THURSDAY
July 16, 2026
CHENNAI
CITY EDITION
20 Pages ₹ 5.00

THE HINDU

www.thehindu.com
INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

Vol. 149 • No. 168
Regd. TN/ARD/110/2024-2026
RNI No. 1001/1957

To subscribe, give a missed call at 9828331787 or scan QR code

Printed at » Chennai » Coimbatore » Bengaluru » Hyderabad » Madurai » Noida » Visakhapatnam » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Tiruchirapalli » Kolkata » Hubballi » Mohali » Malappuram » Mumbai » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna

KEY PROJECTS
Semicon 2.0, new urea plants get Cabinet nod
BUSINESS » PAGE 11

CLINICAL DISPLAY
Spain roars past France, enters final
SPORT » PAGE 13

DELIMITATION BILL
NDA renews push for a two-thirds majority
NEWS » PAGE 9

INSTITUTIONALISED HIERARCHY
The crisis at the heart of global non-proliferation
The Iran crisis lays bare an enduring hypocrisy
OPINION » PAGE 7

EXPEDITED PLAN
BSF to fence Sundarbans along Bangladesh border
NEWS » PAGE 8

NEARBY

Centre approves extension of Sai Kumar's tenure

CHENNAI
The Centre has approved the State government's proposal to extend the tenure of Chief Secretary M. Sai Kumar, a 1990-batch Tamil Nadu cadre IAS officer, who is due to retire in August. » PAGE 4

Eight inmates arrested in prisoner's death

NAGERCOIL
Eight inmates of the Kanniyakumari district jail have been arrested in connection with the death of remand prisoner S. Sabari Varman on Monday. » PAGE 4

METROPLUS » 4 PAGES

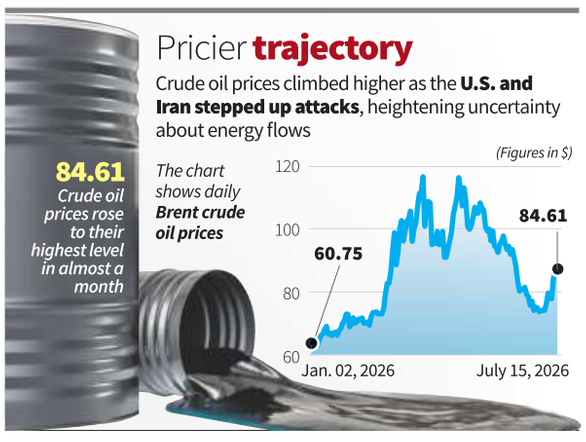
Iran threatens regional oil blockade over U.S. actions

Oil and gas 'will either be for everyone or no one', says Iran as U.S. claims 'wave of strikes'; U.S. blockade has 'dismantled' the peace MoU, says Tehran; Brent crude price nears $85 a barrel

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN/WASHINGTON

Returning to war nearly a month after signing a memorandum of understanding towards peace in West Asia, the U.S. and Iran on Wednesday launched strikes on targets across the region.

While the U.S. Central Command said it launched "a wave of strikes... designed to further degrade military capabilities Iranian forces have used to attack commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz", Iranian state media reported explosions near the port city of Bandar Abbas, on the island of Qeshm, and on Bandar Imam Khomeini. Iranian media later said new U.S. strikes hit the southern port city of Bushehr, home to the country's only civilian nuclear plant.



Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they targeted the U.S. Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, where the military said it had intercepted attacks against civilian targets, while Jordan's armed forces said they had downed three missiles from Tehran. Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi said the renewed U.S. blockade on Iranian ports "has, in a way, dismantled the Islamabad memorandum", referring to the interim deal reached last month to halt hostilities and pursue peace talks.

The Guards also threatened on Wednesday to halt all energy exports from West Asia over the blockade. "The export of oil and gas from the region will be either for everyone or for no one," it said.

The Brent crude oil, the international standard, traded close to $85 a barrel on Wednesday – more than 15% higher than the price before the war, but still below the nearly $120 reached at the height of the conflict. Analysts with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have warned that while a surplus of oil had kept prices low, "much of that room has now been used up".

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8
TRUMP'S WARNING
» PAGE 12

HC nullifies registration of land belonging to Palani math

The Hindu Bureau
MADURAI

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Wednesday allowed an appeal filed by Arulmigu Dhandapani Swamigal Madam (math) in Palani, and declared as "null and void" a controversial sale deed executed in favour of certain individuals with regard to 1.35 acres of land in Palani in Dindigul district.

A Division Bench of Justices C.V. Karthikeyan and R. Sakthivel allowed the appeal against a Single Bench order that had directed the Sub-Registrar to register the sale deed if the document was otherwise in order. It said the appellant was not made a party before the Single Bench and the Sub-Registrar did not consider the objections raised before registering.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 4

Kudankulam nuclear plant data leak sparks 'absolute commotion'

P. Sudhakar
TIRUNELVELI

The leak of highly sensitive files of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP), reportedly accessed by a ransomware group from a contractor's server, has triggered "absolute commotion" in the plant, KKNPP sources said on Wednesday.

After commissioning two 1,000 Mwe VVER reactors, KKNPP is building four more such units with Russian collaboration.

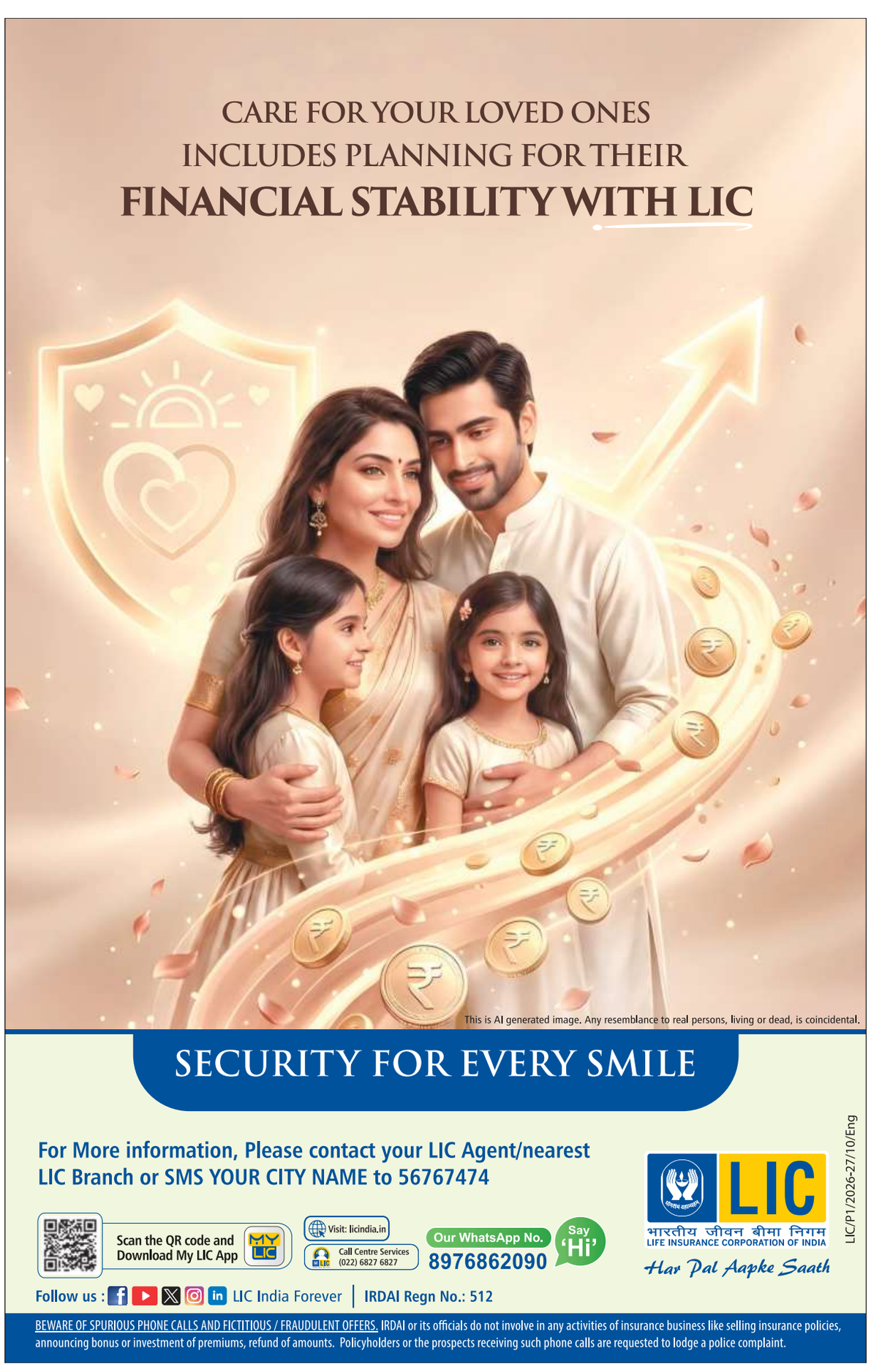
Sources said the top brass of the upcoming nuclear park is "completely clueless" about the development that poses a security threat as it may let an adversary map the support system and identify vulnerabilities.

According to *Reuters*, more than 19,000 files dating between 2016 and mid-2025, and linked to KKNPP's engineering blueprints on control, cooling and ventilation systems, list of vendors and suppliers, etc. had been accessed by World Leaks.

The reported data leak comes amid construction of four VVER reactors at the plant. FILE PHOTO

Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited said the information claimed to be available in public domain pertains to "conventional balance of plant common service facilities" and does not relate to any nuclear safety or nuclear security-related systems.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8



INBRIEF

S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

SIMS performs single-incision spine surgery on octogenarian

An 84-year-old man with severe spinal compression has regained mobility after undergoing a minimally invasive endoscopic spine surgery at SIMS Hospital. The hospital said the patient had multi-level lumbar spinal stenosis and degenerative scoliosis. Instead of an open surgery with deformity correction using pedicle screws and rods, the surgical team led by G. Venkatesh Kumar and Vignesh Jayabalan, senior consultants in orthopaedics, opted for a full-endoscopic uniportal decompression through an 8-mm incision. Ravi Pachamuthu, chairman, said the hospital would continue to invest in advanced technologies.

Chennai Metro Rail's key interchange station takes shape in Koyambedu

The four-level phase II station will be opened when Koyambedu-Chennai Trade Centre stretch is completed, say officials. Koyambedu will be linked to Pattabiram via Avadi in the upcoming phase III network. The phase I and phase II stations will be connected through bridges for pedestrians

TRACK TALES

Sunitha Sekar
CHENNAI

Koyambedu's Metro Rail connectivity, which was established in 2015, is set to get a massive upgrade, with stations planned for the phase II and phase III networks.

This neighbourhood boasted the earliest Chennai Metro Rail connectivity, with the launch of train services for the 45-km phase I network between Koyambedu and Alandur in 2015.

In the 118.9-km phase II network, Koyambedu will be linked to corridor 5, which runs from Madhavaram to Sholinganallur. In the extension planned under the phase III network, Koyambedu will be linked to Pattabiram via Avadi.

According to officials of the Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), a four-level phase II station is taking shape adjacent to the phase I station in Koyambedu. It will be opened when the stretch from Koyambedu to Chennai Trade Centre, a part of corridor 5, is completed.

Major facility: An artist's image of the phase II station being built adjacent to the phase I station in Koyambedu. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

T. Archunan, director (projects), CMRL, said the phase II station would have a street level and four upper levels. While entry/exit and parking facilities would be provided at the street level, property development spaces have been planned at the first and second levels, which means they could be leased out for retail or commercial or co-working spaces. Ticketing facilities would come up at the third level and platforms on the fourth.

The phase I and phase II Koyambedu stations would be integrated through pedestrian connecting bridges at the ticketing level, Mr. Archunan said.

"In the phase II Koyambedu station, we have already made a provision in the design to implement the Koyambedu-Avadi-Pattabiram corridor at the ticketing level. Like the link bridge between phase I and phase II stations, there will be a facility to connect phase II and phase III stations, too. Boarding and transiting via Koyambedu will be made seamless, and it will become a key transport interchange in the city. Residents and commuters in Koyambedu will be able to travel seamlessly to numerous locations in the phase I, phase II, and phase III networks in the future," he added.

Over 10,000 students from govt. schools across city take part in cleanliness drive

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

More than 10,000 students from government schools across the city took part in the grand finale of Swachhata Pakhwada, a cleanliness and reading campaign, organised jointly by *The Hindu In School* and the Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) on Wednesday.

The event, held at the Government Girls' Higher Secondary School in Ashok Nagar, was the culmination of a fortnight-long campaign held at 50 government schools in the city.

Chief Education Officer (CEO) Kabeer stressed co-curricular learning through activities such as essay writing and drawing competitions that encourage students to explore libraries and enhance their knowledge.

Winners of various competitions, held as part of the fortnight-long campaign, at a government school in Ashok Nagar on Wednesday.

Vasuki, Principal, Government Girls' Higher Secondary School, Ashok Nagar, underscored the importance of maintaining personal cleanliness and discipline, and segregating waste. She also urged students to conserve water and electricity.

Ajith, a representative of the BPCL, engaged with the students in an interactive question-and-answer session, encouraging them to become ambassadors of cleanliness.

Talking about the role of *The Hindu In School*, Prabhu Dass, Personal Assistant to the CEO, explained how a dedicated team of professionals works behind the scenes to create educational content, print newspapers, and deliver them to schools. Prizes were given to winners of essay writing and drawing competitions.

MIOT launches emergency museum

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

MIOT International has inaugurated a public Emergency Museum – MIOT's World of Life-Saving Moments – on its Manapakkam campus, with the aim of improving awareness of emergency preparedness and first response.

The museum was inaugurated by B. Shamoondeswari, Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic), Greater Chennai Police. She also launched a pocket-sized 'Emergency Handbook'.

B. Shamoondeswari, Additional Commissioner of Police (Traffic), releasing the Emergency Handbook on Wednesday. M. SRINATH

The museum traces the evolution of emergency and trauma care in Chennai, from the early 1980s to the development of MIOT's emergency services. Through visual exhibits, visitors are introduced to medical emergencies and provided guidance on first aid measures.

A cardio pulmonary resuscitation demonstration station enables visitors to learn and practise chest compressions using a mannequin. The museum also recognises traffic police personnel, paramedics, and citizens who helped save lives during medical emergencies. The museum will remain open from July 15 to August 15.

CENTRAL RAILWAY
SIGNALING WORK
Tender Notice No.: CR-BB-SNT-EAST -2026-82
Divisional Railway Manager (S&T), 1st Floor, Parcel Office Building, above P.F.No.14 & 15, Central Railway, Mumbai CST 400 001, for and on behalf of the President of India Invites Open tenders from the reputed contractors. **Name of work:** Signaling work in connection with interlocking of Level Crossing Gate no. 30, 31, 40 and 42A in East section of Mumbai Division.; **Approximate Cost:** Rs. 2.95 Cr.; **Date of Opening:** 03.08.2026; **EMD:** Rs 5,90,800/-; **Validity:** 60 days; **Completion Period:** 12 Months. This tender complies with Public Procurement Policy (Make in India) Order 2017, dated 15.06.2017. Complete details of tenders are available at Central Railway. Official website **www.ireps.gov.in** the complete tender documents can be downloaded from the website. The complete details of tenders are also available in the "Notice Board" of the Divisional Railway Manager (S&T)'s Office, Mumbai CST. **DE-364**
TRAVEL SAFELY, AVOID FOOTBOARD TRAVELLING

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
Corrigendum - No. 1
Following corrigendum is being made in the Tender Notice No. **DRM-ENGG-BSP-T-137-26-27 C/dated 28.07.2026** for work "Construction of Long Haul Loop Lines by Extension of Existing Loop Lines and/or Construction of New Railway Lines, including Formation, Bridge Extension/Construction, Blanketing and Connectivity to the Main Line for Long Haul formation/Goods Parking Operations, along with Provision of Pathways and Other Associated Civil & P.Way Works at Lorha, Rupaund, Amlai, Mauhari and Bijuri Stations, including Construction of Track Machine Siding at Amlai Station, under the Jurisdiction of Senior Divisional Engineer North of Bilaspur Division." issued by this office with date of opening 28.07.2026.
Particulars: Tender Value As Published earlier: ₹ 42,82,21,585.08/-. Now should be read as : ₹ 41,94,05,791.34/-. EMD As Published earlier : ₹ 85,64,400/-. Now should be read as: ₹ 83,88,100.00/-.
The tender Notice and its amendment are also available at Web site of SEC Railway **https://www.ireps.gov.in**.
Sr. Divil. Engineer (North)
CPR/10/289 **S.E.C. Railway, Bilaspur.**
South East Central Railway @secrail

Bureau for Facilitating MSMEs of Tamil Nadu(FaMeTN)
MSME Department, Government of Tamil Nadu
1st Floor, SIDCO Corporate Office Building,
Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032
Invites Applications for the post of **Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer** of Tamil Nadu Food Processing and Agri Export Promotion Corporation-**TN APEx**
Last date of receipt of application 30.7.2026 by 18:00 Hours
For details login to website: https://www.fametn.com/careers
Place: Chennai
Date: 16.7.2026
Bureau for Facilitating MSMEs of Tamil Nadu(FaMeTN)
MSME Department, Government of Tamil Nadu
1st Floor, SIDCO Corporate Office Building, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai-600032,
DIPR/ 623 /Display/2026
Managing Director
Bureau for Facilitating MSMEs of Tamil Nadu

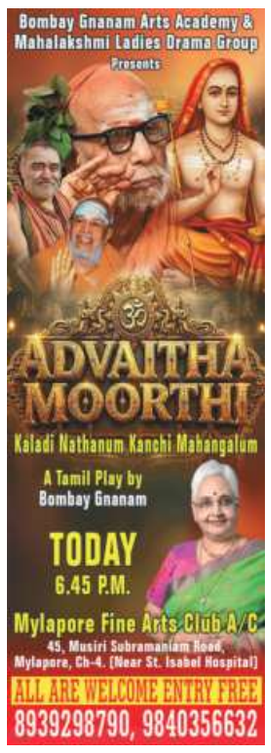
SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Tender notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/189/2026
Dated 08-07-2026
The under signed on behalf of the president of India, invites E- Tenders for the following works:

Description of work	Approx value
Yard Arrangement at Sasalu Station between Arsikere-Hubballi for Freight Terminal Development with 2 Additional Goods and Stabling Lines including Earthwork, Platform Works, Extension of Bridge No.52, Yard Drainage, Construction of Goomty Buildings, Approach Road, Track Linking, Electrical, TRD and Allied Works. (COMPOSITE WORK). (Tender Ref. No. UBL-JRU-66)	Rs. 36,37,37,117/-
Construction of foot over Bridge (FOB) for halt station in Gadag- Hotgi (GDG-HG) section (03 Nos Kudalasangama, Angadageri, Somanakatti) and subway at Honaganahalli, Padnur and Sulerjavalagi station. (Tender Ref. No. HIGA-102)	Rs. 29,47,77,325/-
Tender schedule for SBC-SA Section: Road Over bridge in lieu of LC No.41 at Km. 65/600-700 (1x36.0m Span BOW String Steel Girder) with two wheeler ROB and balance Subway work at LC-43 between Shivadi and Dharmapuri Stations including Electrical works (Composite work). (Tender Ref. No. ROB-LC-41-SBC-SA)	Rs. 12,00,52,931/-

Last date for submission of bids : **upto 15.00 Hrs on 31-07-2026** .
For details Log on :**www.ireps.gov.in.**
Deputy Chief Engineer/ Construction/Works/BNC
PUB/298/AAZ/PRB/SWR/2026-27
Download the RailOne app for easy ticket booking, PNR status, and more railway services.
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

CINEMA ❖ ARTS ❖ EVENTS

MUSIC DANCE DRAMA



Naada Inbam - 24992672
Today 6.15pm Sunil Gargayan, Anayampati Venkata Subramanian, Umayalpuram Mali, Trichy Murali. Concert dedicated to Umayalpuram Brothers by their family. Ragasudha Hall.

Sruti
Presents Tomorrow(17.07.2026) BOOK LAUNCH of C. Ramakrishnan's Musicians of Kerala Chief Guest: Sangita Kalanidhi Dr T.V. Gopalakrishnan Concert: Keraleeyam - A Tribute to Composers of Kerala Desham K.S.Vishnudev (Vocal), H.N. Bhaskar (Violin), N.C. Bharadwaj (Mridangam), Chandrasekhara Sharma (Ghatam). Time: 6.00 PM (Book Launch), 6.30 PM (Concert) Venue: The Music Academy (Mini Hall), Chennai. All Are Welcome. Concert in memory of N.Pattabhi Raman, Founder, Sruti.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,
East Mada Street, Mylapore, Chennai-4
is conducting **"Tamizh Theatre Festival 2026"** from **14th July 2026** to **17th July 2026.** Today: **16th July**: High Tea at 6.15 pm, **6.45 pm**: KNT presents **"Veera"**. Tomorrow: **17th July**: **6.45 pm**: TV Varadharajan & Team presents "**Sangeetha Mumoorthigal**". **All are Welcome.**
Sponsored by : Nalli

MISCELLANEOUS

SRMBV Ashram – 9448488831
Discourse in Tamil by PUJYASRI. Ramanacharana Tirtha (Nochur) Swami from 6:30 -8:30 pm , 10th-16th July and morning 10am -11 am from 11th -16th July at Narada Gana Sabha (Main Hall), All are welcome.

To advertise visit
www.thehinduads.com
044-28576300 Toll Free: 1800 102 4161

Your feedback will keep us Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder
Call our toll-free number
1800 102 1878
Or write to us at
customercare@thehindu.co.in
Scan the QR code to register your feedback
THE HINDU | thehindu businessline. | FRONTLINE | SPORTSTAR | THE HINDU Young World | THE HINDU

CLASSIFIEDS MART
TO ADVERTISE VISIT
www.thehinduads.com
CALL: 044-28576300
TOLL FREE: 1800 102 4161
or Contact your nearest Authorised space sellers

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME
I, AJITHA BEGUM W/o Momeen born 17.6.1976 residing at No.35D, Pappankullam Street, Thiyagadurugam, Kallakurichi Taluk, TN–606206 shall henceforth be known as Ajitha Momeen
S BHAVANI, D/o. P.Ramamoorthy, W/o. G.Sundaram, DOB: 10.06.1949, residing at No. Tower 35A, Flat Vs 68, Ashiana Shubham, Melrosapuram Road, Govindapuram, Singaperumal Koil, Chengalpattu Taluk, Chengalpattu District – 603204 shall henceforth be known as S. BHAVANI RAMAMOORTHY
I, P. Vivek, son of Thiru S. Prathaban, born on 27th July 1991 (native district: Theni), residing at Old No. 8, New No. 29, 11th Street, B.V. Nagar, Nanganallur, Chennai–600 061, shall henceforth be known as P. VIVEK RAJA
I, Loganathan C S/o Chengalvarayan residing Flat No. D4F, VGN Imperia Phase-1, 3rd Main Road, VGN Mahalakshmi Nagar, Thiruverkadu, Chennai 600077 have changed my name to Chengalvarayan Loganathan as per Documents vide Affidavit dated 14.07.2026.

OLD AGE HOME
PALLIATIVE CARE at your home Trained Nurses, 24/7, Dr., Physio visits, Lab tests 1800–313–1883 tikotra.com/seniors

TENDERS
SRM UNIVERSITY AP Andhra Pradesh
TENDER INVITE
For Supply and Installation of Field Emission Scanning Electron Microscope (FESEM)
Tender Enquiry No.
SRM/AP/Tender/26-27/001
For further details, scan the QR Code
SRM University-AP
Amaravati, Neerukonda, Mangalagiri Mandal, Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh - 522240

THE TRAVANCORE SUGARS & CHEMICALS LTD.
(A Kerala Government Company)
Valanjavattom P.O., Thiruvalla, Kerala - 689 104
Tele: Office: 0469-2610711, 2610712, 2610446
Email: travancoresugars65@gmail.com
Website: www.travancoresugars.com
TENDER NOTICE
E-Tenders (https://etenders.kerala.gov.in) are invited for Supply of 750 ml Pet Bottles for the period from 20.07.2026 to 30.06.2027.
E-tender ID 2026_TSC_860146_ 1.
Last Date of Submission is **17.07.2026 at 5.15 PM.**
For more details contact office/ website.
Thiruvalla 10.07.2026 Sd/- GM (i/c)

CLASSIFIEDS SPECIAL

To advertise in
Classifieds Special
Contact: **T Muni Babu @** 98407 95023
Toll Free @ 1800 102 4161

INBRIEF

BIS organises awareness programme for jewellers

The Bureau of Indian Standards, along with the Chennai Wholesale Jewellers' Association, organised an awareness programme on BIS hallmarking, revised guidelines, and consumer protection measures, for jewellers at Sowcarpet earlier this week. A press release said that around 120 jewellers attended the meeting and clarified their queries on hallmarking implementation, registration procedures, and regulatory compliance. S.D. Dayanand, Head, BIS Chennai office, said the BIS was integrating various equipment of Assaying and Hallmarking Centres with Manak Online portal to further enhance the efficiency of hallmarking.

Panchayat chief belonging to TVK held for taking bribe

The Thalambur police on Wednesday arrested Mambakkam panchayat president and Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam's (TVK) Chengalpattu East district deputy secretary Veera alias Veerasamy for intimidating a contractor. He was arrested after a video went viral on social media, where Veerasamy was seen accepting a bribe of ₹1.3 lakh from a contractor. He was also expelled from the party. In a statement, Chengalpattu East district secretary C.V. Dhinakaran expelled Veerasamy, from the party's primary membership. A senior police official of the Chengalpattu district said the arrest was followed by contractor Naveen's complaint, alleging that Veerasamy had demanded ₹1.3 lakh as bribe. Acting on the complaint, a special team led by Inspector Praveen Rajesh carried out the arrest. The accused was produced before the Thiruporur Court and was sent to prison.

Youth dies as two-wheeler crashes into barricade

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A college student was killed after his two-wheeler crashed into a concrete barricade in T. Nagar on Tuesday. Police said, S. Sandeep a resident of Ramakrishna Street in T. Nagar, was proceeding on his vehicle on the Anbazhagan flyover when he lost control of the vehicle and crashed into the barricade. In the impact, he sustained severe head injuries and was rushed to the Government Royapettah Hospital. However, he was declared dead. The Pondy Bazaar traffic investigation police have registered a case, and are investigating.

HC to examine NGT's ban on construction within 1 km of Pallikaranai marshland

Court to take up CREDAI-Chennai's case for final hearing on August 3; CMDA says buildings on 84.2% of the 3,474 hectares were constructed before the marshland was notified as a Ramsar site

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Wednesday decided to take up for final hearing on August 3, 2026, a case questioning the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) authority to impose a blanket ban on constructions within a radius of one kilometre from the boundaries of Pallikaranai marshland, a Ramsar site.

Chief Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and Justice G. Arul Murugan accepted a request made by senior counsel P.S. Raman, representing CREDAI-Chennai Chapter, for an early hearing of the case since it involved a ban on constructions on 3,474 hectares (8,584.44 acres) in the city.

He said, the NGT's order had affected thousands of landowners in Puzhuthivakkam, Madipakkam, S. Kolathur, Pallikaranai, Jalladianpet, Perumbakkam, Arasankalani, Semmancheri, Sholinganallur, Karapakkam, Injambakkam, Okkiyam Thoraipakkam, Seevaram, Perungudi, and Velachery.

Additional Advocate General P.V. Balasubramaniam, representing Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA), too told the court that it had received numerous complaints regarding the applications for building plan permissions not being processed because of the NGT's September 24, 2025 order.

Contested turf: The plea argued that a blanket ban could not be imposed even before the final determination of the 'zone of influence,' which could vary around the marshland. FILE PHOTO

The CMDA, in its additional counter affidavit, said, a ground verification using Google imagery and satellite imagery showed that 2,924 hectare (7,225 acres) out of the 3,474 hectares was already a densely populated area with several thousand buildings having already been constructed over there.

Stating that buildings had been constructed on 84.2% of the area in the one-kilometre radius, the CMDA said, a major part of these developments had taken place in those localities much before the declaration of the Pallikaranai marshland, spread over 1,247.54 hectare, as a Ramsar site in 2022.

The court was told that 47 planning permissions were pending with the CMDA and several others were pending with the Greater Chennai Corporation and other civic bodies. CMDA said, a blanket ban even before the finalisation of the 'zone of influence' around the marshland, had caused severe hardship to the landowners.

"The consideration of 1 km as 'zone of Influence' without completion of the due statutory procedures may not be correct," the CMDA said and relied upon Tamil Nadu State Wetland Authority's (TNSWA) stand that the 'zone of the influence' could be determined only after finalisation of the Integrated Management Plan (IMP).

On its part, the TNSWA told the court that determination of 'zone of influence' and preparation of IMP were complex statutory exercises which would require time. "The final delineation may depend upon the outcome of scientific studies, hydrological assessments, field verification and other relevant ecological factors and cannot be pre-determined at this stage," the authority said in its status report.

Referring to the submissions made by CMDA and TNSWA, Mr. Raman, assisted by P. Veena Suresh, said, CREDAI- Chennai was not against preservation of 1,247.54 hectare of Pallikaranai marshland, but was only concerned over the arbitrary construction ban imposed on a radius of one kilometre around the marshland. He argued that such a ban could not be imposed even before the final determination of the 'zone of influence' which could be anything between zero kilometre and one kilometre at different locations depending upon the scientific studies and not necessarily a fixed area.

Green initiative: Union Minister Suresh Gopi, CPCL MD H. Shankar, and The Hindu Group CEO L.V. Navaneeth at the tree plantation drive by CPCL on Wednesday. S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

CPCL's Swachhata Pakhwada ends with tree plantation drive

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited (CPCL) concluded its Swachhata Pakhwada 2026, which was observed from July 1 to 15, 2026, with a tree plantation drive flagged off by Union Minister of State for Petroleum, Natural Gas, and Tourism Suresh Gopi on Wednesday.

Around 500 saplings were planted by school students in the designated five-acre green belt development area in Amullaivoyal of Manali neighbourhood.

"We have this 15 day exercise called Swachhata Pakhwada which is the responsibility of every human being because we are accountable and answerable to the standards that should be maintained in terms of atmospheric conditions," Mr. Suresh Gopi said at the concluding ceremony.

North Chennai MP Kalanidhi Veeraswamy said that people should carry forward the message of cleanliness beyond the campaign period.

"Cleanliness should not be just a day, it should be in our day to day lives. Each of us should take the responsibility to maintain a clean environment in our houses, streets, workplaces," said Tiruvottiyur MLA N. Senthil Kumar.

Speaking about CPCL's environmental initiatives, H. Shankar, managing director of CPCL, said that the tree plantation was a small gesture to the overall commitment that the organisation has towards the Swachhata movement. "Earlier in the day, we planted around 4000 saplings in a school, and we have a long way to go. This tree plantation drive is going to add to a lot more biodiversity and improve air quality in the Manali neighbourhood," Mr. Shankar said.

L.V. Navaneeth, Chief Executive Officer of The Hindu Group, Rohit Kumar Agrawala, Director (Finance), CPCL, senior CPCL officials and school students participated.

Timings
CHENNAI

THURSDAY, JUL. 16		
RISE	05:51	SET 18:40
RISE	07:37	SET 20:32
FRIDAY, JUL. 17		
RISE	05:51	SET 18:39
RISE	08:34	SET 21:15
SATURDAY, JUL. 18		
RISE	05:52	SET 18:39
RISE	09:29	SET 21:55

Chennai Weather	max	min
Tiruvallur	38	26
Chennai Airport	39	27
Chennai City	38	27

Chennai Airport Today
40°C The weather will be dry. Day will be hot and uneasy. Night also will be uneasy.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
39°C Morning will be comfortable. Day will be slightly hot and uneasy. Night also will be uneasy. Dry weather to occur.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2026
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमंडल, गोड्डा
शुद्धि पत्र

एतद् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि अल्पकालीन ई–निविदा सूचना सं0– RCD/GODDA/773/2026-27(2nd Call), PR 384748 Road (26-27)_D द्वारा प्रकाशित निविदा को ई–निविदा सूचना सं0– RCD/GODDA/778/2026-27(2nd Call) पढ़ा जाय।

कार्यपालक अभियंता
पथ प्रमंडल, गोड्डा

PR 385004 Road(26-27)D

BENGALURU SOUTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Jayanagar Division,
No.44, 18th Main Road, 39th Cross, Jayanagar 4th T Block, Bengaluru-560041.

No.EE/BSCC/JN/TEND/06/2026-27 Date: 15.07.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Two Tender Document System) (Through GoK KPP Portal only)

The Executive Engineer, Jayanagar Division, BSCC invites tenders on behalf of the Commissioner, BSCC from eligible contractors registered in Greater Bengaluru Authority (Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike) or equivalent registration with CPWD/KPWD/Railways/MES or any State Government Organizations for the constructions of work detailed in the table below. Tender documents may be downloaded from GoK e-Procurement website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** The tenderers are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 3 of the instructions to tenderers to qualify for award of the contract (standard document KW-3 & KW-4). Tenders must be submitted online through GoK KPP Portal on or before **16.00 Hrs. on 24.07.2026** opening of tenders will be as per the GoK KPP Portal Guidelines.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work/ Approx. value of work (Rs. in Lakh) / EMD
1	Improvements to roads, drains, culverts and other developmental works in Nakkalubande and surrounding area in Ward No. 182 Byrasandra. Approx. value of work: **Rs.500.00 Lakhs**. EMD: **Rs.7,50,000/-.** Stipulated period: **7 months.**
2	Improvements to roads, drains, culverts in 5th cross road and 6th cross road at 3rd Block Jayanagara East and surrounding area in Ward No. 182 Byrasandra. Approx. value of work: **Rs.99.90 Lakhs**. EMD: **Rs.1,99,800/-.** Stipulated period: **6 months.**
3	Improvements to roads, drains, culverts in 2nd cross road at 1st Block Jayanagara East and surrounding area in Ward No. 182 Byrasandra. Approx. value of work: **Rs.99.90 Lakhs**. EMD: **Rs.1,99,800/-.** Stipulated period: **6 months.**
4	Developmental Works M S Building Block A and B and surrounding area in Ward No. 182 Byrasandra. Approx. value of work: **Rs.99.90 Lakhs**. EMD: **Rs.1,99,800/-.** Stipulated period: **6 months.**
5	Developmental Works and Repairs to M S Building Block-A and B in Ward No. 182 Byrasandra. Approx. value of work: **Rs.250.00 Lakhs**. EMD: **Rs.3,75,000/-.** Stipulated period: **9months.**
	All the above works Cost of Tender form in Rs. (Non-Refundable) inclusive of GST: As per KPP Portal.

1. Pre-bid meeting will be held on **20.07.2026 at 15.00 Hrs. in the office of the Chief Engineer, Jayanagar Zone (Zone-1), BSCC, 9th Main, 9th Cross, Jayanagar 2nd Block, Bengaluru-560011.**
2. Technical bids will be opened on or after **27.07.2026 at 16.05 Hrs.**
3. Financial bids will be opened on or after **28.07.2026 at 16.05 Hrs.**
5. For details, registration and e-payment visit GoK KPP Portal website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in or contact Helpdesk at +91-9240214000/+91-9240214001/+91-8068948777/+91-8046010000.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Jayanagar Division, BSCC

WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND
Office of Deputy Director (SC)QualityControlDivision,
Ranchi Dam Side Dhurwa, Ranchi Email-ddwrdjhr@gmail.com

Very Short Notice Inviting Quotation/EOI
Quotation Reference No–WRD/QCD/Ranchi/
NIQ-01/2026-27 Dated-.....
National Competitive Bidding

1.	Name of the Work	Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) For Contractor Registration/renewal of (wrdreg.jharkhand.gov.in) for Water Resources Department Govt. ofJharkhand.
2.	Mode of Submission of Bids	Online through www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in
3.	Tender fee(In INR)	Rs. 5,000.00 (Rupees five Thousand only) — Online Mode through Portal.
4.	Bid Security(In INR)	Rs.5,0,000.00 (Rupees Fifty Thousand only)—Online Mode through Portal.
5.	Time of completion	3 Years from the date of Letter of Acceptance(LOA)
6.	Publication of online Quotation/EOI Inviting	Date:17-07-2026 (17:00 HRS)
7.	Last date and Time of receipt of online Quotation	Date:25-07-2026 (17:00 HRS)
8.	Date and Time of Online Opening of bid	Date:28-07-2026 (15:30 HRS)
9	Date, time & place of opening of Bid	Office of Deputy Director (SC) Quality Control Division,Ranchi Dam Side Dhurwa, Ranchi Email-ddwrdjhr@gmail.com
10	Name of address of E-procurement officer	Office of Deputy Director (SC) Quality Control Division,Ranchi Dam Side Dhurwa, Ranchi Email-ddwrdjhr@gmail.com Mob No - 9905512603
11.	Helpline no.	7992401434

Note:- 1. Please see details on www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in
2. Only E-quotation will be accepted
3. The Undersign reserve the right to reject/cancel the quotation without assigning the reason thereof.

Dy. Director(SC) Quality Control Division, Dam Side Dhurwa
Water Resources Department, Government of Jharkhand
PR 385010 (Water Resource)26-27*D

ADVERTISEMENT

Bullet Train to Benares
A poem by Gopi Warrier ©

"How would it feel" a poet thought, "to face an executioners' squad?"
Not impossible with his record of revolt against wars of greed,
cash on sales of weapons clawed back from fake wars.

No great loss - this life of fraud art, flaunted celebs,
Donald's profound tweets, drum beat of magas,
and the laser heat of neo nazis at Hungary's borders.

The manufactured virus for elimination of China, the old, the black
made not by the philosopher but his namesake pharmer,
Pouchy and Peter colluding with a deep state of evil
distributing not seeds but disease
and millions of deaths for billions in profit.

Only an ancient civilisation carried out its
dharma of saving lives not for profit.
How beautiful Tulsi, eternal love of Krishna once again
helped him kill evil Shankhachuda.

Now migrants are shot on dinghies before reaching a Western shore.
The WASP media mocks their plight for not being white.

An angry Bear is provoked by Otan's calculated circus in Ukraine
more arms and missile sales, death and refugees,
trigger pulled by those whose share values dipped in years of boring peace.

In poor countries where people cheat even beggars and sell their organs,
and staff who steal gold from dead patients in hospitals,
this world and its fake saviours the Ais are a mirror of true hell.

A bullet is simply a key into the beautiful world where he belongs.
His fast train to Kasi.
"But why give credence to illegitimate authority – East or West?
A good lesson taught by Ahura Mazda in the straits.
Ha! The sorrows of a George being unable to split India into
Hindu, Muslim and Christian states! An ageless lasting culture that learnt
to live together over millennia, whatever its peoples' fates.

I would rather seek my end in Varanasi, by Shiva,
in the Ganga through Jal Samadhi, as even Rama and Krishna did.
From the harsh grip of Maya I must go back into the eternal soul,
pure infinity."

Gopi Warrier is the son of G.P. Warrier former Chairman of Indian Railways.
Published by Delhi London Poetry Foundation.
Design by Sarah Merton

Published by Nirmala Lakshman at Kasturi Buildings, 859-860, Anna Salai, Chennai 600002 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT.LTD. and Printed by Ra Babu Vijay at THG PUBLISHING PVT.LTD. Plot B-6 & B-7, CMDA Industrial Complex, Maraimalai Nagar, Chengalpattu Taluk, Chengalpattu Dist., Pin 603209. Editor: Suresh Nambath Chandrasekar (Responsible for selection of news under the PRP Act).
ISSN 0971 - 751X

From Page One

HC nullifies registration of Palani math's land

In the appeal, the math said the Single Bench order was contrary to law and the facts of the case, and was liable to be interfered with. The Single Bench must not have allowed the writ petition at the admission stage without hearing all the necessary parties, it said.

The math said that without impleading the appellant as a party, filing the writ petition for the purpose of registering the property of the math was improper and illegal. The sale deed was executed between the parties as if a private trust property was sold. Allowing the writ petition behind the appellant's back was improper, it added.

The math said the Single Bench should have considered how the petitioner suppressed the fact that the possession of the property was in the the Thakkar's hands. Hence, permitting to register the sale deed would create unnecessary trouble.

Meanwhile, Justin Manikandan Subramanian, the Sub-Registrar (in-charge) who registered the document, moved the High Court seeking anticipatory bail. He has been suspended. He said he had completed the process of registration on the basis of the order passed by the High Court. The Registration Department has also placed District Registrar Sasikala under suspension.

Justice K. Rajasekar sought the response of the Crime Branch-Crime Investigation Department and posted the matter for hearing to July 17.

INBRIEF

Governor, CM pay tributes to Kamaraj, Maraimalai Adigal

Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar and Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay paid their respects to former Chief Minister K. Kamaraj on his 124th birth anniversary on Wednesday. The Governor hailed Kamaraj as a visionary leader who transformed the educational landscape of Tamil Nadu. The Chief Minister paid floral tributes to the late leader. In a social media post, Mr. Vijay said Kamaraj established schools in villages across Tamil Nadu and introduced the mid-day meal scheme to end hunger among poor children. He also paid tributes to Tamil scholar Maraimalai Adigal on his 150th birth anniversary.

Eight inmates arrested in connection with Nagercoil remand prisoner's death

With the postmortem revealing injuries on Sabari Varman's body, the police have altered the case of suspicious death to that of murder. However, the motive behind the crime is still being probed

The Hindu Bureau
NAGERCOIL

On the heels of the arrest of three prison staff, the Kanniyakumari district police have taken into custody eight inmates of the Kanniyakumari district jail in Nagercoil in connection with the death of remand prisoner S. Sabari Varman in the early hours of Monday. With the postmortem report revealing injuries on his body, the police have altered the case of suspicious death to that of murder. However, the motive is still being ascertained.

According to the police, Sabari Varman, a differently-abled man from Ethankadu, was arrested on July 9 for selling banned tobacco products. A case was registered against him at the South Thamaraikulam police station, following which he was remanded in judicial custody at the district jail in Nagercoil on the same day.

He was found unconscious at his cell in the early hours of Monday, and was taken to Kanniyakumari Government Medical College and Hospital (KKGMCH) in Asaripallam, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Providing solace: Thoothukudi MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi consoling Sabari Varman's family at his residence on Wednesday.

His family and relatives staged a demonstration in front of KKGMCH, demanding a probe into his death. They said they would receive the body only after the cause of death was established and action was taken against those responsible.

The postmortem, conducted at KKGMCH on Tuesday, revealed 19 injuries, including abrasions in various parts of the body and a contusion on the back of the right hand. Further examination found that the underlying right and second metacarpal bone had sustained a shaft fracture.

Against this backdrop, chief head warder N. Suresh, alias Thirumalainambi, grade-I warder N. Jehan, and grade-II warder J. Sibakumar were arrested on Tuesday, and a case was registered against them at the Nesamoni Nagar police station.

Following further inquiries, eight prison inmates were arrested on Wednesday. The arrested persons were identified as V. Vishnu, 21, of Unnamalaikadai, A. Sarathi, alias cross Sarathi, 19, of Rajakkamnagalamthurai, A. Jegan, 40, of Thirparappu, J. Sarath, 20, of Chenkody, R. Veriya Perumal, 36, of Kalakkad, G. Sethuram, 30, of Eraniel, A. Ajith, 29, of Kottaram, and R. Aravind, 27, of Agastheeswaram.

The police altered the case to that of murder and added the eight inmates as accused.

Sources in the Kanniyakumari district police claimed that Sabari Varman had caused a disturbance inside the prison cell, resulting in an altercation with fellow inmates, which turned into a physical attack and led to his death.

MP meets victim's kin

Meanwhile, DMK deputy general secretary and Thoothukudi MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi visited the family of Sabari Varman and offered her condolences.

Addressing the media later, she said that when a mistake occurs, the government must take responsibility. "This government continuously tries to shift the blame onto someone else, and is not prepared to take responsibility," she added.

Even the Minister from the district had not come forward to console the bereaved family, and no assistance had been announced by the government so far, she said.

She said the family lacked confidence in the government, and had called for the case to be transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

State adds 950 MBBS seats for 2026-2027

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu will add 950 MBBS seats across government and private medical colleges for the 2026-2027 academic year, according to the latest seat matrix of the National Medical Commission (NMC) for the undergraduate course (as of July 13). The increase will take the total number of MBBS seats at 78 colleges in the State to 13,999.

The State has the third-highest number of MBBS seats in the country. Karnataka leads with 15,395 seats, followed by Uttar Pradesh with 14,000 seats.

The seat matrix released by the NMC includes approvals granted by the Medical Assessment and Rating Board (MARB) for establishment of new medical colleges as well as increase in intake capacity of existing medical colleges.

The additional seats have been approved across 13 medical colleges, including three government and 10 private institutions, while the NMC has also permitted the establishment of a private medical college with 150 seats.

After permitting the Government Medical Colleges in Namakkal and Tiruppur to increase their MBBS intake from 100 to 150 each, the NMC has also approved a similar increase for the Government Medical College, Tiruvallur. This has added 150 seats to government medical colleges, while private colleges account for the remaining 800 new seats.

Health Minister K.G. Arunraj, in a statement issued on Wednesday, said that as a result of sustained efforts made by the Health Department, the MARB of the NMC had approved an additional 50 MBBS seats each at the three government medical colleges. With this, the annual student intake capacity in each of these three government institutions had increased from 100 to 150 seats.

Through the Health Department's intensive expansion of infrastructure and timely submission of compliance reports, the State government had expanded the total number of MBBS seats in 36 government medical colleges to 5,200, he said. This reflected the government's continued efforts to strengthen health infrastructure, increase faculty strength, and improve healthcare facilities. The State government remained steadfast in maintaining Tamil Nadu's position as a leading destination for healthcare and medical education in the country, Dr. Arunraj said.

He said the Directorate of Medical Education and Research had been instructed to seamlessly incorporate these 150 additional MBBS seats into the State counselling process for 2026-2027.

This overall increase in seats comes at a time when the State is set to lose a considerable number of seats after three private medical colleges obtained "deemed to be university" status.

Form commission to find permanent solution to *Inam* land disputes, CPI(M) urges Chief Minister

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

CPI(M) State secretary P. Shanmugam on Wednesday met Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay at the Secretariat and submitted various demands, including the formation of a commission to arrive at a permanent solution for disputes related to *Inam* lands.

Speaking to reporters, Mr. Shanmugam welcomed the State government's recent order unblocking *Inam* lands in Karur district, and said those lands had been wrongly portrayed as temple lands, leading to a ban on their registration. He said not all *Inam* lands were temple lands, and accused Hindutva organisations of spreading false propaganda.

CPI(M) State secretary P. Shanmugam meeting Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay at the Secretariat on Wednesday.

He said though the government order related to Karur was a bold step, many such cases were still pending. He said his party had urged the Chief Minister to constitute a commission to arrive at a permanent solution for people residing on and cultivating *Inam* lands across Tamil Nadu.

SC verdict on evictions

Referring to a recent Supreme Court order directing the eviction of people living in forest areas in the Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve, Srivilliputhur-Megamalai Tiger Reserve, and parts of Kanniyakumari district, he said the verdict was "highly condemnable". He also criticised the observation of the top court that Central Reserve Police Force personnel could be deployed if the Tamil Nadu government did not cooperate in implementing the order, saying it reflected an "anti-people approach".

He said the party had brought the issue to the Chief Minister's attention. Alleging that the Forest Rights Act, 2006, had not been implemented effectively in Tamil Nadu, he said only about 36,000 families had been granted *pattas* over the past 20 years. He said the CPI(M) had repeatedly urged previous Chief Ministers to implement the Act, following which *pattas* were issued, but only in some areas.

He urged the Tamil Nadu government to file a review petition before the Supreme Court and expedite the implementation of the provisions of the Forest Rights Act.

Mr. Shanmugam also urged the State government to rename Paraicheri, a village inhabited by Scheduled Caste residents in Virudhunagar district, as Vadakku Acham Thavizhthaan, a demand raised by villagers for the past 15 years. He said the CPI(M) had not taken any decision on contesting byelections and local body polls.

'CPI has no plans to join TVK-led govt.'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

CPI State secretary M. Veerapandian on Wednesday clarified that there was no change in his party's decision to extend outside support to the TVK-led government, and that it had no plans to join the Ministry.

When asked about reports that the CPI was planning to join the government, Mr. Veerapandian told *The Hindu* that he had only said that the party would join the government when the time came for the Left to assume power in Indian politics.

Mr. Veerapandian said that the CPI had an alliance only with the Left parties, and that it entered into seat-sharing arrangements with other parties during elections.

"The Left alone is not adequate to change the country's political course from capitalism to a Left-oriented path. We will work with democratic forces to achieve that objective. When our time comes in Indian politics, we will join the government," he said.

Local body elections

He also said the Left parties might contest the local body elections on their own if the situation warranted it. "The party alone will take that decision, depending on the prevailing circumstances," the CPI leader said.

Vijay to chair Cabinet meet to discuss Budget today

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Ahead of the 2026-27 Tamil Nadu Budget, which is likely to be presented in the Assembly by the end of this month, Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay will chair a meeting of his Cabinet at the Secretariat on Thursday.

According to sources, the Chief Minister will discuss with Ministers the proposals and announcements to be included in the Finance and Agriculture Budgets. The Cabinet is also likely to approve industrial projects.

First Budget

Since this will be the TVK-led coalition government's first Budget, expectations are high that it will contain announcements on infrastructure projects and welfare measures. Some of the key promises made in the TVK's election manifesto are also likely to find a place in the Budget.

This will be the second meeting of the Tamil Nadu Cabinet headed by Mr. Vijay. The first meeting was held on June 5, during which the Cabinet approved 436 vision statements under the 'Vetri Tamizhagam Vision Document', encompassing many of the poll promises made by the TVK in the run-up to the 2026 Assembly elections.

Sources said preparations for the Budget were under way.

Mr. Vijay has been holding department-wise review meetings with the Ministers and officials concerned since July 2 to chalk out action plans for the implementation of existing schemes and projects and introduction of new welfare measures.

Centre clears proposal to extend tenure of Chief Secy.

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Union government on Wednesday approved the Tamil Nadu government's proposal to extend the tenure of Chief Secretary M. Sai Kumar, a 1990-batch Tamil Nadu cadre IAS officer, who is due to retire in August.

The Department of Personnel and Training, Government of India, approved the proposal sent by the State government on June 3 for extending his service by six months, from September 1 to February 28 next year, under Rule 16(1) of the All India Services (Death-cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958.

Phanindra Reddy is new chairperson of TNRERA

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has appointed retired IAS officer K. Phanindra Reddy as chairperson of the Tamil Nadu Real Estate Regulatory Authority (TNRERA). Retired District Judge A. Nazir Ahamed and retired IAS officer Reeta Harish Thakkar have been appointed as members.

A Government Order to this effect was issued by the Housing and Urban Development Department on July 14. Exercising its powers under Section 82 of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, the Tamil Nadu government has superseded TNRERA for a period of six months or until the reconstitution of the Authority, whichever comes earlier.

During the period of supersession, the aforesaid office-bearers will hold charge and discharge their functions.

Recent resignations

The appointments come against the backdrop of the resignation of retired IAS officer Shiv Das Meena, who had been serving as chairperson of the Authority since August 18, 2024, and retired IAS officers L. Subramanian and D. Jagannathan, advocate M. Krishnamoorthy, and former Chief Revenue Officer of the Greater Chennai Corporation Sukumar Chittibabu, who had served as members. They had resigned following the change of regime in the State.

Farmers march to T.N.-Karnataka border in protest against Mekedatu dam proposal

P. V. Srividya
HOSUR

Hundreds of farmers under the umbrella of Tamizhaga Vivasaya Sangagalin Kootiyakkam marched to the inter-State border to protest against Karnataka's proposed Mekedatu balancing reservoir project on Wednesday. They subsequently courted arrest near Zuzuvadi in Hosur.

The farmers from the delta districts and the western region gathered in Hosur to protest against the project which, they said, would sound the death knell for agriculture in the delta.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Kaveri Danapalan, president of Tamilzhaga Vivasaya Sangagalin Kootiyakkam, said that since the Union government was unwilling to call out Karnataka on the Mekedatu issue, the Tamil Nadu government should stand up and fight for its farmers.

Police trying to pacify farmers protesting against Karnataka's Mekedatu project in Hosur on Wednesday. N. BASHKARAN

Leading the protests alongside the Namakkal-based Narayanasamy Naiduvin Tamizhaga Vivasaya Sangam, Mr. Danapalan said, "We have already lost 7 lakh acres of Kuruvai crop since water was not released. Now, we are banking on the Samba crop, which is dependent on the monsoon."

In Tamil Nadu, the Mettur dam was usually opened on June 12 and closed on January 22, and the delta region's agriculture was tailored around these dates. But there was no such restriction for Karnataka. How will the water be saved, stored, and shared with the lower riparian State when it was being drawn at will by Karnataka, he asked.

"Karnataka cannot treat the Cauvery as a discharge channel during floods and withhold water for cultivation," he added.

Another section of protesters questioned the alleged silence of Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, whose party was in an alliance with the Congress, which was also ruling Karnataka.

Kannada outfits, led by former MLA Vatal Nagaraj, raised slogans against Tamil Nadu for objecting to the dam. A blockade called by the Kannada outfits impacted inter-State public and private bus transport.

Kerala seeks T.N. help to curb inter-State drug smuggling

Chennithala holds discussions with Vijay; Minister calls for coordinated efforts by southern States to eradicate drug menace; Kerala, T.N. to share information and intelligence on trafficking groups

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Kerala Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala met Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay on Wednesday and discussed the need to establish a coordinated mechanism among the five southern States to crack down on drug peddlers and combat the menace of narcotics.

Speaking to reporters at the Secretariat here, Mr. Chennithala said he apprised Mr. Vijay of the drug menace across the southern States and briefed him on 'Operation Toofan', the Kerala government's anti-narcotics drive. He said the Kerala government had been successfully implementing 'Operation Toofan' for the last 43 days, during which it had arrested more than 6,000 drug peddlers and registered nearly 5,500 cases.

Joint fight: Kerala Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay in Chennai on Wednesday.

He said the drug menace was one of the biggest issues facing not just one State but the entire country. He said he had discussed various aspects of 'Operation Toofan' with Mr. Vijay and sought the Tamil Nadu government's cooperation in nabbing those attempting to traffic drugs across the Tamil Nadu-Kerala boundary. He said the Kerala and Tamil Nadu would work together to share information and intelligence between their police forces, and thanked Mr. Vijay for his commitment to combating drugs.

He said he had also recently met Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar to seek Karnataka's participation in the coordinated efforts against the menace.

Further, the Home Minister said he had invited Mr. Vijay to Kerala. "Our brand ambassador is Mohanlal. So, Mr. Mohanlal and Mr. Vijay, who is the brand ambassador for Tamil Nadu, will be together in Kerala for a big function in August. He assured us that he would come," Mr. Chennithala said.

High Court halts major functions of Kerala Waqf Board

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Kerala High Court has directed the Kerala State Waqf Board not to exercise any major functions, incur capital expenditure or make policy decisions without permission from the court. The judicial functions of the board must also be stopped.

The decision comes as the court found that the board had not been constituted according to the mandate of the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development (UMEED) Act, 2025.

The Act requires the inclusion of two non-Muslim members and a Shia member on the board. Petitioners contended that at present there were nine members, without these community members.

Additionally, one of the petitions challenged the appointment of CPI(M) leader K.S. Hamsa as the chairperson of the board.

'Follow mandate'

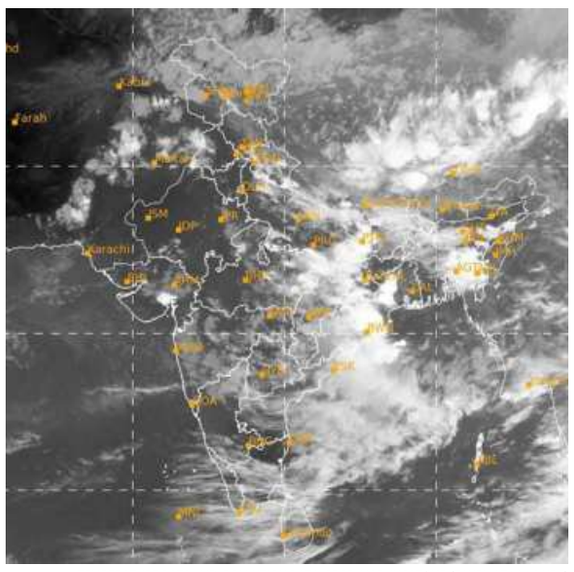
The Division Bench said the mandate of the UMEED Act must be followed.

The State government informed the court that it was prepared to reconstitute the board in compliance with the UMEED Act after considering the various allegations regarding the board's composition raised in a batch of public interest litigation petitions before the court.

BJP leader Shone George had challenged the lack of non-Muslim members on the board. The Assembly of Christian Trust Services had challenged the board's constitution.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday


TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.15 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, West Bengal and Odisha. Heat wave conditions likely at isolated places over Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	5.4	33.0	27.2	Kurnool	—	38.0	26.4
Ahmedabad	—	37.3	27.5	Lucknow	—	36.3	28.0
Aizawl	9.8	33.2	21.6	Madurai	—	41.0	26.1
Bengaluru	—	32.2	20.8	Mangaluru	0.4	30.8	24.6
Bhopal	—	33.6	25.2	Mumbai	0.4	32.7	27.0
Bhubaneswar	1.8	30.7	24.0	Mysuru	—	33.2	18.6
Chandigarh	—	36.7	26.3	New Delhi	—	38.4	29.1
Chennai	—	40.1	28.2	Patna	—	35.0	28.0
Coimbatore	—	33.2	22.6	Port Blair	1.1	31.0	26.8
Dehradun	14.2	32.2	24.5	Prayagraj	—	39.4	28.0
Gangtok	11	24.5	18.4	Puducherry	—	38.2	27.8
Goa	—	33.2	26.0	Pune	—	31.9	22.8
Guwahati	—	33.5	27.5	Raipur	0.6	34.8	26.1
Hubballi	—	29.0	22.0	Ranchi	—	30.6	23.9
Hyderabad	—	35.3	26.2	Shillong	8	26.0	17.4
Imphal	2.7	32.1	22.5	Shimla	—	28.9	19.8
Jaipur	—	35.0	28.2	Srinagar	—	32.0	19.0
Kochi	—	30.8	26.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.0	25.2
Kohima	—	26.0	20.0	Tiruchirappalli	—	38.7	27.0
Kolkata	—	34.1	27.4	Vijayawada	—	40.1	28.0
Kozhikode	—	34.0	25.5	Visakhapatnam	—	32.8	30.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	5	39	80	57	70	
Bengaluru	4	13	36	54	115	
Chennai	6	6	52	23	199	
Delhi	13	48	28	120	285	
Hyderabad	9	15	26	39	79	
Kolkata	17	16	40	81	96	
Lucknow	7	25	62	71	66	
Mumbai	6	65	31	31	63	
Pune	—	23	92	30	64	
Visakhapatnam	—	—	—	—	—	—

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Rupnagar, Punjab recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 203 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Gangtok, Sikkim recorded a healthy AQI score of 14

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

With poor rain, Cauvery panel decides to wait and watch

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC), which met on Wednesday in New Delhi amid poor monsoon rains in Karnataka's Cauvery catchment area, desisted from issuing any direction on water release to both the riparian States of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The CWRC heard the arguments of both the States and decided to wait till July 28 to take stock of the situation with respect to storage, hoping that the catchment areas may receive rain by then, it is learnt.

No water: Karnataka

According to sources, Karnataka's representatives argued that the State was not in a position to release the required quantum of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu as the Cauvery basin was facing water shortage.

However, the representatives from Tamil Nadu insisted that Karnataka immediately release the quantum of water as stipulated by the Supreme Court and the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal for the current period to help its farmers.

Concerns rise in border districts over low storage in Mullaperiyar

Sandeep Vellaram
IDUKKI

The Mullaperiyar Dam recorded alarmingly low water storage in July, dropping to 112.9 ft on Wednesday compared to 131.4 ft on the same day last year. This 18.5-ft deficit has been severely affecting farming activities in the bordering districts of Tamil Nadu.

It may also soon pose a threat to tourism in the Periyar Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Thekkady, as well as drinking water distribution in the Kumily and Chakkupallom panchayats.

PTR Assistant Field Director R. Lakshmi stated that boating and other tourism activities in Thekkady are currently running smoothly. "If this situation continues and the water level drops further, tourism will face disruptions," Ms. Lakshmi said.

The low storage impacts not only Kerala but also the neighbouring districts in Tamil Nadu. Nearly 1.5 lakh acres of farmland rely on Mullaperiyar water, including 14,700 hectares in the Theni district alone. Due to the lack of water, these farmlands currently remain dry.

Kodagu homestay owner's arrest illegal: Karnataka HC

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Observing that the fundamental rights of Indian citizens cannot be bartered away merely because the police received a complaint from an embassy of a country, the High Court of Karnataka has declared illegal the arrest of a Kodagu homestay owner after the alleged rape of a U.S. citizen by a housekeeper at the property in April.

The court also directed the State government to pay ₹5 lakh compensation to the owner for curtailing his personal liberty by arresting him illegally.

Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the order on a petition from the owner. "By such unlawful deprivation of liberty, the petitioner was not merely detained; he was subjected to indignity, humiliation, and the trauma that inevitably accompanies the coercive arm of the State being unleashed without lawful justification," the court said.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

SHRI K.R Balasubramanian (Retd. IA & AS) 90 Yrs passed away on 11.07.2026 at home, Nanganallur Chennai. Deeply mourned by : K B Vaidyanathan & K B Muralidharan (Sons), Sathyabama Thiyagarajan (Daughter), Daughters–in–law, Son–in–law and Grandchildren. Ph 9952029774

Mr.Y.LAKSHMI NARAYAN (87),Father of Mr. Y. Krishna, Chennai - 600017, expired on 15-07-2026, Eyes donated to Rotary Rajan Eye Bank (Project of Rotary Club of Madras T.Nagar), Chennai-17 (Ph: 28340500).

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

1st ANNIVERSARY

K. RAMANAN FCA
(Founder K. Ramanan & Co, Chartered accountants)
Born: 12th October 1949
Reached heavenly abode on: 16th July 2025
Remembering every moment with lots of love in our hearts.
Wife/Son/Daughter/ grand daughter and staff.
Fondly remembered by
Son: Ajoy Ramanan
98408 19391

IN MEMORY OF YOUR LOVED ONES
To dedicate a space in this section, Please contact: 044-28576300 from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.
Toll Free: 1800 102 4161 from 10.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m.
For Placing Advertisements Online log on to www.thehinduads.com
DONATE EYES - GIFT SIGHT

REMEMBRANCE

51st Year Remembrance
In Fond Loving Memory of our Beloved Founder

Late Shri Batchu Purushottam Garu
12.09.1901 to 16.07.1975
From
Family Members, Partners & Staff
M/s.B.Purushottam & Co., Chartered Accountants

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

10th YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Sankaran
(Ex. Assistant Manager RBI)
IN LOVING MEMORY
Shekher & Mythili Shekher

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. L.SANTHANAM
DOB: 01.01.1963 - DOD:16.07.2020
"You are the light of our life"
DEARLY MISSED BY
Family and Friends

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

SECOND DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Date of Birth
26-SEP-1930

Date of Death
16-JUL-2024

Shri. N. K. Kondalswamy Naidu

In Loving Memory of Our King
While we mourn your absence every day, we also celebrate a life well lived. Beneath the strict and disciplined exterior was a kind heart, a spirited soul, and one of the most grounded men we have ever known. You will forever remain our guiding light.
May you rest in eternal peace. You will always be loved, deeply respected, and never forgotten.

Fondly missed by
Family and friends
Management and staff
Fortel Hotel
Chennai -8

GOVERNMENT OF JHARKHAND
AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY & CO-OPERATIVE DEPARTMENT
(CO-OPERATIVE DIVISION)
OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR, CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES JHARKHAND, RANCHI
INTEGRATED CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (I.C.D.P.) CELL, RANCHI

Short e-Tender Notice
DATE:- 15.07.2026

SL No.	Tender Notice Number	Name of work	No Of Unit	Estimated Value of Work (in Rs)	Cost Of BoQ (in Rs)	Earnest Money (in Rs)	Time Of Completion Of Work
01.	ICDP/RANCHI/ 25/2026-27	Construction of 500 MT Capacity Godown in Lamps/Pacs Of Districts HAzaribagh, Chatra, Bokaro & Deoghar	21	19,95,78,900.00	10,000.00	19,96,000.00	12 Months
02.	ICDP/RANCHI/ 26/2026-27	Construction of 500 MT Capacity Godown in Lamps/Pacs Of Districts Palamu & Garhwa.	11	8,78,14,716.00	10,000.00	8,78,500.00	12 Months
05.	Date Of Publication of on Website		20.07.2026 AT 11:00 AM				
06.	Last Date & Time of Submission of bids		25.07.2026 AT 05:00 PM				
07.	Name & Address of Office Inviting Tender		State Monitoring Officer, ICDP Cell, Ranchi, Pasupalan-Sahkarita Bhawan Singh More, Hesag, Hatia, Ranchi. 834003				
08.	Contact No of Procurement Officer		7979780612, 9931477485				

06. Bid document with details terms and conditions will be available online on e-tendering portal, http:// Jharkhandtenders.gov.in from 20.07.2026 at 11:00 AM to 25.07.2026 up to 05:00 PM. Bids must be Submitted online only at the e- tendering portal http:// Jharkhandtender.gov.in on or before 05:00 PM on 25.07.2026. Tender Fee and EMD Will be received through online mode only. Bidders can use internet banking facility for faster processing of tender fee and EMD. Alternatively, bidders can use NEFT/RTGS challan generated for the tender from jharhandtenders.gov.in portal. Technical Bid received online will be opened at 05:00 PM on 27.07.2026.
07. Estimate Cost May Vary.
08. Corrigendum/Amendment if any will be published only on the above mentioned website.

Sd/-
State monitoring Officer
ICDP Cell, Ranchi

PR 385048 (Co-opretive) 26-27 (D)

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
PIU –SALEM
Office: No. Door No.212-3/D3-1, Sri Nagar Colony, Narasothipatti, Salem - 636 004.
Phone No. 0427 - 2444275, Mail id: nhaisalem1@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

The public is hereby informed that the Central Government, in the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways vide the Notification S.O. 2842 (E) published in Gazette of India No. 2748 dated 03.06.2026 has authorized the NHAI to collect the user fee from the road users from 0/800 to Km.57/800 in Cuddalore to Vridhachalam Section of NH-532 of Toll Plaza located at Km.45/200 (U.Ponnalagaram) under the powers conferred by Sec 7 of NH Act 1956 (Act 48/1956) read with the NH fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules 2008 rates specified in Column 3,4,5 & 6 of the following table on the type of vehicles specified in Col. 2 thereof with effect from the 00:00 Hrs on 20.07.2026.

Sl.No.	Type of Vehicles	Fee for single Journey (in rupees)	Fee for Return Journey within a day (in rupees)	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month (in rupees)	Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the district of Toll Plaza (in rupees)
1	Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	95	140	3095	45
2	Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	150	225	5000	75
3	Bus or Truck (Two Axles)	315	470	10475	155
4	Three -Axle commercial vehicles	345	515	11425	170
5	Heavy Construction Machinery (HCM) or Earth Moving Equipment (EME) or Multi-Axle Vehicle (MAV) (four to six axles)	495	740	16425	245
6	Oversized Vehicles (seven or more axles)	600	900	19995	300

Note: - The rate of monthly pass applicable for local personal vehicle shall be Rs. 350/- (Rupees Three hundred and fifty only) for the year 2026-27. Monthly Pass Road users who require can be obtained from the Administrative office at Toll Plaza.

DGM (T) Cum Project Director
National Highways Authority of India, Project Implementation Unit, Salem

Building a Nation, Not Just Roads

Fulfil the promise

New Delhi cannot keep stalling the restoration of Statehood to J&K

It has been over two and a half years since the Supreme Court of India recorded the Union government's solemn assurance that Statehood would be restored to Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). It set no timeline, but the expectation was that it would happen within a reasonable period and steps would be taken progressively. That the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government has done nothing on this front since then can only mean that it has interpreted the lack of a timeline as a licence for the indefinite deferral of Statehood. This is despite repeated assurances from the Centre. Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged it in the run-up to the J&K elections, and Home Minister Amit Shah reiterated it on the floor of Parliament. Unsurprisingly, the inaction has driven J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to organise a series of agitations and rallies, culminating in a sit-in at Jantar Mantar on July 20. His grievance, and that of the province, is legitimate. The retention of Union Territory status even after popular elections subordinates the elected government to an unelected Lieutenant Governor who retains preponderant authority over the bureaucracy, the police and other institutions. There is no principled justification for perpetuating this arrangement once elections have been held and a government installed.

New Delhi's rationale for inaction has been trite: "security", invoked by the Solicitor-General before the Court late last year, citing the Pahalgam attack, in a hearing on a petition seeking restoration of Statehood. But this argument cuts no ice. By the government's account, the attack was orchestrated from across the border, and India responded with Operation Sindoor. A cross-border provocation can have no logical bearing on whether J&K's elected representatives are to be trusted with the powers of a full State. If anything, empowering elected leaders to address local grievances is precisely how a polity assuages concerns before they turn into resentment, which fed into cycles of militancy in the Kashmir Valley for decades. The Centre's handling of J&K, Ladakh and even Manipur reveals a troubling pattern in how border regions with substantial minority populations are treated. Secure in its dominance across the north, the west and now the east, the BJP appears to regard the concerns of citizens in these provinces as expendable. Such a view is myopic: governance that treats a border region as politically dispensable only deepens alienation, and instability soon spills over and unsettles governance overall. The BJP seems cynically content to leave the Statehood question hanging until the political arithmetic, already sought to be reworked through delimitation in J&K, tilts decisively in its favour. A promise made to the Court, to Parliament and to the people of J&K cannot be held in abeyance until political circumstances turn expedient for the BJP.

Export gains

India's trade weaknesses are becoming episodic, its strengths structural

India's trade data for June offers insights into how the country is weathering the West Asia crisis and the prospect of a deficient monsoon. The fact that the trade deficit jumped 430% in June would seem alarming. However, a deeper look at the composition of this deficit should ease a lot of that alarm. The bulk of the increase in the deficit was due to the sharp increase in merchandise imports in June. And within this, it was led by crude, gold, fertilizers and electronic goods. The value of crude oil imports rose 40% in June 2026, reflecting the skyrocketing prices of oil a few months earlier. Gold prices have also been rising as uncertainty over the West Asia situation persists. The doubling of gold import duties in May would also have pushed up prices in June. With India's natural gas supplies hit due to the West Asia constraints, it has had to import more fertilizer – 201% more by value over last June. The only one of these categories that has seen imports rise sharply due to domestic factors is the electronic goods segment. As India's electronics manufacturing and assembly grow, more parts are going to come from abroad to fuel this engine. The government is encouraging this, as seen in its decision last week to remove the basic customs duty on imported parts in the manufacture of display assemblies, lithium-ion cells and inductor coil modules. These are essential if India wants to boost its manufacturing of high-end electronics such as smartphones, laptops and smart TVs. Going ahead, the attempt should also be to manufacture as many of these inputs locally so that these supply chains can be made truly secure.

The good news is that India's merchandise exports have put on a strong showing, not only in June 2026, but throughout the first quarter of 2026-27. Merchandise exports grew 15.5% in June and by an even quicker 16% in Q1. This was not simply a buoyancy granted by costly petroleum exports, either. Non-petroleum exports grew by a robust 16.5% in June and 12.4% in Q1. This is almost precisely the duration of the West Asia crisis. The data show that India's exports to every region of the world except West Asia grew in Q1, and that a large portion of export growth was in volume terms as well as in value. Indian exporters are to be commended for diversifying so quickly. Service exports, however, grew only 2.9% in June and 6.2% in Q1. As Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran has warned, success in areas such as Global Capability Centres should not be considered an end in itself – there is still far to go, and complacency will rob India of its advantage in this area.

Echoes of Karbala, Iran beyond the shadows of war

Mehbooba Mufti

President, Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (PDP)

Finally, the cat is out of the bag. With United States President Donald Trump first announcing a 20% surcharge for facilitating the passage of commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, and now shifting the focus to investments in America ("Trade and Investment Deals that the various Gulf States will be making into the United States"), the "art of the deal" has been laid bare. The war with Iran was never about democracy, human rights, or non-proliferation; those are merely pretexts to control Iran's vast energy reserves and the strategic choke points of global trade. But behind the sterile headlines of geopolitics lies a human reality. I wish to share something far more personal: my experience of stepping into Iran at one of the most extraordinary, painful moments in its modern history.

Late in the evening on July 1, I was deeply moved and, frankly, astonished, to receive an invitation, extended on behalf of the Rehbar, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, to attend the funeral ceremonies of his father, the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. The invitation came suddenly; everything – from the visa and booking the flights to arranging the state protocols – moved with breathless speed. My eldest daughter, Irtiqa, was gripped by fear when she heard the news. Aware of my outspoken stance on Gaza and concerned about the dangers of travelling to Iran, she only calmed down after extracting a promise from me that I would return as soon as the ceremonies were over. Within hours, I was aboard a Mahan Air flight bound for Tehran.

The real Iran

Landing in Tehran, I braced myself for an atmosphere thick with fear and wartime paralysis. Instead, I stepped into a scene of profound, composed calm. The officials who received us were polite, orderly, and reassuring. The airport's VIP lounge bustled with diplomats and leaders from across the globe. Former Union Minister Salman Khurshid and several distinguished spiritual leaders from India were on my flight. It gradually dawned on me that I was the only female political leader invited from India, and a Sunni woman at that. In a region so often fractured by sectarian divides, this gesture of inclusive solidarity made the honour all the more profound.

From the airport to our hotel, the meticulous organisation was striking. There was no chaos, no frantic mobilisation. No one looking at the quiet, efficient streets would have believed that this was a country living under the constant threat of annihilation. Upon reaching the hotel, after being warmly welcomed, a young Iranian woman in a flowing black abaya was assigned to guide me, attending to my every need with effortless grace.

> The Iran that exists beyond stereotypes and western media headlines is a land of faith, resilience, culture, and quiet human dignity

But what shattered my preconceptions most was the sheer presence of women in the public arena. On every corner, I saw female journalists, broadcasters, and camera operators, clad in abayas and headscarves, interviewing international delegates with fierce professional confidence. I have long known of Iran's high female literacy rates and the prominence of women in universities, medicine, and education. Yet, seeing them command the media landscape stood in stark, defiant contrast to the western caricature of the silent, secluded Iranian woman.

A grief beyond words

The next day remains permanently etched in my soul. We were taken to pay our final respects before the coffins of the late Ayatollah and his family.

Nothing prepared me for the sight of the tiny coffin of 14-month-old Zahra Mohammadi Golpayegani, placed gently beside her grandfather. Her photograph, showing her with a pacifier still in her mouth, was a devastating testament to stolen innocence. As I looked at her, my heart broke, and my thoughts instantly turned to the thousands of children pulled from the rubble of Gaza – children whose faces are rarely shown on western screens.

For a Muslim, the scene was an agonising echo of Karbala, where the innocent and the young were denied even water and martyred. Thirteen centuries later, it felt as though the tragedy of Karbala had returned to the banks of the Tigris and the streets of Tehran. It was a grief too profound for words.

Yet, even in this state of national mourning, the dignity of the Iranian people was breathtaking. It reminded me that this is not merely a modern state, but a civilisational giant thousands of years old, carrying its sorrow with poetic eloquence.

During my stay, I visited the Husayniah Jamaran in Tehran, the historic prayer hall and home of the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Standing inside that simple, three-room apartment was a deeply humbling experience. It is a place where the walls do not speak of luxury, but of faith and immense sacrifice. How rare it is to see a global leader live in such austerity while wielding absolute power. One cannot help but contrast this humility with the ostentatious and hedonistic lifestyles of some leaders in neighbouring Muslim countries, whose extravagance surpasses even that of many billionaires in the West.

It was during these quiet moments of observation that I truly understood why Kashmir has historically been called Iran-e-Sagheer, or Little Iran. The cultural threads are woven tight: in the spice of our food, the cadence of our languages, the curves of our architecture, and the protective, immediate warmth with which strangers are welcomed into a home.

I saw this warmth reflected in the vibrant diversity of everyday Tehran. Women dressed as they pleased: some in strict black chadors, others in colourful headscarves paired with jeans, and young women riding scooters with their hair catching the breeze. They spoke freely, argued passionately, and occupied public spaces with confidence. At an official state function, I met two female Iranian parliamentarians. They sat confidently in the very front row, side by side with the country's highest leadership.

Once again, the monochromatic, oppressive image projected by the West crumbled before my eyes.

Resilience beyond the battlefield

What I took home with me was not the political posturing of empires, but the quiet, steel-like resilience of ordinary Iranians. This is a society that has lived under the crushing weight of sanctions and the threat of war for decades. Yet, their streets are spotless, their universities thrive, and their people walk with an unyielding, quiet pride.

They are a testament to the fact that nations cannot be understood through television screens, geopolitical rhetoric, or satellite imagery. I returned to Kashmir with a heavy heart, but with an enduring truth: beyond the smoke of war, there lives a beautiful, ancient society determined to preserve its dignity, its culture, and its humanity, even in the darkest of times.

The only regret I carried back from Iran was that, because of my packed schedule, I could not visit some of its most revered shrines:. Perhaps it was not meant to be this time. I will return to visit these blessed sanctuaries in better times.

Iran's disruptive strategy, its global consequences

Arjun Subramaniam

Strategic affairs analyst

Iran's recent actions over the Strait of Hormuz and its strategy of targeting its neighbours in the Gulf as retribution for the actions of the United States may seem to have been operational masterstrokes. However, in the long run, they may well prove to be strategic blunders that have antagonised the world at large and leave Iran out of the global mainstream and away from the path of sustained economic progress.

A strategy of disruption

For decades, Iran has overplayed its hand in presenting itself as standing up to what it has termed "continued Western imperialism" and in supporting the Palestinian cause through the lens of Islamic resistance – a policy that was not endorsed by most other developed and developing Islamic nations. As the Islamic regime in Iran grew in power, buoyed by its success in standing up to a powerful Iraq during the Iran-Iraq war that stretched through the 1980s, so too did its frustration at being unable to deliver telling blows against the "Big Satan-Little Satan" combination, as it referred to the U.S. and Israel, respectively.

Consequently, it engineered the second phase of its disruptive strategy in the late 1990s by developing and supporting proxies such as the Hezbollah, Hamas and Houthis, commonly known as the Axis of Resistance, and liberally endorsed their use of terrorism to cause widespread disruption in the region.

Here again, the Iranians have achieved much tactical success over the last two decades and kept West Asia on tenterhooks, but at a much larger level, it has widened the chasm that exists between itself and the rest of the world barring Russia, China and North Korea. It is this quartet which is shaping the trajectory of fundamentally disruptive resistance to the existing global order.

When you compare this with the orderly way in which countries such as India are also challenging the existing global order with a call for greater multilateralism through dialogue and consensus, one can clearly figure out Iran's disruptive path.

> Tehran needs to recognise the limits of its current geopolitical advantage

Notwithstanding much assertion of civilisational and cultural linkages, India has maintained a steady transactional relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran, revolving principally around energy flow, trade corridors and the Chabahar port. Much in tune with its foreign policy of multilateralism in a multi-polar world, it managed to navigate the sanctions regime imposed on Iran by the West and maintained some energy flow based on national interest till it found alternate means and then gradually reduced its import of Iranian crude.

India's approach

India has only modest diplomatic leverage with Iran and rightly chose not to position itself as an interlocutor during the recent conflict, preferring instead to resort to quiet back-channel diplomacy and frequent calls for restraint. India co-sponsored the UN Security Council Resolution 2817 (2026), which officially condemned Iran's military attacks and aggressive actions against the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations and Jordan. Adopted on March 11, 2026, the resolution demanded that Iran immediately cease all attacks and threats, particularly those targeting international navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has no doubt been emboldened by its ability to withstand months of the U.S.-Israel bombing campaign. It has come out of the conflict battered and embittered but still standing. With large portions of its military capacity still intact and a regime in power that seems to be now dominated by a combination of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and hard line clerics, it appears that the region can expect continued acts of isolated belligerence that stay below the threshold of conflict. The frenzy of stage-managed grief and genuine hatred towards the U.S. and Israel that was on display on the streets of Tehran for the funeral of its slain leader, Ali Khamenei does not augur well for the future.

Iran's proposal to levy 'special rates' on friendly countries for transit through the Strait of Hormuz is another disruptive attempt at preventing any collective action from energy-hungry countries eager to benefit from this offer.

More recently, Iran's strikes on tankers following the Omani route through the Strait of Hormuz highlight its propensity to engage in coercive brinkmanship. Such an environment is highly unsettling for a large part of the world including India for obvious reasons – energy and trade corridors running through a volatile geopolitical arena.

The choice before Iran

It is time that collective pressure from countries other than the West starts building on Iran to desist from its varied coercive methods to keep the region on the edge. As the U.S.'s appetite to remain embroiled in the conflict waxes and wanes, and Israel strains to 'finish off the job it started', Iran needs to take a step back and not overplay the advantageous geopolitical hand it currently holds.

As a first step, it must look for windows to extract legitimate leverage accruing from the proposed de-freezing of its assets and widening energy flow from its embattled oil fields and refineries. Despite its isolation from the West, Iran is categorised as an upper-middle-income economy and has much potential for rapid growth, should it desire so for its people.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A war over a waterway

The United States and Iran are now engaged in a renewed conflict over the status of the Strait of Hormuz. The fact that it is a limited conflict for now offers little comfort, as it could escalate into a full-scale war. The idea of a "toll" is inconsistent with the U.S.'s stated policy of ensuring the free flow of maritime traffic through this vital waterway. This "protection fee" makes it clear that the U.S. has an economic interest in its involvement in the region. America's military, territorial, and economic expansionism is a reality. When it comes to the Strait of Hormuz, Iran has a more legitimate claim to manage it, given its geographical proximity. The U.S., however, would almost certainly not accept another country exercising control over the waters near its own territory.

G. David Milton,
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

FCNR deposits

Recently, the RBI permitted currency swap facilities to attract FCNR deposits from NRIs. In the early 1990s, the RBI/Government of India introduced the NRNR (Non-Resident Non-Repatriable) deposit scheme, offering interest rates of 18%-22% per annum to ease the foreign exchange crunch. The scheme was a remarkable success. The NRNR scheme offered several advantages over the present currency swap arrangement. Most NRIs, especially those in the U.S., invest in NRE and FCNR deposits primarily for savings in India rather than repatriation. Current NRE deposit rates are low and restrictive immigration policies push overseas Indians to save in the home country. Since NRNR deposits are rupee-denominated and non-repatriable, the RBI would not have to hedge against currency risk. The RBI should therefore consider reintroducing the NRNR deposit scheme with interest rates of 12%-15% per annum.

Cavery Palani,
Chennai

S. Janaki

S. Janaki's versatility in Telugu cinema remains a masterclass for aspiring musicians. She could seamlessly transition from the delicate, sweet vulnerability of a young woman in love to raw, bone-chilling social rebellion and high-energy commercial numbers. Her rendition of *Tolisari Mimmalni Chusindi* in *Srivariki Prema Lekha* perfectly captures the romantic, innocent longing of a girl daydreaming about her beloved. In stark contrast, her powerful, emotionally charged performance in *Ee Duryodhana Dussasan* from *Prathighatana* — a fierce anthem against the atrocities committed against women — justly earned her the State Award. Yet, her playful modulation in the vamp number *Nee Illu Bangaram Gaanu* from *Gaja Donga* demonstrated that no genre was beyond her artistic command.

Harish Betha,
Guntur, Andhra Pradesh

S. Janaki truly exemplified the words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: "Music is the universal language of mankind." She poured her heart and soul into every song, captivating millions with her melodious and soulful voice. She belonged to that rare league of singers who, in the words of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "rowed hard against the stream, saw the distant gates of Eden gleam, but did not dream it was a dream." Her extraordinary talent has earned her an everlasting place in the hearts of music lovers.

Kelath Gopakumar Menon,
Mukkattukara, Thrissur, Kerala

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

The crisis at the heart of non-proliferation

Shelley Walia

has taught Cultural Theory at Panjab University, Chandigarh

The present impasse over Iran's nuclear future lays bare the enduring hypocrisy at the heart of the global non-proliferation order. As talks in Doha stumble through disputes over frozen assets and verification mechanisms, Tehran is being pressed to accept full dismantlement of its enriched uranium stockpile in exchange for economic compensation for decades of sanctions, even as President Masoud Pezeshkian insists Iran will not relinquish its sovereign right to enrich uranium. The demand is unambiguous. Yet the five recognised weapons powers, and Israel, undeclared but widely known to possess the bomb, face no comparable ultimatum to disarm.

The current confrontation raises an unavoidable question: on what grounds should Iran relinquish a capability that nine nuclear states retain for themselves? The claim that Iran is uniquely dangerous, unstable, or aggressive is a conclusion in search of evidence, and cloaked in language by states whose own commitment to international law is selective at best.

Unequal rules

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) institutionalised a hierarchy rather than dismantling it. It divided the world into nuclear "haves" and "have-nots," and enjoined the latter to restraint while the former continue to modernise their nuclear arsenals.

Against this backdrop, the treatment of Iran is not an anomaly. India and Pakistan, both outside the NPT, possess substantial nuclear arsenals and are welcomed as strategic partners by the very powers that patrol the non-proliferation order. Israel, whose nuclear programme is an open secret, has never submitted to inspection and is never named in the discourse of proliferation risk. Iran, by contrast, pursued enrichment within a legal framework, submitted to the most intrusive inspection regime in the history of arms control under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and was "rewarded" with unilateral American withdrawal, the reimposition of sanctions, and the renewed threat of military destruction. Iran complied and got punished anyway.

> The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons institutionalised a hierarchy rather than dismantling it

There is a deeper historical contradiction that the current discourse labours to suppress. The global nuclear order is, in a fundamental sense, anchored in an act of unparalleled destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. These remain the only instances in history of nuclear weapons being deployed in conflict. They established the catastrophic potential of such arms as well as the precedent that their use could be justified, and absorbed into the language of strategic necessity by the state that employed them. The U.S. survived this act morally, emerging successfully as the designated guardian of nuclear order.

This precedent complicates every subsequent moral claim. A state that has demonstrated the willingness to use nuclear weapons against civilian populations occupies a singular position when it seeks to regulate the ambitions of others. The authority it claims is derived from the fact of prior use, and from the geopolitical dominance that use helped to consolidate. Albert Einstein warned with characteristic precision that humanity must choose between abolishing war and facing annihilation. That choice stands only deferred, and most effectively by those with the largest arsenals.

The unravelling of the JCPOA remains one of the most instructive episodes in recent diplomatic history, precisely because it was so revealing. Negotiated painstakingly under the Barack Obama administration, the agreement represented a genuinely achieved instance of multilateral diplomacy. Its abandonment by the Donald Trump administration in 2018 sent a message that resonated far beyond Tehran. For any state observing this trajectory, the conclusion inescapably underscores that future arms agreements with the U.S. carry no guarantee of American compliance. It must be kept in mind that if the Iran nuclear crisis deepens further, the JCPOA's destruction will stand as its proximate cause.

An enduring paradox

The question, in the end, is not whether Iran should or should not enrich uranium. It is whether the framework within which that question is posed is coherent, consistent, or just. By any honest reckoning, it is none of these things. Until that framework is confronted directly, and not obscured by the language of non-proliferation, the contradictions at the heart of the nuclear age will continue to compound. The answer to that question has been available since 1955, when Einstein and Bertrand Russell unambiguously asserted that nuclear weapons must be abolished altogether, by all states, without exception, or the logic of deterrence will produce the catastrophe it claims to prevent. Seven decades later, that conclusion remains as sound as ever.

We stand at a crossroads in a world that has grown accustomed to the gun on the table, until the day it goes off. Selective enforcement of non-proliferation, punishing Iran for compliance while rewarding others for defiance, and the indefinite deferral of the NPT's disarmament obligation do not constitute a rules-based order. They constitute a system that has chosen, knowingly, to tolerate the most destructive weapons in history rather than eliminate them. That choice carries a cost. The only question is whether we confront it through policy or through catastrophe.

Revelling in the power of visual politics

How image and digital strategy power Tamil Nadu CM Vijay's politics

STATE OF PLAY

B. Kolappan

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay is a man of few words, say those who have met him in person. He prefers to listen rather than speak. He is perhaps the only major political leader in the State who has consistently avoided the media and has not held a press conference since launching the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) throughout his election campaign or even after assuming office as Chief Minister.

It is not that he is incapable of engaging in political discourse. When he is thoroughly prepared and rises to address the Assembly or a public meeting, he is capable of delivering speeches, often launching sharp attacks on his political adversaries. Of course, it is peppered with colloquial words and usages that may appeal to his film fans but would make some squirm. Mr. Vijay appears acutely aware that, whether he speaks sparingly or at length, every word serves a political purpose. This marks a striking transformation of a film actor who chose to remain silent in the aftermath of the Karur stampede at his rally last year.

Digital dominance

A close observer of social media will notice how virtually anything connected with the Chief Minister goes viral within minutes. The TVK's well-organised digital machinery amplifies posts relating to Mr. Vijay across multiple platforms, ensuring they reach a vast audience. He has nearly 8,97,000 followers on X through his official TVK account and about 2.3 million followers on his Chief Minister's account and 4.1 million followers on Instagram.

Critical comments about Mr. Vijay or his government often trigger swift rebuttals from his supporters, while the Opposition just as quickly contests praise for the Chief Minister. The resulting online exchanges are often intense, underscoring Mr. Vijay's larger-than-life presence in the digital sphere. The phenomenon extends well beyond social media. Media reports on the Chief Minister – even routine accounts of the functions he attends – generate unusual public interest. His political persona has created a level of engagement rarely witnessed in Tamil Nadu politics, signalling a new phase in the interaction between politics, traditional media and social media.

One of the highest-paid actors before entering politics, Mr. Vijay built his cinematic career largely on films that projected him as an invincible hero. That image has proved to be a political asset in Tamil Nadu, where cinema and politics have long shared an intimate relationship.

Even the Leader of the Opposition, Udhayanidhi Stalin, acted in films before entering active politics, recognising cinema's unparalleled ability to build public visibility. However, almost all their predecessors combined their film careers with gradual political involvement over many years. Mr. Vijay's trajectory has been remarkably different. He announced his decision to launch a political party, formally established the TVK, campaigned across Tamil Nadu, contested the Assembly election and became Chief Minister – all within an extraordinarily short span of time.

Such a rapid ascent to the highest elected office is without precedent in the history of the Dravidian movement. It marks the emergence of a leader who converted immense cinematic popularity into political power with remarkable speed.

As Chief Minister, he has adapted the art of commanding public attention, honed during his years as a film actor, to the realm of politics. When he flagged off vehicles of the health department, he took the wheel himself for a short distance, sitting alongside commuters while launching buses. The video clip achieved what a costly advertising campaign or a lengthy government press release could scarcely have accomplished. When chess grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa called on him, a chessboard had been arranged in advance and the two played a few moves, producing another widely shared visual. On another occasion, while visiting the Nemmeli desalination plant, he drank a glass of the purified water before the cameras. Later, while launching a public distribution initiative, he briefly assumed the role of a ration shop salesman.

Whether spontaneous or carefully choreographed, such visual moments have demonstrated Mr. Vijay's instinctive understanding of the power of political imagery in the age of social media. He revels in the power of visual politics.

kolappan.b@thehindu.co.in

How challenging will Delhi's ambitious EV transition be?

Delhi's target of registering only EV three-wheelers from 2027 seems achievable, but the path to same for two-wheelers from 2028 is likely to be bumpier

DATA POINT

Devyanshi Bihani

The Government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi has given a firm push towards transition to electric vehicles through its new Delhi Electric Vehicles Policy, 2026, notified on June 30.

The policy has set aggressive deadlines for three-wheelers, light commercial vehicles such as mini trucks and two-wheelers. Only EVs in the first two categories can be registered from January 1, 2027, with the deadline for two-wheelers set at January 1, 2028.

Though the policy is right in aiming high, considering Delhi's pollution problem that is worsening every year, analysis shows that it could be an onerous challenge to meet these targets, especially for two-wheelers.

According to the Commission for Air Quality Management's latest source-apportionment study, transport continues to be the largest source of particulate pollution during winter (23%), besides contributing to secondary particulate matter **(Table 1)**.

Noting that two-wheelers account for nearly 67% of Delhi's vehicle fleet, the policy says their "rapid electrification [is] critical for achieving meaningful reductions in vehicular emissions". For three-wheelers and goods carriers in the category of light commercial vehicles, the policy says they exhibit high daily utilisation and mileage, "resulting in a disproportionate contribution to urban air pollution".

The two segments are, however, at different stages of the transition to electric mobility. Three-wheelers account for only four per cent of the total vehicles in Delhi and 43.16% of them are already electric **(Table 2)**.

New registration of three-wheelers is seeing an even further jump towards EVs. Of the 12,809 new three-wheelers registered till the first week of July this year, 8,419 were electric (65.7%).

The picture is markedly different for two-wheelers. Of the roughly 1.05 crore two-wheelers on Delhi's roads, only 1.7% are EVs. In new registrations as well, two-wheelers are showing only marginal improvements.

Moreover, Delhi is not switching to EV two-wheelers at a noticeably faster rate than the country at the moment, for the rapid transition it is targeting by the end of 2027 **(Chart 1)**.

The number of two-wheelers getting registered in Delhi every year shows the massive leap needed in sales. Of the 5.68 lakh two-wheelers registered in 2025-26, only 41,263 (7.25%) were EVs **(Chart 2)**.

Even with a conservative assumption that the demand for new two-wheelers and consequently the two-wheeler registrations will remain at the same level, the sale of EV two-wheelers should see at least a twelve-fold (1300%) jump by next year if the policy's target has to be met by January 1, 2028.

The real challenge would be even more arduous since the registration of two-wheelers is increasing significantly year-on-year. For instance, the numbers went up by nearly 25% between 2024-25 (4.56 lakh) and 2025-26 (5.68 lakh).

The problem would be compounded further if Delhi decides to implement the end-of-life policy for vehicles strictly, as it would demand petrol and diesel-fuelled two-wheelers that are respectively 15 and 10 years old to be replaced with EVs.

The effective implementation of the EV policy will also require Delhi to ramp up the availability of support infrastructure. Delhi Transco Limited has been tasked with expanding public charging facilities.

Delhi presently has 771 charging points, which are unevenly distributed and highly concentrated in the southern region **(Chart 3)**.

Power shift

The data for charts were sourced from VAHAN, India Climate and Energy Dashboard, and the Department of Transport, Delhi

TABLE 1: This shows the major contributors to Delhi's pollution during summer and winter

Sector	Winter (%)	Winter range (%)	Summer (%)	Summer range (%)
Transport	23	19–24	19	18–21
Industry	9	8–10	14	9–15
Dust	15	10–18	27	25–31
Biomass burning	20	17–23	12	11–14
Secondary particulate matter	27	24–28	17	16–19
Other sources	6	–	11	–

Note: Biomass burning, includes burning of municipal solid waste and crop-residue burning. Secondary particulate matter include those transformed from gaseous emissions from transport, industries, biomass burning, etc

CHART 1: Share of electric vehicles in two-wheelers registered every year in the last decade

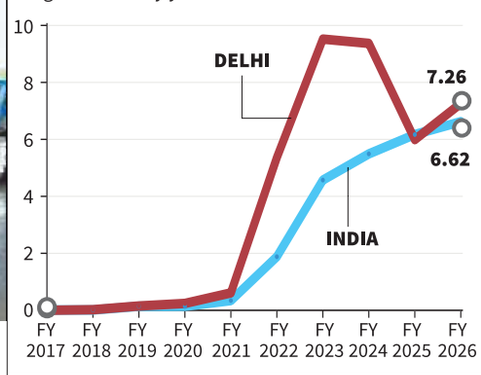


CHART 3: Public charging points across districts in Delhi as per www.ev.delhi.gov.in

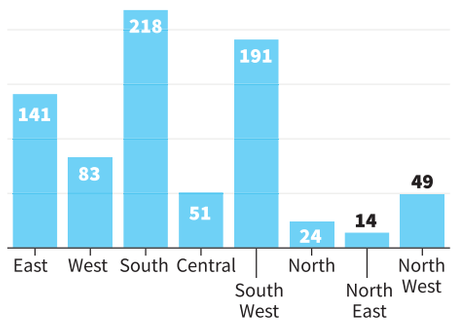
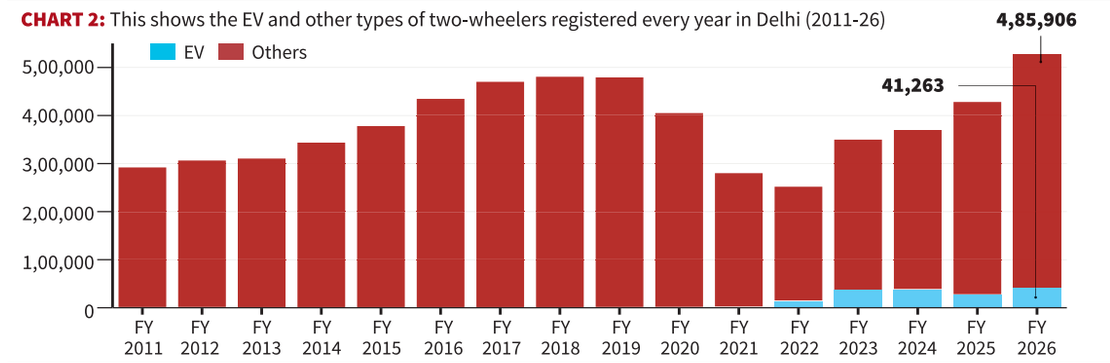


TABLE 2: This shows the total number of two, three and four-wheelers in Delhi as of July 6, 2026 as per VAHAN database

Vehicle type	EV	Gas-based	Petrol / diesel	Others	Total	% of total	% of EV
Two-wheelers	1,80,368	6,269	1,03,22,284	2,188	1,05,11,109	67.5	1.72
Three-wheelers	2,68,114	2,80,488	71,857	781	6,21,240	4	43.16
Four-wheelers	43,102	8,21,692	34,29,079	1,36,690	44,30,563	28.5	0.97

CHART 2: This shows the EV and other types of two-wheelers registered every year in Delhi (2011-26)



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 16, 1976

They give life to 'dead' letters

Madras: Letter writing may be an art where imagination can take wings, but addressing the letters calls for care and precision. Otherwise, a letter meant for a girl with a secret dream could well find its way to the Returned Letter Office.

Once known as the Dead Letter Office, it has been quietly doing its work right from the days Lord Clive introduced the "Official Postal System" in 1766.

Of the 15 RLOs in the country, Calcutta is the oldest, but Madras is one of the busiest (receiving articles from both the Indian and Pacific Ocean nations). To this office, letters come at the rate of 156 a day. The Circle handles about 65 crores of letters annually.

Over 80 persons in this office do a job which should strike a visitor as most amusing (and, of course, most useful). These dedicated men and women, divided into eight or nine linguistic sections give life to letters which must be deemed 'dead' for all purposes.

Within 48 hours of the letters coming to the central table, where Mr. D. Sivaramiah, Manager, sits, they are distributed to the appropriate sections – English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. These men and women, some by instinct and others by sheer experience, and all of them with a uncanny sixth sense, decipher the hieroglyphics and "revitalise" the lost letters. Most of them have come as being "undecipherable", "unclaimed", "refused", or "left with insufficient address".

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 16, 1926

Govt.'s scheme published

Simla, July 15: In pursuance of the Lee Recommendations, the Government of India with the approval of the Secretary of State, have framed a scheme for the recruitment and the training of officers for the three main departments of railways:–(1) Transportation (Traffic) and commercial, (2) Civil Engineering and (3) Mechanical Engineering and transportation (power). The object of the schemes is to see that recruitment in India is advanced, as soon as practicable, up to 75 per cent of the total number of vacancies in the superior railway services. The outlines of the scheme are published.

From Page One

Iran warns of blockade over U.S. actions

"As tensions flare again in the Strait of Hormuz, that room [from oil surplus] is now smaller and shrinking further as spare capacity has been deployed, demand has compressed, and inventories have been drawn down," Azim Sadikov and Jean-Marc Natal from the IMF wrote in a blog post. "Unless inventories are replenished, the world will start from a weaker position when the next shock comes."

At the heart of the resumption of hostilities has been the dispute over the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway that is crucial for global oil and gas flows.

Iran blockaded Hormuz after the U.S. and Israel launched their massive attack on February 28, using it for leverage against its foes for months before briefly reopening it, and then again vowing it would be closed "until the U.S. ends its aggression".

The U.S., in turn, has reimposed its own blockade of Iran's ports, though Mr. Trump has backed down on a planned 20% levy on ships using the strait.

Since the war began, Iran has asserted its control over the strait and opened fire on ships for taking routes it says are unauthorised.

"The retaliatory operations of the fighters will continue, and the strait will remain closed until the U.S. ends its acts of aggression," the Guards have said.

Recent escalations

A Norwegian tanker was hit by an explosion caused by an unidentified device off the Omani coast early on Tuesday, the crisis response company MTI Network said.

Kuwait said one of its naval vessels was struck during an Iranian missile and drone barrage, wounding four crew members.

Since last week, renewed U.S. attacks have killed at least 30 people in Iran, a government spokesperson said. Separately, the military announced that seven of its personnel were killed in Wednesday's strikes on the southeast.

Kudankulam plant data leak sparks 'commotion'

The leak originated from a server hosted by third party provider Yotta. The plant's contractor, Anil Ambani's Reliance Group, has admitted that a "partial breach" had happened and the government had been informed.

"Suspicious activity on Yotta's server was noted on May 29 last and it was reported in June-end. Investigations by Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited, the project proponent, and Computer Emergency Response Team are on," the sources said.

Reliance Group's Reliance Infrastructure bagged the contract in 2018 to build infrastructure for rectors 3 and 4, both under construction.

When the KKNPP encountered a similar incident in 2019, wherein a North Korean malware infection on its administrative network exposed the plant's vulnerability, NPCIL had dismissed it saying that their "unbreachable standalone network" was intact and no data could be accessed by any dark web.

Neither KKNPP's site director Ashok Bhatiya, nor V.P. Sunil, Station Director (1 and 2), could be reached for their comments on this sensitive issue.

The senior manager of human resources and public relations Kannan, who would usually be in touch with the media for occasional press statements, also did not pick up repeated calls.

EC revises phase 3 SIR schedule for four States

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (EC) on Wednesday revised the schedule of the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls for Karnataka, Delhi, Telangana, and Punjab, extending it by around 10-12 days. These States are among the 16 States and Union Territories where the third phase of the SIR is going on.

In Karnataka, the house-to-house visits will now end on August 8 instead of July 29. The draft electoral rolls will be published on August 17 instead of August 8, and the final voter list will be published on September 18 instead of September 7.

In Telangana and Punjab, the enumeration phase has been extended to August 3 from July 24. The draft rolls will be published on August 10 as against July 31, and the final list will come out on October 12 instead of October 1.

In Delhi, the final voters' list will now be published on October 19 and draft electoral rolls will come out on August 17 instead of August 5. The house-to-house visits scheduled till July 29 will now continue till August 8.

Assam Rifles camp attacked, vehicles torched in Manipur

Violence occurred after paramilitary forces launched search operations close to an NSCN (I-M) camp, a Defence spokesperson said; residents stopped patrol columns from entering villages

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A mob threw stones, vandalised an Assam Rifles camp and damaged four vehicles of the security forces in Senapati town of Manipur around 9.30 p.m. on Tuesday.

The attack occurred after the paramilitary forces launched an area domination patrol and search operation based on "credible intelligence inputs" regarding the presence of armed cadres in Makuilongdi, about 2 km west of a designated camp of the NSCN (I-M) at Oklong.

The NSCN (I-M) refers to the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland. The outfit prefers to call itself the National Socialist Council of Nagalim.

"The intelligence reports and social media posts indicated the presence of armed cadres moving outside designated camps, carrying weapons and wearing uniforms, in violation of established Ceasefire Ground Rules," the Defence spokesperson said on Wednesday.

Tensions boil over: Charred remains of a vehicle following a mob attack in Senapati district of Manipur on Wednesday. PTI

The Ceasefire Monitoring Group, which observes, verifies, and reports on compliance with agreed pauses in fighting, was formally informed regarding the reported violations, highlighting the security concerns, he said.

Entry stand-off

"During the course of the operation, residents, including women, obstructed the Assam Rifles columns approaching Makuilongdi and Oklong villages. The columns exercised maximum restraint and communicated with the local representatives, adding that the operations were aimed solely at ensuring security and maintaining peace in the area, and that the columns would not enter any village without the consent of the authorities," the spokesperson said.

As tensions escalated, a large crowd gathered in Senapati town around 9 p.m. and prepared to march towards the Assam Rifles at Naga Taphou in the district. "Despite the withdrawal of the columns, a large mob reached the camp around 9.30 p.m., hurled stones, damaging property and attempting acts of arson," the spokesperson said.

"The mob vandalised and damaged Assam Rifles vehicles. A light vehicle was set ablaze, while two trucks were overturned and damaged. A car of a civilian was also burnt during the violence," an Assam Rifles official said.

Situation under control

Minimum force was applied to disperse the violent crowd in coordination with the Manipur Police and the Central Reserve Police Force, he added.

The situation in Senapati was under control, a district official said.

"Neither the local people nor the security personnel sustained any injuries," he said.

On July 6, unidentified gunmen ambushed an Assam Rifles patrol in Ukhrul district, killing two personnel and injuring several others. Ukhrul, adjoining Senapati, is considered the political heartland of the NSCN (I-M), which is in ceasefire mode since 1997.

SC raps panel mandated to protect people from NE States

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday questioned if any concrete work is being done by the court-mandated monitoring committee set up to address problems faced by people from the northeastern States living across the country, including racial discrimination and targeted violence.

Justice Sanjay Kumar asked if the committee's meetings were only meant to "consume cups of tea". "All talk, nothing seems to be done," Justice Kumar said.

The court's oral observations were triggered when records submitted by the government referred to how the whereabouts of a woman who had sent a complaint to the committee remained a mystery. Justice Kumar asked how the woman could remain untraceable with no means of communication, given that she had emailed her grievance to the committee.

The panel was formed to "monitor, oversee, pursue and review" the implementation of the M.P. Bezbaruah Committee report of July 2014 following the death of Nido Tania, a 19-year-old student from Arunachal Pradesh, in Delhi.

BSF initiates technical study as plan to fence challenging Sundarbans terrain gathers pace

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

In a first, the Union Home Ministry is set to fence about 90 kilometres of the Sundarbans along the India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal, a challenging terrain characterised by mangrove forests, tidal swamps, embankments, and numerous creeks.

The Border Security Force (BSF), which is deployed along the Bangladesh border, has initiated a feasibility and technical study to erect the fence along the land border with Bangladesh, a senior government official told *The Hindu*. At present, there are no barriers on the ground and the BSF has deployed Floating Border Outposts, or FBOPs, in the riverine areas to secure the border. Plans are afoot to augment marine patrolling, the official said.

Ground work: BSF Director-General Praveen Kumar interacting with people in the Sundarbans. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Praveen Kumar, Director-General, BSF, had visited the Sundarbans from July 11 to 14 and reviewed the progress of the fencing work. "No fencing work has ever been done in the Sundarbans till now. The locals have been counselled that fencing is a requirement and that it is vital for national security. The joint inspection by the BSF and Department of Irrigation will start soon," said the official.

Protected area

As part of a public outreach, the BSF D-G met with local people and government officials in the area, a BSF statement said.

Almost 71 km of the border is contiguous with the Sundarbans Wildlife Sanctuary where no construction work is allowed as it is a protected area, the official said. "The three-day security review led by the D-G focused on time-bound completion of fence-related work. The need for more searchlights and surveillance cameras to aid marine domination was discussed," said the official.

Another official said that people were concerned about their land being acquired for construction of the fence. "Several mid-scale hotels and lodges which operate in the area also raised concern. They have been assured that the government will compensate and rehabilitate them," said the official.

"Though the Sundarbans is not a preferred route for infiltrators, it is used for trans-border crimes. After August 2024, additional security measures were taken up here," said the official.

ED files PMLA complaint in alleged visa fraud racket

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a prosecution complaint against Red Leaf Immigration Private Limited and others in connection with an alleged organised immigration and visa fraud under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Among those named are Amandeep Singh, Poonam Rani, Ankur Kumar Kehar, Nitin Vij, Kamaljot Kansal, Overseas Partner, and Rudra Consultancy Services.

The ED initiated its probe based on multiple FIRs filed by police, following complaints by the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi.

SC refuses to entertain plea to curb social media content

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to entertain a writ petition to curb podcasts and social media reels, saying the freedom allowed to citizens to approach the court under Article 32 of the Constitution for enforcement of their fundamental rights cannot be used as a ruse to politicise issues.

The court was hearing a petition against the online circulation of allegedly derogatory comments posted by an influencer against Prophet Muhammad.

The Bench said the petitioner should ideally file a complaint in such cases. The petitioner's counsel said that the plea was highlighting the need for curbs against abusive or hurtful social media posts. Justice P.S. Narasimha said the issue raised was not a case for an Article 32 petition.

Congress asks Centre to clarify on U.S. Bill seeking 100% tariffs

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday asked Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal to clarify the Centre's position after a bipartisan group of United States Senators introduced a Bill proposing 100% tariffs on imports from India and four other countries for continuing to purchase Russian oil.

The proposed legislation, initiated by Republican Senator late Lindsey Graham, seeks to impose punitive tariffs on India, China, Slovakia, Hungary and Azerbaijan.

European exemption

It exempts 15 European nations that continue to import Russian gas, arguing that such imports account for only a small share of their energy needs and that they are reducing their dependence on Moscow.

Congress media and publicity department chairman Pawan Khera questioned the Union government's response to the new development, and said Mr. Goyal should explain its implications for India.

"These are not House Democrats. These are Republican Senators, backed by President Donald Trump, demanding 100% tariffs on India and four other countries for buying Russian oil," Mr. Khera said in a post on X.

He added that India was being "humiliated" by the threat of punitive tariffs for pursuing its energy interests.

If enacted, the legislation would mark the first instance of the U.S. Congress explicitly authorising tariffs as a geopolitical instrument to penalise countries accused of allegedly financing another nation's war efforts.

C-section complications row: kin of five Rajasthan women appeal to President for help

Press Trust of India
KOTA

The families of five women admitted to the New Medical College Hospital (NMCH), Kota, have written to the President of India seeking permission for euthanasia if they do not receive a kidney transplant. They sent a memorandum to Droupadi Murmu with the demand after the five refused dialysis and insisted on a kidney transplant or death.

The development comes after the five women underwent 32 rounds of dialysis in the past 68 days and continue to battle kidney infection suffered after their C-section delivery.

NMCH Principal Dr. Nilesh Jain said on Wednesday that the five new mothers with kidney complications were fully stable and fit to be discharged. He said that the women were fit to go home and can receive dialysis on an outpatient basis.

Silent plight: One of the five women undergoing treatment at the New Medical College Hospital in Kota, Rajasthan, on Wednesday. PTI

Dr. Jain said if the patients refused dialysis, toxic waste would accumulate in the body, leading to severe health complications.

On transplants, the Principal said that a patient must be observed for three to six months for acute renal failure before being categorised as end-stage renal disease.

Mohan Lal, whose wife is undergoing treatment since May, said: "We cannot watch them suffer anymore. If they do not give us a written assurance for kidney transplants within 48 hours, we will stop bringing them for dialysis and let them die. We are living like walking corpses."

The Rajasthan government has ordered a probe into the post-delivery complications at Kota hospitals.

Rath Yatra is Puri's most spectacular festival: President

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

As Odisha prepares for the annual Rath Yatra, which begins in Puri on July 16, President Droupadi Murmu has shared a rare and deeply personal account of her lifelong devotion to Lord Jagannath, describing how her faith sustained her through personal hardships and continues to guide her in public life.

The President said that Lord Jagannath's message of equality has always guided her own commitment to serving all sections of society. She said she silently prayed to Lord Jagannath while proceeding to Parliament to take the oath of office on July 25, 2022.

"I prayed to Mahaprabhu: 'You are taking me to such lofty heights. I implore You to guide me at every step and always be with me. He listened to my prayer. He always responds to my prayers," said the President.

Droupadi Murmu

Describing the Rath Yatra as the most spectacular among the many festivals celebrated in Puri, Ms. Murmu noted that it is the one occasion when Lord Jagannath, accompanied by Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sudarshana, leaves the sanctum of the temple to travel in majestic chariots along the Bada Danda to the Gundicha Temple, giving devotees an opportunity to have darshan outside the shrine.

(Full article is at newsth.live/puri)

NDA renews push to muster numbers for delimitation Bill

Both the ruling alliance and Opposition INDIA bloc are firming up strategies ahead of the Monsoon Session of Parliament; NDA banks on splits in Trinamool, Sena, realignment in T.N.; Congress's parliamentary group is scheduled to meet today

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

With the Monsoon Session of Parliament beginning on July 20, the ruling National Democratic Alliance and the Opposition Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance are firming up strategies with regard to the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, which proposes to raise the number of Lok Sabha seats to 850 and initiate the delimitation process.

The issue acquired a sense of urgency on Wednesday as Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi, while leaders of both factions of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) met Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Mumbai.

Amid speculation that NCP MPs of the Sharad Pawar faction may also switch sides, the party's working president, Supriya Sule, clarified that her party had not taken any decision on the Bill. Earlier in the day, she was reported to have said that if the proposed delimitation Bill was based on a uniform 50% increase in seats across all States, "there would be little reason to oppose it".

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde reportedly met Union Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Wednesday. FILE PHOTO

The NDA government's sustained effort to secure a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha to pass the Constitution amendment Bill gained momentum after 20 Lok Sabha members of the Trinamool Congress and six MPs of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) aligned themselves with the BJP-led NDA. Alliance managers claim that its strength in the Lok Sabha has risen from 298 in April to 329, though it remains short of the two-thirds majority mark of 362.

The Congress's parliamentary strategy group is scheduled to meet on Thursday morning, but sources said the party's top leadership is upset that the government is trying to secure a two-thirds majority through the "defection route". "The Home Minister will not get the two-thirds majority he is desperate for in the Lok Sabha. After his humiliation on April 17, he will suffer a second defeat," Congress leader Jairam Ramesh told *The Hindu*.

Outreach to INDIA allies

The BJP has, meanwhile, stepped up its outreach to parties in the INDIA bloc in an effort to secure the numbers required to pass the amendment Bill, which also forms the basis for implementing women's reservation from the 2029 Lok Sabha election.

According to BJP leaders and government sources, the realignment following the recent Assembly elections in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu has opened fresh channels of communication with Opposition parties. Sources said the BJP has also reopened talks with the DMK after its break with the Congress.

Former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Tuesday had said that the government was trying to woo both the DMK and the NCP (SP). Against this backdrop, Ms. Sule's comments that there would be "little reason to oppose" a proposal based on a uniform 50% increase in Lok Sabha seats across all States fuelled speculation that the NCP (SP) could support the Bill. "The formula for implementation should be given in writing," she said.

In the Rajya Sabha too, the BJP's numbers are set to improve after three Trinamool members joined the BJP. After July 24, the BJP's strength in the Upper House is expected to rise to 117, its highest ever. With the support of seven nominated members, three Independents and NDA allies, the ruling alliance expects to reach 153 members, still 11 short of the two-thirds majority of 164 required to amend the Constitution.

(With inputs from Nistula Hebbar and Vinaya Deshpande)

Panel defers final meeting on higher education Bill amid objections from A.P.

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

The Joint Committee of Parliament reviewing the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, has deferred its meeting, originally scheduled for Friday to finalise its report, to July 20. According to sources, the rescheduling follows objections raised by the Andhra Pradesh government – which is ruled by the Telugu Desam Party, a Bharatiya Janata Party ally – to several provisions of the proposed legislation.

The Bill proposes a restructuring of higher education regulation in India by replacing the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) with a single apex body, the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA). *The Hindu* had reported that the Andhra Pradesh government had argued that the Bill could make the State's legislative competence in higher education "a dead letter". It has sought mandatory consultation with State governments before decisions affecting State universities are taken.

A Parliamentary panel led by BJP MP D. Purandeswari is reviewing the Bill. FILE PHOTO

The State has also objected to Clause 11, which allows the Regulatory Council to bypass State universities in granting degrees, saying it could lead to "constitutional friction".

The Andhra Pradesh government has further proposed a clause explicitly preventing the Centre from taking any action prejudicial to the autonomy, functioning, and governance of State institutes and universities. It has also sought mandatory consultation with the State before any action is taken against any State institution.

TDP's reservations

It is learnt that Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan held an informal meeting on Tuesday with committee chairperson and BJP MP D. Purandeswari and a few other members to discuss the concerns raised. The TDP conveyed its reservations during the meeting, following which it was decided that the draft report would be reviewed again.

"If we find something amiss that needs attention, we will obviously flag it. We have done it in the past with the Waqf Bill and also in the ongoing consultations on the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill. We recommended that the list of offences warranting automatic suspension of a public office holder should be specified," a senior TDP leader said.

The TDP Parliamentary Party is scheduled to meet on Friday to finalise its strategy for the Monsoon Session of Parliament, which begins on July 20.

Wangchuk loses 8.9 kg as fast for Pradhan's resignation continues

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Activist Sonam Wangchuk's indefinite hunger strike demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan entered its 18th day on Wednesday, with his deteriorating health drawing concern from civil society groups, and Opposition leaders. Many of whom have urged him to end the fast.

Mr. Wangchuk is close to emaciation, according to medical reports published by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), the organisation leading the protest.

Over the past two weeks, Mr. Wangchuk's condition has worsened, needing increasing medical supervision.

Mr. Wangchuk, 59, has lost 8.9 kg since he began fasting, according to a review of his condition published by the CJP over the past week. Mr. Wangchuk's vital signs have hit and exceeded thresholds described in medical literature for hunger strikers.

Worsening condition: Activist Sonam Wangchuk and CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke at the protest site. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

In a video posted late Wednesday evening, Mr. Wangchuk sought to assuage concerns around his health. "My condition isn't so bad that I'll die in two days," he asserted. "My vitals are normal for someone who is on the eighteenth day of a fast... Instead of asking me to end this fast, I request everyone to join us on July 20 for our March to Parliament," he said.

The government has remained silent on Mr. Wangchuk's protest.

"The man who chose to put his own life on the line to seek justice for students who died by suicide has received nothing but silence from the govt. The govt is not just unaccountable; it is also cruel," CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke said.

"Instead of asking why Opposition leader hasn't supported CJP, or why every CJP team member isn't on a hunger strike alongside Sonam sir, ask the questions that actually matter. Why is the Prime Minister refusing to engage in a dialogue?" he said.

Bhim Army chief and MP Chandrashekhar Azad, Samajwadi Party MPs Mohibbullah Naqvi and Ajendra Singh Lodhi, Trinamool Congress MP Dola Sen, Congress MP Prashant Yadaorao Padole, and CPI MP Sandosh Kumar visited the protest site on Wednesday. Comedian Kunal Kamra also visited the site.

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor wrote a post on X appealing to Mr. Wangchuk to end his fast.

Wife says activist's decision to join CJP protest was organic

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Activist Sonam Wangchuk's decision to join the protest started by the Cockroach Janta Party was "organic", his wife Gitanjali J. Angmo said.

Ms. Angmo told *The Hindu* that since the CJP was a youth-led movement, Mr. Wangchuk wanted to ensure that the cause was not sabotaged by "nefarious" elements and the movement did not go astray. "He is passionate about education. When he came to know about the social media movement and the discontent of the youth, he connected with the issue. It all happened in an organic way. He wants to hand-hold them and wants every well-meaning person to join the movement," she said.

Wangchuk wanted to ensure that the cause is not sabotaged by 'nefarious' elements, Gitanjali Angmo says

Before joining the CJP protest, Mr. Wangchuk was involved in a movement initiated by Ladakh's civil society leaders to demand constitutional safeguards such as Statehood and inclusion of Ladakh in the Sixth Schedule , thus giving it a tribal status. On May 22, he attended a meeting at the Union Home Ministry to give shape to the demands, for which he spent 170 days in jail.

He was released on March 14 after the Ministry revoked the National Security Act slapped on him. He was detained under the Act following the violence in Leh city on September 24, 2025, which left four people dead. Mr. Wangchuk, who inspired the movie *3 Idiots*, was labelled by the police as the "ringleader" of the violence.

Ms. Angmo said Mr. Wangchuk felt committed to the CJP's cause as nobody has the potential to take on the government. "Whenever someone raises their voice, raids by government agencies follow. He wants to be the third voice. This is a genuine issue, resignation (of the Minister) is the first step to accountability," she said.

Ms. Angmo said the longest Mr. Wangchuk had fasted was for 21 days, adding that the conditions in Ladakh were different than Delhi, which is hot and humid. "He is surviving on salt and water; even though he has completed 17 days of hunger strike here, it feels like 34 days of hunger strike in Ladakh. He never lost muscle mass there, the weather is punishing in Delhi," she said.

Plea in Delhi HC seeks steps to save Sonam Wangchuk

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought the responses of the Centre and the Delhi government on a public interest litigation petition seeking urgent intervention to safeguard the health of activist Sonam Wangchuk.

A Bench of Chief Justice Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia asked them to respond to the petition by Thursday due to the "urgent" nature of the issue.

Advocate and social activist Rakesh Kumar Saini filed the petition, contending that Mr. Wangchuk's health had deteriorated after several days of fasting at Jantar Mantar and urged the authorities to take immediate steps to protect his life.

Mamata comes to Abhishek's defence, says he is still fighting

Shiv Sahay Singh
Senjuti Sengupta
KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress chairperson and former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday defended her nephew and party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, saying he continued to "fight like a tiger" despite facing a barrage of cases.

"They (the rebels) are using Abhishek as an excuse. His family members were summoned. Had he wanted, he could have got relief. But he did not run away from the battlefield. The way he has continued to fight, even if he has made any mistake, that should be forgiven," Ms. Banerjee said during a live address on social media.

The remarks are being considered her strongest public endorsement of Mr. Banerjee since the rebellion within the Trinamool Congress, which has seen a majority of MPs and MLAs desert Ms. Banerjee.

Mamata Banerjee

She alleged that Central agencies had become instruments for dismantling the Opposition.

Throwing a challenge to the BJP, she said that she would not die until she defeated the party. Speaking about her long political journey, including the period in 2004, when she was the lone party MP in the Lok Sabha, she said that she could start afresh once again. "No one can stop me," she said.

Faction led by Ritabrata gets more time to file response

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Ritabrata Banerjee faction of the Trinamool Congress has been given yet another extension by the Election Commission, this time till July 25, for submitting its response to notices issued by the poll body regarding claims made by them on organisational elections and authorised signatories of the party.

While the group led by former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee submitted its response rejecting the rival group's claim over the party on July 6 itself, the team led by Mr. Ritabrata sent a legal representative to the Commission seeking more time. EC sources told *The Hindu* that it was given an extension till July 10, which was subsequently extended till July 25 following yet another representation seeking more time.

Madan Mitra leaves Mamata, joins rebel Trinamool faction

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

In yet another setback to Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee, senior leader and MLA Madan Mitra crossed over to the rebel camp led by the Leader of the Opposition Ritabrata Banerjee.

The development comes a day after the Enforcement Directorate issued summons to him and his family members in an alleged municipal recruitment scam.

Mr. Mitra, the MLA for Kamarhati, was considered to be loyal to Ms. Banerjee and recently she had nominated him as the chief whip of the MLAs supporting her in the Assembly.

After the defeat in the West Bengal election, several of Ms. Banerjee's loyalists have deserted her, joining other political camps. Mr. Mitra joined the long list of leaders such as Firhad Hakim, Aroop Biswas and Chandrima Bhattacharya who have joined the Ritabrata camp.

Move comes a day after the ED issued summons to him in an alleged municipal recruitment scam

Twenty of the Trinamool Lok Sabha members have deserted Ms. Banerjee, and three Rajya Sabha members have resigned only to be re-nominated to the Upper House as BJP candidates.

Mr. Mitra announced his resignation from all posts in the Mamata-led Trinamool while sitting beside Mr. Ritabrata. "I was in the Trinamool, I remained in the Trinamool. I just went from this room to that room," he said. Mr. Ritabrata has the support of about 65 MLAs out of the 80 party MLAs.

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ୍ ଶକ୍ତି ସଂଚାରଣ ନିଗମ ଲିଃ
(ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଏକ ଉପକ୍ରମ)
OPTCL Lifeline of Odisha
ODISHA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
Regd. Office: OPTCL Tech Tower, Janpath, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

E-Tender No.	Tender Description:	Estimated Cost
CPC-42/2026-27	Procurement of Hardware fittings & accessories for various conductor as per triennial procurement plan of O&M materials for the FY 2026-27 in e-tendering mode only. **Last Date & Time of Submission of Bid: 13.08.2026 upto 12:30 Hr.**	**Rs. 3,19,73,220/-**
CPC-53/2026-27	**Lot-I:** Design, Engineering, Supply, Installation and Testing & Commissioning for:"Upgradation of 132/33kV GSS Palaspanga to 220/132/33kV GIS S/s with construction of 220 kV D/C line from proposed 400/220 kV GSS at Unchabali to proposed 220/132kV GIS at Palaspanga with 02 Nos. of 220kV feeder bay extensions at Unchabali GSS" on Turnkey contract basis. **Lot-II:** Design, Engineering, Supply, Installation and Testing & Commissioning for:"Upgradation of 132/33kV Grid S/s Barbil to 220/132/33 kV GSS Barbil (220 kV Side GIS) along with construction of 220 kV D/C line on 400 kV tower (Twin Moose conductor) from Barbil GIS to proposed 400/220 kV GSS at Unchabali" on Turnkey contract basis. **Last Date & Time of Submission of Bid: 11.08.2026 upto 11:00 A.M.**	**Rs. 3,15,26,872/-**

Complete set of bidding documents are available at **www.tenderwizard.com/OPTCL** and **www.optcl.co.in**.
/optcl.odisha /optcl_odisha HIPR-41/2026-27

INBRIEF

AI crash 'draft final report' will be ready by October: AAIB

More than a year after an Air India Boeing 787 Dreamliner crashed in Ahmedabad on June 12, 2025, killing 229 passengers and 12 crew members on board, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau has informed the Supreme Court that it expects to complete its investigation within six weeks, with a "draft final report" likely to be ready by October. It informed the court that the investigation team has interviewed several witnesses, including Air India and Boeing 787 pilots, crew members who had previously flown with the pilots of the accident aircraft, air traffic control personnel, and specialists in human factors and crew resource management.

Two law students held for disrupting SC proceedings

A Delhi court sent two law students from Uttar Pradesh to 14-day judicial custody on Wednesday, in a case where they were charged with allegedly swearing during a Supreme Court hearing and assaulting security staff. The two spent two days in police custody before this ruling. The Delhi Police announced the arrest of Prabal Pratap Singh, 24, and Chander Bhan, 23, on Wednesday after a case was registered against them for disrupting court proceedings. According to the police, the incident took place on July 10, at the Supreme Court during a hearing involving *Prabal Pratap Singh & Another Vs State of U.P. (through Commissioner)*, in which Mr. Singh appealed for registration of an FIR against a police officer.

Marginal dip in number of rural job scheme workers

The analysis finds a dip in registered and active workers coinciding with shift from MGNREGS to VB-G RAM G; govt. counters the claim saying it does not reflect the continuous verification

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

In the fortnight following the transition from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission Gramin (VB-G RAM G), the number of registered workers fell from 27 crore to 26.33 crore, a net reduction of 67.6 lakh workers, or 2.5% of the total workforce enrolled under the rural employment programme, according to an analysis by LibTech India, a consortium of academics and activists.

The number of active workers – those who have worked at least once in the last three years under the programme – also fell from 10.84 crore to 10.57 crore, a decline of about 26.3 lakh workers (2.43%).

The VB-G RAM G 2025 came into force on July 1, 2026.

'Dynamic figure'

Rural Development Ministry officials, however, disputed the findings, saying the analysis covered only a short period and did not reflect the continuous verification, updating and renewal of worker and job card records undertaken by States and Union Territories. The number of registered and active workers is a dynamic figure and changes as records are updated, the officials said.

An analysis notes that public data does not indicate the reason of removal or the gender, age or caste of the affected. ARUN KULKARNI

The Ministry officials also put the onus on the States, arguing that they have to follow the Standard Operating Procedures prescribed by the Centre for any deletions. They added that no complaints had been received regarding denial of employment due to non-completion of e-KYC or face authentication and that about 84,000 Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Cards covering 1.91 lakh workers had already been issued under the new law.

According to LibTech India, three States – Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and Telangana – accounted for a large portion of the net fall in registered workers and the decline in active workers. Bihar saw 5.98 lakh workers removed from the rolls, Uttar Pradesh 8.06 lakh and Telangana 7.2 lakh.

E-KYC in question

The group said that although transition guidelines provided that e-KYC-verified MGNREGA Job Cards would remain valid and workers should not be denied employment because of pending e-KYC, there was little clarity on how workers unable to complete e-KYC or facial recognition-based verification would be protected from omission.

"The publicly available framework did not explain in comparable operational detail how workers unable to complete e-KYC or Face Recognition System (FRS) would be carried over, how omissions would be identified, or how prompt restoration would work," said Venkateswarlu Kuruva, researcher at LibTech India.

LibTech described the latest decline as the fourth major reduction in worker numbers in recent years to coincide with a digital compliance measure, following Aadhaar-based payments in 2022-23, mandatory e-KYC in 2025 and facial recognition-based attendance verification in 2026.

The organisation noted that publicly available data do not indicate why workers were removed, whether they had pending e-KYC or facial recognition verification, whether prior notice was issued, whether Gram Sabha verification was conducted or whether an appeal mechanism was available. It also does not reveal the gender, age or caste of those affected.

SC seeks Centre's status report on CBSE OSM glitches

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Union government to pay heed to the "frustration" children underwent due to the systemic failures and irregularities in the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)'s On-Screen Marking (OSM) of Class 12 answer sheets in 2026.

The court sought a status report from the government detailing the progress made by a one-member probe committee of retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer and chairperson of the Capacity Building Commission, S. Radha Chauhan, tasked to unearth the reasons behind the technical defects.

"But what steps have been taken so far... look at the amount of frustration young children are having to face," Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, heading a three-judge Bench, addressed Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, who appeared for the Centre.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Rakesh Binjola, represented by advocate Laxmikant Matadan Shukla, seeking a fair and reasonable inquiry into the "patent irregularities" found in the OSM evaluation system. Mr. Shukla argued that over 17 lakh students had appeared for the Class 12 exams in May 2026, including his son, whose answer sheet could not be uploaded on the CBSE website.

OSM's 'anomalies'

The "general" prayer made about the faults in the OSM is being looked into by the Chauhan panel, which was appointed on June 2.

Justice Joymalya Bagchi, on the Bench, said the Centre was free to formulate the OSM policy, but the facts show, and the government had itself acknowledged, there were anomalies in implementation.

"You have a right to formulate the OSM policy, but the facts show there are some teething problems which you also acknowledge... we would like you to make improvements for seamless implementation," Justice Bagchi addressed Mr. Mehta.

The top law officer said the government was not taking the court's intervention on an adversarial note, and agreed to file the status report by July 24.

Mr. Binjola said the OSM system had been implemented for the first time without giving the evaluators any formal training.

In meeting with House panel, Ladakh villagers seek access to grazing lands along the LAC

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Residents of villages along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh told a parliamentary panel visiting the Union Territory that they had lost access to their traditional grazing grounds following the border tensions with China in 2020.

The 15-member delegation, representing the border villages of Maan Pangong A and B, Leh, Ladakh, requested that nomadic pastoralists be permitted controlled access to India's traditional grazing lands in coordination with security agencies, emphasising that the continued presence of local communities in these frontier regions contributes significantly to national security, Konchok Stanzin, former councillor, Chushul, said.

India and China have concluded a series of agreements to maintain peace on the border

"The nomads of the border villages depend on these grazing grounds to rear their livestock. Whenever they go there, the Army stops them. We are not even allowed to bring loose earth from these no-go zones to build our huts, and collecting firewood is also not permitted. Before May 2020, we had free access to these areas," Mr. Stanzin, who briefed the parliamentary panel, told *The Hindu*.

Since April 2020, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) has amassed a large number of troops and armaments in eastern Ladakh and other areas along the 3,488 km LAC. The PLA moved into Indian territory and built fortified structures and defences in an attempt to permanently alter the *status quo* on the ground.

While there are differences in perception on the alignment of the LAC, both sides have concluded a series of agreements to maintain peace on the border, and a moratorium on patrolling was implemented following the June 15, 2020, violent clashes at Galwan. The parliamentary panel has assured that it would look into their issues, Mr. Stazin said.

Govt. taking nation towards economic crisis, says Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday accused the Narendra Modi government of steering the country towards an economic crisis, citing the latest wholesale inflation data that showed price pressures remaining elevated across several sectors.

The party demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi explain the government's handling of the economy.

"In May, Modi*ji* preached the entire country to save, and then his government imposed levies and burned up the public's savings! West Asia War is just an excuse; the truth is that in the last 12 years, the BJP has built a dubious record of picking the public's pockets. Wholesale inflation has now reached 9.87%, the highest in 44 months. Retail inflation has climbed to 4.4%, the highest in 18 months," Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said in a post on X, adding that food inflation too stood at 5.49%.

Higher input costs

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh noted that wholesale price inflation, which measures the rise in prices at the producer level, rose to 9.87% in June from 9.68% in May, marking its highest level in 44 months.

In a post on X, he said the increase reflected mounting economic stress, and claimed the Congress had repeatedly warned the government about the trend.

Govt. issues public consultation guidelines for highway projects after panel recommendations

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Taking cognisance of recommendations made by the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament, headed by senior Congress leader K.C. Venugopal, the Ministry for Road Transport and Highways has informed the panel that it has issued guidelines for structured public consultation in all future highway projects at the stage of preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR).

Under the revised Request for Proposal (RFP) document for inviting bids from consultants to prepare DPRs, a mandatory provision for public consultation has been incorporated. For all brownfield projects, the Ministry informed the panel that consultations will be held with the village sarpanch, the mayor or chairperson of the municipal body, the District Magistrate, and the State Public Works Department. For greenfield projects, consultations will additionally be held with the local MLA and MP.

K. C. Venugopal

The panel had, in earlier meetings, flagged concerns that highways were often being constructed by sub-contractors not listed with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), and who did not always comply with prescribed norms.

At the meeting on Wednesday, the NHAI informed the committee that it has introduced a requirement for all sub-contractors undertaking work worth 8% or more of the total project cost to register with it.

Reflecting on the deficiencies flagged by members regarding inadequate facilities at toll plazas, Mr. Venugopal pulled up both the NHAI and Ministry.

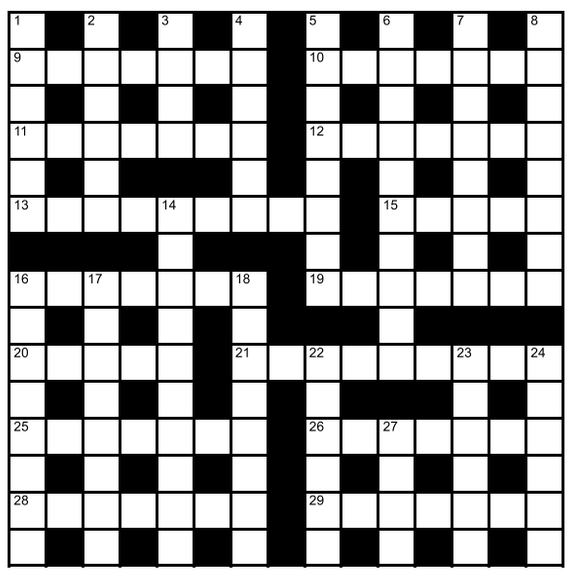
BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad pointed out that ambulances required to be stationed at toll plazas were often absent, leading to delays in emergency response on highways, sources said.

TH CROSSWORD + 14847

(set by Afterdark)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at *https://thehindu.com/crosswords*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

9 Greed? It is not seen in female pilot (7)
10 For the most part, Tata Ace transports vitamin and salt (7)
11 Famous specialist follows eastern time (7)
12 Copper nabs snitch with soldier's attendant (7)
13 Agrees, but vacillates getting vegetable (5,4)
15 Drive to Marrakesh over partly (5)
16 Special wine (cold) altered muscle tone (7)
19 By deceit, cash given to sister's used to frame (7)
20 Gain a male animal (5)
21 Gladiator's role in South Africa's discussed centrally (9)
25 Explosive to primarily ruin someone like Epstein (7)
26 At the start, sudden noise baffled son entering a meeting (7)
28 Nurse corresponding with leading endocrinologist to join (7)
29 Son's team centre joins another team at beach (7)

Down

1 Touch actress badly to lose front tooth (6)
2 Goods arriving without name (6)
3 Limits excess centrally from rodents (4)
4 Spy's article creates rage (6)
5 Unruly trio can, at the border clandestinely get controlled substance (8)
6 Downer from French media worker (10)
7 Careful about one in car, say at America (8)
8 It's unique; spy replaces man with lady in difficulty (8)
14 Cooking device for breads used by South American (10)
16 I ate an egg of a marine creature (3,5)
17 Enthusiasm offers one clarity somehow (8)
18 Client of Atticus, Tom, Eric protected (8)
22 Leading an animal to the front provides benefit (6)
23 Judge's important to evict gangster (6)
24 Say, diva spotted in a bus in Germany (6)
27 Collect sample of son and wife to get blood group (4)

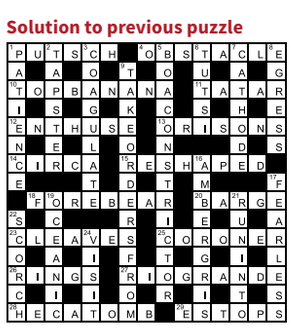
SUDOKU

1						8		
4					7		3	
		8	3	5			4	1
		4			2		7	
		6	4		8	5		
	7		5			3		
7	8			2	4	9		
	2		7					3
		1						7

No.SS6943 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

8	4	5	1	6	9	2	7	3
3	1	7	2	8	5	6	9	4
9	2	6	4	7	3	8	1	5
2	8	1	3	9	4	7	5	6
6	5	9	8	1	7	3	4	2
7	3	4	5	2	6	9	8	1
1	9	3	6	4	8	5	2	7
5	7	2	9	3	1	4	6	8
4	6	8	7	5	2	1	3	9

FAITH

Inner freedom, the Gita way

The Bhagavad Gita is a dialogue between two ambitious, high-performing individuals at the critical moment of their careers. One is a soldier who wants to reclaim everything he lost, the other is his adviser. The setting is the battlefield but the principles apply just as directly in a boardroom, a start-up or any place where the stakes are high, said Swami Mitranandaji.

Chapter XV, Verse 5 gives us Krishna's check list for people who want to win without being destroyed by the win. Krishna is not asking Arjuna to quit and become an ascetic. He is giving him the operating system for clarity under pressure. First, the words *nirmana moha* ask you to be free from pride and illusion. In business, that means your title, your last success or your ego cannot drive the decision. Check the data, not your image.

Next, the words *jita sanga dosha* is a call to conquer attachment. Be committed to the mission, not addicted to one outcome, one client or one quarter's result. Third, the words *adhyatma-nitya* means stay anchored in purpose. Understand why you are doing this, beyond money or applause. Fourth, the words *vinivritta-kamah* ask you to be free from compulsive craving. Ambition is fuel. Craving is noise. Leaders with craving chase every shiny object and burn out teams. Fifth, *dvandvair vimuktah sukha-dukha-samjnaih:* asks you to rise above the pairs of opposites – success and failure, praise and criticism. If a win makes you arrogant and a loss makes you collapse, you are not leading. You are reacting. Do the job. However, do not let the job own you. That is the eternal abode Krishna points to: inner freedom in the middle of the fight.

INBRIEF

Adani denies any deal linked to dismissal of case in the U.S.

Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani has denied under oath that there was any promise, agreement or deal behind the U.S. Department of Justice's move to dismiss a criminal indictment against him. The affidavit was filed in response to a July 8 order by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York asking Adani to state under oath whether he was aware of any promise, offer or agreement related to dismissal of the indictment. PTI

Indian Gas Exchange files IPO papers; parent to divest stake

Indian Gas Exchange Ltd. (IGX), the country's first online delivery-based trading platform for natural gas, has filed preliminary papers with markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to launch an Initial Public Offering (IPO). The proposed public issue is entirely an Offer For Sale (OFS) of up to 1.67 crore equity shares by promoter Indian Energy Exchange Ltd (IEX), according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) filed on Tuesday.

Sun Pharma gets nod for generic semaglutide injection

Sun Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd. on Wednesday said it has received approval from the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) to manufacture and market the generic version of semaglutide injection in South Africa for the treatment of adults with inadequately controlled type 2 diabetes mellitus as an adjunct to diet and exercise. In a regulatory filing, the company said it plans to launch the product in the market in the coming days. PTI

Cabinet okays Semicon 2.0, mobile, urea manufacturing schemes, highways

Projects cleared by the CCEA include two major highway projects worth ₹25,400 crore to ease congestion in Varanasi; 9 new gas-based urea plants with a production capacity of 10 MT; ₹1.27 lakh crore for the second edition of India Semiconductor Mission; and 62,500 crore for MPMS

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has cleared several projects, including ₹1.27 lakh crore for the second edition of India Semiconductor Mission and ₹62,500 crore for the mobile phone manufacturing scheme (MPMS) as part of efforts to localise manufacturing amid global geopolitical uncertainties.

The Cabinet also accorded approval to two major highway projects worth ₹25,400 crore to ease congestion in Varanasi and as many as nine new gas-based urea plants nationwide with a production capacity of 10 million tonnes.

Semicon Mission 2.0

The Cabinet has accorded approval for the ₹1.27 lakh crore for the second edition of India Semiconductor Mission through which the government expects to attract investments of around ₹4 lakh crore and lead to semiconductor production of ₹2 lakh crore during the scheme period.

The new edition of the semiconductor programme – which has provisions to incentivise even suppliers of raw material in the chip manufacturing industry, including minerals and gases – has come at an appropriate time when the world is reeling under a memory chip shortage, and companies are working on plans to enhance production capacity. It also expects to attract investment from other chip segments to meet chip requirements for artificial intelligence devices.

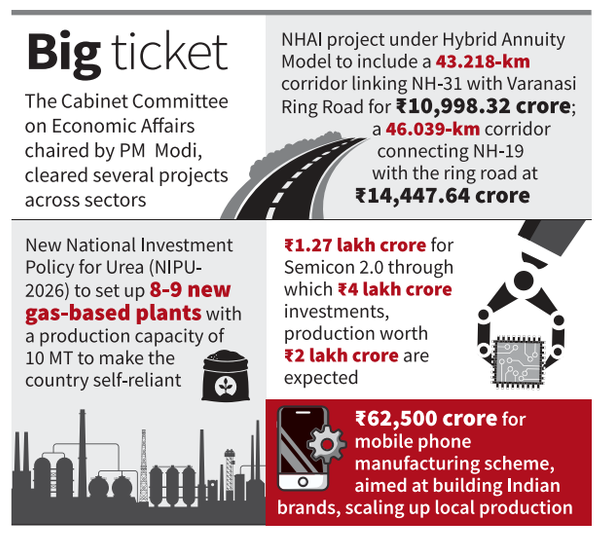
Highlighting that "Semicon 2.0 will have six pillars. The first pillar will be the design of chips"; Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the programme will focus on design, development and production of indigenous chips. "We will be self-reliant in the production of indigenous chips by the end of this programme," the minister said.

The government had allocated ₹76,000 crore for the first edition, under which it had approved 12 projects with cumulative investments of around ₹1.64 lakh crore.

The majority of the investment in the sector has come from technology firm Tata Electronics and its semiconductor arm.

Mobile manufacturing

The Cabinet also approved an outlay of ₹62,500 crore for the MPMS, aimed at building Indian brands to achieve technological sovereignty and scale up local mobile production to capture the significant economic value, and create Indian patents in design and research and development.



"The scheme provides incentive support on eligible sales for manufacturing of mobile phones in India at differentiated rates ranging from 2.25% to 5%. Scheme also provides additional incentive of up to 1.5% linked to domestic sourcing of key components/sub-assemblies. For building Indian brands, an additional incentive at 3% on eligible sales for design and R&D of the product," an official release said.

During the scheme tenure, the cumulative mobile phone production in the country is expected to reach about ₹39 lakh crore with significant increase in exports of mobile phones. The scheme is also expected to generate around 60,000 direct jobs thereby contributing to economic growth, the release added.

Highways

The highway projects, to be implemented by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) under the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM), include a 43.218 kilometre (km)corridor linking NH-31 with the Varanasi Ring Road along Varuna River at a total capital cost of ₹10,998.32 crore and a 46.039 km corridor connecting NH-19 with the ring road along the Ganga River at a cost of ₹14,447.64 crore. The NH-19 project will feature a six-lane elevated carriageway, a cable-stayed bridge, an extra-dosed foot over bridge-cum-major bridge, loops, ramps, link roads and service roads. The NH-31 corridor will comprise a predominantly elevated four and six lane carriageway with flyovers, loops, ramps and service roads.

Designed for operating speeds of 80-100 kmph, the projects are expected to significantly reduce travel times across the city. The NH-19 corridor will cut travel time between NH-19 and Kashi Railway Station from around 50 minutes to 25 minutes, while the NH-31 project will halve the journey between NH-31 and Kashi Railway Station from 40 minutes to 20 minutes. The government said the corridors are part of the Varanasi Decongestion Plan and aligned with the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan.

Urea demand

The Cabinet also approved the National Investment Policy for Urea (NIPU 2026) to set up "eight-nine" new gas-based plants with a production capacity of 10 million tons to make the country self-reliant in the most widely consumed fertiliser. The new investment framework, which assumes significance as it will encourage new investments in the sector, is an extension of the 2012 New Investment Policy (NIP) with revisions.

Mr. Vaishnaw said the urea demand is rising 5% annually and the policy approved aims to create additional urea capacity of 10 million tonnes.

Key changes compared with NIP 2012 include the separation of fixed and variable costs for greater transparency, the introduction of a viable return on equity (RoE) band with a floor at 12% and a ceiling at 16%, and mitigation of foreign exchange risk through conversion of fixed costs into the rupee after four years based on prevailing exchange rates.

"These measures are estimated to result in savings of over ₹250 crore for each plant established under NIPU-2026 compared with NIP-2012," the Fertilizers Ministry said.

The minister said the country imports 10 million tons of urea to meet the domestic shortages. The annual domestic production is around 30 million tons against the requirement of 40 million tons.

The objective of the new policy is to become self-reliant in urea amid a rise in demand due to a change in cropping patterns, increased sowing area and record production.

"The incentive under the policy will be the same for private, government and cooperative projects," Vaishnav said.

Under the 2012 NIP, which expired in October 2019, six new urea units were set up, including four through joint venture firms of nominated public sector undertaking, and two units by private companies.

Global bids invited under PLI for 10 GWh ACC batteries

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The objective is to cut dependence on imported ACCs by strengthening local manufacturing

The Ministry of Heavy Industries has invited global bids to set up advanced battery manufacturing plants with a total capacity of 10 gigawatt-hours (GWh) in India under the government's Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) batteries.

These batteries will be used for grid-scale energy storage, helping store electricity generated from renewable sources such as solar and wind.

In 2021, the Centre approved an ₹18,100-crore PLI scheme to build 50 GWh of battery manufacturing capacity in India. Of this, 40 GWh has already been allocated to domestic manufacturers, with the remaining 10 GWh now open for bidding.

The objective of the scheme is to reduce India's dependence on imported ACCs by strengthening domestic manufacturing capabilities and incentivising large domestic and international players to establish a globally competitive ACC battery-manufacturing ecosystem in the country.

India-U.K. FTA a boost for farmers and small,medium firms, says PM

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

PM Narendra Modi said the India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), taking effect Wednesday, will boost Indian farmers' incomes, entrepreneurs and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

"The CETA will give fresh momentum to farmers, entrepreneurs and MSMEs," he posted on X.

"Several vibrant sectors will gain stronger access to U.K. market. It will deepen cooperation in technology, professional services and innovation, while supporting greater mobility for skilled Indian talent."

He said the Double Contribution Convention will provide "invaluable support to Indian professionals" working temporarily in the U.K. and boost 'our firms' competitiveness.'

Narendra Modi

"All the U.K. cities are looking at India with great excitement," Harjinder Kang, the U.K.'s Trade Commissioner for South Asia and British Deputy High Commissioner for Western India and one of the lead negotiators of the trade pact, said, adding the bilateral trade between the two countries stood at £45 billion in 2024 and rose to £48 billion in 2026 even in the absence of a deal.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said, "It [the deal] opens new frontiers for IT, professional, financial, education and business services sectors while expanding mobility for Indian talent."

Meanwhile, Maharashtra CM symbolically flagged off the first consignment of goods from India to the U.K. under CETA.

Rajeev Singh, DG, Indian Chamber of Commerce said, "Securing duty-free access for 99% of exports is no small achievement. Textiles stand out in particular. Our exporters in Tiruppur and Surat have long operated at a duty disadvantage against Bangladesh and Cambodia in the U.K. and that gap now closes, giving an entire manufacturing ecosystem room to grow."

Services also to gain

Chandrajit Banerjee, DG, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), said, "Enhanced market access across IT, financial, professional, education and healthcare services with improved mobility provisions and Double Contribution Convention, will boost global competitiveness of Indian firms and professionals in the U.K.."

(With inputs from Vinaya Deshpande)

Indian government set to invest ₹200 cr. in Ather Energy

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Government of India will invest ₹200 crore in Ather Energy through India-Japan Fund (IJF), a joint investment vehicle backed by the Government of India and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

Founders Tarun Mehta and Swapnil Jain are also participating in the fundraising round, investing ₹20 crore each, along with other existing promoters and IJF. Hero MotoCorp (HMC) is set to invest ₹960 crore as part of the fundraise, according to Ather Energy's regulatory filing.

All promoter investments in the round are being made at a premium of

Ather Energy showroom

₹85 to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)-mandated floor price. The firm would issue 79.36 lakh warrants at ₹1,260/warrant to HMC and promoters and 16.26 lakh equity shares at ₹1,230 per share to IJF.

The board had okayed preferential allotment of about ₹1,000 crore.

RBI issues data governance guidance framework for banks

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued the 'Guidance on Regulatory Expectations for Data Governance' for banks and other Regulated Entities (REs) prescribing a comprehensive framework to strengthen governance of data across the banking system.

The objective is to improve data quality, accountability, risk management and security while ensuring compliance with the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, and other applicable laws.

This has become important because with the increasing digitalisation of the financial sector and growing adoption of technology-driven business models, data has emerged as a critical asset for REs.

Reserve Bank of India REUTERS

As the volume, variety and velocity of data continue to rise, effective data governance has become crucial to ensure data stays accurate, consistent, secure and fit for purpose across functions and systems, the RBI said. Weaknesses in data governance and its management can lead to broader financial, operational, compliance and reputational risk for the REs, it said.

Draft released

Recognising this, this draft has been released to support REs in strengthening their data governance framework and promoting sound practices relating to data management across the data lifecycle.

All REs have been directed to establish a comprehensive Data Governance Framework (DGF) aligned with overall risk management framework.

The framework needs to be proportionate to the size, complexity, business model and technology infrastructure of each bank, while covering all aspects of data governance, including organisational structure, policies, processes, technological systems, audit mechanisms and the entire data lifecycle.

The Reserve Bank of India has also asked banks to review the framework annually or more frequently whenever required.

SEBI bans board from new stock, related instruments

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has classified investments allowed for board members, including chairperson into permitted and non-permitted investments in its now stricter Code of Conduct Rules for Board Members 2026.

The entirely new code was released on July 15 after the capital market watchdog said the board made the announcement of the release after the first quarter meet on June 19.

According to the new code, equity or convertible-to equity instruments and derivatives fall under non-permitted investments. Investment via a regulated pooled investment vehicle such as a SIP or SIF among others and buying units of InVIT and REITs are permitted investments, the regulator said.

Moreover, Whole Time Members will now come under insider trading rules and be considered a person with price sensitive information. The 2008 code stopped with mandating disclosure for members' and families' ownership/other investments in listed, to-be-listed and regulated intermediaries of SEBI.

TELANGANA MEDICAL SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
3rd Floor, DM & HS Campus, Sultan Bazar, Koti, Hyderabad • 95 Ph. No.040-40032888: email: cetsmsidc@gmail.com

Tender Notice No.4/TGMSIDC/Civil/2026-27, **Dated: 13.07.2026.**

Tenders are invited through e-procurement platform for the following works: **(1)** Establishment of 50 bedded Integrated AYUSH Hospital at Karimnagar. **(2)** Construction of New Building (OP Block) at Area Hospital Golconda, Hyderabad. **(3)** Establishment of (416) Dialysis beds in the (79) Government Hospitals in Telangana State under PPP mode. The other details can be seen at our website **http:/www.tgmsidc.telangana.gov.in** and **https://tender.telangana.gov.in.**

Sd/- (dt.13.07.2026)
DIPR R.O.No.6137-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27 Dt. 15.07.2026 **MANAGING DIRECTOR**

Petronet LNG Limited

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT) FOR SELECTION OF CONTRACTOR FOR PROVIDING CANTEEN SERVICES FOR A PERIOD OF 2 YEARS AT PETRONET LNG LTD., KOCHI

Petronet LNG Limited (PLL) invites bids from experienced and financially sound contractors for **Providing Canteen Services for a Period of 2 Years** at PETRONET LNG LTD., KOCHI (Kerala).

Interested parties are requested to visit our website **www.petronetlng.in** for detailed eligibility criteria along with other necessary details for issuance of tender document.

Note: PLL reserves the right not to issue the tender document and/or accept or reject any or all the bids at any stage of the process and/or modify the process without assigning any reasons on its sole discretion. No separate notification w.r.t. this tender shall be issued in press. Interested parties to regularly visit aforesaid PLL website for any updates.

Sr. Manager (C&P)
PETRONET LNG LIMITED
Survey No-347 (PSEZ), Puthuvypu P.O, Kochi-682508, Kerala, India.
Tel: No.- 0484-2757702 / 1
Email : **cnp_kochi@petronetlng.in; shriranga@petronetlng.in**

WASHINGTON

U.S. military will be out of country by end of September, says Iraqi PM

AP

The U.S. military will leave Iraq by the end of September, Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi said on Tuesday, following a 23-year presence. Meanwhile, explosions were heard on Wednesday near the U.S. consulate in Iraq's Erbil, as air defences shot down drones. No group has claimed responsibility for any attacks. AP

WASHINGTON

U.S. Senators vie to levy 100% tariffs on countries buying oil from Russia

AFP

A bipartisan group of U.S. Senators unveiled a Bill that seeks to impose 100% tariffs on five countries, including India and China, for purchasing oil from Russia. The Bill, brokered by late Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, exempts 15 European nations that buy gas from Russia from the tariffs. PTI

MUZAFFARABAD

Nine killed and dozen wounded in protests in Pak.-occupied Kashmir

AFP

Nine persons were killed and a dozen wounded in renewed clashes between supporters of the banned Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) and security forces in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, an official said on Wednesday. "Seven civilians, one paramilitary personnel and one police officer were killed," officials said. AFP

PHOENIX

Pat Oliphant, Pulitzer-winning political cartoonist, dies at 90

AP

Pat Oliphant, an influential political cartoonist known for creating caricatures of U.S. and world leaders, died on Monday. He was 90. Oliphant died at his home from age-related issues, said his son, Grant Oliphant. During the 1980s, his political cartoons appeared in more than 500 publications in the country and around the world. AP

Trump threatens to hit Iran power plants, bridges next week if no deal

'We're going to knock out all their power plants. We're going to knock out all their bridges unless they get to the table and negotiate,' says U.S. President, adding that strikes will continue; U.S. says Iran had attacked seven ships over the past week

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said on Tuesday he would expand U.S. strikes on Iran next week to target power plants and bridges if Tehran does not make a deal.

"Next week it gets really bad for them because next week comes the power plants. Next week comes the bridges," Mr. Trump said in an interview with *Fox News*.

"We're going to knock out all their power plants. We're going to knock out all their bridges unless they get to the table and negotiate." Mr. Trump's comments came as U.S. forces carried out strikes against Iran for a fourth day in a row and reimposed a naval blockade on the country's ports.

A fragile June 17 ceasefire between the two sides has effectively collapsed, with the focus on control of the crucial Strait of Hormuz.

Asked how long the U.S. strikes would carry on, Mr. Trump replied: "They'll continue until I say it's enough."

Meanwhile, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps threatened to close "all other export corridors that benefit the U.S. and its allies", Iranian media reported. "Regional energy exports are either shared by all, or denied to all," the IRGC said in a statement carried by Iran's *IRNA* state news agency on Wednesday.

Energy targets: The reactor building of the nuclear power plant, just outside the southern city of Bushehr in Iran. AP

A senior Houthi official warned on Monday that the group was prepared to close the Bab el-Mandeb Strait – a move he said could send oil prices soaring to $200 a barrel – if Saudi Arabia continued to attack Yemen, according to a report on Iran's *Press TV* website.

The United States said Iran had attacked seven commercial ships over the past week, leading to nearly a dozen crew members being killed, missing or injured.

India-U.K. social security pact is not retrospective

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

The India-U.K. Double Contributions Convention (DCC), allowing temporary Indian and British workers an exemption from paying social security contributions in their host countries for 60 months, is not retrospective, i.e., it will not apply to Indians already working in the U.K. and Britons working in India before July 15.

The DCC came into effect on Wednesday alongside the India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Normally, temporary foreign workers – called "detached workers" in the U.K. – are exempt from U.K. social security contributions known as National Insurance (NI) for the first 12 months. The India-U.K. DCC has increased this exemption from 12 to 60 months for detached workers.

Double Contributions Convention applies only to employees arriving in U.K. on or after Wednesday

However, guidance issued by the U.K. clarifies that individuals already working in the U.K. immediately before Wednesday are not considered "detached workers" under the DCC and are hence subject to U.K. law on social security contributions.

National Insurance contribution is paid by both the employee and employer, normally. The employee could pay up to 8% of gross salary generally and the employer up to 15% of gross salary as NI contributions.

The DCC applies only to employees arriving in the U.K. on or after Wednesday and who are not expected to remain in the U.K. for more than 60 months.

His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) adds that in these cases those seeking an exemption should get a "certificate of coverage" from India's Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) as evidence that they are making social security contributions in India and are exempt from U.K. NIC.

Sri Lanka is 'always willing' to host India-Pak. sporting events: Minister

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka is "always willing" to host sporting events featuring India and Pakistan, Sports Minister Sunil Kumara Gamage said, pointing to the island's proximity and Colombo's strong ties with New Delhi and Islamabad as advantages. "Not just cricket, we are willing to extend our fullest cooperation and support to host any game between India and Pakistan if they make a request. Both countries are our close friends and partners," he said.

Speaking to *The Hindu* at his office in Colombo, Mr. Gamage further said Sri Lanka is looking forward to welcoming cricket fans from India to watch the Test series next month. India is scheduled to tour Sri Lanka in August for a Test series, with matches scheduled at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) in Colombo and the Galle International Stadium in the southern coastal district.

"We saw a large number of Indians travelling to Sri Lanka earlier this year for the [ICC Men's] T20 World Cup that we co-hosted with India. We hope that there is a similar interest in the Test series too. Sri Lanka offers a lovely environment for sporting events, and as we did last time, we will ensure that very good security arrangements are in place."

Sports Minister Sunil Kumara Gamage has appointed a 9-member transformation panel for Sri Lanka Cricket. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Tourism revenue

Still recovering from the economic crash of 2022, Sri Lanka is counting on revenue from the tourism sector, a key foreign exchange earner, to boost its reserves. India tops Sri Lanka's tourist arrival charts, and authorities observed a spike in Indian tourists in February 2026, just ahead of the India-Pakistan match. Local media reported that hotels in Colombo were fully booked ahead of the much-anticipated game between the sporting rivals.

Sri Lanka expects Indian cricket fans for August Test tour after strong turnout for T20 World Cup

While promoting the island as a feasible destination for international sporting events, Sri Lanka has also set out to reform cricket administration in the country.

In April this year, the Sports Minister appointed a nine-member Transformation Committee for Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC). Its members, including cricketing greats Kumar Sangakkara, Roshan Mahanama and Sidath Wettimuny, apart from business leaders and professionals, have been tasked with "transforming and restructuring" cricket administration, which has for long been marred by political interference, mismanagement, and financial irregularities.

"We want to chart a proper path forward for the game. A new constitution, a credible election, and stronger structures for cricket at the local level, be it in schools, at the district or provincial level, that is our focus," Minister Gamage said, adding that improvements in those areas will also lead to better player selection. Women's cricket is another "key area". "We have some great players, skills; we see that from time to time. The committee will come out with a comprehensive plan to strengthen women's cricket too."

'Supporting grassroots'

Coinciding with the committee's early efforts to reform cricket administration, International Cricket Council Chairman Jay Shah visited Colombo last month and held high-level talks. Following a meeting with President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Mr. Shah wrote on X that discussions focused on increasing opportunities for emerging players and supporting grassroots and youth development programmes.

"We also exchanged views on the role Sri Lanka continues to play in hosting major international events," he said in the post. Describing Mr. Shah's visit as "very good", Minister Gamage said: "We want to make sure that the funds Sri Lanka receives from ICC are used efficiently and in a transparent manner to develop the game."

Sri Lanka is also gearing up for the sixth season of the Lanka Premier League (LPL), scheduled from July 17 to August 8, with five franchises participating. "We are looking forward to that," Mr. Gamage said.

Courting athletes

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka has also been urging its sportspeople living abroad to play for the country. "Already [Sri Lankan-American gymnast] Tiana Sumanasekera, who formerly represented the U.S. women's artistic gymnastics team, has agreed to play for Sri Lanka. We are hoping we can import more players to develop sports in our country and motivate aspiring players. Many countries do that already."

While Sri Lanka is focused on strengthening cricket, the government is simultaneously working on enhancing opportunities for other sports as well.

"In fact, we have sought assistance from India in areas of coaching and training. We are exploring the possibilities of bringing down chess grandmasters from India to train our players. We are in discussion with the Indian High Commission in Colombo, and the response so far has been very positive," the Minister said, adding that "shared histories and culture" made India and Sri Lanka close partners.

"We hope and look forward to meeting India in the South Asian Games too," he said, referring to the multi-sport regional event scheduled to be held in Pakistan in March 2027. India is yet to officially confirm participation.

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER
PHED, REGION-II JODHPUR
Tel: 0291-2651730, Email: ace2.jod.phed@rajasthan.gov.in

No. Region-II/Jodhpur/NIB/2026-27/2133-68 Date- 09.07.2026

Notice Inviting Bid

Bids for work of **"Work of Construction and Commissioning of One day demand storage capacity Clear Water Reservoir at Zero Point Headworks Barmer, District Barmer with one year DLP (Under CM Budget Announcement 2025-26)"** (NIB 01/2026-27) are invited from interested bidders upto 18.00 hrs, 30.07.2026 for Rs. 2689.09 Lacs. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.raj.nic.in) of the state; and PHED department website.
UBN No- PHE2627WLOB02688

(Jagdish Prasad Sharma)
ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER
PHED, REGION-II JODHPUR

DIPR/C/12370/2026

Rajasthan State Road Development And Construction Corporation Ltd., JAIPUR
No. : NIT/2026-27/4617 - 26 Date : 14/07/2026
अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या 230/2026-27
निम्नलिखित कार्य के लिए केन्द्र / राज्य सरकार के अभियांत्रिकी विभागों एवं उनके अधिकृत संगठनों में पंजीकृत एवं अनुभवी संवेदकों से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई-प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट प्रक्रिया हेतु ऑनलाइन निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती है

कार्य का विवरण	कार्य की कुल अनुमानित लागत (रु.)
Renewal work of 4 Laning on Hanumangarh-Suratgarh Road. UBN : RRC2627WLOB00369	4645.37 Lakh

निविदा से सम्बन्धित प्रपत्र में निविदा शुल्क, धरोहर राशि, डाउनलोड करने व खोलने की तारीख सहित सम्पूर्ण विवरण एवं संशोधन वेबसाईट: http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://sppp.rajasthan.nic.in तथा http://pwd.rajasthan.gov.in/rsrdc पर देखा जा सकता है। इच्छुक संवेदकों को अपने डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर के माध्यम से वेबसाईट http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर रजिस्टर्ड करवाना आवश्यक है।
महाप्रबंधक

MALKAJGIRI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, PROJECTS, MMC, HYDERABAD.
Tender Notice No.09/SE (Projects)/MMC/2026-27 (Re-Call), Dt: 16.07.2026

Item No.	Name of work
1	"Project management Consultancy Services for Proof checking, construction supervision, Quality Assurance, Quality Control & Quality Audit for the work of "Construction of RK Puram ROB Deposit work" under Engineering Procurement Construction (EPC) / Turnkey Basis"

Events	Date & Timings
Start Date	16.07.2026 03.00 PM
Pre-Bid Meeting	23-07-2026 at 03.00 PM Location: O/o Chief Engineer (Projects), MMC 1st Floor, Head Office, Tarnaka, Hyderabad.
Last Date & Time for receipt of Bids	01.08.2026 @ 03.00 PM
Technical Bid Opening	01.08.2026 After 03.30 PM
Price Bid Opening	03.08.2026 @ 04.00 PM

Address of the officer concerned Smt. K.Rohini, SE (Projects), 9959442013. Superintending Engineer (Projects), Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation, 1st Floor, HMDA Complex, Tarnaka, Hyderabad. Further details can be seen at 'e' Procurement **https://tender.telangana.gov.in.**

Sd/- Superintending Engineer(FAC)
(Projects), MMC.
DIPR R.O.No.6150-PP/CL/ADVT/2026-27 Dt. 15.07.2026

AJMER VIDYUT VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED
Registerd Office: Vidyut Bhawan, Panchsheel Nagar, Makarwali Road, Ajmer-305004
Office of The Superintending Engineer (Solar), Vidyut Bhawan, Panchasheel Nagar, Ajmer-305004
Email : ceprojectavvnl2023@gmail.com, Website –http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/avvnl
Sr. :- AVVNL/SE(Solar)/XEN(DF)/2026-27/D.416 Dated :- 13/07/2026
E - PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
E-tenders in Single Stage Two-Part Bidding System (Technical Bid and Financial Bid) are invited from eligible bidders for Procurement of Pilot Based Small Scale Standalone Decentralized Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Projects through Tariff-Bassed Competitive Bidding on Build-Own-Operate (BOO) Model, including Operation & Maintenance (O&M) for period of 15 years, for providing Battery Energy Storage Services to Ajmer Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (AVVNL). The total tendered capacity in 10MW/40MWh comprising individual BESS projects of 1MW/4MWh to be established at identified 33/11kV Grid Sub-Stations under AVVNL. The detailed Request for Selection (RfS), eligibility criteria, qualifying requirements, Websites **www.energy.gov.in/avvnl, www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in** and **www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** vide NIT No. AVVNL/SE(Solar)/XEN (DSM)/TN-DSM-49.
Any corrigendum, clarification, addendum and/or extension, if issued subsequently, shall be hosted only on the above-mentioned websites and no separate advertisement shall be published in newspapers.
All the details regarding tender is available at website.
UBN : AVV2627WLOB00159
Raj.Samwad/C/26/6993 SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (SOLAR)

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY
Yelahanka, BANGALORE - 560 064
Website: www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in
Tender Notice No. RWF/S/10/2026-27
Dated 14/07/2026
On behalf of the President of India, the Principal Chief Materials Manager invites Electronic Open Tender from OEM/authorised dealers for supply of the following item on the Indian Railways e-portal www.ireps.gov.in.
1)**Tender No:** P2265670. **Brief Item Description :** Design, Manufacture, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Fully Automatic Wheel and Axle Assembly (wheel set pressing) complex with PLC/CNC control systems as per Specification No.RWF/MECH/proj/WPC/2026-02 and amendment to Specification. **Quantity :** 1 Number. **Tender Closing Date and Time :** 20/08/2026,14:00 hrs. **Pre-bid conference on** 04/08/2026 @11.00 hrs.
2)**Tender No:** P2256039A. **Brief Item Description :** Replacement of old 1600KVA, 11kV/433V transformers & allied Switchgear panel with new transformers & allied Switchgear panel as per RWF Specification . **Quantity :** 2 Sets. **Tender Closing Date and Time :** 05/08/2026,14:00 hrs. **Pre-bid conference on** 28/07/2026 @15.00 hrs.
TENDER NOTICE NO.RWF/S/P1/07/2026-27 dt:14.07.2026
1)**Global Tender No :** P1262246. **Due date :** 07/08/26. **Short Description :** Pouring Tube Ceramic as per RWF specification. **Quantity :** 15019 Nos.
2)**Global Tender No :** P1262402. **Due date :** 12/08/26. **Short Description :** Graphite Mould Blanks 1097 mm Dia X 575 mm height (43.2" X 22.6") as per RWF specification. **Quantity :** 1548 Nos.
Tender corrigendum can be viewed on our website www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in or www.ireps.gov.in. The tender documents, Specification and the corrigendum to the Tender will be available on the portal only.
Principal Chief Materials Manager

E-mail ID: cebuildings_orissa@yahoo.co.in; cebuildings@rediffmail.com; Tel. - (0674)-2391523
OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA
NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
File No. B-IV-H-(Ayur.)-04/2025 Lr. No.-24917 / Bhubaneswar, 10th July, 2026
Invitation for Bids - REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP Identification No: CE-Bldg-I-06/2026-27
Chief Engineer, Buildings-I, Odisha on behalf of Government of Odisha invites proposals from experienced and reputed Consulting firms to provide Consultancy Services for Supervision Works.

1.	Supervision Consultancy Services for the following 2 Nos. of works		
	(1) Construction of New Govt. Ayurvedic Medical College in Mouza-Murugaghutu, P.S. Rairangpur in the district of Mayurbhanj, Odisha on Turnkey Basis.		
	(2) Construction of District Court Complex (B+G+4) at Dhenkanal on Turnkey Basis.		
2.	Nature of work	:	Supervision Consultancy Services
3.	Bid Cost	:	₹ .10,000/- (Each)
4.	Availability of Bid Documents in the website	:	From 22.07.2026 to 5:00 PM of 06.08.2026.
5.	Pre-bid Meeting	:	Dt.31.07.2026 at 11:30 AM.
6.	Date of Opening of Bid	:	Dt. 07.08.2026 at 11:30 AM
7.	The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only and bidder must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) of Class-II or Class-III. Further details can be seen from the website : **https://tendersodisha.gov.in.** Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.		

Chief Engineer, Buildings-I, Odisha, Bhubaneswar
34001/485/2627
OIPR-34001/34117/1/26-27/0049

idco Your power to grow ISO 9001 & 14001 Corporation | ODISHA NEW OPPORTUNITIES
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (P&C) IDCO, IDCO TOWER, BHUBANESWAR
Tender Call Notice No. File No.: HO/P&C/EST/E-3040/04/2026 20403, Dated : 08.07.2026
NOTICE INVITING TENDER THROUGH e-PROCUREMENT
Name of the Work : Construction of 11 kV dedicated feeder from Nimakhandi PSS to IDCO Barpali MSME Park under Lochhapada Electrical Section, Berhampur.
Estimated Cost put to tender : Rs.2,22,03,934.00
Period of completion : 6 (Six) Calendar Months

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-Line for Bidding	
		From	To
1	2	3	4
Chief General Manager (P&C), IDCO, IDCO Tower, Bhubaneswar	Bid Identification No.:- P&C/EST/E-13/2026-27	17:00 hours of dt. 17.07.2026	17:00 hours of dt. 06.08.2026

Further details can be seen from the e- Procurement Portal www.Tendersodisha.gov.in and Corrigendum if any will be published in newspapers and can only be seen in the **e-procurement** portal as well as in **IDCO website.**
Sd/- Chief General Manager (P&C), IDCO, Bhubaneswar
4001/203/2627
OIPR-4001/4075/1/26-27/0069

BLUNT ASSESSMENT

We faced one of the best, but they faced the best: de la Fuente

AFP

Luis de la Fuente hailed his players, saying Spain proved it is "the best team in the world". "We started almost four years ago with an idea, and we've been faithful to that idea, and it's brought us here. Today we faced one of the best teams in the world, but in front of them they had the best team in the world. That is different".

HONEST

We made technical mistakes and didn't find solutions: Deschamps

AFP

Spain defended very well. They left us very little space. Because we made technical mistakes, it became difficult to create problems for them. We were below our usual level and made more technical errors than in previous matches. We were a step short physically and did not find solutions — France coach Didier Deschamps.

TACTICALLY OUTPLAYED

Mbappe calls France 'sloppy' after the semifinal reverse to Spain

AP

Kylian Mbappe said France was too "sloppy" to keep Spain from controlling the game. "We were three against two in midfield and against Spain, that's hard. Fabian and Rodri had plenty of time to play. We should've done man-to-man press and forced them to run with us. We didn't play the game we wanted, technically, tactically".

SURREAL

Spain's Porro says 'dream come true' to reach World Cup final

AP

Pedro Porro, who scored Spain's second goal in the 2-0 win over France, said reaching the World Cup final was "a dream come true". "I am very happy with the team's attitude from start to finish. We played a great match; we did everything we had to do today to reach the final. It's a dream come true".

Spain's masterclass dismantles France's star-power

Oyarzabal strokes home the opener from the spot after Digne trips up Yamal; Porro adds gloss to the scoreline; *Les Bleus*' fearsome attack is rendered toothless by the disciplined *La Roja*

FIFA WORLD CUP

Agence France-Presse
DALLAS

Spain snuffed out France's dream of a third World Cup triumph on Tuesday, taming its galaxy of forwards to win 2-0 and progress to a final against England or Argentina.

Didier Deschamps' men – hot favourites after a string of breathtaking displays – met their match against the slick European champion in the semifinals.

Emphatic penalty

Mikel Oyarzabal opened the scoring for the 2010 winner with an emphatic penalty in the first half and Pedro Porro doubled the lead in the second.

Shell-shocked France could not find a way back into the match despite its wealth of attacking riches.

The game caught fire midway through the first half when Salvadoran referee Ivan Barton pointed to the spot after a reckless challenge by France left-back Lucas Digne on Spain winger Lamine Yamal.

Oyarzabal hammered the ball past goalkeeper Mike Maignan for his fifth goal of this edition.

Saliba leaves the pitch

Minutes later France suffered another blow when centre-back William Saliba had to leave the pitch after a recurrence of his lower back injury, replaced by Crystal Palace defender Maxence Lacroix.

Agonisingly close

Spain went agonisingly close to extending its lead after some dazzling one-touch football but Dayot Upamecano's challenge denied Fabian Ruiz.

Deschamps threw on Desire Doue for Bradley Barcola in the 57th minute in a bid to supercharge his attack but a minute later it was 2-0 down after a stunning team goal for Luis de la Fuente's men.

Defender Porro delivered a sharp pass to the feet of Dani Olmo on the edge of the box and collected the return ball before coolly slotting past Maignan. Deschamps threw on Theo Hernandez and Rayan Cherki after the second hydration break in a desperate bid to get back into the match.

But France could not find a way back into the game against a solid opponent who refused to yield.

Body blow: Porro caps off an intricate team move to slot in Spain's second. REUTERS

Stat attack

0 Mbappe failed to have a single shot on target for the first time since the 2022 quarterfinal against England

0 Since joining Real Madrid, Mbappe has lost every knockout match for club or country against Yamal

0–2 France suffered its biggest defeat in a knockout game since the 1986 semifinals (0-2 vs. West Germany)

6 Spain earned the distinction of being the first to register six clean sheet victories in a campaign

3 Oyarzabal became the third Spaniard to net five or more goals in an edition (Villa in 2010 and Butragueno in 1986)

6 Simon recorded the most clean sheets by a goalkeeper in a single tournament

8 Spain defeated France for the eighth time in its last 11 matches across all competitions

30 With his 30th international strike, Oyarzabal moved to sixth in Spain's goalscoring list

655 Rodri completed 655 passes, the most in a single edition

37 Spain's 37-game unbeaten streak in all competitions (28 wins, 9 draws) pulled it level with Italy (2018-21) for the longest one by a European nation

COMPILED BY ANIRUDH VELAMURI

THE RESULT

Semifinal: France 0 lost to Spain 2 (Oyarzabal 22-pen, Porro 58).

How the Spanish midfield choked France

Ayon Sengupta

France had arrived in Dallas carrying the tournament's most feared attack. Kylian Mbappe, Ousmane Dembele and Michael Olise had combined for 13 goals and 10 assists in six matches as opponents struggled to contain them. By the end of the semifinal, Spain had made that frightening front three look almost anonymous.

The scoreline read 2-0, but the performance was even more emphatic.

Spain reached its first World Cup final since lifting the trophy in Johannesburg 16 years ago by producing perhaps the tournament's most complete display, suffocating Didier Deschamps' side through relentless pressing, immaculate possession and defensive organisation.

France managed only three shots on target and rarely looked capable of disturbing a Spanish side that controlled both the ball and the rhythm of the evening.

Rodri and Fabian Ruiz controlled the midfield while Pau Cubarsi and Aymeric Laporte stepped forward to nullify the threat of Mbappe, who failed to register a single shot on target for the first time in his last nine World Cup appearances.

Luis de la Fuente's side has reached the final having conceded just one goal in seven matches.

It has now gone 37 matches unbeaten in all competitions and stands one win away from becoming only the third reigning European champion to follow it up with the World Cup.

Spain reduced *Les Bleus* to just 0.30 expected goals – France's lowest attacking output at a World Cup in six decades. France attempted only 10 shots, with just one coming from inside 13 metres of the Spanish goal.

Spain's defending begins long before opponents reach its centre-backs. Rodri and Ruiz monopolise possession, the press forces hurried decisions, passing lanes disappear and attacks are extinguished before they gather momentum.

That collective understanding has become Spain's greatest strength.

Lamine Yamal dazzles, Rodri dictates, Cubarsi defends with the assurance of a veteran, while Mikel Oyarzabal continues his habit of deciding the biggest matches.

Pedro Porro, whose first responsibility is usually to stop elite forwards, scored the second goal that put this contest to bed. The stars change from game to game because the system remains.

Spain has the most forced turnovers (303) in the tournament, has tried the most passes (4592) with a 91 percent success rate and also had the most defensive line breaks attempted (175) with a 65 percent success rate, while topping the charts in almost all movement metrics.

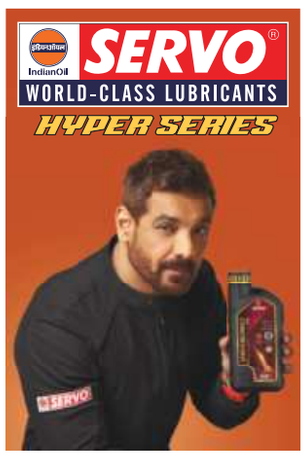
For years, Spain was admired for its possession but questioned for lacking the cutting edge.

This generation has found the balance. It monopolises the ball without becoming sterile, attacks without losing structure and defends without retreating.

Only one team has found a way past Unai Simon in seven World Cup matches.

With one game remaining, that may be the statistic that defines Spain's tournament.

Bossing the turf: Spain's relentless pressing, immaculate possession and defensive organisation suffocated France. REUTERS



Men in Blue look to build on the positives

INDIA IN ENGLAND

N. Sudarshan
CARDIFF

Banking on a new set of actors to switch up performances when ratings dip is common practice in the showbiz industry.

For Indian cricket, a new set of entertainers arrived in time and helped deliver a moderate box-office hit in the form of a six-wicket victory in the first ODI versus England in Birmingham on Tuesday.

First success

It was the away side's first success after six T20 defeats during the ongoing sojourn of the United Kingdom.

In the second match of the series at Sophia Gardens here on Thursday, there will be another opportunity to build on the positives.

Captain Shubman Gill scored a typically classy 80 before having to retire hurt owing to cramps.

Gill expected to play

The 26-year-old is expected to be fit for the encounter here, despite the short turnaround time.

Jasprit Bumrah, in his first ODI in nearly three years, bowled nine miserly overs for 31 runs.

The 32-year-old troubled Ben Duckett with his swing early on, and had skipper Harry Brook caught at slip with a delivery that bounced a tad more and left the batter in two minds.

But it was not a happy return for the star duo of Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli.

Rohit looked scrappy in his 21-ball stay for 11 runs while Kohli was out leg-before for five after playing across the line to Jofra Archer.

Rohit, 39, has not been at his aggressive best for a while. Since the Champions Trophy triumph in March 2025, he has batted 13 times in ODIs, and has scored one century, four half-centuries, and a 48.

These are not bad numbers per se, but as Novak Djokovic said at Wimbledon, greats are "blessed and cursed to be used to the highest degree in terms of results and achievements."

For Kohli, runs haven't been an issue, for he had a productive IPL with Royal Challengers Bengaluru. But he would like to get back into his scoring rhythm quickly after having missed the home series against Afghanistan with a hamstring injury.

England, on the other hand, will want its present personnel to step up, for the loss in Edgbaston was its 20th in the 30 ODIs since the 2023 World Cup.

Of particular concern will be the collapse it suffered from 61 for no loss to 107 for six, with Brook, Jos Buttler and Sam Curran falling for a collective score of six.

Lack of game awareness

There was also a severe lack of game awareness from the tail when the last three wickets fell for just eight runs. With Joe Root at the other end, all that Archer, Adil Rashid and Josh Tongue had to do was turn the strike over.

But Archer perished trying to hammer Axar Patel while Rashid paid the price for stepping out of the crease as England folded with 13 deliveries still remaining.

Top-order's duty

Brook later said that it was the top-order that needed to shoulder more responsibility rather than the bowlers being asked to be better at their secondary skill. But in the cut-throat universe of international cricket, every run counts.

Match starts at 5.30 p.m. IST.

Putting their hand up: Axar and Washington were at the forefront of India's win in Birmingham. AP & REUTERS

INBRIEF

Chuah and Othman take the honours in PSA Challenger

Malaysia's Joachim Chuah and Egypt's Rouquaia Othman triumphed at HCL-SRFI PSA Challenger squash tournament in Chennai on Wednesday. The five-day event featured 48 players from 14 countries with a prize purse of $9,000 in each section. Six Indians made the quarterfinals.

The results (final): Men: Joachim Chuah (Mas) bt Adham Roshdy (Egy) 11-6, 10-6, 19-21, 11-7, 11-8. **Women:** Rouquaia Othman (Egy) bt Hwayeong Eum (Kor) 12-10, 11-7, 11-8.

Lakshya, Sagar in big stand as India makes a strong reply

Lakshya Raichandani's unbeaten 196 powered India under-19 to 378 for three in reply to Sri Lanka's first-innings total of 424 for nine declared on the third day of the Youth 'Test' in Galle on Wednesday. Fellow opener Sagar Virk also struck a century (134), the duo forging a 295-run alliance.

The scores: Sri Lanka u-19 424/9 decl. in 106.4 overs vs. India u-19 378/3 in 117 overs (Lakshya Raichandani 196 batting, Sagar Virk 134).

Mixed results for jr. women's hockey team in Europe

The Indian junior (U-21) women's hockey team logged three wins and four losses in an exposure-cum-competition tour of the UK. India lost two matches against Scotland senior women, beat and lost one match against USA U-21, beat England U-21 twice and lost to Belgium U-21.

Waerenskjold wins fastest ever Tour de France stage

Norwegian Soren Waerenskjold launched a long-range sprint to claim victory at the Tour de France on Wednesday in the fastest stage in the race's history. Dutchman Olav Kooij took second ahead of Belgian Jasper Philipsen at the end of the 161km 11th stage from Vichy to Nevers.

Dismal day for India at Japan Open badminton

Indians endured a disappointing day at the Japan Open Super 750 badminton in Tokyo on Wednesday.

The results (first round): Men: Kunlavut Vitidsarn bt Ayush Shetty 21-191, 23-25, 21-15; Koki Watanabe bt Lakshya Sen 21-16, 21-14.
Women: Huang Yu-Hsun bt Unnati Hooda 16-21, 21-16, 21-15.

McIlroy seeks to end British Open drought

Rory McIlroy has his sights set on a first British Open win since 2014 as World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler tries to get his game back on track to defend the Claret Jug at Royal Birkdale. McIlroy's drought at his home Major in front of an adoring crowd of fans goes on since his only British Open victory at the Royal Liverpool.

Atiqa outqualifies two Mercedes F1 juniors for pole

India's 11-year-old racing prodigy Atiqa Mir out-qualified two Mercedes Formula One junior drivers for pole position in the Champions of the Future Academy Program Round 3 at Viterbo (Italy). Atiqa set sizzling pace in qualifying of the karting series and beat Mercedes F1 Junior drivers like Niccolo Perico of Italy and Devin Titz of Germany for pole position besides setting event record.

ENGAGEMENTS

Cricket: Tagore Sports-TNCA u-16 city schools tournament, quarterfinals, St. Bede's-A vs. St. Bede's-B (SMK Fomra-A); Ramachandraa PS, Kottivakkam vs. Heartfulness IS NIOS-A (GE-B); Heartfulness IS-CBSE, Kolapakkam vs. Don Bosco-B (GE-A); Heartfulness IS NIOS-B vs. PSBB-N (SMK Fomra-B), 9 a.m.

Lord's Test shows how well women cricketers can adapt to the demands

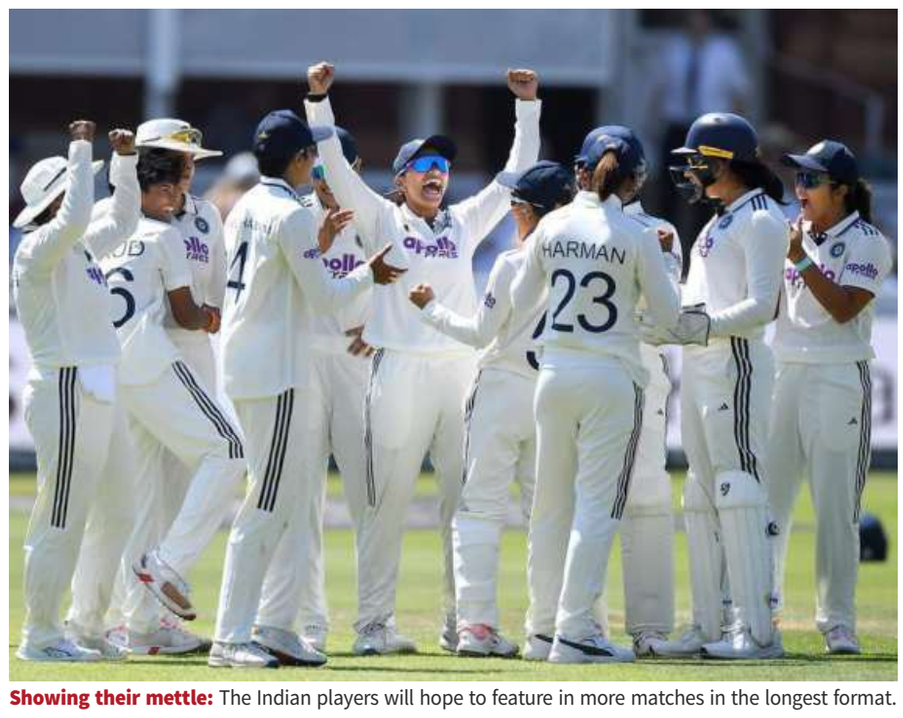
The attendance set a new record for a women's Test match and the MCC pulling out all stops to market the historic contest reflected the stunning evolution of the game

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LONDON

There is cricket. Then there is Test cricket.

It is the greatest theatre in sport. It will be injustice if Women's Tests are reduced to tokenism. The first ever Women's Test at Lord's was a resounding success, not just from the Indian point of view. Harmanpreet Kaur's women dominated England in no uncertain terms and won by 270 runs.

There was much to cheer about for India, apart from the handsome victory. The brilliant hundred by a returning Yastika Bhatia and superb spells from the young Kranti Gaud and the seasoned Sneh Rana.



Showing their mettle: The Indian players will hope to feature in more matches in the longest format. GETTY IMAGES

Contributions

Even in the one-sided encounter, there was much to savour for the crowd, for the English supporters, too. Like the two fighting fifties by wicketkeeper Amy Jones, a five-wicket haul and half-century by Sophie Eccelstone.

Apart from Yastika, Kranti and Sneh, there were a few other Indian performances that delighted the spectators. If Smriti Mandhana gets going twice during a Test, that alone should be worth the money paid for the ticket.

There was a decent attendance even for the final day, though it promised very little cricket, India needing just four more wickets. And there were a lot of Indian fans in blue shirts, who were, in fact, one of the features at the Women' T20 World Cup that preceded the Lord's Test.

So the Indian women could celebrate one of their greatest moments on a cricket field in front of the people that adored them.

The attendance at Lord's actually set a new record for a Women's Test. And the MCC had put in a serious effort to market the match. That is a reflection of the stunning evolution of the women's game. The MCC had for long resisted female membership.

> There were a lot of Indian fans in blue shirts, who were, in fact, one of the features at the Women' T20 World Cup

It had taken 239 years for Lord's to host a Women's Test. Hopefully it may not take as long for cricket's most iconic venue to have the next one.

This Test was another example of how wonderfully well women cricketers could adapt to the demands of the longest format, though they get very few opportunities. India's cricketers are luckier with the BCCI organising red-ball matches.

Mithali Raj, remember, ended her career with just 12 Tests, though she played 232 ODIs. Heather Knight, who played her last match for England, appeared only in 15 Tests. Sophie Devine didn't get even one, because New Zealand no longer plays Tests.

Women in white deserve more Tests.

Good show by India in Asian age-group boxing

ANI
JAKARTA

India capped off a stellar campaign in the Asian U-19 & U-23 boxing championships, securing a total of five gold, 10 silver, and four bronze medals. In the U-19 women's category, India secured two gold and six silver medals, according to a press release.

Chandrika Bhoresh Pujari (51kg) delivered a dominant performance to clinch gold with a 5-0 win over Uzbekistan's Nazokat Mardonova, while Prachi also secured gold with a convincing victory over Indonesia's Dira Artika.

India's other finalists in the U-19 category put up strong fights but settled for silver, contributing to the team's overall tally.

In the U-23 women's category, India registered an equally impressive showing with one gold, four silver, and four bronze medals.

Nisha (54kg) led the charge with a commanding 5-0 victory over Japan's Koiin Kokufu in the final.

Meanwhile, Nikita Chand (60kg), Kajal (65kg), and Muskan (75kg) fought hard in their finals but finished with silver after facing strong opponents from Uzbekistan.

The results (finals):
U-23: 54kg: Nisha bt Koiin Kokufu (Jpn) 5-0; **60kg:** Mushtariybonu Ibrokhimjon (Uzb) bt Nikita Chand 5-0; **65kg:** Sevinch Khurramova (Uzb) bt Kajal 4-1; **75kg:** Shugyla Nalibay (Kaz) bt Muskan 5-0.
81+kg: Sobirakhon Shakhobidinova (Uzb) bt Priyanka 4-1.
U-19: 45-48kg: Anggie Intania Chalik (Ina) bt Gunjan 3-2; **51kg:** Chandrika Bhoreshi Pujari bt Nazokat Mardonova (Uzb) 5-0; **54kg:** Sabrina Chakomanova (Uzb) bt Joyshree Devi Chirom 5-0; **57kg:** Prachi bt Dira Artika (Ina) 5-0.
60kg: Sevara Mamatova (Uzb) bt Chahat 5-0; **75kg:** Samira Turgunova (Uzb) bt Anshika 5-0; **80kg:** Aidana Ubaidullakyzy (Kaz) bt Megha Sheokand 3-2; **81+kg:** Zarina Tolybay (Kaz) bt Prachi Tokas 3-2.

Overjoyed: Under-19 boxers Chandrika (51kg) and Prachi (57kg) celebrate.

ICC tweaks ODI and T20 WC formats

Press Trust of India
EDINBURGH

The ICC on Wednesday made changes to the formats of the 2027 ODI World Cup and 2028 T20 World Cup. The decisions were taken at the ICC Annual Conference here.

The 2027 ODI World Cup in South Africa would have 14 teams as planned before, up from the 10 in the previous edition, but the governing body has added a Super Series and Super 7 stage in its bid to spice up the competition.

The Super Series will be played among three teams and one of them will progress to round two of the competition that will see six teams divided into two groups. The top three teams from each group plus the next highest placed team across both groups qualify for the Super 7 (instead of the Super 6). Four teams from the Super 7 stage progress to the semifinals.

Super 8 in T20 WC

For the T20 showpiece in Australia and New Zealand in 2028, the ICC has brought in Super 10 instead of the Super 8 after the Group stage. Five groups of four teams will be created and the top two from each will enter the Super 10 phase.

Instead of the top two teams from each Super 8 group making the semifinals in the last edition, only the one that tops the table in each group will enter the last four. Teams placed second in groups play in the Eliminator against the teams placed third in the opposite group, adding another layer to the competition.

Scotland will enter directly into the Europe Regional Final, recognising the circumstances surrounding its participation in the 2026 tournament, having replaced Bangladesh in the 11th hour. The remaining teams that competed at the 2026 T20 World Cup 2026 but did not secure automatic qualification will advance to the Global Qualifier.

The other eight places in the Global Qualifier will be filled through regional qualification, with two teams each qualifying from Africa, Asia and Europe, and one team each from the Americas and East Asia-Pacific regions.

The highest placed team from each region at the Global Qualifier, together with the next three highest-placed teams overall, will qualify for the 2028 T20 WC.

Meanwhile, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia was appointed as the head of the Governance Review Committee, which also approved a $12.82 million loan to Cricket West Indies. The ICC also ratified the appointment of Bangladesh Cricket Board president Tamim as the Member's Full Member Director.

LIVE TELECAST

Golf: British Open, Day 1, FanCode, 11 a.m.
England vs India: Second ODI, Sony Sports Ten 1 & JioHotstar, 5.30 p.m.
West Indies vs New Zealand: Third ODI, FanCode, 12 a.m. (Friday)

Arnav causes a flutter in the tennis world

Tarun Shastry

Three dozen years is a long time in any sphere of life, not just sport. Yet, on a scorching Wednesday morning last week, on the most famous lawns in the world, it took just 52 minutes for Arnav Paparkar to script a chapter in Indian tennis history.

With a clinical 6-2, 6-1 demolition of Japan's Ryo Tabata in the boys' round of 16, the 18-year-old stormed into the Wimbledon quarterfinals and became the first Indian since the legendary Leander Paes in 1990 to achieve the feat. For Indian tennis, the long wait was finally over.

In a virtual interaction with *The Hindu*, Arnav revealed that meticulous preparation did the trick. "I trained on grass in Spain for two weeks before Wimbledon and also played a tournament in Roehampton. I was comfortable with the way I moved, served and returned... I didn't miss too many returns," Arnav said.

Talent and substance: Arnav impressed one and all en route his historic run to the Wimbledon quarterfinals. GETTY IMAGES

The confidence also stemmed from the lessons learnt during the course of the year. "I was a bit nervous because the Australian Open was my first Grand Slam. There were so many people watching. By the time French Open arrived, I wasn't thinking about the crowd anymore. I just played my natural game," said the Pune teenager, who idolises Roger Federer and football icon Cristiano Ronaldo.

Arnav's self-belief came to the fore at The Championships. He brushed aside British wildcard Joshua Craze before causing a flutter by taking out third seed Keaton Hance. He then went on to avenge the two losses against Tabata in their earlier meetings.

"I knew playing the third seed was going to be tough, but wasn't impossible. My serve clicked, and I handled the pressure well. Only after the match did it sink in that I had beaten a higher-ranked player," Arnav recalled.

Behind the teenager's rise lies the unwavering support of his family.

"My mother is a doctor, but she closed her clinic as she had to travel with me regularly. My elder brother sacrificed a lot because he often stayed home alone while my parents travelled for tournaments. Everyone in my family has sacrificed in some way or the other. I want to do something special for them one day".

SNAPSHOTS

Salem wallops Tiruvannamalai

SALEM: M. Mohamed Saafir finished unbeaten on 303 (224b, 33x4, 12x6) as Salem amassed 607 for four before beating Tiruvannamalai by an innings and 408 runs on the second day of the TNCA P.R. Thevar Trophy inter districts u-16 tournament quarterfinal here on Wednesday.

The scores (quarterfinals, day two):
At Tirunelveli: Tirunelveli 155 in 70 overs & 67/3 in 19.5 overs (G. Rahul 40) drew with Tiruvallur 188 in 73.5 overs (Chetan Kumar Meena 82, K. Lagan 6/61).
At Salem: Tiruvannamalai 93 in 33.5 overs & 106 in 27 overs (S. Ashwath 4/58, K. Shamalan 4/32) lost to Salem 607/4 in 90 overs (M. Mohamed Saafir 303 n.o., A. Mohamad Arfaz 177, R.S. Ashwin Hariharan 38).
At Dharmapuri: Tirupur 339 in 85.1 overs & 172/4 in 28 overs (K.P. Thanvanth 86, P. Shanvasessh 46) drew with Dharmapuri 148 in 57.1 overs (S. Pranesh 5/28, S. Vishnu Dev 5/64).
At Virudhunagar: Virudhunagar 122 in 39.3 overs & 105/7 in 40 overs (D. Niranjanveer 49, J. Kabilan 3/23) lost to Chengalpattu 223/9 in 90 overs (A. Jayanth 41, R. Sai Krithik 52, S. Hashvamithiran 30, R. Shrinath 5/77, S. Abhishek 3/40) & 5/0 in 0.2 overs.

Best of the lot: Silver Strikers, winners of the TNCA-Freyer Trophy T20 tournament. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Silver Strikers wins Freyer Trophy

CHENNAI: Silver Strikers defeated Blue Avengers by five wickets in the final of the TNCA-Freyer Trophy women's T20 tournament on Wednesday.

The scores (final): Blue Avengers 126/8 in 20 overs (Eloksi Arun 71 n.o.) lost to Silver Strikers 128/5 in 19.5 overs (Trisha Madhu 42 n.o.).

Haripriya & Nalini win

Haripriya & Nalini secured 67.08% to clinch the TTK Anna University Alumni Club open bridge tournament title recently. Sherien Ryan and Srihari Varghese finished runners-up with 64.19%.

TNPL ticket sales begin

Ticket sales for the league stage matches of the 10th Tamil Nadu Premier League (TNPL) commenced on Wednesday.
Tickets are available exclusively through the District app *(www.district.in)* and TNCA website. All tickets will be sold online.

TAMIL NADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED
No.67, Anna Salai, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Tender No	Description	Due date
262713 002520	Enlistment of Freight Forwarders for Offering Ocean Freight for Export of Paper/Board in 20'/40' Containers.	03.08.26

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website and NIC Portal only. Detailed Terms & conditions are available in tender document at our websites: **www.tnpl.com/ www.tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app**

DIPR.2290/Tender/2026 *TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper*

CORRIGENDUM NO. 01 AGAINST TENDER NOTICE NO.: CON/2026/JUN/04; DATED: 17-06-2026

Corrigendum-01 for **Tender No. CE-CON-DK-EPC-2026-05** has been published. For details please visit **www.ireps.gov.in**.

Chief Engineer/Con/NL Project/Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
(Construction Organisation)
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice

E-TENDER NOTICE No. SG-664-09-Sig-2026-27

E-TENDER IS INVITED ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA FOR THE UNDER MENTIONED WORKS.

Sl.No.: 1. Name of the work: Provision of Essential Spare parts and items related to interlocked gate in DHN Division. **Sl.No. : 2. Approx. Cost of the work:** ₹ 5,12,47,162.48 (Approx.) **Sl.No.: 3. Earnest Money:** ₹ 10,25,000.00 **Sl.No.: 4. Date & time for closing of tender:** 04.08.2026 at 12:30 Hrs. **Sl.No.: 5.** Any E-Tenders which is sent by Post / Courier / FAX or self, Manual proposals although the letter is on firm's letter pad or received in time will not be accepted. The above E-Tenders, E-Tendering document alongwith full information is available on website i.e. **http//www.ireps.gov.in** Note :- Tenderers are requested to visit the website **http//www.ireps.gov.in** atleast 10 days before last date of closing for latest corrigendum / corrections etc. in response to this E-tender.

Sr. D.S.T.E.
East Central Railway, Dhanbad
PR/0552/DHN/S&T/T/26-27/36

THE HINDU
Air Surcharge as applicable:
New Delhi - Rs. 15/-;
Port Blair - Rs. 20/-

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

Tender Notice No.: DRMENGGRNC-56-57-2026, Dated: 14.07.2026. Divisional Railway Manager (Engg), South Eastern Railway, Ranchi for & on behalf of President of India, invites e-Tender for the following works: **Sl. No. : 1. Notice No.: DRMENGGRNC-56-2026. Name of work:** Elimination of manned LC No. MK-4, MK-5 & MK-11 by constructing RUB in MURI-Kotshila section in Ranchi Division. **Tender Value:** ₹ 38,15,52,038.59. **EMD Value:** ₹ 76,31,100/-. **Sl. No. : 2. Notice No.: DRMENGGRNC-57-2026. Name of work:** Elimination of manned LC No. CM-17, CM-37 & CM-40 by constructing RUB in MURI-Chandil section in Ranchi Division. **Tender Value:** ₹ 40,57,85,335.58. **EMD Value:** ₹ 81,15,700/-. **Tender closing date & time:** 07.08.2026 at 15.00 hrs. for each. Tenderers can visit the website **www.ireps.gov.in** for online tendering.

(PR-482)

TAMILNADU CO-OPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS' FEDERATION LIMITED,
ICE CREAM PLANT, MADURAI - 625 020

Ref.No: 384/MICP/Admn/2025 **TENDER NOTICE** **Dt:08.07.2026**

Tenders are invited from the contractors through online for 1) Providing of 8 Nos. unskilled manpower for Housekeeping works at Ice Cream Plant, Madurai-625 020 for 24 months for the years **2026-2028** and 2) Providing 12 Nos. of ITI/Diploma qualified manpower for 3 shifts at Ice Cream Plant, Madurai-625 020 for 24 months for the year 2026-2028.

Sl. No.	Description	No.of workers required	Approximate estimated value (Rs. in lakh)	Permitted Date & Time for tender document download at free of cost	Pre Bid meeting	Last date for Submission of Tender Documents	Opening of Technical bid
1	For Providing of 12 Nos. of unskilled manpower for Housekeeping works at Ice Cream Plant, Madurai-625 020 for 24 months for the year 2026-2028.	8 Nos.	Rs. 54.00 Lakh	17.07.2026 to 31.07.2026 upto 4.00 pm	23.07.2026 at 11.00 am	31.07.2026 at 4.00 pm	03.08.2026 at 11.00 am
2	Providing 12 Nos. of ITI/Diploma qualified manpower for 3 shifts at Ice Cream Plant, Madurai-625 020 for 24 months for the year 2026-2028. Ref.No:385/MICP/Admn/2025	12 Nos.	Rs. 91.00 Lakh	17.07.2026 to 31.07.2026 upto 4.00 pm	23.07.2026 at 11.30 am	31.07.2026 at 4.00 pm	03.08.2026 at 11.30 am

The Tender documents can be submitted as e-tendering through the e-procurement website **"https://tntenders.gov.in"**. The tenderer can also check the website **https://aavin.tn.gov.in** for reference for item-wise specifications, EMD amount payable etc.. For further details see the tender documents.

DIPR/ 2287/TENDER/2026 **JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR**

National Highways Authority of India
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways)

भर्ती सूचना /RECRUITMENT NOTICE

भारतीय राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग प्राधिकरण (भा.रा.रा.प्रा.) **संविदा आधार पर** निम्नलिखित पदों के लिए आवेदन आमंत्रित करता है:–

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) invites applications for following positions **on contract basis**:-

Name of the post	No. of posts*	Deployment
संयुक्त सलाहकार (तकनीकी) Joint Advisor (Technical)	01	चेन्नई क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय Regional Office-Chennai
भू–तकनीकी अभियंता Geotechnical Engineer	01	डिज़ाइन प्रभाग, भा.रा.रा.प्रा. मुख्यालय Design Division, NHAI HQ

*पदों की संख्या भा.रा.रा.प्रा. की आवश्यकता के अनुसार बढ़ाई या घटाई जा सकती है।

*Number of posts may increase / decrease as per requirement of NHAI.

2. पात्रता मानदंड और अन्य शर्तें भा.रा.रा.प्रा. की वेबसाइट **www.nhai.gov.in** पर देखे जा सकते हैं।
   Eligibility criteria and other conditions may be seen on NHAI's website **www.nhai.gov.in**
3. **आवेदन जमा करना:** इच्छुक और पात्र उम्मीदवार अपने आवेदन **14.08.2026 (सायं 06:00 बजे तक)** भा.रा.रा.प्रा. की वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध लिंक के माध्यम से केवल ऑनलाइन जमा करें।
   Submission of Applications: Applications are to be submitted online only. Eligible candidates may apply online on the link provided on the website of NHAI by **14.08.2026 (upto 06:00 PM)**.
4. इस विज्ञापन के संबंध में शुद्धिपत्र/अनुशेष/निरस्तीकरण, यदि कोई होगा तो, उसे केवल भा.रा.रा.प्रा. की वेबसाइट पर प्रकाशित किया जाएगा।
   Corrigendum/Addendum/Cancelation to this advertisement, if any, shall be published on NHAI website only.

BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

ENGINEERING WORKS UNDER ALIPURDUAR DIVISION

E-Tender Notice No.: 28/W-2/APDJ; Dated: 10-07-2026. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work: **Tender No:** 08-AP-III-2026. **Name of Work:** "Improvement of station approach road Kalchini (KCF), Madarihat (MDT) & Mujnai (MJE) railway station". Tender Value: ₹3,20,37,989.06; Earnest Money: ₹6,40,800.00. E-tender will be **closed** at 15:00 hrs. on 03-08-2026 and **opened** at 15:30 hrs. on 03-08-2026. The complete information with the tender documents of above e-tender will be available in the website **http://www.ireps.gov.in**.

DRM (Works), Alipurduar Jn.
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

SCHEDULE OF E-AUCTION NOTICE (SCRAP SALE)
Schedule E-Auction time from 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM

Month	Division	Date & Day				Mobile
August 2026	Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay	03.08.2026 (Monday)	10.08.2026 (Monday)	17.08.2026 (Monday)	24.08.2026 (Monday)	9794848770
	Dhanbad	04.08.2026 (Tuesday)	11.08.2026 (Tuesday)	18.08.2026 (Tuesday)	25.08.2026 (Tuesday)	9771426770
	Danapur	05.08.2026 (Wednesday)	12.08.2026 (Wednesday)	19.08.2026 (Wednesday)	26.08.2026 (Wednesday)	9771449770
	Samastipur	06.08.2026 (Thursday)	13.08.2026 (Thursday)	20.08.2026 (Thursday)	27.08.2026 (Thursday)	9771428770
	Sonepur	07.08.2026 (Friday)	14.08.2026 (Friday)	21.08.2026 (Friday)	28.08.2026 (Friday)	9771429770
	Harnaut	04.08.2026 (Tuesday)	11.08.2026 (Tuesday)	18.08.2026 (Tuesday)	25.08.2026 (Tuesday)	9771452206
September 2026	Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay	07.09.2026 (Monday)	14.09.2026 (Monday)	21.09.2026 (Monday)	28.09.2026 (Monday)	9794848770
	Dhanbad	08.09.2026 (Tuesday)	15.09.2026 (Tuesday)	22.09.2026 (Tuesday)	29.09.2026 (Tuesday)	9771426770
	Danapur	02.09.2026 (Wednesday)	09.09.2026 (Wednesday)	16.09.2026 (Wednesday)	23.09.2026 (Wednesday)	9771449770
	Samastipur	03.09.2026 (Thursday)	10.09.2026 (Thursday)	17.09.2026 (Thursday)	24.09.2026 (Thursday)	9771428770
	Sonepur	04.09.2026 (Friday)	11.09.2026 (Friday)	18.09.2026 (Friday)	25.09.2026 (Friday)	9771429770
	Harnaut	08.09.2026 (Tuesday)	15.09.2026 (Tuesday)	22.09.2026 (Tuesday)	29.09.2026 (Tuesday)	9771452206
(a)	Bidders are advised to inspect scrap lot before submission of bid. They are allowed to inspect the lot, on an authority from the concerned officer of Railway Administration, at the site of lot mentioned in the auction catalogue on any working day (except Sunday).					
(b)	The Complete details of materials and the terms and conditions will be as per Auction Catalogue, which shall be available with the respective auction conducting authority of East Central Railway or from our website **www.ireps.gov.in** prior to the date of auction.					

PR/0551/HQ/Material/EAN/26-27/88 **Dy. CMM-IV/ECR/Hajipur**

राष्ट्रीय सिद्धा संस्थान / NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SIDDHA
आयुष मंत्रालय / **Ministry of Ayush** भारत सरकार / **Government of India**
ताम्बरम सनटोरियम / **Tambaram Sanatorium** चेन्नई / **Chennai - 600 047.**
फ़ोन / **Tele : 044-22411611** ईमेल / **Email: director.nis-tn@gov.in / chennai-nis@gov.in**
वेब / **Website: https://nischennai.org**

संख्या / No.NIS/1-1/Recruitment-Contract/2026 Vol.2 तारीख / Date : 15.07.2026

EMPLOYMENT NOTIFICATION NO: 06/2026

A Walk-in interview will be held at 11.00 a.m. onwards on **29.07.2026** at National Institute of Siddha, Tambaram Sanatorium, Chennai-47 to fill up the following posts **on contract / part-time basis**:-

S.No.	Name of the Post	Total No. of Post	UR	OBC	SC	ST	EWS
1	**Professor** (Maruthuvam)	01 Post	01	-	-	-	-
2	**Professor** (Sattam Saarntha Maruthuvamum Nanju Maruthuvamum)	01 Post	01	-	-	-	-
3	**Associate Professor** (Udal Koorugal)	01 Post	-	-	-	-	01
4	**Assistant Professor** (Gunapadam – Marunthakaviyal)	01 Post	-	-	-	-	01
5	**Assistant Professor** (Pura Maruthuvam)	01 Post	-	-	-	01	-
6	**Emergency Medical Officer** (1) / **Medical Officer** (1)	02 Posts	-	-	-	-	02
7	**Veterinarian**	01 Post	01	-	-	-	-

Project Consultant – 1 Post
1. Project Consultant (Electrical) – 1 Post

Consultant (Full time or Part time) – 1 Post
1. Medical Oncologist – 1 Post

Part Time (Vacant Post)
1. Surgical Specialist – 01 Post
2. Traditional Bone Setter – 01 Post

For details regarding the details of the above posts, educational qualifications, age, experience, general conditions etc., please visit "NOTIFICATIONS" in the Institute **website https://nischennai.org.**

Any updates / modifications in this regard will be posted in the above website only.

Sd/-
Director

BIG DEALS! BIGGER DISCOUNTS! BIGGEST SAVINGS!
BIG FURNITURE
Aadi Sale
OPENS TOMORROW
UPTO 70% OFF
DATE : 17 | 18 | 19 JULY 2026
10.00 AM TO 7.30 PM
VENUE : CHENNAI TRADE CENTRE
NANDAMBAKKAM- CHENNAI
LIVING ROOM | BEDROOM | DINING SET | STORAGE UNIT | PAINTINGS | OFFICE CHAIR | HOME DECOR
ENTRY FREE
+91 7448767203
ads & events

The Next Chapter in Urban Growth Begins Here.

As India enters a new era of urban transformation, the ideas shaping tomorrow's cities are taking centre stage today.

The Hindu Real Estate & Urban Infrastructure Summit 2026 brings together policymakers, industry leaders, developers, investors, architects and urban planners to explore the trends redefining urban India from manufacturing and GCC-led growth to AI in construction, emerging investment corridors and the future of housing.

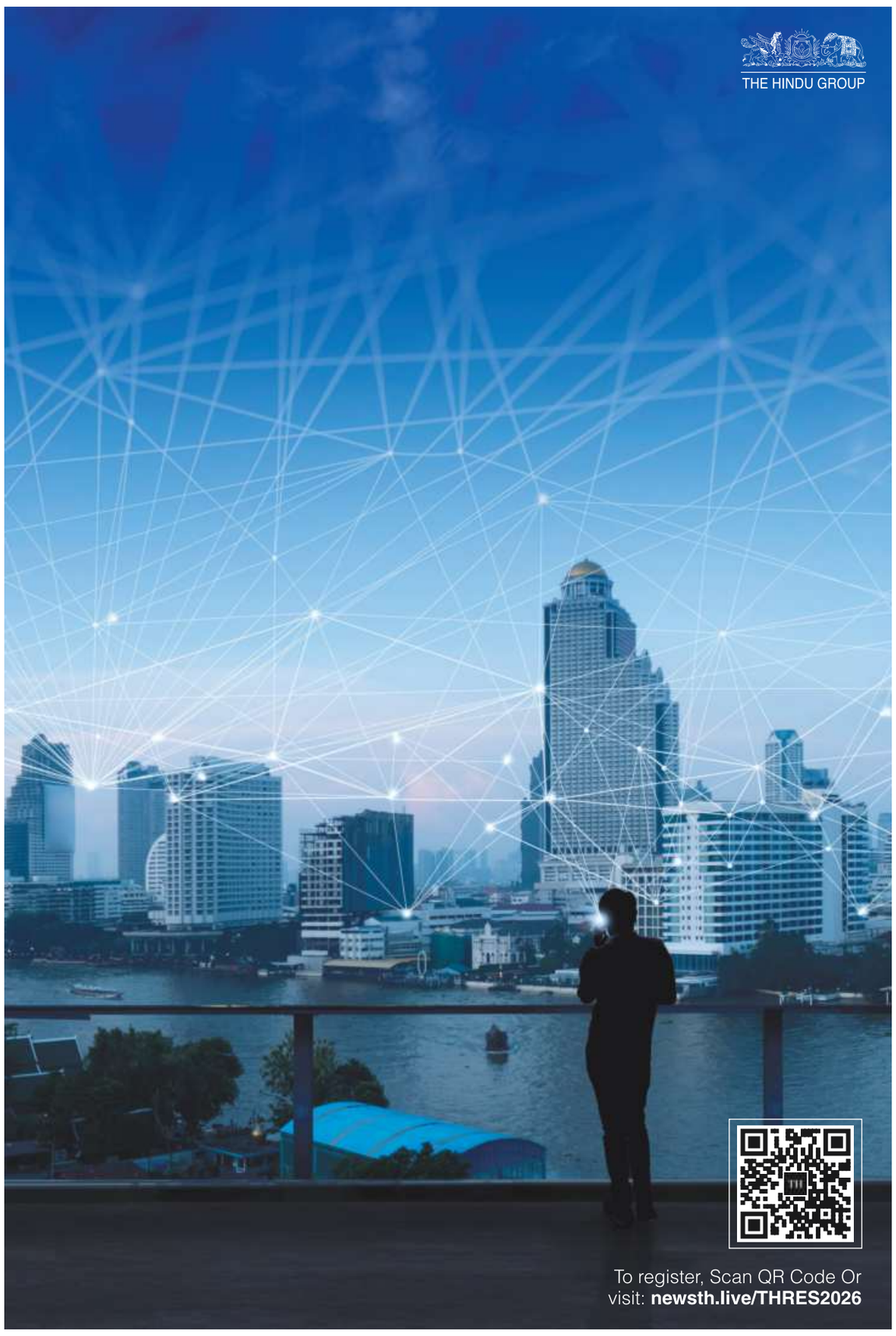
Join the conversations shaping the future of urban India.

CASAGRAND building aspirations
PRESENTS
THE HINDU Real Estate & Urban Infrastructure Summit 2026
In association with
ADISSIA YOUR PROPERTY, OUR PRIORITY

30 July 2026, Chennai

Register your interest by scanning the QR code – **Entry by Invite Only**
For Sponsorships contact **+91 98419 62820**

Associate Partners: NAVIN'S, MINDSPACE | Banking Partner: SBI | Insurance Partner | Academic Partner: SAVEETHA COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN



Decisive win: Bardet edged Sathiyan to give U Mumba the lead. BUTTERFLYUTT

U Mumba registers season's first win

Anusha pulls off a crucial victory in the final singles match to help the defending champion best Dabang Delhi 8-7

UTT

K. Keerthivasan
PANAJI

The odds were firmly stacked against Dabang Delhi's Maria Xiao when she walked out to face U Mumba TT's Anusha Kutumbale in the fifth and deciding match of the Ultimate Table Tennis Season 7 at the Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium on Wednesday.

Moments earlier, Mumba's Lilian Bardet had edged past G. Sathiyan 2-1 in a fiercely contested singles match to hand the defending champion a 7-5 lead. With just one game needed from the final match to secure the tie, the advantage lay squarely on Anusha. Though Anusha lost the first two games, she came up with an excellent counter-attacking effort in the third to win the game that mattered to give U Mumba its first win of the season 8-7.

Mumba's Manush Shah has not been at his best in this edition. If there has been one glaring weakness in his game, it has been a lack of consistency.

Against Youssef Abdelaziz in the opening match, Manush seldom displayed the patience or discipline needed to build points. Particularly in the opening game, he appeared eager to end rallies too quickly, going for ambitious winners before constructing the point.

The resulting unforced errors prevented him from finding any rhythm and he lost 1-2. Mumba's Anna Hursey extended her unbeaten run in the singles, with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Sutirtha Mukherjee, to level the tie at 3-3.

It was a huge upset in the third match as Manush found his attacking touch and Anna kept within herself as the mixed doubles pair outwitted Sathiyan and Maria Xiao to swing the momentum in Mumba's favour at 5-4.

The results: U Mumba TT bt Delhi Dabang 8-7 (Manush Shah lost to Youssef Abdelaziz 11-9, 11-4, 6-11; Anna Hursey bt Sutirtha Mukherjee 9-11, 11-7, 11-6; Manush & Anna bt Sathiyan & Maria Xiao 11-4, 8-11, 11-8; Lilian Bardet bt Sathiyan 11-10, 8-11, 11-8; Anusha Kutumbale lost to Maria Xiao 10-11, 9-11, 11-10).

The charge of the youth brigade in Season 7

K. Keerthivasan
PANAJI

The Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) Season 7 has once again lived up to its reputation of giving youngsters the platform to showcase their potential and they have grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

At the Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium here, it has been these young paddlers who have injected the league with energy, fearlessness and fresh ambition. Time and again, they have delivered much-needed breakthroughs for their franchises, swung the momentum with fearless performances, thrown the rankings out of the window, and in the process, propelled their teams ahead in the race for crucial points.

They have served up memorable contests for the modest gathering at the stadium and the OTT audience producing performances rich in skill, composure and daring that fans are likely to cherish for a long time.

It was P.B. Abhinandh of Dempo Goa Challengers who opened the floodgates for Gen Z. The 18-year-old matched 25-year-old Frenchman Lilian Bardet in both attack and defence by displaying maturity that belied his age.

It was refreshing to see him with such freedom, composure and nonchalance, and his victory unleashed a wave that continued through to 20-year-old Sayali Wani of UP Prometheans defeating Ahmedabad APL Pipers' Manika Batra on Tuesday.

The paddler who has borne the brunt of the 'youth aggression' has been Manika, a three-time Olympian and multiple Commonwealth Games medallist. The 31-year-old has lost all her singles matches so far. While her defeat to Anna Hursey could perhaps be dismissed as an off day against an accomplished international, her losses to 16-year-old Syndrela Das and 20-year-old Sayali cannot be viewed in the same light.

The manner in which Syndrela dismantled Manika was a lesson in fearless, attacking table tennis. The teenager had an answer to every variation Manika's racquet could conjure up. Syndrela's backhand down-the-line and cross-court winners repeatedly left the veteran stranded.

Equally impressive was HVR Kolkata Thunder-Blades' Ankur Bhattacharjee's victory over 33-year-old G. Sathiyan. A powerhouse of talent, the 19-year-old produced a masterclass in aggressive play, refusing to yield an inch, as he relentlessly attacked and broke through Sathiyan's famed defence. His celebration of standing atop the table after the victory, however, was not in the spirit of the game.

Taneesha Kotecha's win over Diya Chitale, Payas Jain's victory against Manush Shah, and the high-quality contests featuring Abhinandh against Ankur and Payas illustrated how far the country's young paddlers have progressed. Their shot-making, tactical awareness and ability to absorb pressure reflected a generation that is no longer content merely to compete with established names.

At the same time, there remains considerable room for improvement. Syndrela, for instance, struggled against the anti-spin rubber used by Kolkata's Ayhika Mukherjee, highlighting the need to adapt better to different styles and equipment.

This season has demonstrated that Indian table tennis has a vibrant pipeline of talent and that a new generation is keen to take the sport to greater heights.

Making a mark: Youngsters like Abhinandh, Syndrela, Ankur and Sayali have served up a feast. BUTTERFLY UTT

High-quality field for Quantbox Chennai Grand Masters

C. Shyam Sundar
CHENNAI

The heat is on in Chennai.

It is also time to brace up for some heated battles on the chessboard as the stage is set for the first move in the fourth edition of the Quantbox Chennai Grand Masters chess tournament at Hotel Westin Velachery on Thursday.

The reigning World champion D. Gukesh, whose diminishing returns since his ascension to the throne have sparked a lot of chatter, will be eyeing a return to form in the lead-up to the championship match against Javokhir Sindarov.

He will have his task cut out in a eight-man field that features Frenchman Alireza Firouzja, Sindarov's Uzbek compatriot Nodirbek Abdusattorov, American Hans Niemann and fellow Indians Arjun Erigaisi and Nihal Sarin.

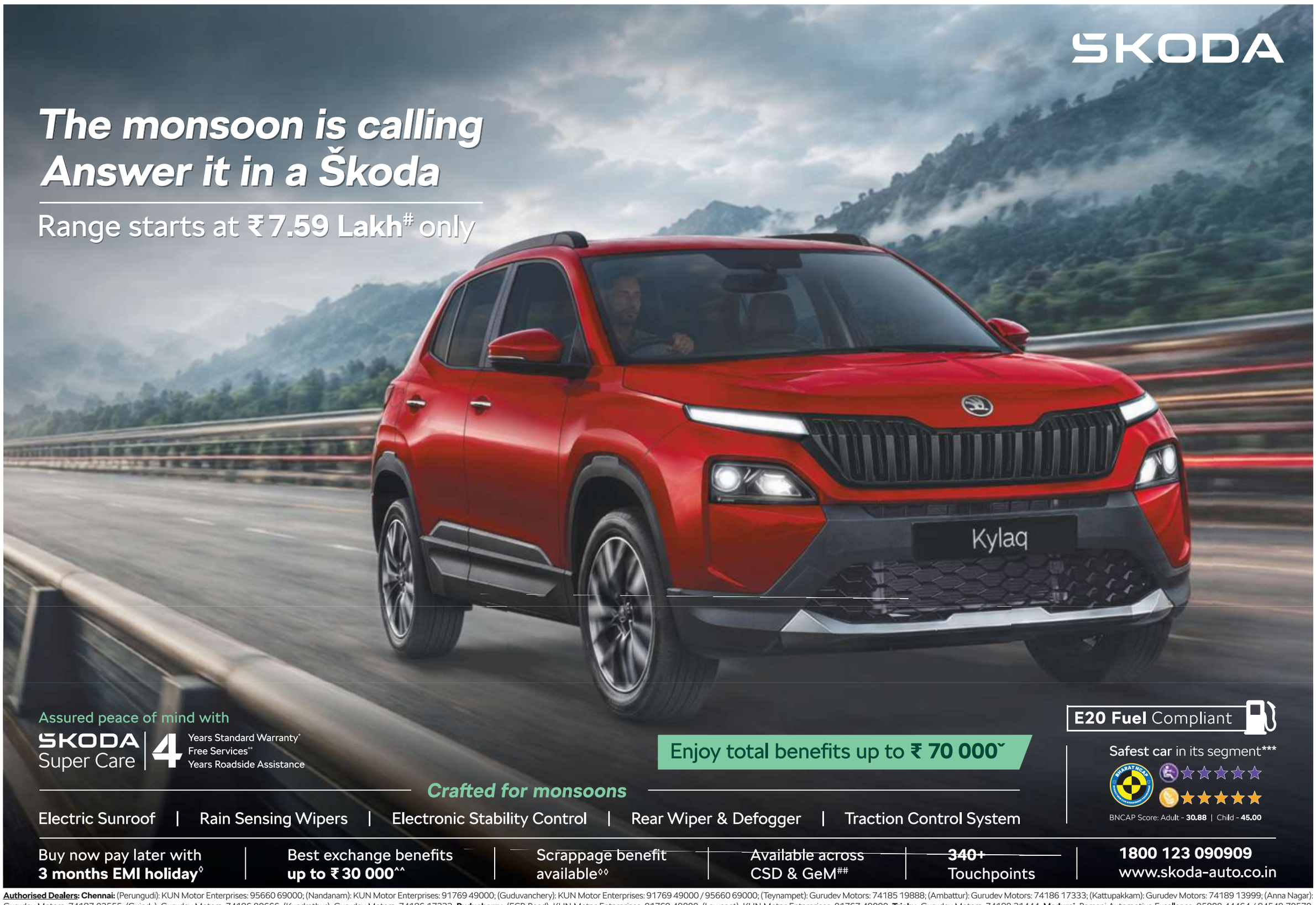
Coming off modest returns in Norway Chess and the Grand Chess Tour event in Croatia, Gukesh would be hoping for home comfort.

Former World Rapid champion Abdusattorov, the highest rated player in the fray, will start favourite, entering the event on the back of a runner-finish in GCT-Croatia.

Firouzja, the champion in Croatia, will be the player to beat here. Erigaisi, who didn't have a great outing in the tournament last year and Nihal, who is also returning to the event, would look to make their best moves.

M. Pranesh, the victor in the Challenger section in 2024 and Russia's Dmitry Andreikin won't just want to make up the numbers and put up a good show against some of the best.

It's over to Gukesh and the rest to sizzle on the chessboard.



Authorised Dealers: Chennai: (Perungudi): KUN Motor Enterprises: 95660 69000; (Nandanam): KUN Motor Enterprises: 91769 49000; (Guduvanchery): KUN Motor Enterprises: 91769 49000 / 95660 69000; (Teynampet): Gurudev Motors: 74185 19888; (Ambattur): Gurudev Motors: 74186 17333; (Kattupakkam): Gurudev Motors: 74189 13999; (Anna Nagar): Gurudev Motors: 74187 03555; (Guindy): Gurudev Motors: 74186 90666; (Kundrathur): Gurudev Motors: 74186 17333; **Puducherry:** (ECR Road): KUN Motor Enterprises: 91769 49000; (Lawspet): KUN Motor Enterprises: 91767 49000; **Trichy:** Gurudev Motors: 74189 31444; **Madurai:** Ramani Automotive Excellence: 95009 44464 / 84549 70570; **Coimbatore:** (Mettupalayam Road): SGA Cars: 0422-7123456; (Avinashi Road): SGA Cars: 0422-7123456; (Saravanampatti): SGA Cars: 0422-7123456 / 0422-7123506; (Sowripalayam): SGA Cars: 0422-7123456; **Salem:** S7 Cars: 87400 85555 / 95665 00007; **Namakkal:** S7 Cars: 87400 85555; **Cuddalore:** KUN Motor Enterprises: 91769 49000; **Vellore:** Gurudev Motors: 74189 29333; **Tanjore:** Gurudev Motors: 78450 29333; **Erode:** S7 Cars: 97915 01999 / 87400 85555; **Hosur:** S7 Cars: 95665 66663; **Tirupur:** SGA Cars: 0422 7123456; **Dindigul:** Ramani Automotive Excellence: 95009 44464; **Karur:** SGA Cars: 0422-7123500; **Pollachi:** SGA Cars: 0422-7123456; **Tirunelveli:** Ramani Automotive Excellence: 95009 44464; **Nagercoil:** Ramani Automotive Excellence : 95009 44464

T&C Apply. #Ex-showroom price. The price listed is based on current prevailing rates and is subject to change without any prior notice. ˇTotal benefits are applicable on select variants and models for a limited period and in limited quantities, and they differ from model to model & variant to variant. The Škoda Super Care programme is applicable to all new Škoda vehicles purchased on or after 1st January 2026. *Each Škoda vehicle is covered by warranty for a period of 4 years or 100,000 km, whichever occurs earlier. **The 4 free services scheduled at 1,000 km, 7,500 km, 15,000 km and 30,000 km are limited to free labour charges only; all costs pertaining to parts, consumables and lubricants shall be borne by the customer. Roadside Assistance is subject to Škoda Assist's standard coverage areas and service terms. Škoda reserves the right to alter the details of specifications and service offerings without any prior notice. ***Sub-4 metre ICE vehicles, as per the BNCAP Rating ◊3-month EMI holiday is available on select variants through participating finance partners, subject to loan approval. Down payment, loan amount, interest rate, EMI and final finance terms may vary based on variant, location and customer profile and will be at sole discretion of the finance partner. ^^Exchange benefits are applicable on select models and differ from model to model and variant to variant, for limited period and in limited quantity. ◊◊Scrappage benefit can be availed on select variants only against Certificate of Deposit. Check with your nearest dealership for more information. ##Selected variants available, stock subject to availability on CSD and GeM. Please refer to www.skoda-auto.co.in for more information. Images are for representation purposes only. Actual colour, features and specifications may vary. Above car picture is created with the help of computer graphics solely for the purpose of advertising. All disputes are subject to Mumbai court's jurisdiction only.

Everyone wants to win gold at the Asian extravaganza

Sarvesh Kushare adopts well-prepared training methods to better Tejaswin's eight-year-old National record; coach Jithin feels the tweaks made in the run-up make the difference

BISWARANJAN ROUT & RITU RAJ KONWAR

Y.B. Sarangi

On June 27 evening, immediately after Sarvesh Kushare ended his four-year quest to better Tejaswin Shankar's eight-year-old high jump National record of 2.28m at the National inter-state athletics meet at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar by clearing 2.31m, Tejaswin took to his 'X' handle to write: "Another mental barrier broken!! 2.30+ was probably the last of the sticky records. 2.34-35 is just a matter of time."

Worlds and Olympics gold medallist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra endorsed Tejaswin's statement, and Sarvesh's achievement of becoming the first Indian to go past 2.30m, by reposting it.

With very few world-class marks to their name, Indian athletes' hunger for success is understandable. Perhaps that appetite kept 30-year-old Sarvesh patient in the hunt to surpass the 2.30m barrier. He had missed it by a whisker when he recorded 2.28m at the Federation meet in Ranchi a month ago, before seeing his perseverance rewarded.

No excuse

"At 2.28m, my ankle slipped a little in Ranchi. I was in good condition. I still had a light injury. But I had to do it today. There was no excuse. The weather was good. The ground was also good. Overall, there was a lot of motivation. I also held the Asian Games qualifying mark for the first time. I'm improving – what more can I ask for!" said Sarvesh.

"My body felt good. My coach had said it would happen this time. I was determined. 2.30m was not happening despite my long-time effort to get it. So, I thought today I would do 2.31m. It was a lot of fun doing that," said Sarvesh, as he displayed different antics as the bar went up and up and he kept sailing over it effortlessly.

"It was very difficult to go above 2.30m. If Tejaswin had not done 2.28m in 2018, I would not have come this far. I was also progressing slowly. Today, by the grace of God, everything went well. I have tried this during training, but I had not done it so well prior to today. Since our preparation was top-class, anything was possible."

Now, 2.31m has placed Sarvesh as the joint fourth season leader in the world, along with British jumper Kimani Jack, and first in Asia, ahead of tied-fifth spot holders Japan's Naoto Hasegawa and Tomohiro Shinno and Korea's Sanghyeok Woo, who have all cleared 2.30m. "Everyone wants to win a gold medal at the Asian Games. I will also try to win one," said Sarvesh.

Pressure under control

Sarvesh's coach Jithin Thomas, a former Asian silver medallist with a personal best of 2.22m, shared his thoughts about the feat. "This time, the pressure was under control. I told him to stay focused and control the pressure. This time, the work was about that. I knew if we controlled the pressure, then the jump would happen."

For Sarvesh, who competed in the Paris Olympics and was a finalist at the Tokyo World Championships last year, the right pace of his run-up did the trick. Apart from the requisite exercises, visualisation is a main activity in Sarvesh's training.

"The difference was the run-up. Earlier, he used to pick up speed from the beginning and move uncontrollably. He was trying to speed up too early. Now, in the beginning, the speed was under control. Then gradually, it went up. He was trained that way. He needs to work on it. I told him, 'Stay focused and you will clear it smoothly.'

"I told him that no one has done 2.30m in India. If you do 2.30m, your name will be up there as long as high jump is there in India.

Patience pays

"In high jump, there is a mark for everyone. Then it becomes stagnant. Some people pursue it for two-three years and leave it. If you have patience, then you will be able to improve it. Because Sarvesh had the patience, he could do it. There was this belief that he would do it, so now there is relief. It's the greatest day of my life. "Because he had done (well earlier), he was after it. We were focused. We were careful that he should not pick up any injuries. There were small injuries. Still, we were focused. We kept talking about it. The mark kept improving and we were able to do it."

With a smile, Sarvesh, who hails from a village near Nashik in Maharashtra, quipped, "He (Jithin) spoke very little to me this week. I don't know what he was thinking."

Sarvesh acknowledges that the support extended by his coach, his family, his employer the Indian Army, his sponsor OGQ, and the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) played a key role in his journey. "I am confident. If the training goes well and there are no injuries, then confidence will increase. If everyone's support is there, then we can go ahead. Especially my coach, who has not taken any leave for seven months, and my family members are very supportive. That's why I am able to do it. Otherwise, I would have been disturbed."

Sarvesh is happy to note that Indian jumpers, including women's National record holder Pooja Singh – who, like Sarvesh, trains at the Anju Bobby George Academy in Bengaluru – are doing well. "Yes, it did impact me mentally that Pooja broke the National mark. She set a record of 1.93m. We were thinking that we would do well. She made a National record before me. I did it after her. Dev Meena is also doing well in pole vault. He is also breaking National records. This is a good year for jumpers." Needless to say, long jumpers Ancy Sojan, who broke Anju's 22-year-old National record, and M. Sreeshankar and Shahnavaz Khan, who achieved his season best, are also among the Indians who have achieved world-class marks this season.

Encouraging sign

Even in men's high jump, the presence of some good athletes, including Tejaswin, Adarsh Ram, and Basant, is an encouraging sign. "A pool of jumpers should be there – only then can there be improvement. Otherwise, Sarvesh will be alone. Whoever achieves something first, his name remains up there," said Jithin.

After breaching the 2.30m peak in June, Sarvesh became the first Indian high jumper to earn a podium, by finishing third with a mark of 2.26m, on his Diamond League debut in Monaco on July 10. Now, Sarvesh and his coach Jithin are bubbling with confidence while eyeing higher marks and glorious medals in the upcoming Commonwealth Games and Asian Games. "I hope Sarvesh maintains his focus and patience. He will go far," said Jithin.

THE GIST

- With very few world-class marks to their name, Indian athletes' hunger for success is understandable. He had missed it by a whisker when he recorded 2.28m at the Federation meet in Ranchi a month ago, before seeing his perseverance rewarded
- 2.31m has placed Sarvesh as the joint fourth season leader in the world, along with British jumper Kimani Jack, and first in Asia, ahead of tied-fifth spot holders Japan's Naoto Hasegawa and Tomohiro Shinno and Korea's Sanghyeok Woo, who have all cleared 2.30m
- Sarvesh and his coach Jithin are bubbling with confidence while eyeing higher marks and glorious medals in the upcoming Commonwealth Games and Asian Games

A new era of Indian ecology looks to its horizons, and to the ground

The second Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference in Haryana became a forum where researchers from universities, government agencies, NGOs, and field stations got together to figure out where the discipline is heading — using insights into evolutionary history, long-term monitoring, public policy

Ankita Rathore
SONEPAT

Wildlife ecology in India looks different today than it did a decade ago. Climate change, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and rapid development are all reshaping ecosystems faster than scholars can document them. Thus, ecologists are interested in how biodiversity has changed as well as how it is likely to change next.

Just these questions shaped the second Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference (IWEC), at Ashoka University in Sonepat, Haryana, on July 10-12, where researchers from across India came together to discuss the future of wildlife ecology in the country. Conceived by the late wildlife biologist Ajith Kumar as a national platform for India's wildlife ecologists to exchange ideas, IWEC has grown into a forum where researchers from universities, government agencies, NGOs, and field stations together figure out where the discipline is heading – using insights into evolutionary history, long-term monitoring, public policy, technology, and public health.

The inaugural conference, held in 2024, demonstrated the breadth of this community. At the second conference, this year, the participants repeatedly returned to the same question: how can ecologists anticipate ecological change? As Indian ecology reaches towards prediction across biological scales, disciplines, and even the divide between science and policy, much of that ambition still depends on staying close to the ground, to fieldwork and local institutions.

A group photo of the attendees and organisers at IWEC 2026. ANKITA RATHORE

Biodiversity at scale

The conference's three paired plenary sessions showed how wildlife ecology is expanding across biological scales, taking in evolutionary history, ecosystem change, bird conservation, citizen science, and animal physiology. The throughline was that predicting the future requires evidence spanning both the deep past and the decisions animals every day make to survive.

The opening plenary traced biodiversity through deep evolutionary time. Jahnavi Joshi (CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad) spoke of how geological history and climate gradients shaped the diversity of woody plants in the Western Ghats. Using phylogenetic analyses, she examined whether different parts of the mountain range function as evolutionary 'cradles', where new species originate, or 'museums', where ancient lineages persist. She argued that both patterns can help predict how species will respond to future environmental change.

Mahesh Sankaran (National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bengaluru) turned to the future of India's montane grasslands under climate change, drawing on projections from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to show how rising temperature, increasingly variable rainfall, and extreme weather will reshape these already vulnerable ecosystems, alongside other human-driven pressures such as altered nutrient cycles and land-use change.

Evolutionary history has set the stage and long-term monitoring is today tracking how biodiversity is changing. Ashwin Viswanathan (Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysuru) spoke of citizen-science platforms such as eBird India generating observations at scales impossible in conventional field studies, helping researchers track migration and species distributions. His example of choice was the rusty-tailed flycatcher, whose migration across Uttarakhand and eastern India researchers reconstructed using citizen-science data.

Asad Rahmani (Bombay Natural History Society) – who has been surveying the pressures on the country's birds such as habitat loss, infrastructure, and climate change – pointed to the drying of Kashmir's Shallabugh wetland and urged scientists and citizens alike to speak up for wildlife. Anusha Shankar (Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Hyderabad) described physiology as an underutilised lens connecting processes across biological scales, drawing on energy expenditure and body temperature measurements in hummingbirds.

Maria Thaker (Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru) likewise drew on studies of the spiny-tailed lizard to show how desert reptiles regulate body temperature and adjust their nutritional requirements across seasons. "Lizards, like other ectothermic vertebrates, can behaviourally thermoregulate, but will not be able to handle future climate warming," she said. Rather than just record where species occur, researchers are also increasingly trying to understand the mechanisms that determine how organisms and ecosystems respond to environmental change. The emphasis is moving from description towards prediction. Yet every one of these predictive tools, including from physiological measurements to citizen-science records, rests on long, even tedious periods of observation.

Understanding to action

However, scientific understanding alone cannot conserve biodiversity. A special session, called 'Leveraging Global Policies for Local Conservation in India', turned the focus to how ecological knowledge can inform decision-making in India while recognising that conservation everywhere is shaped by the interplay of science, governance, and society. The discussion, moderated by Asmita Kabra (Ashoka University), asked how international biodiversity commitments could be adapted to India's ecological and social realities. Its speakers agreed global frameworks succeed only where local institutions and evidence-based implementation back them up.

In particular, Jagdish Krishnaswamy (Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bengaluru) called for experts to move beyond species-centred conservation to protect the ecological processes that sustain entire landscapes. Following the success of India's protected areas, he argued that the next frontier is conserving landscapes beyond their boundaries and integrating biodiversity, livelihoods, and climate resilience.

Vivek Menon (Wildlife Trust of India), in turn, said conservation centred on species remains indispensable because "the natural world sustains us, but we are losing the species that sustain it". He added that while conservation cannot completely halt biodiversity loss, "it significantly reduces how fast it occurs".

International agreements can provide a common framework, Menon and Krishnaswamy argued, but lasting conservation depends on effective local institutions and the communities that share these landscapes with wildlife. In other words, predictions and commitments are both only as effective as the institutions and communities that can act on it.

Across disciplines

While the plenary sessions highlighted what wildlife ecologists are studying, the conference's panel discussions noted how the discipline itself was changing. Advances in artificial intelligence, genomics, environmental DNA, and computational tools are transforming ecology research, allowing scientists to ask questions that would have been difficult, or even impossible, just a decade ago. Yet throughout the conference, speakers also cautioned against viewing technology as a replacement for ecological understanding.

In a discussion called 'Extinction of Experience: The Decline of Field-based Ecology', moderated by Robin Vijayan (Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Tirupati), panellists discussed how ecology is adapting to rapid advances in artificial intelligence and genetics. These tools have expanded the scope of ecological research, the panel noted, but could not substitute for the understanding that comes from directly engaging with nature. "Unless and until we have field logic, we won't be able to analyse our data well," Bilal Habib (Wildlife Institute of India) said.

Another panel examined the complex issue of free-ranging dogs through the intersecting lenses of ecology, public health, animal welfare, and urban governance. And rather than advocate a single approach, the discussion laid out the scientific and policy challenges of managing free-ranging dog populations in Indian cities and their edges.

Panellists also reflected on how terminology shaped public discourse. Chandrima Home (Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design, and Technology, Bengaluru) argued that the label "free-ranging dogs" captured these populations more accurately than "stray" or "feral", since only a small fraction comes into conflict with wildlife or livestock. Other speakers discussed the role of Animal Birth Control programmes alongside the need to improve waste management and stronger municipal governance, arguing that dog populations track food availability as closely as any carnivore does in the wild. As Anindita Bhadra (IISER Kolkata) put it, "We want our cities to be smart, but we can't manage our garbage." Both, in fact, made the same case from opposite directions: that technology cannot replace field logic and that a problem like free-ranging dogs cannot be solved by ecology alone.

Spider silk on the breeze

The conference's parallel symposia carried this range of inquiry further as researchers also presented work on river ecosystems, disease ecology, bats, insects, behavioural ecology, environmental DNA, wildlife corridors, and conservation technologies, drawing ecology into the conversation through genetics, physiology, epidemiology, and the social sciences. Sara Kamat, a PhD scholar at Bharati Vidyapeeth (Deemed-to-be University), Pune, has used advanced molecular methods to map how seasonal changes in diet shape the gut microbiome of Indian grey wolves, offering insights into how carnivores persist in changing environments. Swapnil Kiran (CSIR-CCMB Hyderabad) spoke about her work on quantifying the economic burden of snakebite mortality and morbidity in rural India using a community-based ecological epidemiology approach. Sibasish Sahoo (Amity University, Noida) has documented how Asian elephants change the way they behave in the mining landscapes of Keonjhar, Odisha, to navigate increasingly fragmented habitats, utilising a mix of field-based, spatial, and analytical ecological methods. The three researchers' work was a reminder of how wide ecological methods range today.

Overall, over three days and 197 talks, the throughline described a discipline that has become ambitious – especially more integrative and more willing to speak to policy and public health – even as it remains, at its core, a science of the ground. In a special address, philanthropist and one of the conference's sponsors Rohini Nilekani likened wildlife ecologists to the breeze that carries a spider's silk, allowing it to cast a web that would otherwise be impossible to build. Likewise, individual strands of conservation become meaningful only when they connect.

(Ankita Rathore is a science communicator and writer whose work focuses on science and technology policy, research, and higher education. rathoreankita024@gmail.com)

Attendees at the conference read a poster. ANKITA RATHORE

A view of Taipusi in China's Inner Mongolia region, in 2007. It is the centre of the 'Green Wall' project, a buffer that slows the Gobi desert's expansion. AFP

China's 'Great Green Wall' tames desert growth, but fight not over

Associated Press

For half a century, millions of workers have repeated a task across the deserts in northern China: inserting forearm-length sticks into shifting sand, first in a row, then in an intersecting line, gradually forming a grid. Then saplings are planted at the centre of each small square.

The technique, known as "straw checkerboards", is a simple yet widely used method to stabilise sand dunes against the wind and help plants take root by using water supplied through an irrigation system.

The widespread lattice it created across the sand has become the iconic image of China's decades-long campaign against the spreading of desert conditions, known as the Three-North Protective Forest Program or the Green Great Wall.

The generations of work have yielded measurable progress, but scientists caution that preserving the gains will require decades of continued effort.

For a long time, drought, overgrazing and farming removed vegetation, harmed the soil and made areas vulnerable to wind and sandstorms. That kind of degradation of the land over time is known as desertification. The area of desertified land in northern China peaked in 2000, and it has been reduced by over 1,000 sq. km each year since then, according to data published by state media. The Chinese government said the initiative launched in 1978 has played a crucial role in transforming vast regions covering nearly half of China from "the desertification advancing and people retreating" to "greenery advancing and the desertification retreating." Forests planted by the program now cover a cumulative 500,000 sq. km.

"The broad significance of the Three-North Program is not only the scale of restoration, but the long-term political commitment behind it," said Barron Joseph Orr, chief scientist for the U.N. Convention to Combat Desertification. He added that reversing desertification is possible when it becomes part of long-term development strategies.

The progress is the result of the efforts of frontline sand-control workers, along with top-level planning and substantial state investment, said Zhu Jiaojun, a scientist at the Institute of Applied Ecology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, who has long been dedicated to the construction and management of the program. He added that increased rainfall in recent years in some areas has made vegetation restoration easier.

"The achievement of desertification combat is due to people's hard work and a bit of luck with climate," he said.

According to long-term monitoring data by Zhu's team, China's desertified land has shrunk by around 10% overall since 2000, and areas of severely or extremely desertified land have decreased by more than 40%. Forest cover in the program area has risen from around 5% in 1978 to 14% in 2022.

In a recent government-organised media tour to a corner of Kubuqi Desert, about 800 km to the west of Beijing, 60-year-old Yin Yuzhen recounted her early days of being a sand-control worker.

Four decades ago, she recalled, the sand often blew so thick that it made it hard to see a short distance. "But now we can see the sun. We can see the green in the distance. We can see the road," said Yin. Zhu, the scientist, estimated that over 300 million rural labourers have been involved in the program, mostly on a paid, part-time basis.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Cost of energy relief package planned by Germany for 2027

13.3 € billion. The German government plans an energy cost relief package for businesses and consumers worth €13.3 billion ($15.2 billion) in 2027, to be drawn from the Climate and Transformation Fund, the Finance Ministry said on Wednesday. REUTERS

Number of Ebola cases in Democratic Republic of the Congo

2,000 More than 2,000 Ebola cases, including 754 deaths, have been recorded in the DR Congo, where the World Health Organization warns the outbreak may be two to four times larger than official figures suggest. AFP

Persons affected due to flood situation in Arunachal Pradesh

1 lakh. The flood situation in Arunachal Pradesh worsened on Wednesday, with 26 of the State' s 28 districts affected and the number of people hit by the deluge crossing one lakh, an official bulletin said. The floods and landslides have so far claimed seven lives and injured 29 people across the State. PTI

Value of goods exported on India-U.K. trade pact's first day

140 $ million. India has exported goods worth $140 million to the United Kingdom at zero duty under the comprehensive economic and trade agreement (CETA), which became operational on Wednesday, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said. PTI

Dementia risk that could be prevented or delayed

45 in per cent. Up to 45% of dementia risk could be prevented or delayed, the World Health Organization said on Wednesday, citing modifiable risk factors such as tobacco and air pollution. It is the seventh leading cause of death. AFP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

Follow us facebook.com/thehindu X.com/the_hindu instagram.com/the_hindu

The problem with China's 4.3% growth

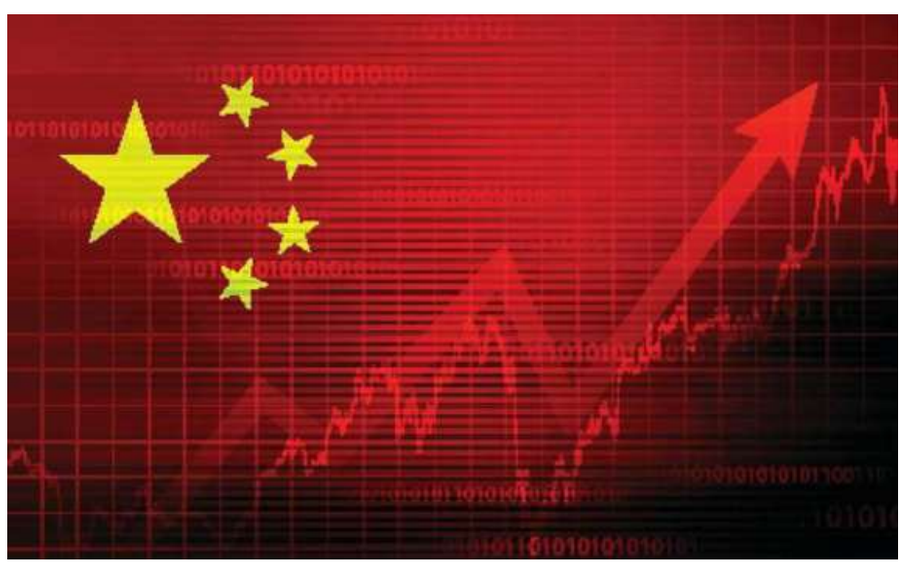
It's the slowest growth since 2022, when China was still in the grips of the pandemic, and below the government's already-lowered annual target of 4.5-5%; the country is facing multiple challenges of a real estate slowdown, sluggish consumption, and serious challenges in the job market

WORLD INSIGHT

Ananth Krishnan

China's economy grew 4.3% in the second quarter of 2026, according to data released on Wednesday by China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). With growth falling to the lowest in more than three years and below the government's already lowered annual target of 4.5-5%, attention has turned to how the Chinese government is likely to deal with multiple challenges of a real estate slowdown, sluggish consumption, and serious challenges in the job market.

A meeting of the ruling Communist Party's Politburo slated for July-end is likely to offer some clues. China's surging exports have emerged as a bright spot for Beijing, while raising questions for India and other trade partners that are grappling with ever-widening trade imbalances.



China's GDP expanded by 4.3% in the second quarter. The numbers reveal how the government wants to portray the state of the economy and may signal potential policy changes. GETTY IMAGES

What does the latest data show?

China's GDP expanded by 4.3% in the second quarter, down from 5% in the first quarter. This marked the slowest growth since 2022, when China was still in the grips of the pandemic. Significantly, growth fell below the annual target. In March 2026, China's National People's Congress (NPC), or Parliament, announced a 4.5-5% target for the year, which was the lowest since 1991.

Other economic indicators released on Wednesday showed a 5.7% drop in fixed-asset investment and sluggish retail sales – an important marker of consumption, which the government hopes will drive future growth for a historically investment-reliant economy.

In May, retail sales fell 0.6% from last year, another low since the pandemic. June showed a slight recovery to a 1.1% increase in retail sales of goods. Usual caveats apply about China's economic data, which China's former Premier Li Keqiang himself reportedly once advised were for "reference only" (and that other indicators, such as freight and power consumption, were arguably more revelatory about the state of the economy). At the same time, it is important to note that economists still closely study China's official data, as numbers reveal how the government wants to portray the state of the economy and may signal potential policy changes. Most economists have noted improvements in the reliability of statistics, with numbers becoming harder to fudge coinciding with the global integration of China's economy and more transparency into the performance of Chinese companies, many of which are publicly listed.

What is driving down growth?

If real estate is about "location, location, location", China's slowdown story is in many ways about "real estate, real estate and real estate". In the first half of the year, property investment fell 18%, a remarkable statistic for an economy once driven by real estate growth. This isn't only about the property sector. The spillover effects are hard to overstate.

An entire swathe of the economy is in a slump, from construction to every related industry that has for decades relied on a booming property sector, from lighting to furniture. Then there is the psychological impact in a country where most people's savings are locked into real estate given the low returns from regulated interest rates that make bank deposits unappealing. Investing abroad is also not an option given the tight capital controls, although the stock market has emerged as an alternative avenue despite its volatility.

This has further dampened the willingness of Chinese consumers to spend, along with other persisting anxieties such as rising healthcare and education costs. Still, there are bright spots for the Chinese economy such as the rapid growth in China's high-tech industries and the continuing expansion of Chinese exports, from electric vehicles to most recently, an extraordinary surge in the exports of air-conditioners to Europe amid a summer heat wave. Trade still remains robust for China, growing 17% in the first half of the year. Exports grew for 11 consecutive quarters to $2.1 trillion in the first six months of the year.

How is the government likely to respond?

All eyes are on an upcoming meeting of the Politburo, the top policy-making body of the Communist Party of China, set for late July. Mao Shengyong, deputy director of the NBS, said on Wednesday the government was likely to "introduce targeted, more proactive and effective policies in response to changing circumstances", without specifying.

Boosting domestic consumption and minimising job losses are likely to top its concerns, especially with many graduates currently entering the workforce. Urban unemployment remained flat at 5% in June. Mr. Mao said "efforts will be stepped up to secure the steady development of employment", with a target to create 12 million new urban jobs in 2026, despite the concerns about hiring impacted by AI. Earlier this week, China announced a first of its kind five-year plan for consumption, with a 2030 retail sales target of 60 trillion yuan ($8.86 trillion), a 20% rise from 2025.

Addressing the property sector – the elephant in the room – is one major challenge. The government has walked a tightrope of avoiding what it calls "systemic risks" while trying to protect buyers (as it needs to, if consumption is to revive) while not bailing out many developers. This is part of an ongoing effort to reform the sector and curb speculation, after Chinese President Xi Jinping's declaration in 2016 that "houses were for living in and not speculation".

The broader problem for Beijing is that it's not only property developers but local governments also have been hard hit by the slump, with real estate sales a major contributor of revenues. Many tier-two and tier-three cities have seen a major cash crunch, impacting spending on infrastructure and social services. The extent of the crunch remains unclear with some taking to fudging data to mask the state of their finances, as the Communist Party's own anti-corruption watchdog warned recently. It cited the example of one plot of land being sold "18 times" in the southern city of Nanning "without ever changing hands", reported the *South China Morning Post*, with the fudge allowing "the city government to artificially shore up its fiscal revenue by 2.83 billion yuan (US$416 million) in 2024".

"Captivated by quick gains," it warned, "some authorities engaged in accounting gimmicks to reflect substantial rises in fiscal revenue, masking actual budget strains."

THE GIST

- Economic indicators released on Wednesday showed a 5.7% drop in fixed-asset investment and sluggish retail sales — an important marker of consumption, which the government hopes will drive future growth for a historically investment-reliant economy.
- The broader problem for Beijing is that it's not only property developers but local governments also have been hard hit by the slump, with real estate sales a major contributor of revenues.

Digitisation and efficiency in criminal justice system

The shift in approach to justice has contributed to making the criminal justice system more citizen-oriented

LETTER AND SPIRIT

C.B.P. Srivastava

Recently, the Centre has announced that India aims for full digital rollout of its criminal justice system from July 1, 2027 after which the procedures related to investigations and trials under the new criminal laws will be recorded digitally through the Interoperable Criminal Justice System. The efficiency of any criminal justice system largely depends on the procedural efficiency beginning from the registration of the first information report (FIR) to investigation, filing of chargesheet outlining specific charges levelled against the accused and presenting the evidence and witness testimonies gathered to substantiate them, trial and finally the disposal. In the digital system the data is stored on the government's cloud platform, MeghRaj.

Understanding criminal justice system

The criminal justice system comprises the police, courts, prisons, forensics, and prosecution services, and aims at ensuring that individuals who suffer injury or loss at the hand of others can present their cases and seek justice.

Justice cannot be delivered unless the rights of the accused and the interests of the victim and the society are balanced. This has been the fundamental principle of the criminal justice system, particularly in common law countries that follow the adversarial system. These countries base their legal systems primarily on judicial precedents and uncodified case law rather than strict statutory codes. This principle also gives the accused a fair chance to present his case in accordance with the tenets of natural justice, that is, the rule of fair hearing (*Audi alteram partem*). In other words, no person should be condemned unheard. The system seeks to ensure procedural fairness. On the other hand, the inquisitorial system is practised in civil law countries, where rules are codified into comprehensive written statutes rather than shaped by judicial precedent. Under this system, the judge plays an active role in investigating the facts and determining the outcome of the case on the basis of inquiry and investigation. Thus, the precision of decision depends largely on the skills and prudence of the judge concerned.

Changed attitude

The reforms in the criminal law have opened a new avenue for the delivery of justice. To be more appropriate, the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) have been replaced by the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) with the idea of transformation. While the erstwhile penal code was implemented with an idea to punish the accused, the BNS believes in the delivery of justice through retribution. The new code has a democratic approach, placing greater emphasis on individual than on the state in matters relating to crimes. The criminal procedure code believed that trial of a 'criminal' was being conducted whereas the BNSS considers an accused as a citizen whose rights should be balanced with the interests of the victims without any prejudice. Thus, the shift in approach to justice has contributed to making the criminal justice system more democratic and citizen-oriented, while strengthening the protection of the principles of natural justice that are embedded constitutional framework of India.

Reforms in the system

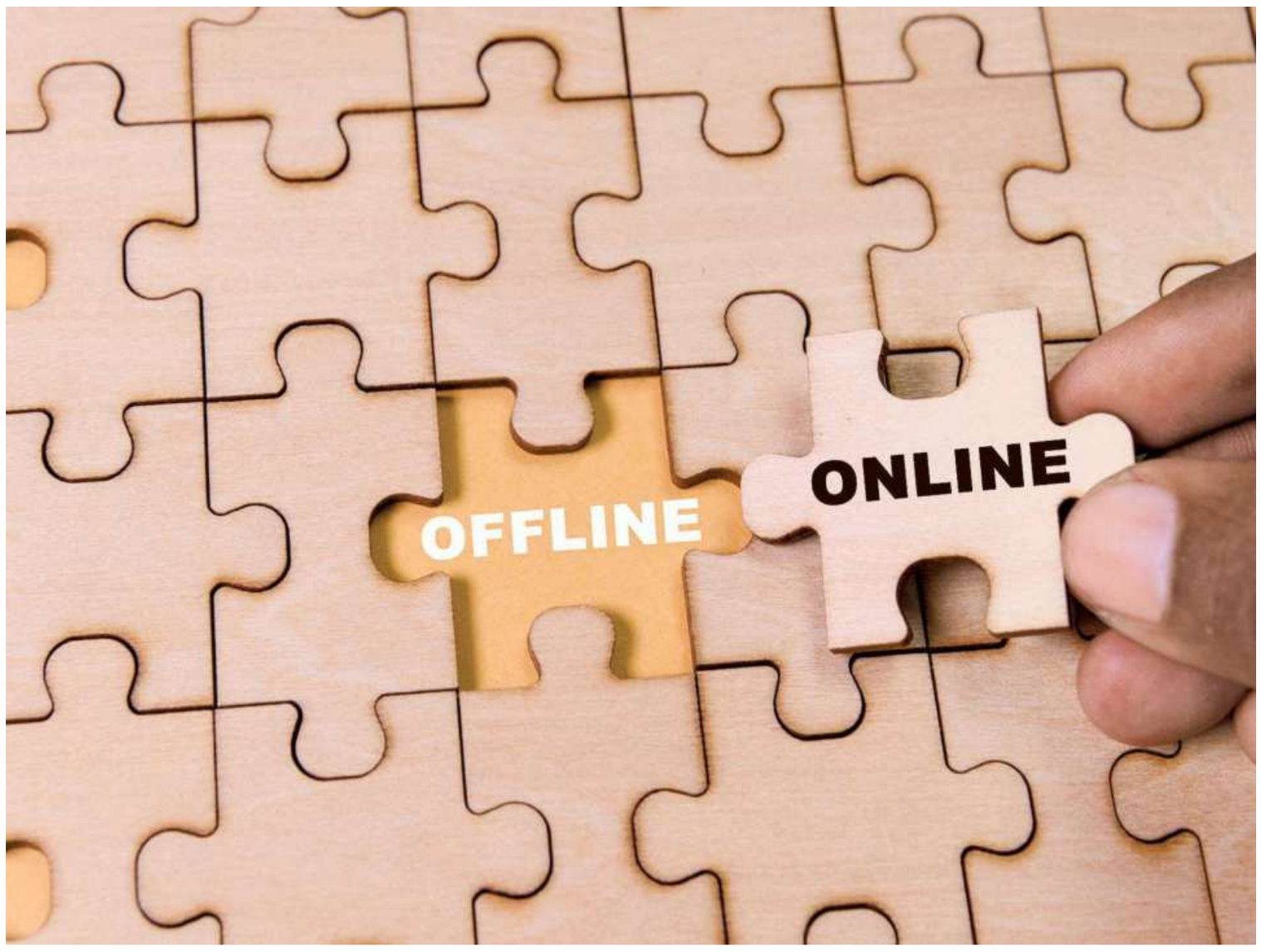
It is well established that every system requires periodic reform to remain responsive to changing needs and circumstances. The judiciary plays a vital role in this process by guiding the state through its directions and rulings. Against this backdrop, it is important to note that courts have laid down procedures governing several aspects of the criminal justice system. Through their decisions, courts often seek to fill legislative gaps in areas where the law is silent, thereby ensuring the effective administration of justice. For example, the Supreme Court in *Visakha v. State of Rajasthan (1997)* gave guidelines to prevent sexual harassment of women at workplace holding that such an act violates Articles 14,15 and 21 of the Constitution.

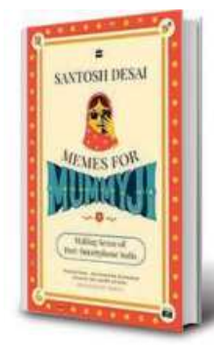
The recent announcement by the Centre to enhance the efficiency of the criminal justice system through digitisation assumes considerable significance. In the field of forensics, the new criminal laws have made forensic examination of crime scenes mandatory for offences punishable with imprisonment of seven years or more. In view of this requirement, the number of forensic laboratories has increased from 129 in 2023 to 154 in 2025. However, according to the National Crime Records Bureau, only 46% of FIRs were digitally transmitted to courts. Since this accounts for less than half of all registered cases, it suggests that the digital chain of the criminal justice system remains incomplete.

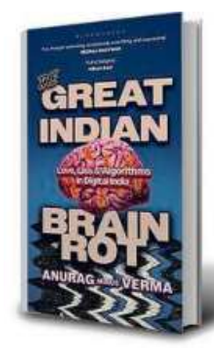
Although most states have implemented various components of the criminal justice digitisation system, progress remains uneven. In this context, full digital rollout by 2027 will fill this gap and make the system more efficient.

The author is President, Centre for Applied Research in Governance, Delhi.

BIBLIOGRAPHY







Online culture is no longer a subset of culture, but its very foundation, with the digital space now serving as the primary space where culture is being created. GETTY IMAGES

From creators to memes: how the Internet came to shape culture

As the boundary between the real and the virtual blurs, three books explore how the Internet has transformed everyday life, suggesting extremely online humans are no longer an aberration, but a product of the world where identity and meaning are increasingly shaped by screens and algorithms

Abhishek Baxi

For much of its early life, the Internet was an escape from the real world, a place one "went" to. In India, in the beginning of the digital revolution, many of us often visited booths to access the Internet – mostly to check our emails or search for information on Google. With the Internet now ubiquitous and available to all, that distinction has collapsed. Today, we live in a culture shaped by both the real and the virtual, often at the same time. The shift is so complete that it is almost invisible.

How do we understand this transformation? Three books – Taylor Lorenz's *Extremely Online* (Simon and Schuster), Anurag Minus Verma's *The Great Indian Brain Rot* (Bloomsbury Publishing India), and *Santosh Desai's Memes for Mummyji* (HarperCollins India) – approach the subject from different angles, but together they show how the Internet has become our primary cultural habitat.

From a tool to a stage

Lorenz's work provides the global scaffolding for this story. Drawing on years of reporting on Internet culture for *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Atlantic*, she chronicles the rise of creators – the people who are online to make money – and how the Internet turned ordinary people into commentators and performers, in *Extremely Online*.

She provides a rosy picture of the Internet, as a place of endless opportunity and democratisation. She writes, "Blogs offered readers everything that legacy media couldn't, revealing what writers really thought." These blogs and forums, she argues, evolved into a culture where visibility slowly became a form of currency. As a result, the self is now curated; it is constantly fed into algorithms. The shaping and evolution of the self has become a public project. Lorenz tries to capture the moment when not just us, but the Internet itself transformed – from a tool to a stage, which then became the default mode of being for many of us.

The Indian story

Her book provides the global story. But when it comes to India, there is something far more chaotic taking place. Verma's The Great Indian Brain Rot argues that India's digital life cannot be understood through the western lens. His essays, written with a satirical edge, show how caste, class, aspiration, and misinformation shape the Internet. The "brain rot" he describes is not a lament about screen addiction or cringe content online; it is a commentary on how digital life amplifies the tensions in society.

According to Verma, the Indian Internet is a place where the earnest and the frivolous, the ordinary and the bizarre, coexist. As we scroll, we come across political propaganda right after an astrology reel. Or we see caste-based trolling thriving alongside self-care content. For many creators, the Internet is a platform that fulfils their desire for upward mobility as well as virality; the latter often helps them achieve the former. Cheap data and inexpensive smartphones have ensured that everyone has access to the Internet, which in turn has created a cultural churn that is still unfolding.

The digital and the domestic

Desai has long been one of India's most perceptive observers and interpreters of the everyday life. In *Memes for Mummyji*, he argues that the meme, the WhatsApp forward, the short video, and even the AI slop that we all consume are not trivial artefacts; they contain our humour, anxieties, and aspirations, and give us a sense of belonging.

His observations reveal how deeply the smartphone has embedded itself in the Indian household, just like the pressure cooker. It has changed how people think and express themselves. We see it around us: our parents, who once struggled with technology, now send us emojis. And family WhatsApp groups, like drawing rooms, are arenas for affection, conflict, and negotiation. In short, the digital and the domestic are no longer separate spheres.

What these three books show is that online culture is no longer a subset of culture, as it once was, but its building block. In other words, the online space is where culture is now being made. On platforms such as Instagram, strangers unknowingly shape our identity and how we present ourselves. On YouTube or X, we post jokes and then watch nervously to see how quickly they travel, how viral they become. We share political statements through memes and hilarious videos.

Of course, this does not mean that the offline world has disappeared. For instance, when a protest begins online, it can gain momentum on the street, as we saw recently with the Cockroach Janata Party movement. We share memes online, but also discuss them in everyday conversation. If you happen to be a chronically offline person, taking part in daily conversations can be challenging if you are not up-to-date with the latest Internet lingo.

Lorenz reminds us that the Internet has given voice to people who were once excluded from public discourse. Verma warns us that the same systems can deepen inequalities and amplify prejudices. Desai shows us that our digital life is shaped by our everyday existence – our rituals, vulnerabilities, and negotiations.

Together, these three books suggest that "extremely online" humans are no longer an aberration. They are a product of the world we have built – a world where our identities, our sense of community, and the meaning of life itself are constantly mediated and determined by screens and algorithms.

Abhishek Baxi is an independent journalist covering the intersections and faultlines of technology, society, and culture.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

The late great Sam Neill delivered versatile performances far beyond Jurassic Park. A quiz on his horror movie exploits

Mohammed Hidhayat

QUESTION 1
The actor portrayed the adult Damien Thorn, the Antichrist, in the third instalment of this famous film franchise, which centres on a child born to the Devil.

QUESTION 2
Shot in West Berlin, Neill acted opposite Isabelle Adjani in this psychological horror drama, which has attained cult status since its release.

QUESTION 3
Neil took a sinister turn in this sci-fi slasher set aboard a haunted spacecraft, delivering the famously chilling line: "Where we're going, we won't need eyes to see."

QUESTION 4
He starred in genre master John Carpenter's lovecraftian homage as an insurance investigator probing the disappearance of a horror writer.

Visual Question: Sam Neill plays a corporate criminal-cum-vampire who plans to profit from a company that sells blood. Name the film which stars Ethan Hawke in the lead role. LIONSGATE

Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:
1. The original name of the platform followed the then popular trend of dropping vowels from the domain name. What was the original name and who coined it? **Ans: Twttr and Noah Glass**
2. Twitter originally had a 140-character limit for tweets but it was later increased to 280 characters. When was the change introduced and what was the reason for the original limit? **Ans: 2017 and so tweets fit into single SMS messages**
3. Which astronaut sent the first tweet live from outer orbit? Also mention the year the tweet was posted. **Ans: Timothy Creamer and 2010**
4. Which politician, who once used the platform to declare victory in the Presidential election ["four more years"], is among the most followed accounts on X? **Ans: Barack Obama**
5. Which user proposed the introduction of a popular feature of the platform used to categorise content on the platform? Identify the feature. **Ans: Chris Messina and Hashtag**
6. Visual: The iconic blue bird logo became synonymous with the platform. Who were the designers who designed it? **Ans: Philip Pascuzzo and Douglas Bowman**

Early Birds
Nobody answered all the questions correctly.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

What is the meaning of 'heist'? (V. V. Annapoorani, Bangalore)
First, let's deal with the pronunciation. The "ei" is like the "y" in my and by. "Heist" can be used as a noun and a verb. When used as a noun, it means robbery or theft. Here are a few examples.

The heist didn't go according to plan. Several people were killed.

Did you know that there was a jewellery heist this afternoon?

When you "heist" someone, you rob him of something. The word can also mean "to steal". Here are a few examples.

Ranjit heisted a car and drove it all the way to Shillong.

After they had heisted the passengers they began to kill them.

Is it OK to say "parapet wall"? (P. V. Srinivasan, Chennai)
The dictionary defines "parapet" as a "low wall at the edge of a high roof, bridge, etc". Since the word "parapet" means a wall of some kind, you needn't say "parapet wall". But you do hear a lot of people saying exactly that.

When someone says "Would you mind repeating what you just said?", should the reply be "Not at all"? (S. S. Saravanan, Madurai)
Well, it depends on what you mean. If you don't mind repeating what you have just said, then the reply "Not at all" is correct. If, on the other hand, you say "Yes", it implies, "Yes, I do mind repeating what I just said". Many non-native speakers of English have problems with such questions.

What is the difference between 'expire' and 'die'? (M. Damodaran, Trivandrum)
The word "die" is the informal of the two. "Expire" is considered by many to be literary. When you "die" you cease to live; all signs of life cease to exist. The word can be used not only with people, but also with things; things which have the appearance of life – echo, topic, music, etc. Here are a few examples.

The smile that was splitting Hema's face died when she saw Arun.

The firemen were waiting for the flames to die out.

The word "expire", on the other hand, means "to breathe out air through the lungs". When you say that someone has "expired", what it means is, the person has expelled air for the last time! In other words, he has stopped breathing and is therefore dead.

Like the word "dead", "expire" can be used with things as well. When you say that something has expired, it implies that it has reached its limit and cannot be further extended. When something "expires", its ending is usually gradual and is expected; when something dies, its ending may be sudden and totally unexpected. For example, people usually die in an accident; they do not expire in one. When you cannot extend your lease, you say it has expired; you cannot say that it has died.

Farheen's contract with the company expired last week.

The battery died the second week.

Published in The Hindu on April 17, 2001.

Word of the day

Convalescence:
gradual healing (through rest) after sickness or injury

Synonyms: recuperation, recovery

Usage: *During my convalescence, I thought that others in the world must be suffering like me.*

Pronunciation:
newsth.live/convalescence

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˌkɒn.vəˈles.əns/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'