated Mineral	CL	5,00,000
Second Attempt Blocks					
7.	Argat (Part-A) Limestone Block	Malhar	Limestone	ML	2,00,000
8.	Argat (Part-B) Limestone Block	Malhar	Limestone	ML	1,00,000
9.	Argat (Part-C) Limestone Block	Malhar	Limestone	ML	2,00,000
10.	Argat (Part-D) Limestone Block	Malhar	Limestone	ML	2,00,000
11.	Hinauti-1 Limestone Block	Satna	Limestone	ML	1,00,000
12.	Hinauti-2 Limestone Block	Satna	Limestone	ML	2,00,000
13.	Khadgada Limestone Block	Malhar	Limestone	ML	5,00,000
14.	Bagda-Sawarsa Dasesmatel (Lead, Zinc, Copper and Silver) Block	Dewas	Basemetal (Lead, Zinc, Copper, Silver and associated minerals)	CL	5,00,000
15.	Ranrajh Pakatola Aluminous Laterite and Bauxite Block	Anuppur	Bauxite and Aluminous Laterite	CL	5,00,000
16.	Gulharia Basemetal (Lead and Copper) Block	Singrauli	Basemetal (Lead, Zinc, Copper and Associated Minerals)	CL	5,00,000
17.	Baghrell Bauxite & Aluminous Laterite Block	Dindori	Bauxite & Aluminous Laterite	CL	2,00,000
18.	Parihasi Rasesmetal (Lead, Copper and Silver) Block	Singrauli	Basemetal (Lead, Copper, Silver and associated minerals)	CL	5,00,000
19.	Bhalwar Aluminous Laterite Block	Anuppur	Aluminous Laterite	CL	2,00,000
20.	Byodihar Gold and Basemetal (Lead & Silver) Block	Singrauli	Gold and Basemetal (Lead, Silver and associated minerals)	CL	5,00,000
21.	Dhamani-Nana Manganese Block"	Jhabua	Managanese Ore	CL	25,000
22.	Kehalpur (East) Basemetal (Zn) Block	Betul	Basemetal (Zinc)	CL	2,00,000
23.	Kubri Limestone and Bauxite Block"	Malhar	Limestone and Bauxite	CL	2,00,000
24.	Salarpur Navaliya Basemetal (Copper, Lead & Zinc) Block	Katni	Basemetal (Copper, Lead & Zinc)	CL	5,00,000

Note: GST shall be payable by reverse charge mechanism # Mineral Blocks being put up for auction in accordance with section 10A2D of the Act

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Tender Document for the blocks being auctioned in accordance with Section 10A(2) (d) of the Act, the State Government makes no representation whatsoever, express, implicit or otherwise, regarding the accuracy and/or completeness of the information provided in the said geological report and the Bidder confirms that it shall have no claim whatsoever against the State Government in this regard. The Bidder acknowledges and hereby accepts the risk of inadequacy, mistake or error in or relating to said geological report and hereby acknowledges and agrees that the State Government shall not be liable for the same in any manner whatsoever to the Bidder and their associates or any person claiming through or under any of them. The Bidders agree and acknowledge that any mistake or error in or relating to the said geological report shall not vitiate the tender process, Mining Lease and/or MDPA, or render the same voidable.

The block specific Tender documents are available for purchase on the e-auction portal of MSTC Limited (<http://www.mstccommerce.com/auctionhome/mlecn/index.jsp>) from Thursday, 17 July, 2025. Last date for purchase of Tender Document on the e-auction platform is Monday, 18 August, 2025, and the last date for submission of the bid is Monday, 25 August, 2025, on or before 17:00 hours (IST).

Bidders may note that for composite licences, the Mineral (Auction) Amendment Rules, 2022 have dispensed with the requirement of indicating the division of the land into forest land, land owned by the State Government, and land not owned by the State Government and the requirement of demarcating the area using total station and differential global positioning system and has provided the flexibility of demarcating the concession area using global positioning system. However, the requisite demarcation in respect of certain blocks is nevertheless being provided (as and where available) as part of the information memorandum. Thus, the terms and conditions for auction of the said block remain unchanged.

Additional Director (GEO)
Directorate of Geology and Mining
Madhya Pradesh

No. G/16149-25

Sd/-
 Additional Director (GEO)
 Directorate of Geology and Mining
 Madhya Pradesh

Join FREE WhatsApp Channel <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKh6oBd0F>

Join FREE Telegram Channel <https://t.me/+Bu7senHpQdHODg1>

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

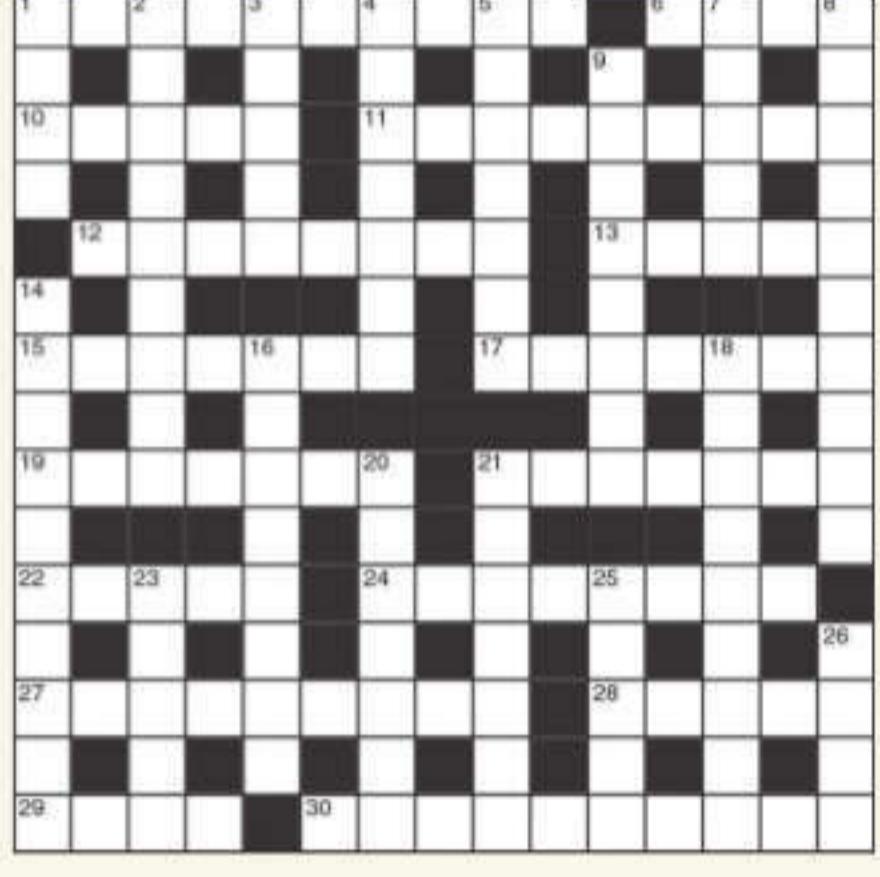
SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP/AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/CORP/AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, SONIPAT	CATCHING AND CAPTURING MONKEYS IN MUNICIPAL CORPORATION AREA	24.07.2025 08.08.2025	EMD Rs. 10,000/-	https://tenders.hry.nic.in	0130260100 sahebsingh600@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.tenders.hry.nic.in No- 36952/HRY

SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP/AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/CORP/AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, HISAR	SHIFTING OF MILK DAIRIES IN MC HISAR	Closing Date 12.07.2025	Rs. 34,61,76,297/-	https://tenders.hry.nic.in	01662237001 xenmchissar@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or <a href="http://www.t

CROSSWORD 5737



ACROSS

- 1 Benefactor who provides tea, milk etc free (4,6)
- 6 Shot at a poker game (4)
- 10 Manages to vary in scope (5)
- 11 Give up on French return (9)
- 12 Observe someone steal some money (4,4)
- 13 Runaway debtor in a mess (5)
- 15 We can do with it (7)
- 17 They may lift or bring down (7)
- 19 A target set out for water sports (7)
- 21 Does such selling show indecision? (7)
- 22 It dies at the end of December (5)
- 24 Teach one to give orders (8)
- 27 Flying up and down the touchline? (2,3,4)
- 28 Bone found in small measure in fur (5)
- 29 One in an explosive situation may change colour (4)
- 30 Two containers make a musical instrument (10)

DOWN

- 1 Club for those who like a bit of spice (4)
- 2 Attractive method of preventing injustice? (9)
- 3 Discrimination a cannibal appreciates in people (5)
- 4 Imprisonment for possession (7)
- 5 Serious article grasped by a man (7)
- 7 Hardy sort of monster (5)
- 8 Perhaps a party ends a school occasion (7,3)
- 9 Problem of pain (8)
- 14 Accomplished boxes hope not to be (7,3)
- 16 Political victim of restrictive practice? (8)
- 18 He turns up after all (9)
- 20 Inane is another way of putting this (7)
- 21 Visible understanding? (7)
- 23 Stick no label upside-down (5)
- 25 Strip a firearm? (5)
- 26 Lily serves a drink (4)

Solutions Crossword 5736 Across: 1 Bandsaw, 5 Habit, 8 Guy Fawkes, 9 Yap, 10 Espy, 12 Curtains, 14 Castor, 15 Etudes, 17 Nowadays, 18 Owed, 21 For, 22 Office boy, 24 Raps, 25 Lantern Down: 1 Bugle, 2 Nay, 3 Stab, 4 Wake up, 5 Hesitate, 6 Bay window, 7 Typists, 11 Passwords, 13 Road hogs, 14 Conifer, 16 Eyeful, 19 Doyen, 20 Icon, 23 Bee

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLE WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.
— should be your ____ - Missy Elliott (5,6)

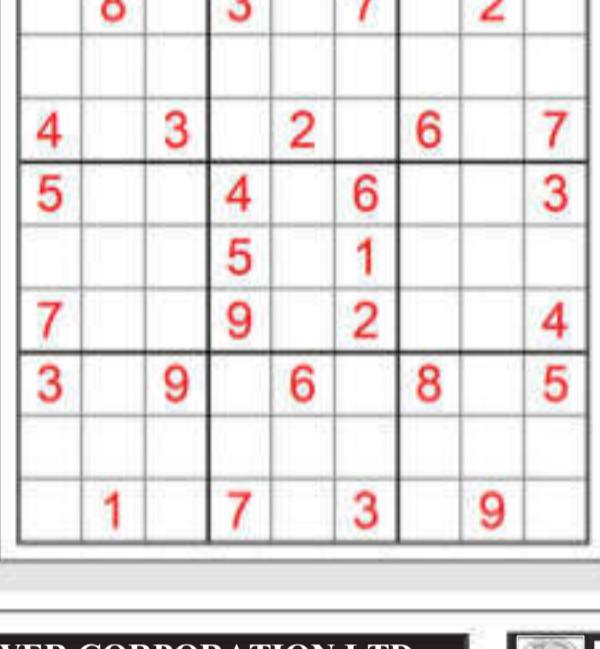
LEASE OPYCCU
NPSS AILRMP

Answer: MUSIC should be your escape - Missy Elliott

Difficulty Level 5s

Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
5s = Very Hard;
6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 6025



SALUTE THE SOLDIER

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE

25 July 2001

Veer Balidani
Constable
Awadh
Kishore Singh
24 Bn.
25-6-1972 To
25-7-2001
from the front, sustained severe bullet injuries but continued the assault, forcing the insurgents to flee. He later succumbed to his injuries, attaining martyrdom.

25 July 2004
Veer Balidani
Constable
Harpal Singh
58 Bn.
2-1981 To
25-7-2004
in the column, sustained severe injuries but bravely returned fire, forcing the militants to flee into nearby lanes. Though the troops gave chase, the militants escaped. Constable Harpal Singh later succumbed to his injuries, attaining martyrdom.

25 July 1994
Veer Balidani
Constable
Kurada Ram
83 Bn.
2-10-1972 To
25-7-1994
with a 9 mm pistol. The guard retaliated with courage and restraint, mindful of the civilian presence. In the exchange, heavy losses were inflicted on the attackers, but Constable Kurada Ram sustained severe injuries and later succumbed, attaining martyrdom. His selfless sacrifice stands as a shining example of bravery and dedication to duty.

25 July 1999
Veer Balidani
Constable
PT. Kandhare
45 Bn.
25-2-1970 To
25-7-1999
militants during a fierce encounter. He laid down his life in the line of duty. His selfless sacrifice stands as a testament to his unwavering bravery and dedication.

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3.प्र. आवास एवं विकास परिषद
कार्यालय अधिकारी अभियन्ता निर्माण खण्ड-आगरा-03
मालवीय प्रूत्तकालीन योजना, जी.टी. रोड, अग्रीगढ़
सुर्दाना

जनपद अग्रीगढ़, मैं आगरा रोड पर ३०४० आवास एवं विकास परिषद द्वारा संचालित भूमि प्रूत्तकालीन योजना संख्या-१४ (श्रम बढ़ावे लेवल अपार्टमेंटों की सुरक्षा हेतु दिनांक-२५.०७.२०२५ को होने वाली नियोजन समिति की बैठक अपार्हार्य कार्रवांश अधिकारी अदारें तक स्थगित की जाती है। अपार्टमेंटों की सुरक्षा हेतु नियोजन समिति की अधिकारी विद्युत विभाग की अधिकारी अभियन्ता

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
Letter No.: DRMC/AGRA/PARKING/E-AUCTION/2025 Dated- 23.07.2025
E-Auction Notice

On behalf of the President of India, The Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager- North Central Railway, Agra invites E-Auction as per categories given us under:-

Category: Parking **Auction Catalogue No.:** PARKING-2025-4

Asset Details: Agra Cantt Railway Station, Circulating Area-Cycle, Scooter, Motor cycle & Car Parking (Mix Parking)

E-Auction Start Date and Time: Date- 07.08.2025 Time: 12.00
E-Auction End Date and Time: Date- 07.08.2025 Time: 12.30

Note: Prospective bidders are requested to visit E-Auction details available on IREPS website (www.ireps.gov.in). The Lot-wise details are available therein under the above mentioned Catalogue Number.

1299/25 FA

North central railways @CPNCR www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

Join FREE WhatsApp Channel <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6PGJOKh6oBd0F>

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Business plans could be thrown off course, if you allow your heart to rule your head. A small blunder may be desirable if it serves as an object lesson for the future then you'll know how best to succeed next time round.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

As the Moon sweeps through your chart, it forms a turbulent relation with Pluto that can raise passions, but also makes partners more intense. It is on you, to stress on the need for charm, good manners and considerate behaviour.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Your fixed, intense, emotional nature may crave security, but there will be moments when you feel like risking it all, it is your determined pursuit of the truth which leads you into such tricky situations. You will need to compromise.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)
The theme for the day is hard work, loyalty and the willingness to fulfil obligations. If you continue to bide your time and remain above the fray, you are bound to end up with your reputation and good name intact. If you bend the rules, then you may lose a friend.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Something still seems to elude you, and you may fall prey to certain secret fears or suspicions.

While the facts may still be obscure, in your heart you know the exact truth. It's just a matter of putting it into words and making partners understand.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

All forms of partnership are now up for review. Personal complexities may be avoided if you wish to socialise and go around in a gang. If you want to tell someone just how you feel about them, do so while the going is good.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Stick to conventional methods or tactics and prove by your behaviour just how experienced you are. Keep a weather eye open for hysterical employers and rogue authority figures. If you see trouble coming, keep your head down.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

There is no need to rush just because you're over-conscious of your deadlines. If you wish to put a precious scheme on hold for another few months, you may do so. It's not a question of abandoning the race, but of giving yourself sufficient time to make a go of it.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

It is pleasant to report that your solar chart is relatively

relaxed, and that there is therefore scope for you to reshape aspects of your future before they occur.

It's a grand day for making practical plans, writing out lists and deciding what to do next.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
If you still feel that you will never be able to surmount certain serious financial obstacles, you are totally wrong. The first step in this, as in a number of personal affairs, is to realise just how much you rely on other people's help and assistance.

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ANDERSON-TENDULKAR TROPHY: FOURTH TEST, OLD TRAFFORD, DAY 2



BRAVADO!

After coming out to bat, Rishabh Pant was visibly struggling to complete runs (L). But when possible he took on English bowlers (C). Departing batter Shardul Thakur appreciated his teammate as he got a standing ovation from the crowd. AP/PTI

India's Manchester blues

Visitors endure a chastening day; all out for 354 and then letting England storm away to 225/2 at stumps



EXPRESS IN ENGLAND

SANDEEP DWIVEDI
MANCHESTER, JULY 24

INDIA COULD blame the weather but that would still sound like an excuse. When England bowled in the morning, there was cloud cover and rain. Late in the afternoon when Indians got the ball in hand there was bright sunlight.

Data also showed that the swing and seam movement dropped drastically as the day progressed. Indian pacers surely didn't get favourable conditions but they didn't help their cause by having their worst day of the tour.

Solid opening partnership

Pedestrian first spells by the entire pace unit helped England to pull away. The 166-run opening-wicket stand between Ben Duckett (94) and Zak Crawley (84) at over 5 runs per over tilted the balance of the game on England's side.

At 225/2, England trail by 153 runs. By the end of the day, India's first innings total of 358 looked insufficient on this track that kept changing its character based on the cloud cover and sunshine.

This clearly was a game of two halves. After the engrossing session-and-half in the afternoon, the evening lacked drama or intrigue. India's strike bowler Jasprit Bumrah had an off-day—he was off-target and his pace too was off.



Listless display from the Indian bowling unit has put England in command. PTI

bowled from round-the-wicket and beat Duckett's bat, it was the case of tight batting against undisciplined bowling.

Stingless Bumrah

Bumrah bowled to a packed off-side field to Crawley. The plan was to invite him to swing his bat freely and try one of his booming drives. It wasn't that the England opener had gone into the shell, it is just that most times the ball was so wide outside off stump that the batsman wasn't tempted. The famous Bumrah consistency was missing and even his pace seemed to have dropped.

When attempting to change his line, he would often drift down the leg-side. Siraj looked tired. There was nothing amiss in his action, his stride had the usual rhythm, the jump too was also in place but the balls lacked the zip.

Like most bowlers with diminishing energy levels, Siraj's effort balls would tail on the leg of the batsmen, making the off-side heavy field redundant.

English commentator Nasser Hussain made a sharp observation about the two England openers Duckett and Crawley.

He said both had it in them to punish the bad balls but Duckett was more fo-

cused and apt in dealing with the good balls. But at least in this Test, Crawley's shot-selection had improved.

There was a Thakur over where he bowled a couple of great balls—they came in, bounced and seamed away. These balls he left and when the bowler erred in his length he pulled it to square leg for a boundary.

Duckett, like he always does, jumped on loose balls and there were many. If a ball was marginally short on the off-side, he would bring out his tight jab to the cover region. When the ball was short, he didn't go blind to the fielders on the fence, like the Indians.

India's two left-handers Sai Sudharsan and Washington Sundar were both out to Stokes' leg-side trap. He would bowl a sharp short ball that climbed towards the head of the batsmen.

Sudharsan and Washington both ended up guiding the ball into the hands of the lone fielder on the fine-leg boundary. India too tested Duckett with the short ball but he had control over his shot, he kept it down and played square of the wicket.

Both Duckett and Crawley missed their centuries. First Crawley edged a Jadeja ball to slips and Duckett was out flashing at a Kamboj short ball outside the off-stump. They certainly weren't top wicket-taking balls but they got the batsmen to commit unforced errors.

As the day ended and players were in the dressing room, two worried men, in India blues, walked up to the pitch. After a brief inspection, coaches Gautam Gambhir and Shitanshu Kotak walked on the turf, talking while staring at the grass blades. India might be feeling the ground under their feet shaking.

SCORECARD

ENGLAND vs INDIA

OLD TRAFFORD CRICKET GROUND
Toss: England, chose to field

INDIA 1ST INNINGS (O/N) 264/4	
R Parth Archer	54(75b, 3x4, 2x6)
R Jadeja c Brook b Archer	20(40b, 3x4)
S Thakur c Duckett b Stokes	41(88b, 5x4)
W Sundar c Woakes b Stokes	27(90b, 2x4)
A Kambob c Smith b Stokes	0(3b)
J Bumrah c Smith b Archer	4(7b, 1x4)
M Siraj not out	5(7b, 1x4)
■ Extras (b 4, lb 8, nb 4, w 14)	30
■ Total 114.1 Ov (RR: 3.13)	358/10
■ FoW: 1-94 (KL Rahul, 29.6ov), 2-120 (Yashasvi Jaiswal, 40.1ov), 3-140 (Shubman Gill, 49.1ov), 4-235 (Sai Sudharsan, 73.5ov), 5-266 (Ravindra Jadeja, 84.5ov), 6-314 (Shardul Thakur, 101.4ov), 7-337 (Washington Sundar, 109.2ov), 7-337 (Anshul Kamboj, 109.5ov), 9-349 (Rishabh Pant, 112.3ov), 10-358 (Jasprit Bumrah, 114.1ov)	
■ Bowling: Chris Woakes 23-5-66-1, Jofra Archer 26.1-3-73-3, Brydon Carse 21-1-71-0, Ben Stokes 24-3-72-5, Liam Dawson 15-1-45-1, Joe Root 5-0-19-0	

ENGLAND 1ST INNINGS	
Z Crawley c Rahub Jadeja	84(113b, 13x4, 1x6)
B Duckett c (sub) Jurel b Kamboj	94(100b, 13x4)
O Pope batting	20(42b, 3x4)
J Root batting	11(27b, 2x4)
■ Extras (0, 4, lb 6, nb 6)	16
■ Total 46 Ov (RR: 4.89)	225/2
■ Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 13-4-37-0, Anshul Kamboj 10-4-48-1, Mohammed Shami 10-0-58-0, Shardul Thakur 5-0-35-0, Ravindra Jadeja 8-0-37-1	

NUMBER PLATE

90 Rishabh Pant surpassed Rohit's Test sixes (88) tally and equalled Virender Sehwag for the most sixes by an Indian batter.

14 Pant registered his 14th fifty-plus score in SENA Tests, the highest among visiting wicket-keepers, surpassing MS Dhoni (13).

2731 During his knock of 54, Pant became India's highest run-scorer in the World Test Championship, surpassing former India captain Rohit Sharma's tally of 2716 runs.

LALITH KALIDAS

Courageous Pant breaches pain barrier, stands tall for his team

SANDEEP DWIVEDI
MANCHESTER, JULY 24

AT LUNCH, almost half of the Indian team waited just outside the boundary rope to receive their hobbling teammate Rishabh Pant. Spinner Kuldeep Yadav took his helmet and bat, pacer Akash Deep the gloves, others were checking if he needed help to climb the dressing room stairs. Pant said no, walked gingerly, taking care not to put weight on his fractured right foot.

After ten flights, at the landing, he stopped for a bit. That's when a young fan in the stands, waving a Tricolour, shouted, "We love you, Rishabh." Pant smiled, waved his hand and took ten more discomforting steps on the balcony where coach Gautam Gambhir and the team's most senior player Ravindra Jadeja gave him a hug. These seemed like scenes from a Bollywood sports biopic. Who writes Pant's scripts, Old Trafford wondered.

Before lunch on Day 2, Pant had scored just two runs from seven balls. A day earlier, he had retired hurt on 37 in the final session. On Thursday, he eventually made 54 but fought for his team on one foot. He played 27 balls with a fractured toe. From an overnight 264 for four, India were eventually bowled out for 358.

The dressing room knew the importance of Pant taking the field. If not for him, India wouldn't have reached this score, a challenging one on this difficult track.

Less than 24 hours back, he was carted off the ground in a buggy after getting hit flush on the foot by a slower yorker from Chris Woakes. Scans on the toe showed it was a fracture. A BCCI press statement said Pant wouldn't keep wickets but "would bat as per team requirement". Struggling to reach 300 in the first innings, the team needed him. Through his innings, Pant looked in pain but didn't give up. He never has.

Three years ago, he had met with a horrific car crash on the Delhi-Rourkee highway. When he was rescued from the mangled pile-up, injured beyond recognition, it was feared that he wouldn't survive. Pant too had said that he thought his "time in this world was over". His self-belief and incredibly high pain threshold would give him a "second life", and also a second wind to his career.

On this England Test tour, Pant has been the second highest run-scorer with two hundreds and has proved to be the batsman the rivals dread. Several times in this series, he has unsettled the opposition with his play. The team was aware of Pant's importance.

In a late night meeting Thursday, the BCCI medical team said the wicket-keeper would need six weeks of rest. But could he just bat for this Test with the help of pain-killers, they were asked. "He could, if need be," was the answer. Pant didn't travel to the stadium this

morning on the team bus.

Around the time the big batting hope Jadeja was out, a car brought Pant to the ground. When the giant screen showed him in whites, a cheer rose around the stadium. And once he entered the field, the entire Old Trafford was on its feet. There was rhythmic, typically English, clapping as Pant took a while to walk to the central square.

He frustrated the English bowlers by taking them on. They tried to bowl him short balls but that didn't bother Pant. After that, Stokes aimed at his injured leg and bowled a swinging yorker. The ball hit low on the pad, just above the fractured part of the foot. Pant clenched his teeth, shut his eyes and dragged his feet towards square leg. After the brief walk, he came back again to bat.

Pain and Stokes go back a long way. But he wasn't going to get intimidated. Very soon, he hit a slower one from Jofra Archer out of the ground for a six and after that played an exquisite cover drive -- easily the stroke of the morning. Stokes bowled a ball wide of the crease, thinking Pant wouldn't move his feet and struggle to middle it. Pant leaned into it and pushed it -- the ball raced across the boundary line.

On BBC's Test Match Special, they were remembering the 1984 Headingley Test where West Indian great Malcolm Marshall, playing with a double fracture, got seven wickets and batted bravely.

Former India wicketkeeper Deep Dasgupta recalled watching spin legend Anil Kumble bowl with a broken jaw during the 2002 tour of the West Indies. Pant at Old Trafford was joining the greats of the game who didn't allow pain to stop them from doing their bit for the team cause. The myth of the "Courageous Keeper" grows.

END OF A FEUD?

IOA council ratifies CEO appointment in thaw with president Usha

PRIYUSH RAJ

NEW DELHI, JULY 24

AFTER MONTHS of infighting between the President and executive council of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), both parties seem to have mended their relationship, at least for the time being.

On Thursday, IOA members confirmed that the appointment of Raghuram Iyer as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) — a bone of contention between the two parties — has been ratified and he will continue in his post.

Till now, the EC members had refused to ratify Iyer's appointment made by IOA President PT Usha in January 2024 - his Rs 20 lakh per month salary along with other perks being the apparent reason for the disagreement.

"Everything is sorted out now and Raghuram Iyer is the CEO of IOA. There are always differences of opinion when there is a discussion but it is all good now," IOA vice-

president Kalyan Chaubey said.

Executive council member Harpal Singh claimed there was no infighting in the IOA, only 'minor bickering'.

"We have resolved all the minor differences and we are united now. While there was infighting, we never let it hamper anything. We continued meeting in smaller groups, we delivered the National Games twice and had a solid performance at the 2022 Asian Games," he said.

The thaw comes after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) raised concerns last month over India's governance issues and the doping menace, asking IOA to get its house in order first as it bids to host the Olympic Games.

Working on governance, doping

The IOA has decided to set up an anti-doping committee, led by executive council member Rohit Rajpal, that will include former shuttler Aparna Popat and sports medicine expert PSM Chandran, among others.



Indian Olympic Association officials claim to have ended their long feud. Express

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at all levels, coaches, sports officials, and parents," Rajpal said.

The IOA opposed the 'National Sports Governance Bill' for a long time on the grounds that it threatened the autonomy of

join FREE WhatsApp Channel <https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0F> process to select future Games hosts for the time being.

"They (IOC) have just got a new leader and she is driving some changes and in the next couple of years, we can see where it is going. It will be premature to say anything as more countries have entered the fray for the 2036 edition," Iyer said after Qatar confirmed their official bid for 2036 on Wednesday.

In case of the CWG bid, the international body is resetting the Commonwealth programme and can announce the host by the end of the year. "After Victoria pulled out of the 2026 CWG bid, there has been a lot of debate. The body is looking to reset the CWG programme. A number of countries have expressed their interest, and the Commonwealth Sports representatives will be looking at all the possible hosts. There is a general assembly at the end of the year where we can expect an announcement," Harpal Singh, who is part of the CWG revamping team, said.

India has bid for the 2036 Olympics and 2030 Commonwealth Games, but new IOC president Kirsty Coventry has paused the

CHESS WORLD CUP: ALL-INDIA FINAL

Gen Z prodigy versus OG star

Divya, 19, to face 38-year-old Humpy, who outlasts top seed Lei Tingjie in eight games played over three days, in title round

AMIT KAMATH
MUMBAI, JULY 24

IT'S BEEN a barnstorming campaign in Batumi for the 19-year-old Divya Deshmukh, who became the first player to enter the FIDE Women's World Cup final in the Georgian city on Wednesday after defeating Tan Zhongyi, a former women's world champion. 102 other players started the FIDE Women's World Cup hoping to be in the position Divya finds herself today: a finalist which also ensures she gets a spot at the FIDE Women's Candidates Tournament. The win over China's Tan also ensures Divya seals the first of the three norms needed to become India's only fourth woman to be a grandmaster.

Divya's challenger in the final will be the OG trailblazer Koneru Humpy, who was the first woman from India to become a grandmaster. At 38, Humpy is twice Divya's age. She reached the final after outlasting top seed Lei Tingjie in eight games played over three days, where every time control came into play. After four draws in the Humpy vs Lei game, the Chinese GM won to push Humpy towards the exit door. But the Indian GM then won three games in a row to secure her spot in the final.

The win over Tan Zhongyi was particularly memorable for the teenage girl from Nagpur: after ending the first game with a quick draw, Divya and Tan duelled for over five hours, making just over 100 moves each to emerge triumphant. Tan has been a women's world champion as late as 2018 and just earlier this year was fighting in the women's world chess championship to reclaim the crown. "What's the fun of going into the final the easy way? Wouldn't be me if it wasn't dramatic," Divya wrote on her social media after the win over Tan.

Remarkably, while her opponent was fighting for the greatest title of all in women's chess this year, it was only in June last year that Divya became the world junior champion. It's taken her 13 months to find herself on the cusp of winning one of the most treacherous tournaments in chess. Divya's run to the final can only be compared to the one that Praggnanandha made in 2023 at the FIDE World Cup as an 18-year-old, defeating players like Arjun Erigaisi, World No.3 Fabiano Caruana and World No.2 Hikaru Nakamura before losing the final to Magnus Carlsen. Just like Pragg's 2023 moment, at the ongoing World Cup, Divya had dispatched Serbian IM Teodora Injac, world No.6 from China Zhu Jiner, veteran Indian grandmaster Dronavalli Harika before beating a former women's world champion.

"This is a huge achievement. The fact that she beat players like Zhu Jiner, Tan Zhongyi and Harika is quite impressive. She's someone who has a lot of potential, so I wouldn't say this is unexpected. But people were waiting for this and it's nice that she's delivered."

VISWANATHAN ANAND
FIVE-TIME WORLD CHAMPION

Academy (WACA) to sharpen her game play. As late as 2023, Divya wasn't even certain she wanted to pursue chess full-time. She had told The Indian Express in an interaction after winning the title at the Tata Steel Chess India's rapid tournament in Kolkata, that she was 'still exploring' if she wants to continue playing chess full time or focus on further studies. "A lot fascinates me. I'm not sure which field to choose," she had said then. Divya's tryst with chess started almost accidentally.



Divya Deshmukh (L), who became a junior world champion last year, will take on Koneru Humpy, twice her age, in the final this weekend. Anna Shtourman/FIDE

This is a huge achievement. The fact that she (Divya) beat players like Zhu Jiner, Tan Zhongyi and Harika is quite impressive. She's someone who has a lot of potential, so I wouldn't say this is unexpected. But people were waiting for this and it's nice that she's delivered."

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Accidental chess player

As the teenager had recounted in 2023: "I started playing the sport accidentally. My sister used to go to badminton classes, one day my parents took me as well. But I was just four or five years old then, and I didn't even reach the badminton net. There was a chess class happening in the same building, so my

parents took me there. I liked the sport. Then, I just stuck with chess."

While her elder sister stopped playing badminton a while back, Divya's conquests on the board have brought her closer to becoming the fourth Indian woman to become a grandmaster. Ask grandmaster Abhijit Kunte, who has seen Divya's rise from close quarters, what her best attributes are, and he says: "She has always been very brave, someone never afraid to experiment."

But Kunte points out that she didn't have too much exposure to elite top-level chess before this year, when she played in multiple events of the FIDE Women's Grand Prix.

Anand, meanwhile, praises Divya for her penchant for attacking chess. "She does lean (towards) aggressive (chess). But that seems to be the general trend in women's chess these days," he said.

Kunte, on the other hand, is impressed by Divya's maturity at the age of 19. After the first game with Tan ended in a draw, Divya was almost disappointed with herself, even though she had held one of the strongest players in women's chess to a draw with black pieces.

Then after the 101-move rollercoaster in the second game which saw her beat Tan, Divya was again thinking of ways she could have done better. "I could have played much better. I was winning at one point, then I messed up in the middle game. I should have had a much smoother win," Divya admitted in an interview right after the win.

"This kind of maturity at 19 is not easy to get. It's very rare in women's chess," Kunte had said.



Koneru Humpy, twice her age, will face Divya Deshmukh in the final of the FIDE Women's World Cup. Anna Shtourman/FIDE

One of the happiest moments, title coming to India: Humpy

AMIT KAMATH
MUMBAI, JULY 24

WITH A MARCH OF HER KING in the penultimate blitz game against China's Lei Tingjie, GM Koneru Humpy barged into the FIDE Women's World Cup Final. In doing so, Humpy set up an India vs India battle for the title, with 19-year-old Divya Deshmukh having confirmed her qualification just yesterday with a win over another Chinese combatant, former women's world champion Tan Zhongyi.

"This is one of the happiest moments for Indian chess fans. The title is coming to India for sure," Humpy told FIDE in an interview.

At 38, Humpy is twice Divya's age, which sets up a fascinating clash of generations. Humpy has seen a resurgence in her career over the last year, when she won FIDE World Rapid Championship in December 2024, her second rapid title after the one in 2019. She had eased up on her events over the past few years to focus on her daughter and family life.

The all-India final in Georgia's Batumi also means that there will be two Indians at least in the eight-player Women's Candidates Tournament, which decides the challenger to the women's world champion.

India had its best headcount at the previous Candidates tournament when Humpy and Vaishali had qualified.

Humpy's win was remarkable because it took her eight games over three days to breach the challenge put up by Lei. Humpy and Lei played out two draws on Tuesday and Wednesday in the classical format. The first two tiebreaks, played with 15 minutes (with a 10 second increment per move), also ended as draws before Lei landed the first punch by winning the first game of the 10 minute (+10 second per move increment) tiebreak. Now, Humpy had to win on demand.

Humpy didn't just win the next game; she won three in a row. The first win sent the battle into another best-of-two tiebreak, this time to be played in the blitz format. With both players playing a significant portion of the game under severe time pressure, Humpy managed to defeat the Chinese GM in 70 moves. Now, Lei had to win on demand with white pieces, but she lost instead in 33 moves.

"It was a very tough match, initially I played very badly with black pieces. She always had the advantage. After the loss, it was a very difficult situation but I was able to come back. The blitz portion was in my control. I played a bit shaky in the rapid portion," Humpy said.

BRIEFLY

Chopra-Nadeem face-off in Poland next month unlikely

Karachi: The much-anticipated duel between double Olympic medalist Neeraj Chopra and reigning champion Arshad Nadeem at the Diamond League in Poland lies in uncertainty after the Pakistani javelin thrower underwent a surgery on his calf muscle in England recently. Chopra and Nadeem were scheduled to face each other for the first time after the Paris Olympics in the Diamond League in Silesia, Poland on August 16 and then in Switzerland next month. Nadeem's coach Salman Butt, who is with him in England, informed that the reigning Olympic champion is unsure for both the events as he was more focused on making his comeback at the World Athletics Championships in Tokyo in September.

Anahat in Jr. Worlds semis, medal assured

New Delhi: After coming close thrice in the past, India's teenage squash prodigy Anahat Singh finally ended her quest for winning a medal at the prestigious World Junior Championships as she beat Egypt's Mallika Elkarkasy in the quarterfinals in New Cairo on Thursday. The 11-6 13-11 11-5 win took Anahat into the semifinals, which assures her a place on the podium. After a bye in the opening round, Anahat defeated Joelle Kim of Canada 11-4, 11-4, 11-2 in the round of 64. In the next round, she overcame Ines Guyot of France even more comfortably, 11-1 11-6 11-1. The prequarterfinals saw the Indian beat Brazil's Laura Da Silva 11-5 11-2 11-6. In her first Egyptian test on Thursday against Elkarkasy, Anahat was finally pushed, especially in the second game, but she prevailed 13-11 to ensure her run of not dropping a game continued on.

BFI elections to be held by August end

New Delhi: Boxing in India is currently being managed by a six-member panel headed by Ajay Singh, who said that the elections for the national body would be conducted by the end of August. "The BFI elections will be held on August 27 or 28 tentatively," he told the media. "We did start the process of conducting the elections in March. But it was held up due to various litigations. The world body, World Boxing, subsequently created an interim panel. We have been asked to conduct elections before August 31." Earlier the Indian Olympic Association had formed a three-person committee to investigate why the elections were being delayed. Ajay Singh's term had ended in February. But Singh had said that the interim committee was on track to conduct the elections according to the timeline agreed upon with World Boxing.

ENS & PTI

CHINA OPEN BADMINTON

Hooda signals the start of something special

SHIVANI NAIK
MUMBAI, JULY 24

METICULOUS PV Sindhu-centric tactical preparation, defensive solidity and some clean, gutsy stroke-play saw 17-year-old Unnati Hooda land the first blow on her legendary senior on Thursday. The 21-16, 19-21, 21-13 win came in front of a gleaning Changzhou crowd, watching the earth shift slightly in Indian badminton at China Open.

The gleeful shuttler, whose defence was impressive on the day, had been ready for fearless battle, and was under no pressure. She said: "I stayed patient and when the side changed I was ready to play long rallies and a long match from the start of the third game. I didn't expect I would win today but I came thinking I'll give my all whatever the match result will be. Winning against her is surprising for me too. I was happy to win against her. It was a good match."

The Haryana teenager, trained by her father and a bunch of sparring mates at Rohtak, has been considered a special talent since she was 14. There was always a stubbornness and abrasion to her game, where she feared no reputation, knew she had the strokes, power and pace to trouble big names, and never lacked self-belief. But it would need more than self-assured poise to get past Sindhu, even while she struggles to go deep into tournaments and is severely impeded in her speed, if not power.

Hooda had come prepared. She had been preparing for months, in fact, after being blasted by a big rattling Sindhu game at Syed Modi last winter in Lucknow. They were Ranked No 35 and No 15 respectively. She knew the big smash would always loom from Sindhu and she needed to absorb that pressure, but she had plans to deny any elevation to belt down her hits and keep her busy, head



Unnati Hooda beat PV Sindhu 21-16, 19-21, 21-13. BWF/BadmintonPhoto

dragged down in retrieval, on the front court.

This she did by severely testing Sindhu's lunge. Her height gives her the expansive attack and even the reach to get to the front court. But the low lunge has always tested Sindhu, and Hooda kept peppering the forehand spots with pinpoint drops - some from imbalanced positions.

Undaunted, unintimidated

Hooda set the tone early, and never allowed Sindhu to snatch the lead in the opening set. A clean striker with the racquet, Hooda also has some pretty nifty footwork and anticipation. Her game pace might get tested, starting with Akane Yamaguchi on Friday in the quarters, but against Sindhu, her game-plan was watertight.

She didn't get intimidated by Sindhu's reach, knowing that even if she retrieved 20 shots, she could fox her on the 21st. So she eschewed errors on the lines, took the un-

certainty of minimal court drift, precision mistakes out of the equation. With a good 45-day training block, Hooda's fitness was optimum, and she came prepared for long rallies even as she claimed the opener 21-16, with a clean break from 13-13.

Undaunted, her personality always has been, and those around the Indian team talk of her self-assurance when she was unfazed by Sindhu's reputation even when she made the Uber Cup squad at 14. There's no needle as such, but Hooda did hurry her serves (or simply, serve the soonest) and twice found Sindhu not quite ready to receive. Having broken the age-old rule of no coaches when two Indians play, the duo also got on with setting down a clear rivalry, where they would use every help available to beat the other.

Sindhu trailed 11-14, levelled at 15-15 and went on to push a decider, but it was at 13-13 in the second that Hooda made her point. After the rushing serve, the immediate point

thereafter was one of the longest, blistinely paced rallies played by Indians on the circuit in many years, and Hooda drew the best out of Sindhu even, like Nozomi Okuhara used to, Hooda used a variety of drops and tosses, at a fast clip, to harry Sindhu and leave her panting.

More nuanced was the body attack. Sindhu's body defence, owing to her frame, has always been tentative, but Hooda didn't quite smash into her torso; she simply looped the shuttle at awkward lengths, forcing Sindhu to thwack it out of the court in an untidy parry. In the decider she opened up the court cerebrally. Her ability to play set-up points leading up to a winner or drawing out an error is rather impressive. She could lull Sindhu into thinking she had a chance, could push her to corners, trigger really awkward positions from which she struggled to recover for the next return. And then she brought out her own smash.

Shoulder-heavy smash

It's not a power bazooka, but it's more than strictly workable. She puts a lot of shoulder on it, and two down-the-lines stunned Sindhu a little, as Hooda opened up a 15-10 lead. Continuously chasing, with Hooda's shoulder heavy and unscrutinizable in front of her, Sindhu couldn't quite take control of any rallies, besides going for the smashes. Hooda's own scramble defence is not too shabby. And she simply threw herself at the shuttle, and even if she didn't retrieve half a dozen smashes, she bought herself time and breath with subsequent mopping of the court.

It was pretty evident when Sindhu went for the lines and sent one wide, trying to keep the shuttle away from Hooda that she wasn't entirely comfortable. Two errors from overhitting brought Hooda to the threshold. And the win was sealed with an expansive cross-court smash - that ought to make Sindhu very proud of her.

Another step forward in the Satwik-Chirag rebuild

SHIVANI NAIK
MUMBAI, JULY 24

THE CHINA Open Super 1000 Round of 16 win mirrored Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty's career as a pairing - a swell start, needing to dig deep and learning to stay calm and battle discomfiting zones along the way.

Playing Leo Rolly Carnando and Bagas Maulana, a juggling Indonesian pairing, Satwiksairaj and Chirag were dragged into what is a familiar flat game, demanding a set of strokes that they have literally had to learn anew by unlearning their natural repository of aggressive down strokes. It's a tilted axis - not many leaping smashes north to south, just a lot of angular whizzing east to west and diagonal. Crouch, chisel a clever curler, crunch a point.

Rinse, repeat, 21-19, 21-19 in 43 minutes for the day, recorded. Having repeatedly been caught off guard on the literal receiving end of funky spinning, shooting, squirming serves over the last 18 months, the Indians showed glimpses of coming to grips with a weapon the Indonesians and Malaysians have been liberally using against them.

They have been doing by tweaking their crouching stance, keeping their heads and biding their time while puncturing the fear around the serve. They stub it with some aggression now and use racquet angles to shake off the fanged poison. But just like their career, the steep inclines invariably follow the smooth sailings. Except now they aren't caught unawares having faced many calamitous situa-

tions in the past year. So even after they had broken away at 16-all to take the opener 21-19, things got ticklishly unfunny in the second. Chirag told the BWF, "It was quite topsy turvy, back and forth, we didn't really have a sizeable lead, neither did they. At some point we were leading by 2 points. They led by 2. Eventually at 16, we finally had that breakthrough when we got 3-4 points in a row. And we could close out that first game. But we should have started that second a little more calmly. We could have restricted them quite a bit. But they played good badminton as well.

Service and receiving. But happy we could finally get that game," he added.

The flat, fast game simply needs constant improvisations and endless patience, while never foregoing aggression. But every jazzed up serve dished out needs to be dealt with. And like Satwik says, it needed digging deep. And committing this debugging to muscle memory.

Satwik has picked a few tricks while trying to find their antidotes. Talking through the second set when they fell behind 10-14, he described the broad contours of resilience to a point where the drift advantage or disadvantage barely bothered them. "After first game, we got a lot of confidence. Like Chirag said, we were a little passive, not so aggressive on receiving. Way too many mistakes that we didn't make in first game. Then they got their rhythm. Then we again had to dig deep and here and there, had to struggle.

SATWIKSAIRAJ

While the Malaysians Ong-Teo offer them no respite there is incremental, hard-earned progress.

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