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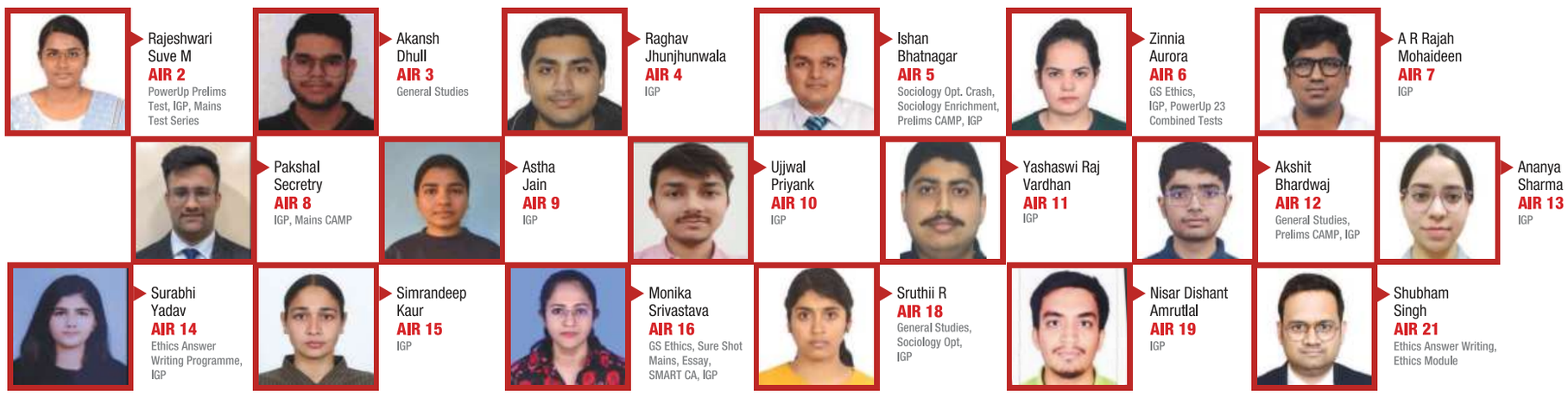

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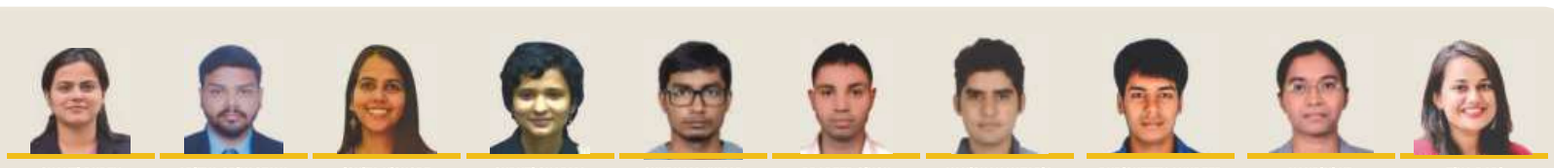

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The panel may lead to institutional targeting of minority communities

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MAIDEN MAJOR

Zverev beats Cobolli, wins French Open

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NEARBY

No DMK-led alliance in T.N. now: CPI(M)

PUDUKOTTAI
CPI(M) State secretary P. Shanmugam on Sunday said the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance did not exist in Tamil Nadu now, and the CPI(M) was not part of the DMK alliance. » PAGE 6

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 2, 4 & 5

Not seeking mediation on border dispute: Nepal FM

Kathmandu's focus is on establishing claim on tri-junction; new 'political reality' in Nepal under PM Shah not in favour of tying relations with India to 'old baggage', says visiting Foreign Minister Khanal

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Kathmandu is focused on establishing Nepal's claim on the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura tri-junction and is not "asking for mediation" by third parties, Nepal's Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal said here on Sunday.

At a press conference at the Embassy of Nepal, Mr. Khanal said he represented a "completely new political reality in Nepal" that was determined to deliver "uncompromising good governance". The new government of Prime Minister Balendra Shah was not in favour of tying Nepal-India relations down to "old baggage", he added.

"We want to solve our disputes through diplomatic processes. We just want to see if we can access some of the documents that might be in libraries or museums in the U.K. Our position was not that we were asking for mediation," Mr. Khanal said, elaborating on Mr. Shah's remarks that Nepal was in contact with China and the U.K on the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura dispute with India.

Field trip: Nepal's Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal visits the Embassy of Nepal in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI

Shah's statement

"The problems that existed when British India left the region still persist, so we believe Britain also has a role to play in this matter," Mr. Shah had said in Nepal's Parliament, stirring debates.

India's Ministry of External Affairs had issued a rebuttal, reiterating that India and Nepal had established a bilateral mechanism for discussing the dispute, and there was no scope for third-party intervention.

As a new-generation political entity, the Rastriya Swatantra Party refuses to "look at India through the distorted, hypersensitive lens of 20th century geopolitics", Mr. Khanal said. "Instead, the RSP wants to shift the entire vocabulary of Nepal-India relations away from geopolitical friction and square it firmly on development diplomacy," he added.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Protest will continue until Pradhan quits: CJP founder

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

A day after organising a demonstration in New Delhi demanding the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, the founder of the online movement Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), Abhijeet Dipke, on Sunday said the protest would continue.

Hundreds of people, including students, had gathered at the Jantar Mantar on Saturday demanding the resignation of the Minister over the alleged irregularities in CBSE examinations, entrance tests for higher education, and recruitment examinations. Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and CPI(ML) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya also came in support of the CJP's demands.

Addressing pressmen at his hometown in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar district in Maharashtra on Sunday, Mr. Dipke said, "What to do with this government? No employment, no proper exams. The youngsters of the country are not scared of the government. We will continue to fight until he [Mr. Pradhan] resigns. Someone must be held accountable."

> The youngsters of the country are not scared of the government. We will continue to fight for him [Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan] to resign. Someone must be held accountable
>
> **ABHIJEET DIPKE**
> CJP founder

He said the protest was a success, saying that around 7,000 people took part in it, and dismissed claims that people were paid to take part in the demonstration. "I came to the venue direct from the airport [after arriving from the U.S.]. How could I have paid them? The BJP is also running a fake campaign that not many people turned up at the venue."

"I informed my friends that I am going to India and very much mentally prepared to go to jail also. Someone must raise the voice. In our country, the politics has been limited to elections. Once elections are done, [people] forget about it for the next five years," Mr. Dipke said.

On the future course of action, Mr. Dipke said, "We will discuss with the members of the community, take their suggestions, and accordingly decide on our next move."

Grass is greener

Fresh pasture: Spotted deer grazing on a clearing inside the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, near Udhagamandalam, in Tamil Nadu on Sunday. Recent rain has helped improve the greenery in the reserve, leading to deer flocking to open grasslands. M. SATHYAMOORTHY

Neutralise armed miscreants found in Manipur, CRPF chief asks personnel

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

G.P. Singh, Director-General, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), has asked personnel deployed in Manipur to "neutralise" miscreants found roaming around in civilian areas with weapons.

Mr. Singh made the remarks during an interaction with CRPF personnel in Manipur on Saturday, according to a 6.05-minute video clip seen by *The Hindu*. He said that discussions were held at the highest levels in the government, and added, "It is expected that there will be a turnaround in the situation in the northeastern State in the next one or one-and-a-half years."

More than 6,000 police weapons and thousands of rounds of ammunition were looted from armouries after ethnic violence erupted in the State on May 3, 2023.

Security agencies have flagged the availability of weapons with civilians as a major challenge in the violence-hit State. FILE PHOTO

Security agencies have consistently flagged the availability of a large number of weapons with civilians as a major security challenge.

In the video, the CRPF officer said that personnel need not worry about firing at miscreants and he, as the D-G, would protect any "*bona fide* action".

"If you do not fire at miscreants, why has the government given us so much arms and ammunition. I have your back. Till the time I am here, no need to worry about any (legal) action," Mr. Singh said, referring to an April 7 incident in which CRPF personnel opened fire as a mob stormed the force's camp at Gelmol, a buffer zone between Meitei and Kuki-Zo areas in Bishnupur district since 2023. The firing led to the death of three protesters.

When contacted, Mr. Singh said the video was meant for "internal purposes".

"I had addressed the troops in Manipur and exhorted them to take the strongest lawful action against armed miscreants. I have always maintained that the responsibility of all the *bona fide* action taken by the force shall be mine as chief," he said.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

T.N. rolls out online system for registering select documents

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

To simplify document registration and take the process beyond the confines of the sub-registrar office, the Registration Department has introduced an online system to enable the registration of select documents from anywhere and at any time.

The documents include first sale of plot, first sale of flat, sale deeds relating to the Tamil Nadu Housing Board, and mortgage deeds and discharge deeds relating to bank loans, according to an official press release.

First sale of plot and flat, housing board sale deeds, and mortgage deeds are among the eligible documents

Once the document submitted by a user is approved by the sub-registrar, the digitally signed document can be accessed and downloaded by the user through the account registered on the portal.

Shared on WhatsApp

It will also be shared through WhatsApp on the registered mobile number. The Registration Department is planning to make this system mandatory soon, the press release said.

According to the release, members of the public, construction companies, document writers, banks, and advocates can create their own login credentials on the Registration Department's website and submit the documents online.

The Aadhaar card of the individuals concerned, including executants, claimants, and witnesses, should be uploaded on the portal, and the Aadhaar verification should also be completed through fingerprint or iris authentication with the UIDAI system.

23 parties to attend INDIA bloc meet, says Congress

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Ahead of a meeting of the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), coming amid disarray within the Opposition bloc, the Congress on Sunday sought to project unity, asserting that 23 parties would participate in the gathering in Delhi and that even those skipping it had conveyed their "strong opposition" to the Narendra Modi government's policies.

The bloc has been grappling with one crisis after another. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) has already announced that it will not attend the meeting, calling the Congress's decision to tie up with the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) in Tamil Nadu a "betrayal". Separately, Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary M.A. Baby has written to all INDIA bloc partners, underlining the Congress's campaign against the Left in Kerala, while Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) is learnt to be unhappy with the Congress unilaterally announcing its candidate for one of the two Rajya Sabha seats that are up for election in Jharkhand.

> There are some parties that have expressed their inability to attend this particular meeting for their own reasons, even though they have conveyed their strong opposition to the Modi government's policies
>
> **JAIRAM RAMESH**
> Congress general secretary (communications)

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh, in a post on X on Sunday, said 23 political parties had confirmed participation in the "INDIA *janbandhan*" meeting. "There are some parties that have expressed their inability to attend this particular meeting for their own reasons, even though they have conveyed their strong opposition to the Modi government's policies," Mr. Ramesh said.

'United stand'

He said Opposition parties were united against the government's actions, including "attempts to snatch away the right to vote for millions of Indians", "assaulting the Constitution daily", "attacking Opposition leaders through investigative agencies", "seriously damaging the livelihoods of crores of Indians", "breaking household budgets through relentless price rise", "betraying hopes and aspirations of lakhs of youth", and "compromising the national interest through its foreign policy".

According to sources, the meeting was convened at the insistence of the Trinamool Congress, which is facing internal strain in West Bengal. Former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and party national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee are expected to attend.

"Meeting with a common purpose and clear intent. INDIA united. Many parties look forward to meeting in the spirit of camaraderie," Trinamool's Rajya Sabha member Derek O'Brien, quoting Mr. Ramesh's post on X, said. "Like India itself, the 'INDIA janbandhan' continues to stand united through its diversity," he added.

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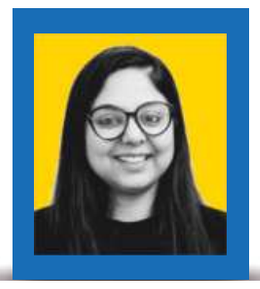

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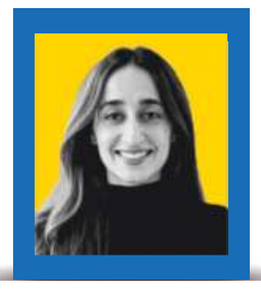

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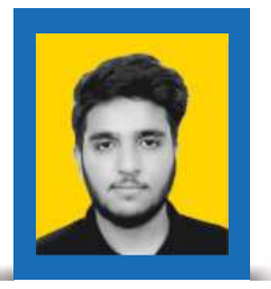

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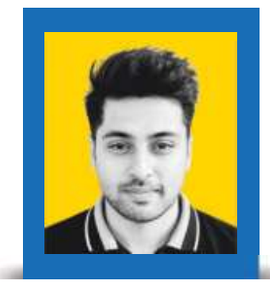

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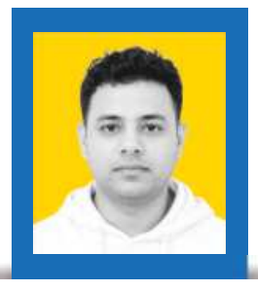

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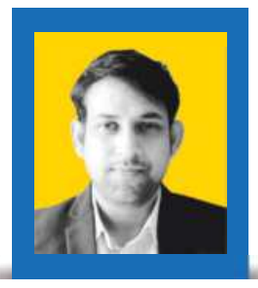

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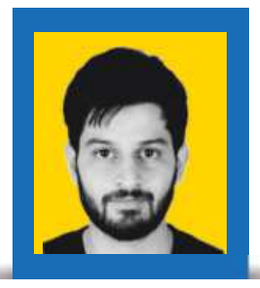

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Manavala Nagar residents take to cartoons to flag sewage pollution near Putlur check dam

The clean stretch of Cooum near the check dam in Tiruvallur district is heading towards degradation as in urban stretches owing to sewage release. Residents who have been fighting for restoration of the portion have launched awareness campaigns through cartoons titled 'Koovam Kudineer'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A section of residents in Manavala Nagar near Chennai has taken to cartoons to draw attention to the growing sewage pollution in the upper reaches of the Cooum river, particularly near check dams.

The clean stretch of Cooum river near Putlur check dam in Tiruvallur district, located about 40 km from Chennai, is heading towards degradation as in urban stretches owing to sewage release. Residents of Manavala Nagar, Tiruvallur, who have been fighting for restoration of the portion have now launched awareness campaigns through illustrations and cartoons.

D. Anandhakrishnan, resident of Manavala Nagar, said "I decided to attract people's attention towards the issue affecting groundwater through cartoons. These cartoons are titled 'Koovam Kudineer'. The illustrations are gaining traction in social media and messaging apps than long messages and videos."

Residents noted that the Cooum river was a significant source of groundwater recharge in their locality.

While some cartoons depict the network of check dams across the river and explain how water from Cooum river eventually reaches Chembarambakkam reservoir, one of the Chennai's drinking water sources, others highlight concerns about declining groundwater levels.

Residents noted that the Cooum river was a significant source of groundwater recharge in their locality. However, urbanisation, and lack of proper sewage treatment and disposal facility, often led to discharge of raw sewage into the clean stretch of the river. Members of Manavala Nagar Residents' Welfare Association recently met Tiruvallur MLA T. Arunkumar to highlight the issue.

C. Aravind of Manavala Nagar said the association requested the MLA to take measures to operate the dysfunctional Periakuppam sewage treatment plant and also increase sewage treatment capacity. Release of raw sewage not only affected the river but also Vengathur lake.

Residents stressed the need for urgent measures to curb sewage pollution from the rapidly urbanising areas along the Cooum river to protect the groundwater recharge zones, residents noted.

Wife, her friend held for murder of man whose torso was stuffed in suitcase

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Otteri police have arrested a woman and her friend for the murder of Ameer Ali, 40, whose torso was found in a suitcase at the Perambur railway station.

The victim's wife, Raheema, with the help of her friend Ashraf Ali, killed Ameer Ali.

Government Railway police (GRP) had on Friday found a headless body of a person in a suitcase left unattended on platform no. 4 of the Perambur railway station.

The murder case was shifted to Otteri police station. The police said that Ameer Ali would often assault Raheema.

Unable to bear the assault, she planned to murder him with the help of her friend, the police said.

Work begins to provide online tickets for darshan

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

In an effort to streamline darshan in large temples across the State, the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR & CE) Department has begun work to tweak its website for providing online tickets for devotees.

Minister for HR & CE, S. Ramesh, told *The Hindu* that a survey is under way to get the average number of devotees visiting a few temples on each day and during any particular time like *Pradosham*.

"We are trying to make things easier for all the devotees, including those from outstation, senior citizens, pregnant women, mothers with toddlers, and persons with disabilities. People who cannot wait in queues due to special circumstances, will be allowed direct darshan. When slots are fixed for darshan, there will be no need for brokers to provide services. It is also important for the safety of devotees. We are looking at the Tirupati Temple as a model. Tickets will also be available at the temple," Mr. Ramesh said.

He said that free darshan that is opted by a large number of devotees will not be affected in any manner due to this online ticket system.

"In fact, we are also factoring in local residents who visit these temples regularly. They will be able to visit without any disturbance," he said.

The trial for the online system is expected to be conducted in 15 days to a month. The implementation will be taken up in three phases. This will also help in accounting the beneficiaries of the *annadhanam* scheme, he added.

108 ambulances record faster response time, city gets services in 6.14 minutes on average

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The 108 ambulance service has recorded a significant improvement in emergency response times across Tamil Nadu.

In Chennai, the average response time reduced from 7.45 minutes in 2023-2024 to 6.14 minutes in 2026-2027 (till April). Across the State, the average response time also improved, falling from 13.24 minutes to 11.22 minutes during the same period.

EMRI Green Health Services, which operates the ambulance network through the Tamil Nadu Health System Project and Government of Tamil Nadu, runs a total of 1,353 ambulances across the State. There are 66 first responder bikes, a press release issued by its State Head of Operations M. Selvakumar, said.

The network has achieved a reduction in response time through a number of initiatives. This includes GPS fitment in all ambulances, based on the accident grid and cluster analysis and scientific deployment of ambulances. The response time in attending to emergencies by 108 ambulance associates have been reduced drastically, the release said.

At present, the average reach and response time for the ambulance services stood at 6.14 minutes for Chennai.

It was 10.07 minutes for urban areas (11.47 minutes in 2023-2024) and 12.18 minutes in rural areas (14.15 minutes in 2023-2024). In tribal areas, the ambulance service clocked a response time of 14.23 minutes.

Road accidents

For road traffic accidents, the ambulances clocked an average response time of 9.48 minutes, a decline from 11.42 minutes in 2023-2024).

Since its launch in 2008 to May 2026, the ambulance has reached out to 2,05,44,631 persons in emergencies.

This included 47,73,823 pregnancy-related cases and 37,97,993 road traffic accident cases, the release said.

The ambulance service can be availed by calling the tollfree number '108'.

Rapid response

From September 2008 to May 2026, the average number of calls received in a day by '108' Ambulance Service from the Emergency Response Centre is 12,600

A look at the total number of beneficiaries of the '108' Ambulance Services

Number of beneficiaries

Type of emergency

Pregnancy related cases	47,73,823
Road Traffic accident (RTA) cases	37,97,993
Other types of emergency services	1,18,72,815
Total number of beneficiaries	2,05,44,631

Comparision of response time in FY 23-24 and FY 26-27
*till April

Response Time	FY 23-24	FY 26-27*
Metro (Chennai)	00:07:45	00:06:14
Urban	00:11:47	00:10:07
Rural	00:14:15	00:12:18
Tribal	00:15:41	00:14:23
RTA Response Time	00:11:42	00:09:48
State	00:13:24	00:11:22

Types of ambulances

Basic Life Support	977
Advanced Life Support	307
Neonatal Life Support	65
Very Very Important Person	4

Total 1,353

First responder bikes: 66

Source: EMRI GHS - 108 ambulance

Experts at webinar stress early diagnosis of brain tumour

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

kauvery hospital Presents THE HINDU WELLNESS SERIES a webinar on Understanding Brain Tumours: Awareness, Diagnosis and Treatment

Ahead of World Brain Tumour Day, observed on June 8, experts emphasised early diagnosis, and dispelled common misconceptions about the disease at a webinar organised by *The Hindu* in association with Kauvery Hospitals.

Speaking at the webinar, G. Jos Jasper, Head of Department, Brain and Spine Surgery, Kauvery Hospital, Trichy Cantonment, said certain warning signs must not be ignored.

He stressed the importance of early diagnosis and treatment for improving outcomes and quality of life in patients with brain tumours.

Ranganathan Jothi, chief brain and spine surgeon and director of Neurosciences, Kauvery Hospital, Vadapalani, said that MRI remained the standard for diagnosing brain tumours, while PET-CT scans helped accurately map the location of tumours and aided in surgical planning.

Krish Sridhar, group mentor for Neurosciences and director, Institute of Brain and Spine, Kauvery Hospital, Radial Road, Chennai, said treatment aims to minimise the impact of tumours on healthy brain tissue through surgery, followed by radiation and chemotherapy when necessary.

Advances in technology have reduced the complication rate of brain surgery to below 3%, he said.

The panel said nearly 70% of the brain tumours were benign and clarified that stress, anxiety, and sleep deprivation had not been established as causes.

Genetic mutations and radiation exposure are considered greater risk factors, while evidence linking obesity and mobile phone radiation remains inconclusive, they said.

The webinar can be viewed at newsth.live/THKABY

Timings
CHENNAI

MONDAY, JUN. 08			
RISE	05:43	SET	18:34
RISE	00:00	SET	12:04
TUESDAY, JUN. 09			
RISE	05:43	SET	18:35
RISE	00:32	SET	12:54
WEDNESDAY, JUN. 10			
RISE	05:43	SET	18:35
RISE	01:11	SET	13:46

THE HINDU
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NOTICE OF THE 104th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, E-VOTING AND BOOK CLOSURE INFORMATION

Notice is hereby given that the 104th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of the **Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Limited,** will be held on **Tuesday, July 14, 2026,** at 11:00 A.M. IST through Video Conferencing ("VC") / Other Audio Visual means ("OAVM") without the physical presence of the members, at a common venue, in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 & rules made thereunder, read with MCA circular (vide General Circular No.03/2025 dated September 22, 2025) and in compliance with the applicable provisions of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, to transact the businesses as set forth in the Notice of the AGM.

In compliance with aforesaid MCA Circular and the applicable provisions of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, electronic copies of the Notice of the AGM, along with the Annual Report for the Financial Year 2025-26, will be sent to those shareholders whose e-mail address(es) are registered with the Registrar & Share Transfer Agent (RTA) / Depository Participant(s).

As per Regulation 36(1)(b) of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, a letter containing the web link, including the exact path and complete details of the Annual Report, will be sent to the shareholders who have not registered their email address(es) with the Registrar & Share Transfer Agent (RTA) or Depository Participant(s). Shareholders who have not yet registered their email address(es) are requested to update the same.

Further, the Notice and the Annual Report for the Financial Year 2025-26 will also be made available on the website of the Bank www.tmb.bank.in under 'Investor's Relations' section, on the website of Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL) at www.evotingindia.com and on the website of Stock Exchanges i.e., BSE Limited at www.bseindia.com & National Stock Exchange of India Limited at www.nseindia.com in due course.

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 (the "Act") and the rules made thereunder and in compliance with the Regulation 42 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 ("SEBI LODR"), the Register of Members and Share Transfer Books of the Bank will remain closed from Wednesday, July 08, 2026 to Tuesday, July 14, 2026 (both days inclusive).

Shareholders will be able to attend and participate in the AGM only through VC / OAVM. The details for joining the AGM through VC / OAVM will be provided in the Notice of the AGM to be sent to the Shareholders.

In accordance with the applicable circulars issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the Bank is providing to its Members facility to exercise their right to vote on resolutions proposed to be passed at the AGM, by electronic means ("e-Voting"). The Bank has engaged the services of Central Depository Services (India) Limited ("CDSL") as the agency to provide e-Voting facility.

The remote e-Voting schedule is as under:

Commencement of e-Voting	**Saturday, July 11, 2026 at 9:00 A.M. IST**
End of e-Voting	**Monday, July 13, 2026 at 5:00 P.M. IST**
Cut-Off date for determining the eligibility for voting	**Tuesday, July 07, 2026**

Additionally, the Bank is providing the facility of voting through e-Voting during the AGM for the members who have not exercised the remote e-Voting facility earlier. Detailed procedure for remote e-Voting / e-Voting during the AGM will be provided in the Notice.

In case of any queries, you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Shareholders and e-Voting user manual for Shareholders available at the download section of www.evotingindia.com or call on: 1800 21 09911 or send a request to Mr. Rakesh Dalvi at helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com

The Board of Directors in their meeting held on April 27, 2026, recommended a Final Dividend of ₹12.50/- per equity share of the face value ₹10/- each, for the Financial Year 2025-26, subject to the approval of the Shareholders at the ensuing AGM of the Bank. The Record Date for determining the eligibility for entitlement of dividend for the Financial Year 2025-26 is **Friday, June 12, 2026.**

Pursuant to Income Tax Act, 2025, dividend income is taxable in the hands of shareholders and the Bank is required to deduct tax at source (TDS) from the dividend paid to shareholders at the prescribed rates as mentioned in the Income Tax Act, 2025. The rate of TDS would vary depending on the residential status of the shareholder and documents registered with the Bank.

Shareholders who are not liable to pay Income Tax, can submit the Forms 121/41 online in the website of our Registrar & Share Transfer Agent by accessing the following web link https://web.in.mpms.mufg.com/formsreg/submission-of-Form-121-41.html, not later than **June 12, 2026.**

Members may note that as per extant guidelines of SEBI, it is mandatory for shareholders holding securities in physical form in listed entities, to furnish PAN, Bank account details, Specimen Signature, Contact Details and Address. With effect from April 01, 2024, SEBI has mandated that all dividends shall be paid only after submission of all the above-mentioned particulars. Henceforth, the Bank's RTA i.e., MUFG Intime India Private Limited, will attend to all service requests of the shareholders with respect to transmission, dividend, etc., only after updating the above details in their records.

By Order of the Board of Directors
For Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Limited
Sd/-
Swapnil Yelgaonkar
Company Secretary
(Membership No: ACS 21877)

Date : 06.06.2026
Place : Thoothukudi

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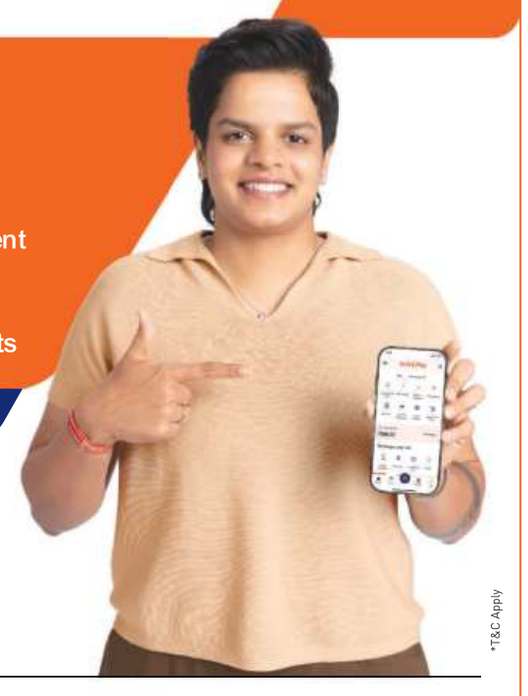

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Domestic LPG cylinder now costs ₹957.50

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

With the latest hike in the price of a domestic liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinder by ₹29 in Chennai, effective Sunday, a cylinder now costs ₹957.50.

The last price revision – a ₹60 increase per refill – was carried out on March 7. In a span of three months, the price of a 14.2-kg cylinder has gone up by ₹89.

Customers who already booked for refills but did not receive them must pay the revised rate. If they had made the payment online, they can pay the remaining amount to delivery boys.

Consumer activist T. Sadagopan said this revision was an early morning shocker. "Last year, the OMCs made a profit of 150%, but this year, they say they cannot absorb the losses, which is unfair. Consumers are already burdened with high petrol and diesel costs. The amount a family spends on provisions and gas is going up every month. The government could consider some kind of a dole for the taxpayers," he added.

Meanwhile, oil industry sources said the OMCs were spending an additional ₹700 on every cylinder, without passing on the burden to the consumers.

LPG distributors said that with each revision, they had to spend more on cylinders, and supplies were still irregular. "We are getting only half of our requirements. We are being told to slow down on distribution," a distributor said.

11 Metro Rail stations in phase II network to have retail spaces

Such development measures can persuade people to use Metro trains, and strengthen CMRL's revenue stream, ensuring financial stability

TRACK TALES

Sunitha Sekar
CHENNAI

Unlike the phase I network, Chennai Metro Rail's phase II stations will serve not only as mass rapid transit hubs but also as public spaces for commuters to dine, shop, and relax.

The work to build such spaces - both on a large scale and at neighbourhood level - has already begun in some locations. Now, the preliminary work is taking off in 11 stations of the phase II network.

According to officials of the Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), they are going to undertake work to design spaces in 11 underground stations of the phase II network. They include six stations – Chetpet, Royapettah, Sterling Road, Nungambakkam, R.K. Salai and Adyar Depot – in corridor 3 (Madhavaram to SIPCOT), and five stations – Kutchery Road, Alwarpet, Bharathidasan Road, Boat Club, and Nandanam – in corridor 4 (Poonamallee to Light House).

Besides transforming the neighbourhood, such transit-oriented development measures can persuade people to switch to the Chennai Metro Rail system. It will also significantly strengthen CMRL's revenue stream and financial stability, officials said.

The CMRL is looking at small-scale development in these stations such as kiosks for retail outlets or eateries. "We are taking up this work in parts. In most of the stations, there is space for a ground floor and three upper floors over the entry/exit structures. We have floated bids for a firm to design these spaces," an official said.

Unlike the phase I network where such property development measures were taken up after the commencement of train operations, in the phase II network, the CMRL wanted to take them up alongside the station construction work.

Space optimisation

In most of the stations, there is space for a ground floor and three upper floors over the entry/exit structures

Station	Total built-up area (Sq.m)
Chetpet	12,320
Royapettah	1,356
Sterling Road	3,220 and 3,955 (two separate structures)
Nungambakkam	3,124
R.K. Salai	2,048
Adyar Depot	1,654
Kutchery Road	2,018
Alwarpet	1,565
Bharathidasan Road	636
Boat Club	763 and 708 (two separate structures)
Nandanam	988

An artist's impression of the Nungambakkam Metro Rail Station with the integrated property development. CMRL

Chennai Weather	max	min
Tiruvallur	29	26
Chennai Airport	40	30
Chennai City	40	30

Chennai Airport Today
41°C The weather will be hot and uneasy. The night also will be uneasy. A spell of light rain and thundershowers may occur.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
39°C The morning will be comfortable. The day will be hot and uneasy The night also will be uneasy. There are chances of light rain and thundershowers.

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CINEMA ❖ ARTS ❖ EVENTS

MUSIC DANCE DRAMA

The Music Academy Madras
Today: 6.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. At the Kasturi Srinivasan Hall - The Music Academy Madras – HCL Concerts – Ananth Mysore (Vocal), Sreeranjani Muthu Subramanian (Violin), Srihari S.Raman (Mridangam).

Naada Inbam, 24992672
Today 6.15 pm Vidya Kalyanaraman, B U Ganesh Prasad, J Vaidhyanathan, G. Ravichandran. Endowment concert instituted by the family of Dr. Raghunath. Ragasudha Hall.

Palani Sri M Subramania Pillai Trust
9962030766
Today at RAGA SUDHA HALL, Mylapore. 9 a.m. - Musical Tributes to the Maestro. 10.30 a.m. - A tribute to Palani Sri M. SUBRAMANIA PILLAI by Sangita Kalanidhi Dr. Thiruvaarur BAKTHAVATHSALAM assisted by Shri A. Rohith. 12.00 Noon - Deeparadhanai and Prasadam. All are welcome.

Shri Purandaradaasar Trust (Regd). Ph: 8925062417
Concert today at Ganamritha Hall, 27/15, Sambandham Street, Mandaveli, Chennai. 5.30 p.m. VUM Aishwarya - Bhargav Vignesh - Ajeet Sridhar. 7.00 p.m. C. R. Vaidyanathan - S. Ramakrishnan - Dr. K. R. Ganesh - Madipakkam A. Murali. All are welcome.

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PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I, MIR Zamin Hussain Ali Nawaz s/o Mir Ali Nawaz born on 09.10.1982 Presently residing at Flat A Signet Manor,2 , Thiruveedian Street, Gopalapuram, Chennai – 600086 and having Permanent Address at 15/5 Mirza Hyder Ali Khan Street, Royapettah,Chennai – 600014, do hereby declare that I have changed my name to Mir Zamin Hussain vide affidavit dated 05.06.2026 at Chennai. Henceforth, I shall be known by the name Mir Zamin Hussain for all purposes and records. Old Given Name: Mir Zamin Hussain Old Surname: Ali Nawaz New Given Name: Mir Zamin New Surname: Hussain

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

MY SON, T R Tarun, Born on 29th April 2011(District of Birth.Chennai), residing at No.1412, 2nd Block. Alliance Orchid Spring. Water Canal Road Korattur, Chennai-76, Shall Henceforth be known as SAKTHIVEL T R D.Thirugnanasambantham(Father)G.O No.42 Dated: 22/10/2025 Serial No. 24782

I, KAMALANATHAN Yuvasree, daughter of Thiru S. Kamalanathan, born on 11th September 2005 (District of Birth: Chennai) residing at Old No. 25B, New No. 65, Nimandakara Othavadai Street, Kancheepuram – 631502, shall henceforth be known as YUVASREE K – KAMALANATHAN YUVASREE

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I, Navaneethakrishnan S S/O, Sivaprakasam A R/o A7 Block - 7 Pro Police Quarters,rohini Garden, Raja Annamalaipuram, Chennai have changed my name to Naveen S.

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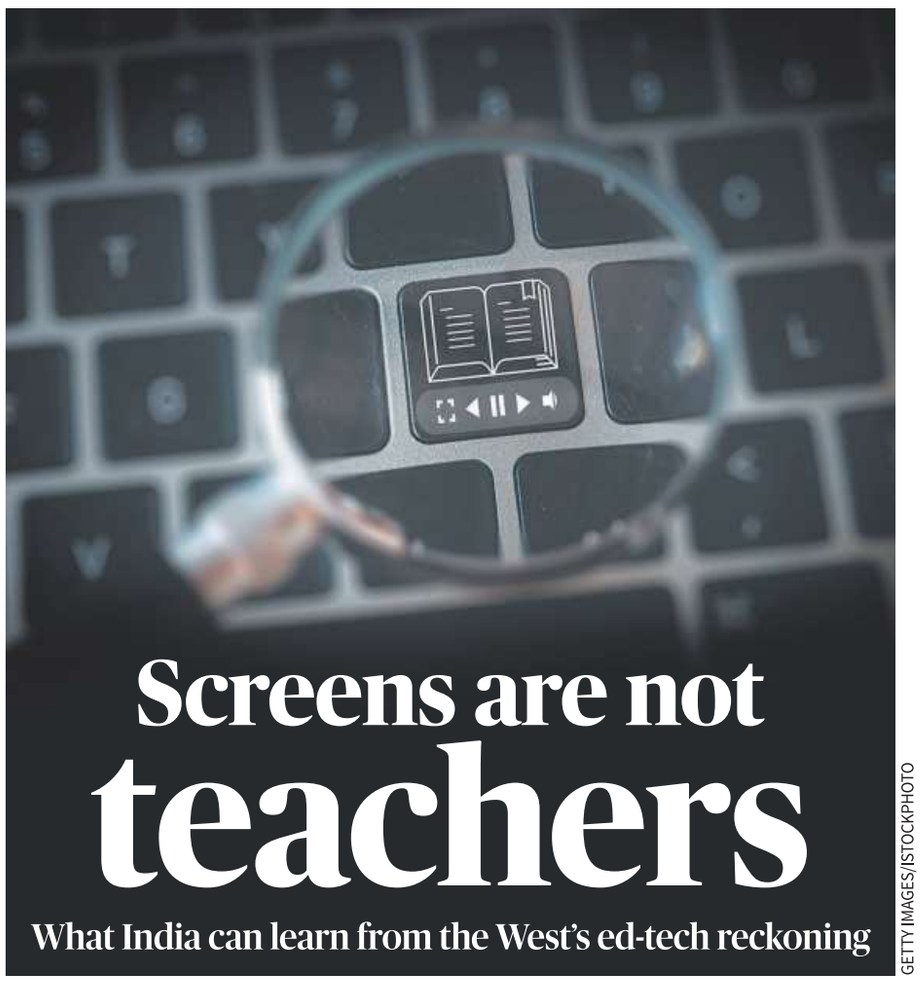
Screens are not teachers

What India can learn from the West's ed-tech reckoning



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Vishal R. Choradiya

In early 2025, neuroscientist and education consultant Dr. Jared Cooney Horvath testified before the United States Senate with findings that ought to give policymakers pause everywhere: large-scale adoption of digital technology in classrooms is actively harming children, reducing comprehension, eroding attention, and driving a generational cognitive decline unlike anything in the history of standardised measurement.

Gen Z is the first cohort in modern history to underperform its predecessor across attention, memory, literacy, numeracy, and IQ, despite spending more years in formal schooling than any generation before them.

Consistent pattern

Correlating classroom technology adoption across 80 countries with cognitive performance data, Horvath finds a consistent pattern: once digital devices become standard in schools, outcomes deteriorate. The inflection point tracks roughly to 2010 when one-to-one device programmes began spreading through Western schools. Students with heavy daily screen exposure in school score dramatically lower than those with little or none.

Horvath argues that human cognition evolved for sustained, focused engagement and, crucially, for learning from other humans through direct interaction, social cues, and observed behaviour. Digital environments are engineered for precisely the opposite: perpetual novelty, instant switching, continuous distraction. By routing learning through screens, classrooms sever the connection that cognition depends on.

Historian and generational consultant Dr. Eliza Filby adds a dimension that should concentrate minds in India. Across the Western world, a quiet divergence appears to be under way. Wealthy families – including, conspicuously, those who build and sell these very technologies – are pulling their children away from screen-heavy education.

Elite private schools are increasingly rowing back on digital programmes, reinvesting in teacher-led instruction, and foregrounding skills that screens demonstrably weaken: concentration, creative thinking, and sustained reading.

Meanwhile, children in poorly resourced schools are growing more reliant on device-led learning, often because little else is available. The digital revolution in education is becoming a mechanism for entrenching the very inequalities it promised to dissolve. The new dividing line, as Filby puts it, runs not between those who can access technology and those who cannot but between those whose education is shaped by people and those whose education is governed by platforms.

Indian situation

India is accelerating into this landscape with marked enthusiasm. The National Education Policy 2020 positions digital technology as central to the country's educational future: a National Educational Technology Forum, widespread investment in digital infrastructure, AI-integrated pedagogy, and online and blended learning across levels.

Beyond formal schooling, India has seen explosive growth in ed-tech platforms selling the promise of quality learning to millions of aspirational families. Online courses, coaching apps, and AI tutors are rapidly filling the space that the state has long failed to adequately occupy.

The framing of technology as an equaliser lets governments sidestep the harder work of building human educational capacity – trained teachers, functional schools, real accountability – while the IT and ed-tech industries, with obvious commercial interest in embedding technology into policy, profit from the substitution. Endorsing mass digital adoption as progress risks replacing genuine reform with a corporate growth agenda.

The children most exposed to the consequences are those in underfunded government schools – precisely the children for whom a tablet can seem like an upgrade. While they get apps, children of the affluent get teachers, tutors, and the deep human instruction that produces durable learning. The equity argument for ed-tech, applied at scale and without rigorous scrutiny, may produce the opposite of what it promises.

China – which has invested in ed-tech at a scale that dwarfs India's and has mandated AI literacy across all grades – has nonetheless restricted unsupervised AI use by primary school students and imposed screen time limits. The thrust is on capturing benefits while containing documented costs. PISA 2022, drawing on data from 81 countries, points in the same direction: modest device use in structured learning showed small gains, while heavy screen use correlated with dramatically lower scores. This endorses selectivity, not blanket acceleration.

India has the advantage of being a late mover. The evidence from countries that moved first is abundant and concerning. The NEP's digital commitments deserve serious, sceptical re-examination driven by research rather than by industry advocacy or the lure of a technological fix. Putting a screen in front of a child is not the same as educating one.

The writer is an assistant professor with the Department of Professional Studies, Christ University, Bengaluru.

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Application: Online
Deadline: July 27
www.b4s.in/edge/TSRI5

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Offered by the Falmouth University, the U.K.
Eligibility: Open to international students who are progressing directly from a partner institution to Falmouth University for a full-time Bachelor's degree in September.
Rewards: £2,000 towards tuition fees.
Application: Online
Deadline: August 31
www.b4s.in/edge/FUPA1

Courtesy: Buddy4study.com

Shikshagraha Awards

Shikshagraha invites nominations for the third edition of the Shikshagraha Awards, instituted by The Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiatives, to recognise educators, community leaders, and grassroots changemakers who are reshaping public education.

Eligibility: Individuals working in schools or in governmental or institutional frameworks, and grassroots leaders making an impact.

Deadline: July 31
For more details visit shikshagraha.org/

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INBRIEF

Agriculture Minister inspects paddy procurement centres

Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare R. Vinoth inspected paddy procurement and storage facilities in the Kumbakonam municipality zone on Sunday. He directed the officials to open an additional open-air storage facility at Krishnapuram and take steps to prevent grain loss during the ongoing procurement season. During surprise visits to the Patteeswaram Open Air Storage Centre, the Kumbakonam (Kottaiyur) Regulated Market and the Solzan Malligai Direct Paddy Procurement Centre (DPC), Mr. Vinoth reviewed storage capacity, procurement operations, and infrastructure requirements. He directed officials to expedite the process of securing land for a permanent storage godown in Thandanthotam.

Elderly woman injured while protecting dog from leopard

An elderly woman suffered serious injuries after she was attacked by a leopard when she tried to stop the animal from preying on her pet dog in the village of Kil Thalaiyattu Mund in the Udhagai North Range on Sunday. The victim was identified as R. Visalakshmi. She and her pet dog were reportedly sleeping inside her house when a leopard came and tried to attack the dog. However, Ms. Visalakshmi noticed the animal and is said to have stepped in between the leopard and her dog before raising an alarm, alerting neighbours. The panicked leopard is said to have attacked the woman. Forest Department officials said neighbours rescued her. The leopard fled the area. Ms. Visalakshmi is currently undergoing treatment at the Government Medical College and Hospital in Udhagamandalam. Officials confirmed that her dog escaped without serious injuries. They said that they would step up surveillance around the area to prevent more human-wildlife conflicts.

'There is no DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance in T.N. now'

P. Shanmugam criticises Stalin and EPS for claiming TVK-led govt. 'would not last even one or two months', and terms such remarks 'irresponsible'

The Hindu Bureau
PUDUKOTTAI

CPI(M) State secretary P. Shanmugam said on Sunday that the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance did not exist now and the Left party was not part of the DMK's alliance.

"There is no such thing as a DMK alliance now. The Secular Progressive Alliance, of which we were a part, is no longer there. However, we will work with the DMK on issues concerning the welfare and rights of Tamil Nadu, based on a shared understanding on select issues," he said. Interacting with journalists in Pudukottai, he criticised DMK president M.K. Stalin and AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami for publicly stating the C. Joseph Vijay-led government would not last even one or two months. He called such remarks "irresponsible". Calling for patience towards the new TVK-led administration, he said it would need time to familiarise itself with various departments.

He rejected claims of widespread power cuts across Tamil Nadu, noting that even the electricity board chairman had acknowledged outages only in certain areas. "Power must be distributed without disruption," he said. He also called for continuing the complete ban on lottery ticket sales in Tamil Nadu, citing the destruction it had caused to many families across the state.

> However, we will work with the DMK on issues concerning the welfare and rights of Tamil Nadu, based on a shared understanding on select issues
>
> **P. SHANMUGAM**
> CPI(M) State secretary

He argued that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) no longer existed in its original form. "Some parties that were part of that alliance voted against the TVK-led government in the confidence motion, some voted for it, and some remained neutral. This must be seen as a major shift in the political landscape," he said.

Mr. Shanmugam clarified that his party had no intention of propping up the TVK-led government. "Our aim is not about which alliance we were part of when we won, but that a government chosen by the people should be in place. If the TVK-led government, which we are supporting, takes decisions we disagree with, we will oppose them," he said.

On the BJP, he alleged that since the party had failed to gain traction in Tamil Nadu, Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah had blessed former State BJP president K. Annamalai to launch a new organisation – effectively another RSS outfit – under a different name. "He has created an image of lakhs of people joining his organisation," he said, questioning why the leader, who claimed he was resigning from the BJP, needed to travel to Delhi to meet party leaders. "He could have simply sent his resignation letter from here," he said.

He also took a swipe at defections, saying that while MLAs switching parties was wrong, others changing parties was being treated as normal. On local body elections, he said his party's position was that they should be held immediately, but whether they would actually be conducted remained unclear.

G.O. promoting seven IAS officers to Chief Secretary grade challenged before HC

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

A public interest litigation (PIL) petition has been filed in the Madras High Court challenging a government order (G.O.) issued on December 24, 2025 for promoting seven officers, including T. Udhayachandran, of the 1995 batch of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) to the grade of Chief Secretary.

First Division Bench of Chief Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and Justice G. Arul Murugan have adjourned the hearing on the case to June 10 after questioning as to how a PIL petition could be entertained by the court on an issue related to officers in government service.

The judges told the petitioner's counsel the Supreme Court, in a catena of decisions beginning from Dr. Duryodhan Sahu versus Jintendra Kumar (1998), had held that government service matters could not be generally raised before the constitutional courts by way of PIL petitions.

Further, stating that concerns related to officers in government service could be raised only before the Central Administrative Tribunal or by way of filing writ petitions before a single judge of the High Court, the judges said, the top court had time and again clarified that PILs should not be used as a shortcut.

However, when the counsel sought time for the appearance of his senior to argue the matter, the judges adjourned the hearing to June 10 after taking note that Additional Solicitor General AR.L. Sundaresan, assisted by central government senior panel counsel C. Kulandaivelu, had entered appearance on behalf of the Centre.

The PIL petitioner contends that the G.O. should not have been issued without the concurrence or approval of the Centre.

The December 2025 G.O. had been issued for promoting IAS officers M.A. Siddique, R. Jaya, P. Senthilkumar, Sandhya Venugopal Sharma, Mr. Udhayachandran, Hitesh Kumar S. Makwana and B. Chandra Mohan to the Chief Secretary grade of IAS with effect from January 1, 2026.

The G.O. also accorded sanction for creation of temporary posts of Additional Chief Secretary in the departments of Economics and Statistics, Health and Family Welfare, and School Education so that Ms. Jaya, Mr. Senthilkumar, and Mr. Mohan could continue to occupy those positions at that point of time.

The G.O. also stated Mr. Makwana shall stand promoted to Chief Secretary cadre without prejudice to his central deputation as Surveyor General of India. Then, Mr. Siddique and Mr. Udhayachandran were serving as Managing Director of Chennai Metro Rail Limited and Finance Secretary respectively. Ms. Sharma was the Chairperson of the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation.

However, the PIL petitioner M. Balakrishnan of Anna Nagar in Chennai claimed the G.O. ought not to have been issued without concurrence/approval of the Centre and had listed the Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions as well as the Union Cabinet Secretary as respondents to the case.

He sought a direction to the Principal Accountant General's office in Tamil Nadu to refrain from paying higher salary, allowances, perquisites, arrears, or other pensionary/monetary benefits to the seven IAS officers on the basis of the G.O. under challenge.

TVK govt. should be criticised given current situation: Stalin

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

DMK president M.K. Stalin said on Sunday that though he had earlier maintained that the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) government should be given six months before any criticism, the prevailing circumstances would not permit any such leniency.

"I fear the situation warrants criticism even within three months. The government is being run in such a manner," he said at a meeting organised to welcome former Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) MLA Panaiyur Babu into the DMK in Chennai.

M.K. Stalin

According to him, the government's functioning had already drawn criticism from various quarters.

The DMK president said there was no need to criticise the party to which Mr. Babu belonged before joining the DMK.

Recalling DMK founder C.N. Annadurai's observation that even the jasmine blooming in a neighbour's garden carries the same fragrance, Mr. Stalin said there was no need to underestimate anyone.

We're yet to decide on smart meter: Nirmalkumar

The Hindu Bureau
MADURAI

The Tamil Nadu government has not taken any decision yet on the smart meter project, Minister for Energy Resources and Law R. Nirmalkumar said on Sunday.

He was speaking to journalists in Madurai against the backdrop of media reports that the project was being abandoned. Mr. Nirmalkumar said, "The project requires a huge investment. A comprehensive study is being carried out to assess its technical and economic viability."

He said the government was also studying whether the modem and SIM card technology used in smart meters would work properly in all areas, especially at places with low signal strength.

In accordance with the guidelines of the Central government, surveys were being taken up for installation of smart meters at government buildings in the first phase, and the performance of more than one lakh smart meters, already installed at T. Nagar in Chennai, was being analysed.

Mr. Nirmalkumar said studies were being conducted to find out how the project was being implemented in other States and countries.

R. Nirmalkumar

He clarified that a final decision would be taken later with the approval of the Chief Minister.

Earlier, reacting to media reports that the Tamil Nadu government had abandoned the project, BJP spokesperson Narayanan Thirupathy said that such a decision would be a "grave mistake".

'Will benefit people'

Mr. Thirupathy said: "It risks pushing the loss-making State's power distribution company towards deeper financial losses. The project, designed under the Central government's Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), will pave the way for the State's progress in the power sector. By ensuring accurate reading and billing for every connection, it will greatly benefit the public while eliminating technical and commercial losses of the government and steadily increasing the revenue of the power distribution company."

The DMK government had cited high cost and shelved the project, Mr. Thirupathy said. "If the TVK government follows the same path, it will be a huge blunder," he added.

Government hospitals' share in organ donation rises in T.N.

Significant role

A total of 13 government hospitals and 159 private hospitals hold transplant licences, while there are 35 non-transplant organ retrieval centres in the government sector

Share of government hospitals in deceased donors and organ transplantations

Year	Donors from govt. hospitals	Donors from private hospitals	Total donors	Share of govt. hospitals
2022	51	105	156	33%
2023	74	104	178	42%
2024	146	122	268	54%
2025	154	112	266	58%
2026 [Till April]	72	40	112	64%

Organ transplantation in Tamil Nadu

Year	Transplants in govt. hospitals	Transplants in private hospitals	Total transplants	Share of govt. hospitals
2022	151	727	878	17%
2023	253	682	935	27%
2024	473	972	1,445	33%
2025	420	997	1,417	30%
2026 [Till April]	211	405	616	34%

Source: Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu

Serena Josephine M.
CHENNAI

The contribution of government hospitals to the organ donor pool has increased gradually over the past four years in Tamil Nadu. In 2025, government hospitals accounted for 58% of the deceased donors and their share has risen to 64% as of April 2026. However, organ transplantation, except for kidneys, remains limited in volume, likely reflecting the interplay of multiple factors.

The number of deceased donors in Tamil Nadu showed a substantial increase from 156 in 2022 to 178 in 2023, and rose to a record high of 268 in 2024. It remained at a similar level in 2025 with 266 donors and stood at 112 up to April 2026. During this period, the government's contribution to the organ donor pool increased steadily, rising from 33% to 64%, data from the Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu (TRANSTAN) shows.

A number of factors contributed to better performance of government hospitals, N. Gopalakrishnan, member secretary, TRANSTAN, said. This includes honour walks in government medical college hospitals, government announcement granting State honours to deceased donors, systematic reorientation for government doctors by TRANSTAN, standardisation of operational protocols, multi-level periodic reviews, and continuous updation of knowledge and practical know-how through Continuing Medical Education programmes.

"Almost 15% of the donors were contributed by these non-transplant organ retrieval centres. These centres proved to be a gamechanger for improving donations and expanding the pool of donors," he said.

Once a donor is identified, maintenance becomes crucial, he said, adding: "Starting with constant communication to brain death certification, we have protocols in place. As a result, donors crashing before organ retrieval has become rare now. But there is no room for complacency. Measures to sustain the progress are happening."

Dr. Gopalakrishnan added the acceptance rate for organ donation was around 75% to 80% in the State. "The reasons for the remaining 20% to 25% have to be studied. There are certain myths surrounding organ donation. We need to address apprehensions among families and expedite processes such as faster handing over of mortal remains after organ retrieval," he said, adding that transparency in the organ allocation process has led to trust in the system among the public.

A number of senior doctors said there were areas that required strengthening. More government centres should have the capacity to perform transplants, and training for heart, lung, and liver transplants. One or two fully equipped government centres can function in each region to improve the organ transplant rates. Doctors said kidney transplants dominated the transplantations in the government sector as most centres perform them. Patients with renal failure are able to survive with the help of dialysis, resulting in more persons listed for kidney transplants. Many have a good quality of life on maintenance dialysis, which is provided free of cost in the government sector. On the contrary, liver, heart, and lung failures do not have enough support systems and the number of patients listed for transplants was relatively less.

"We need to develop regional centres in the government sector to focus on a single organ transplant. This way, we can pool all resources, including human resources," a senior doctor said.

'Instagram friends' abduct and sexually harass minor, 9 held

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUCHI

The Fort All-Women Police in Tiruchi have arrested nine persons, including two youths and seven juveniles, for allegedly sexually harassing a 17-year-old girl after befriending her on Instagram.

The police said the minor girl from Mudaliarsathram in Tiruchi went missing last month. Following a complaint from her parents, the Palakkarai police registered a missing person case and launched a search. The police rescued the girl. However, when they attempted to hand her over to her parents, she refused to go with them. She was then put up at a children's shelter home.

At the shelter, the girl disclosed to the staff that she was sexually harassed by a group. The management immediately alerted the District Child Protection Officer (DCPO).

A team from the Child Welfare Committee subsequently met the girl and recorded a detailed statement after she revealed that she was sexually harassed by individuals she had befriended on Instagram. Based on a comprehensive inquiry report and a formal complaint lodged by the DCPO, the Fort All-Women Police registered a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Subsequently, the police arrested Kishore, 20, Mohanraj, 19, and seven juveniles. The youths were remanded in the Tiruchi Central Prison while the juveniles were sent to a Government Observation Home in Thanjavur. A search is on to trace another 17-year-old boy involved in the case.

INBRIEF

Cong. govt. compromising on Telangana's water rights: MLA

Former Telangana Minister and BRS MLA T. Harish Rao accused the Congress government of compromising on water rights by linking the proposed Godavari-Nallamalasagar project with the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme. He said the State was entitled to 45 tmc ft water allocation in Krishna waters if Godavari was diverted to the Krishna basin by Andhra Pradesh. "Any attempt to link the two projects amounts to surrendering Telangana's legal rights," he said.

Hyderabad man shot dead during pizza delivery in U.S.

A 28-year-old Hyderabad man was allegedly shot dead in Philadelphia, United States, while carrying out a pizza delivery on Friday. The victim, Anshul Kuncha, had moved to the U.S. almost four years ago for higher education. The family said he was employed at a multinational company and took up pizza deliveries during weekends to supplement his income. The family has sought the Centre's intervention to expedite the repatriation of Anshul's mortal remains.

Karnataka schools introduce module for value education

With an aim to instil morality, good behaviour, and social responsibility in schoolchildren, the Karnataka government has introduced a value-education module from Classes 1 to 10 in all schools this academic year. "Instead of teaching value education as a separate subject, steps have been taken to integrate it with all subjects," an official from the State Educational Research and Training Department said. Over a lakh teachers have already been trained for the module.

TDP names three candidates for elections to Rajya Sabha

The ruling party says the candidate selections have been made with a focus on social engineering and to encourage young leadership; Jana Sena, NDA ally in Andhra Pradesh, fields one candidate

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has announced Chintakayala Vijay, Bhashyam Ramakrishna, and sitting Rajya Sabha member Sana Satish as the candidates for the forthcoming elections to the Upper House.

TDP national president and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu presented the B-Forms to them at his camp office on Saturday.

Mr. Vijay is the son of Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu and the party's State general secretary.

For Mr. Satish, this is his re-nomination to the Rajya Sabha. He was elected to the Upper House in 2024 and his term is set to expire on June 21.

Mr. Ramakrishna is the founder-chairman of Bhashyam educational institutions.

The TDP stated that the selections were made with a focus on social engineering, dedication and loyalty to the party, and to encourage young leadership.

The leaders who could not be accommodated in the current round of political appointments would be considered for other positions in the future, the party added.

TDP candidates for Rajya Sabha polls (from left) Chintakayala Vijay and Sana Satish, and Bhashyam Ramakrishna (right) with party president N. Chandrababu Naidu. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ally choice

The TDP's ally in the ruling NDA alliance in the State, Jana Sena Party, has named industrialist Lingamaneni Ramesh.

Mr. Vijay hails from north Andhra and the other three are from the central coastal region.

Some leaders from the Greater Rayalaseema region, which spans from Prakasam to Chittoor districts, have expressed displeasure over the selection of candidates. The leaders questioned the lack of representation from the 11 districts, which comprise nearly half of the State.

Salim Kumar cremated with state honours

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Malayalam actor-filmmaker Salim Kumar, who started as a mimicry artiste and went on to win the National Award for Best Actor in an inspiring career, was cremated at North Paravur, his hometown in Ernakulam district in Kerala, on Sunday with state honours.

Thousands of people, including his colleagues from the film industry, political leaders and fans from across the State, gathered to pay their last respects to the popular actor at North Paravur Municipal Town Hall.

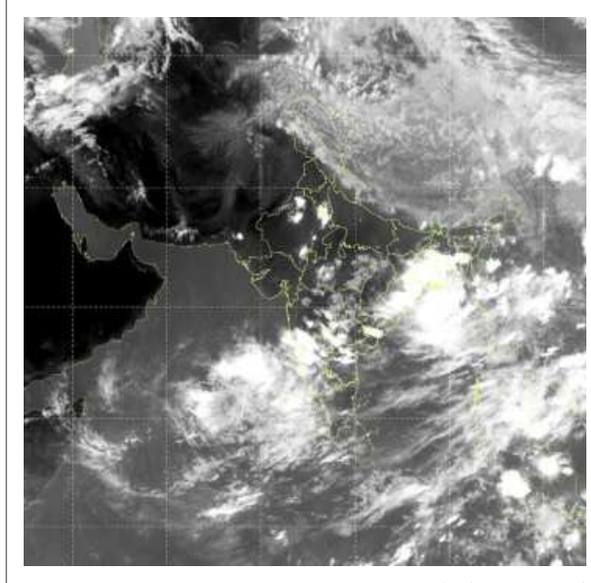
The funeral of the 57-year-old actor, who died of a cardiac arrest, was conducted on the premises of his residence at Chittattukara.

Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan paid last respects to the actor at the town hall and also attended the funeral. He remembered Salim Kumar as someone with whom he shared a "brotherly bond."

Kerala Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan pays his last respects to actor Salim Kumar in Ernakulam on Sunday. R.K. NITHIN

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall with isolated extremely heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places over coastal Karnataka. Heavy to very heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places over Interior Karnataka, Kerala, Mahe, West Bengal and Sikkim.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala		35.5	27.1
Ahmedabad		41.5	30.2
Aizawl	15.8	33.8	21.5
Bengaluru	3.0	29.5	21.3
Bhopal	—	—	21.6
Bhubaneswar	3.0	39.2	26.6
Chandigarh	—	25.6	—
Chennai	—	40.4	30.4
Coimbatore	—	32.2	22.6
Dehradun	—	—	—
Gangtok	7.0	24.3	17.6
Goa	28.2	—	—
Guwahati	—	33.8	26.7
Hubballi	—	28.0	23.0
Hyderabad	3.0	37.6	24.8
Imphal	—	30.5	22.0
Jaipur	0.3	—	25.6
Kochi	28.0	28.4	24.0
Kohima	—	—	—
Kolkata	15.0	35.3	26.5
Kozhikode	53.0	32.4	23.6
Kurnool	4.0	36.4	25.8
Lucknow	—	40.4	28.1
Madurai	—	38.0	26.5
Mangaluru	38.0	28.9	23.5
Mumbai	—	35.8	30.0
Mysuru	—	29.2	20.2
New Delhi	—	40.0	25.8
Patna	2.0	38.0	27.0
Port Blair	8.0	29.6	25.9
Prayagraj	—	42.8	27.6
Puducherry	—	38.4	27.5
Pune	—	37.4	25.5
Raipur	—	41.9	30.1
Ranchi	1.0	34.6	23.0
Shillong	0.8	28.3	16.4
Shimla	—	27.4	17.2
Srinagar	—	28.2	14.5
Thiruvananthapuram	6.0	31.4	26.6
Tiruchirappalli	—	38.7	27.0
Vijayawada	—	35.0	30.0
Visakhapatnam	—	—	—

(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	.76	.31	53	69	97	
Bengaluru	.11	.45	48	—	114	
Chennai	5	5	16	29	84	
Delhi	.25	.59	39	85	276	
Hyderabad	.15	.19	34	62	81	
Kolkata	.16	.37	17	63	84	
Lucknow	.12	.25	49	104	110	
Mumbai	2	5	40	30	99	
Pune	—	.21	94	28	78	
Visakhapatnam	.26	.57	14	63	133	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Dhanbad, Jharkhand recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 291 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Madikeri, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 16

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

Ticket to ride: D.K. Shivakumar interacts with passengers while travelling on a metro train in Bengaluru on Sunday. K. MURALIKUMAR

Karnataka CM takes Metro rail to avoid disruptions to traffic

Shivakumar was visiting Kanakapura, his home turf, for the first time after becoming CM

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a bid to avoid causing inconvenience to citizens by accessing zero-traffic arrangements, Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar travelled by Namma Metro from Vidhana Soudha to Silk Institute on Sunday.

Mr. Shivakumar was visiting Kanakapura, his home turf, for the first time after becoming the Chief Minister to meet and extend his gratitude to the people of his constituency.

"The Chief Minister arrived at this decision after recognising that using zero-traffic all the way from his Sadashivanagar residence to Kanakapura Road would disrupt traffic movement for the public," a statement from his office said.

The Chief Minister interacted with metro commuters at the station and inside the train, exchanging pleasantries. After getting down at the last station on Kanakapura Main Road, Mr. Shivakumar proceeded to Kanakapura by road.

Last week, the facilitation of zero traffic for Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's convoy at Wind Tunnel Junction, where underpass work is ongoing, sparked public outrage after a frustrated man staged a protest by sitting down at the junction. He claimed that his wife was pregnant and he was on the way to the hospital.

VIP movement

The incident triggered widespread outrage on social media, with many pointing to Bengaluru's crumbling infrastructure, which has already made commuting difficult.

They argued that VIP movement and the associated traffic restrictions were causing further inconvenience to the public.

Home Minister, Priyank Kharge, also discussed the issue during his first meeting with IPS officers on Friday. He said they were trying to work out alternate solutions, like synchronised signals to avoid blocking other traffic.

Kerala government issues orders reinstating suspended IAS officers

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The United Democratic Front (UDF) government in Kerala has issued orders revoking the suspensions of IAS officers B. Ashok and N. Prasanth.

Both officers had been placed under suspension during the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government's term on charges of criticising the government.

In separate orders dated June 6 issued by Chief Secretary A. Jayathilak, the suspensions stand revoked with "immediate effect".

Mr. Prasanth, a 2007-batch officer, was placed under suspension in 2024, for levelling serious allegations against Mr. Jayathilak, then Additional Chief Secretary, and former Chief Secretary Sarada Muraleedharan.

Mr. Ashok, a 1998-batch officer, was Vice-Chancellor, Kerala Agricultural University, and Principal Secretary, Sainik Welfare, when he was suspended in April for criticising government policies on social media.

THE HINDU
Air Surcharge as applicable:
New Delhi - Rs. 15/-;
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CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICES
The following **e-Tenders** can be accessed under the link **www.ireps.gov.in.** Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link **www.ireps.gov.in → login → E-Tender Stores/Supply.** Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or IREPS related information if any, Dy. CMM/HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340711 or AMM/HQ, 9163340713 for notice Sl. No. [A] and Dy. CMM/HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340711 or AMM/HQ-II, 9163340724 for notice Sl. No. [B]. Office Address: Office of the PCMM /CLW/Chittaranjan. **[A] Notice No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 04/06/2026. Sl. No.:[1]. Tender No.: 73263713B. Brief Description of Item:** High Tensile Transition C.B. Coupler Without Draft Gear as per RDSO Drg. No. - SK-DL-3430, ALT.-8 or latest except item nos. 18 to 20,24 to 47 along with part Drg. Nos. SK- 62724 alt-23 or latest, SKDL-2496 alt-6 or latest, SK-69508 alt-4 or latest, SKDL-2494 alt-17 or latest and SKD L-2495 alt-12 or latest. [**Warranty Period:** 30 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity:** 387.00 Nos. **Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees):** ₹722640.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST):** 24/06/2026 at11:00 AM. **[B] Notice No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162, Date: 04/06/2026. Sl. No.:[1]. Tender No.: 70261255B. Brief Description of Item:** Modified Cow Catcher Assly For WAG-9HC Loco To Specification No. CLW/ MS/ 3/107 ALT-8, DRG NO.1209-02.140-032 ALT-11 [**Warranty Period:** 30 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity:** 336.00 set. **Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees):** ₹390460.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST):** 26/06/2026 at 11:00 AM.
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BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Wholly owned by Government of Karnataka undertaking)
(CIN-U04010KA2002SGC030438)
NOTIFICATION INVITING TENDER (NIT)
(Through KPP Portal)
No: BESCOM/CGM(Proj)/DGM-1/AGM-1/BC-14/ 26-27/CYS-80
BESCOM Invites a tender for the work of **"Conversion of existing 11KV Overhead line into UG Cable to reduce power outages, to improve quality & reliable power supply to Industrial consumers in Harohalli sub division, Kanakapura Division, Ramanagara circle, BESCOM"** on Total Turnkey basis under Percentage Quoting basis.
Tender Enquiry No: BESCOM/2026-27/EL/WORK_INDENT1099. **Availability of Bid documents:** 08.06.2026 onwards. **Last date for submission of bid Queries:** 19.06.2026 before 17:00 Hrs. **Pre-Bid meeting:** 20.06.2026 @ 11:00 Hrs. **Venue of Pre-Bid meeting:** O/o Chief General Manager (Ele), 4th Floor, Project Section, B Block, Corporate office, BESCOM, K. R Circle, Bangalore- 560 001. **Last date & Time for bid submission:** 08.07.2026 before 15:00 Hrs. **Opening of Technical Bids**: 09.07.2026 @ 15:30 Hrs.
The bid documents can be downloaded and necessary assistance can be obtained through the e-procurement portal from the website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in
E-procurement Help Desk: Phone No: **+91-8046010000 +91-8068948777,** E-mail: **support@eprochelpdesk.com**
Aspiring bidders needs to be registered on e-procurement portal. Bidders can take the assistance from the e-procurement during office working hours.
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Chief General Manager (Ele.),
Projects, BESCOM
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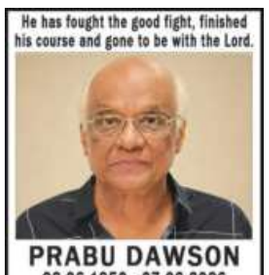
For Electricity related complaints call: 1912
Download "BESCOM Mithra" Mobile APP

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

He has fought the good fight, finished his course and gone to be with the Lord.

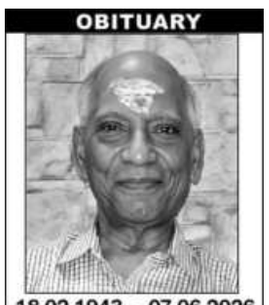


PRABU DAWSON
22.06.1950 - 07.06.2026
Funeral Service
On Tuesday, 09.06.2026 at 3.00 PM
St. Paul's Church, Choolai, Chennai.
Burial: Kilpauk Cemetery at 4.00 PM
Deeply mourned by
Family & Friends
Ph: 9884048511 / 9384600805

Safe with God, Forever at Peace

Sandeep Isaac Joseph
Retd. Exec Director Hindustan Petroleum
July 7, 1955 - June 7, 2026
Son of (late) Capt. J. Joseph & (late) Molly Joseph
Husband of Tanya;
Father of Rohan
Brother of Arun & Anjali

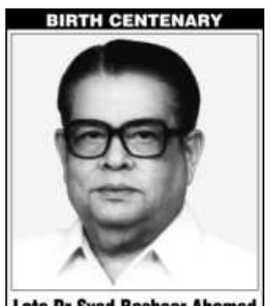
OBITUARY



18-02-1943 - 07-06-2026
with profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved
Dr.E.Gurusamy,
M.B.B.S, M.D (DCH)
S/o. Easwaramoorthy)
who left for his heavenly abode on 07-06-2026 Sunday. His last rituals will be held 09-06-2026 Tuesday 10.30am at his residence
Cremation at Velachery burial ground
with grief
Family & Friends
33/5B, 3rd Main Road, Dhandeeswaram, Velachery, Ch-42

BIRTH CENTENARY

BIRTH CENTENARY



Late Dr Syed Basheer Ahamed
DOB: 8th June 1926
Retd. Supdt, GRH,Chennai - 600 014
Former HOD & Professor of Orthopaedics KMCH, Chennai & Founder Head of Accident Block GRH, Chennai - 600 014
Dearest Dad, you only dealt in superlatives - A great Son, A great Husband, A great Teacher, A great Brother, A great Friend, A great Grand Father and the Greatest Dad
- The Basheer's

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

A.V.RAJESWARAN
Chief Engineer PWD (Retd)
DOD: 08.06.2020
Wife: R.Ratnakantha
Son: Dr.Venkateswaran
M.D.D.M, Former Director Medical GE, MMC Chennai.
Relatives & Friends

SIXTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

NAMBUNGAL R.NARAYANAN
DOD - 08.06.2010
We Miss you..
Family & Friends
Mob: 98410 50221

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

3RD DEATH ANNIVERSARY

We miss you every moment in our life. Your presence continues to surround us. In our hearts, you are always there.
C.S.LAKSHMANASWAMY
Exec. Engr. (Retd) TWAD Board
Fondly remembered by
L. Soundary (Wife) Family & Friends

TENTH ANNIVERSARY

S.SHANMUGAVADIVEL
B.A.,B.L.,D.SS.
Retd. Asst. Commissioner of Labour, Chennai.
Fondly remembered by the FAMILY

In Loving Memory of

Sri V. Krishna Kumar
04.02.1946 - 08.06.2025
"To live in the hearts of those we leave behind is not to die."
Always remembering you with love
Wife: Dr Nandini K. Kumar
Daughters: Rema and Jyothi
Sons-in-law: Puneet and Gokul
Grandchildren: Yashasvini & Kanishk

SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

In ever loving memory of
V.S.SURAB B.Sc., MBA, MCA
Deputy General Manager,
Manapuram Finance Ltd. Kerala
10.06.1974 - 08.06.2019
Remembering every moment in silent grief by
Prabitha (Wife)
Shyamak & Shrenik (Sons)
V.S.Subramanian, M.A.B.L. Advocate, High Court, Chennai (Father)
Late. Lalitha (Mother)
V.S.Sishir (Brother & Family)
V.S.Sulab (Brother & Family)
AA 47 (7), 2nd Street, Anna Nagar
Chennai-40. Mob: 94449 18150

Testing times

GDP data reveal some strengths, but they will come under strain

The GDP growth data released on Friday simultaneously portray recent economic strength and reveal some reasons for worry. The provisional estimates of GDP growth for 2025-26 have been pegged at 7.7%, which is marginally higher than the 7.6% predicted by the government in February. This suggests that March, the first full month since the West Asia crisis erupted, did not see enough of an impact to affect the full year's growth. That resilience will be dented in the months ahead. The data also showed that several key sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing and several services sectors, grew by double digits over and above a relatively high base. These are all good signs for an economy heading into severe supply-related headwinds due to the war in Iran. Notably, both Private Final Consumption Expenditure and Gross Fixed Capital Formation – metrics of household consumption and government and private sector investment activity, respectively – grew faster in 2025-26 than they did in the previous year. The consumption growth is especially welcome given that it had been at a tepid 5.8% for the previous two years. It remains to be seen how much of the investment growth was driven by the private sector. Even if this growth was driven by government spending, it has positive knock-on effects on the rest of the economy.

The weakness in the agriculture sector, however, is something to worry about. The sector's growth slowed to 3% in 2025-26 from 4.2% in 2024-25, despite the 2025 monsoon having concluded at 108% of its long period average (LPA). This is dire news, given that the India Meteorological Department has predicted that this year's monsoon will only be 90% of the LPA. That is not counting the fertilizer supply constraints that will really be felt in the months ahead. The data also show the rising dominance of services in the economy, with their share rising to 54.3% of total gross value added (GVA) in 2025-26, up from 51.9% in 2022-23. The agriculture sector, which continues to employ the largest share of the population by far, saw its share in GVA fall to below 20% from 22.1% in 2022-23. The manufacturing sector's share has remained largely unchanged, another cause for concern. This suggests that India is not growing its value-added manufacturing sector fast enough. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), government, and independent economists are in agreement that 2026-27 will see growth slowing significantly. The RBI predicted growth will dip to 6.6%, and the Chief Economic Adviser said that he saw no need to second-guess this estimate. Last year's tariff-related disruptions were a test of India's export resilience. This year's energy supply disruptions will test the entire economy as well as the government's policy agility.

Missed call

India must brace itself for a deficient southwest monsoon

The southwest monsoon reached Kerala on June 4, three days past its normal date and four days behind the India Meteorological Department's own forecast. This is the first time since 2015 that the agency has misjudged the onset beyond its margin of error. A late arrival, in itself, is no calamity. The date on which the rains touch the Kerala coast has little statistical bearing on how much falls over the four months that follow. Many times in the past, the monsoon has begun early and failed, and also begun late and recovered. It is what the monsoon has in store over the next four months that is unsettling. The India Meteorological Department has pegged seasonal rainfall at 90% of the long-period average, with a 60% probability of an outright deficient year – its most pessimistic pre-season call in a decade. Only the northeast is expected to see normal rain; the northwest, central India, the peninsula and the monsoon core zone that waters most of the country's rain-fed farmland are all forecast to fall short. As monsoon watchers have often cautioned, it is the distribution – the sudden long dry spells, sown crops that then face the danger of being unwatered – that matters. Every monsoon is consequential for India. This one is exceptionally so, because it arrives atop an input crisis. The West Asia conflict and the disruption at the Strait of Hormuz earlier this year throttled energy supply and fertilizer production.

History offers little comfort. Around 60% of El Niño years since 1951 have brought deficient or below-normal rains; 2002, 2009 were the severest droughts of the century with significant shortfalls in 2014 and 2015. With El Niño now near-certain through the heart of the season, the government must not count on a late, redeeming swing of the Indian Ocean Dipole. That means activating the Agriculture Ministry, Jal Shakti and Consumer Affairs Ministries on a war footing along with the disaster management authorities, with advisories steering farmers toward short-duration pulses, oilseeds and millets over thirsty paddy. Disciplined groundwater and reservoir management are necessary and crop insurance and relief provisioning must be readied. India will also have to brave more days of severe heat, which a parched landscape will only sharpen. The government as recently as last week claimed to deliver a record *kharif* production. While hoping for the best, it must prepare for the worst. A weak monsoon would fall on a farm economy whose nutrients and fuel are both already scarce and dear.

A targeting in the name of demography

C. Rammanohar Reddy

Writer based in Hyderabad

India is on the cusp of a demographic upheaval. Fertility rates across the country have been falling for decades and are now on or below replacement levels. We will soon have to shift from the challenges of finding jobs for the youth bulge to preparing to care for an ageing population.

You would not think so looking at the Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the High-Level Committee on Demographic Change that the government constituted at the end of May. The ToRs are peppered with the need to address "illegal immigration" and border management. Home Minister Amit Shah said on the social media site X while announcing the formation of the committee that "Illegal infiltration and other reasons leading to Unnatural Demographic Change is a very big challenge for the present and future of any nation." It is no wonder that the committee does not have a single demographer to guide its work. Its chairperson is a retired Supreme Court of India judge; it has a retired IAS officer and a retired IPS officer, the Census Commissioner and an economist.

The infiltration narrative expands

Using strong words about "infiltrators", the Prime Minister had announced the need for such a committee from the ramparts of Red Fort on August 15, 2025. Indeed, this was the culmination of years of building a mythology that undocumented (Muslim) migrants from Bangladesh are swamping the districts on the border, spreading across the country and influencing electoral outcomes. It was way back in 2018 that Amit Shah, then Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President, said that Bangladeshi migrants were termites. The mythology about hordes of immigrants has seeped into the citizen's consciousness and has served well the electoral purposes of the BJP.

It has worked very well in Assam during a couple of election cycles, and it was stunningly effective in West Bengal during the recent elections where the need to deal with "infiltration" was a central feature of the BJP campaign. It is perhaps time now to make it a nation-wide campaign aided by the recommendations of the Demographic Change Committee.

Given how the issue has been highlighted and framed, we can have a fair idea of what the recommendations of this committee will be. It is still important to understand why this has little to do with demographic challenges and is all about moving to the next stage of the "Othering" of India's minorities, especially Muslims.

To begin with, what is the evidence of large-scale undocumented immigration from Bangladesh? It is revealing that the only kind of official evidence we have so far of "demographic change" (i.e., immigration from Bangladesh affecting population size and composition) are observations by the Home Minister of large increases in the population of a few of the border districts. Highlighting such increases without reference to domestic migration or differential fertility behaviour among communities is not proof of undocumented immigration. It is instructive that studies that had been done by official agencies showing evidence of demographic change in the border districts were removed without explanation, according to a report in this daily ("Government proposal in 2024 for a panel on 'demographic challenges' never took off", August 16, 2025). We can only presume that they were deleted because they did not stand scrutiny.

> The Demographic Change Committee may become a platform to institutionalise the targeting of minorities

This is not about undocumented migration

For decades there has indeed been cross-border migration between India and Bangladesh across what is an integrated riverine ecology. But given the economic transformation that has taken place in Bangladesh in recent decades, it would be hard to argue for economic distress driving large-scale migration from Bangladesh to India. India's neighbour is no "basket case" as it was derisively described decades ago.

According to World Bank data, Bangladesh's per capita income (in nominal dollar terms) grew faster than India during 2005-23 (10.4% versus 7.70% compound annual growth rate); it now has roughly the same income as India's. In purchasing power parity terms, India's growth is slightly higher. Both countries presently have roughly the same per capita income however measured, and both now have the same levels of human development, according to the UNDP's Human Development Index. But the change in Bangladesh has been much faster. Why then would there be migration to India of a scale that there should be talk of being swamped? There would certainly remain pockets of distress forcing the poor to consider migrating to India and the more skilled to West Asia. But we cannot find economic evidence to suggest waves of Bangladeshis being pushed by distress to migrate to India, ending up affecting jobs and electoral outcomes here.

Of course, all this is not about undocumented migration. All this is really a code for the place of Muslims in India and an acceleration of the social, economic and political discrimination of this community of Indian citizens that has taken place over the past 12 years. And here the government has given a more dangerous diktat to the committee. Item (iv) reads "to analyse structural population changes at the level of religious or social communities, particularly where they deviate from broader trends". This in particular is about the fertility behaviour of Muslims and "where they deviate from broader trends".

For a century now, the Hindutva campaign has whipped up fears of Muslims overtaking Hindus in population.

This is now firmly impregnated in the minds of Hindus of all ages, classes, castes and regions. It is to be found in everyday social conversations, on social media of course, and it is expressed in less than thinly veiled terms during electoral campaigns.

When facts are ignored

It is tiresome to repeat the facts, but one has to, even when confronted by a wall of disinformation and prejudice. Yes, the share of Muslims in India's population has risen from 10% in 1951 to 14% in 2011, at the time of the last Census. Yes, in the past, the Muslim community on a whole has shown a higher fertility than the Hindus and other religious denominations. This has been on account of its poorer economic status, lower education of women and perhaps even religious beliefs. However, fertility among Muslim women has begun falling rapidly, with the result that the gap between Muslims and Hindus has narrowed and will soon disappear. On the desired number of children that women want to have, there is now almost no difference between Hindus and Muslims. So much for Muslims now having more children than Hindus. And to repeat what is well-known, the best example of why religion is not the determinant of fertility behaviour: Muslim women in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Jammu and Kashmir exhibit lower fertility than the Hindu women of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Poverty and education matter more. This is the deviation that needs to be addressed, not fertility behaviour according to religion.

To speak then about Muslim fertility "deviating from broad trends", as one of the ToRs of the committee indicates, is to ignore the facts on the ground and fall back on familiar tropes about the behaviour of this minority, giving official validation of age-old misinformation.

We cannot escape from the realisation that this committee is being asked to recommend steps to target minorities under the cover of checking undocumented migration. After all, we have already become an inhumane society where, according to reliable reports, government agencies have flown Rohingya refugees from Delhi to the Andamans and then pushed them into the sea with life jackets. So when the Demographic Change Committee is asked "to recommend a streamlined and permanent operational mechanism for the legal, fair, and time-bound identification, detention, and deportation of illegal immigrants already residing in the country", there is a chilling similarity between the language of this "permanent operational mechanism" and the "Final Solution" practised in 1940s Europe.

We should not say we have not been forewarned.

From borderland to India's strategic resource frontier

Sangmuan Hangsing

Researcher and alumnus of the Kautilya School of Public Policy

Within days of one another, official platforms of the Ministry of Mines cast several northeastern States in a similar frame – as repositories of strategic minerals and untapped potential. Manipur was described as a "quiet mineral frontier", Arunachal Pradesh as a "resource-rich frontier", while Meghalaya and Mizoram were portrayed through comparable narratives that emphasised the hidden wealth beneath their hills. Governments routinely publicise natural resources and development opportunities, and such descriptions would ordinarily attract little attention.

Taken together, however, they point to a broader shift in the language through which the northeast is increasingly being framed in the national conversation and strategic picture.

The critical mineral push

The timing is significant because critical minerals have moved from geological discussions into strategic ones. Lithium, cobalt, graphite, nickel and rare earth elements increasingly shape industrial competition, technological manufacturing and energy transitions. Batteries, semiconductors, renewable technologies and defence systems depend upon them, and countries have begun repositioning themselves around access to these resources. India itself continues to depend on imports for several critical minerals and has consequently expanded exploration efforts. According to a Ministry of Mines reply in Parliament, the Geological Survey of India undertook 43 critical mineral exploration projects across northeastern States during the 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 field seasons, covering minerals such as graphite, vanadium, lithium, rare earth elements, nickel and cobalt. Exploration activity has expanded across Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Assam, Nagaland and Manipur. In Manipur, projects involving nickel, cobalt and chromium exploration have recently been initiated.

Geological surveys have pointed toward mineral potential across the region for years.

> Critical mineral ambitions must account for the people, land and history of northeast India

What appears to be changing is the language through which that significance is increasingly being understood. The northeast has long held strategic significance that extends beyond geology, but the framework through which that significance is understood now appears to be widening.

Shift in language

For decades, the northeast has figured in national strategy largely through the language of borders and security. Discussions have centred on insurgencies, territorial management, connectivity initiatives and geopolitics considerations involving neighbouring countries, while infrastructure and development were often justified as instruments of strategic access and territorial security.

The language of resources is increasingly entering a strategic space once dominated by concerns over borders and security. Critical minerals are now discussed alongside trade corridors and geopolitical access, with territorial and resource security converging. Places once viewed mainly as sensitive border regions are increasingly seen as strategic assets.

The repeated use of the word frontier is revealing, because frontiers rarely function as neutral descriptions. They do not merely describe geography; they often reflect how States imagine it. Historically, frontiers have been viewed as spaces awaiting integration, development or extraction because they appear as landscapes of future possibility.

The difficulty is that frontiers are rarely empty spaces waiting to be discovered. The hills and valleys of the northeast already contain dense social and political worlds structured around customary land systems, local institutions and long-standing relationships with territory. Questions of land often extend beyond economics, as they are also tied to authority, identity and memory. Resource extraction thus enters landscapes that already possess institutions and histories of their own.

These questions become particularly significant in regions where political uncertainties continue to shape everyday life. In Manipur, years of violence and displacement have intensified debates over land and territorial arrangements. Similar concerns about ownership, ecological vulnerability and local participation have surfaced across the northeast at different times. Projects involving land often acquire meanings that extend beyond development, as communities interpret them through the lens of trust, representation and political inclusion.

Resources and inclusion

India's search for critical resources is understandable within a global environment increasingly shaped by supply-chain uncertainty and strategic competition. The northeast itself also requires infrastructure, employment and economic opportunities that have remained uneven for decades. Questions surrounding resource development rarely fit neatly into positions of support or opposition.

How quickly these transitions unfold and who shapes them may matter as much as the resources themselves. For a very long time, national priorities and local realities in the northeast often moved at different speeds. Connectivity projects sometimes arrived without corresponding economic ecosystems, while strategic considerations frequently overshadowed questions surrounding participation and representation. Resource development risks reproducing similar tensions if extraction begins moving faster than institutions capable of managing its social consequences.

What is being debated extends beyond the minerals beneath the hills. The northeast has spent years being viewed first as a border to be secured and then as a corridor to be connected. If it now begins entering national imagination as a landscape of strategic resources, the question is whether this new frontier will finally include the people who already inhabit it, or merely assign another purpose to the land beneath their feet.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Hindu Huddle 2026

The 2026 edition of The Hindu Huddle, in Bengaluru, was an intellectually enriching experience that provided a remarkable platform for delegates to engage with an eclectic range of subjects — spanning the complexities of domestic and geopolitics to the nuanced worlds of cinema, art, and music. The event was well-organised, ensuring a seamless and hassle-free experience for all in attendance. It is rare to find such a thoughtful curation of topics under one roof, and the depth of insight provided by the speakers was commendable. One hopes that such vibrant dialogue continues to flourish in our city.

Ram Kumar Viswanathan,
Bengaluru

The sessions were well curated and offered an engaging blend of perspectives and discussions. The sessions featuring the actors and the mentalist were particularly refreshing. I especially enjoyed the discussion with the diplomats from the EU and Australia.

L. Gopinath,
Bengaluru

It is distressing that Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah unabashedly bemoans the abrogation of Article 370 while, in the same breath, urging the Centre to accord statehood to the newly carved-out Union Territory. He must reconcile himself to the changed realities and accept that the welfare of Jammu and Kashmir can be better served now than under the erstwhile dispensation with Art.370.

Ravi Mathur,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

How ICMR is rewiring the health ecosystem

Rajiv Bahl

Secretary to Govt. of India, Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Director-General, Indian Council of Medical Research

As the nation advances toward the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, the question is not only about how to treat disease, but how one builds a health system that is anticipatory, equitable, and innovation-driven. At the heart of this transformation lies a reimagined approach to health, one that connects data to decisions and decisions to impact.

Building on the hard-earned lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), India's apex body for biomedical research, has undertaken a series of forward-looking reforms. These reforms range from reimagining its institutional architecture to strengthening the way research is funded and translated into impact. This shift reflects a deliberate move towards integrated, institute-led research aligned with national priorities, where science is designed not just to generate knowledge, but to solve pressing public health challenges.

A strategic reorientation

A cornerstone of this transformation is the restructuring of the ICMR's institutional architecture. Recent reforms have expanded the mandates of several institutes, repositioning them as interdisciplinary hubs rather than narrowly defined entities. The evolution of institutes toward domains such as digital health and data science, child health, and women's health reflect the changing contours of India's disease burden and technological capabilities. Another important step is the creation of a network of regional National Institutes of Health Research across the country, from Dibrugarh in the Northeast to Jodhpur in the west. These institutes will conduct operational research with State and district health systems to ensure that relevant research is conducted and the output is used on the ground. These changes signal a strategic reorientation toward future-ready science, where AI, genomics, and real-time data systems are integral to public health decision-making.

Equally important is the shift from compartmentalised functioning to a connected national research ecosystem. Institutes are now envisioned as resource centres that contribute to a shared national mission, ensuring that evidence generated in one setting informs action across the country. This systems-level thinking is critical in an era where health challenges, be it antimicrobial resistance, pandemics, or non-communicable diseases, are complex and interconnected. Similarly, the research funding ecosystem is also going through a redesign.

This integrated continuum marks a decisive shift from funding projects to enabling solutions. It is further reinforced by the National Health Research Programme (NHRP), which has identified 13 priority areas ranging from antimicrobial resistance and tuberculosis to mental health, nutrition, and emergency care.

Technology, too, is playing a transformative role. The integration of AI into diagnostics, surveillance, and program implementation is helping bridge longstanding gaps between urban and rural healthcare. AI-enabled tools for tuberculosis and diabetic retinopathy screening are already supporting frontline health workers, while innovations such as AI-driven nutritional monitoring are improving program delivery at scale. The i-Drone initiative, which began with vaccine delivery and has expanded to transport critical medical supplies, exemplifies how cutting-edge technology can overcome geographic barriers and bring care closer to communities. At the frontier of science, advances across the medtech gamut, from medical devices and diagnostics to next-generation vaccines and therapeutics, are enabling more targeted, patient-centric interventions. In parallel, the integration of traditional knowledge systems through innovative, evidence-based models is gaining global recognition. Schemes such as First in the World Challenge complemented with platforms such as MedTechMitra and the Medical Innovations-Patent Mitra initiative are accelerating the journey from research to commercialisation, ensuring that publicly funded science translates into affordable, accessible technologies for the people.

> The roadmap to 2047 will be shaped by advances in digital health, bio-manufacturing, and sustainable development, with a strong emphasis on capacity building and global collaboration

Towards universal access

The true measure of these reforms, however, lies in their impact on public health. Initiatives such as the India Hypertension Control Initiative have demonstrated how evidence-based strategies can transform chronic disease management at scale. Mission-mode programmes in emergency care, including mobile stroke units and rapid cardiac response systems, are redefining outcomes in life-threatening conditions. Expanded diagnostic networks and indigenous technologies are strengthening early detection and treatment across diseases ranging from cancer to infectious outbreaks. These efforts are closely aligned with the National Health Policy 2017, which emphasises preventive and promotive healthcare, universal access, and quality of care.

As we look to the future, the vision is clear. The ICMR will continue to serve as a catalyst, bringing together researchers, clinicians, policymakers, and the industry to build a resilient health ecosystem. The roadmap to 2047 will be shaped by advances in digital health, bio-manufacturing, and sustainable development, with a strong emphasis on capacity building and global collaboration. The transformation underway within the ICMR is an invitation to all stakeholders to participate in this journey and to ensure that science serves society in the most meaningful way.

A united front for local body elections

All three parties of the ruling coalition are likely to eye the lion's share of seats

STATE OF PLAY

Hareesh. P

The elections to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in Andhra, likely to be held towards the end of 2026 or in the first half of next year, are set to pose an acid test for the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners, as they will have to navigate differences that may arise during the process of seat-sharing.

While petitions are pending before the courts questioning the ongoing ward delimitation process, the bigger challenge before the NDA, and more particularly Chief Minister and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) national president N. Chandrababu Naidu, is the need to quell dissidence and ensure that the NDA emerges with flying colours in the elections.

There are over 120 urban local bodies spread across the 175 Assembly constituencies in the State, and winning them gives political parties an edge ahead of the Assembly elections. This, however, is not always the case. The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), which swept the ULB elections last time, could not capitalise on its success in the 2024 general elections due to a massive anti-incumbency wave that reduced the party's strength from 151 Assembly seats in 2019 to just 11 in 2024.

Proportional sharing

As the number of wards are set to increase in corporations and municipalities, the number of leaders aspiring to contest in the ULB elections will also rise across all parties; there is bound to be competition among the ruling coalition leaders of the TDP, the Jana Sena Party (JSP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The JSP, in particular, is likely to seek a larger share of corporator and councillor seats, as well as the posts of Mayors and Chairpersons. It had contested just 21 Assembly and two Lok Sabha seats in the 2024 elections, even though there was a strong demand from party leaders seeking a larger share, considering the prevailing political situation and the bargaining power JSP chief K. Pawan Kalyan wielded at the time. Mr. Kalyan, however, had strongly advocated the need for a united fight against the then incumbent YSRCP government. The JSP went on to record a 100% strike rate.

Therefore, this time around, the party's leaders and cadre are hopeful that they will receive their rightful share in the local body elections in recognition of the party's contributions to the coalition's victory.

The BJP, on the other hand, is keen to expand its grassroots presence in the State and hopes to use representation in local bodies to strengthen its organisational base. Similarly, buoyed by the victory it secured in the elections two years ago, TDP leaders too are hoping to secure the lion's share of seats, confident that local bodies generally favour the ruling party.

This competition among leaders of the three parties for seats could lead to internal squabbles and even instances of leaders working against the spirit of coalition politics, thereby hurting the alliance's prospects and inadvertently benefiting the YSRCP. This is where Mr. Naidu's political acumen will be put to the test, as the arduous task of containing dissidence and rallying the three parties behind a common strategy will rest largely on his shoulders.

Focus on local issues

Moreover, Mr. Naidu could be wary of the possibility of the YSRCP winning a significant number of corporations, municipalities, or even seats in key local bodies such as the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation and the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation. Such victories could energise the party's cadre and leadership, turning the results into a launch pad for the Assembly elections that are just three years away.

The NDA will have to rely on local issues rather than solely banking on the government's much-publicised success of the 'Super Six' welfare schemes and its claims of development through investments. With local issues such as sanitation, sewerage systems, basic infrastructure and grassroots development expected to play a crucial role, the NDA will have to demonstrate what it has done to improve cities and towns over the past two years vis-à-vis the previous YSRCP regime.

The early completion of elections and the formation of new executive and administrative bodies with elected public representatives at the helm, replacing the current Special Officer governance, would pave the way for a faster and more effective development of the ULBs.

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India's pension scheme lags in terms of coverage, contribution

The Centre's contribution to India's flagship pension scheme has remained the same while the add-on contributions by State governments have increased

DATA POINT

Nitika Francis

The Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) – the Government of India's flagship cash assistance scheme for the elderly under its National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) – is in dire need of a revamp as it remains frozen in time, since 2007, both in terms of the sum of ₹200 it offers per person per month and the roughly 2.2 crore beneficiaries it covers. The States and Union Territories (UTs) add their own contributions, ranging from ₹150 to ₹2,000, on top of the ₹200 offered by the Union government for the 60-plus age group or the ₹500 it offers for the 80-plus category.

Chart 1 shows how the Union government's contribution for this centrally-sponsored scheme has remained the same while the add-on contributions by State governments have increased between 2012 and 2023. States such as Telangana and Andhra Pradesh contribute the largest sums – of around ₹2,000. Many others do not bring as much to the table. Chhattisgarh offers ₹150, taking the total pension to ₹350, while West Bengal offers a total of ₹250. Goa and Manipur do not provide any additional amount.

The call for increasing the quantum of assistance, number of beneficiaries and linking the assistance with inflation, as it is done for the payment of Dearness Allowance to government employees, has been made at least since 2013, when the task force constituted by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) first made such recommendations. The latest official recommendations came from the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Lok Sabha in 2025 and the report released in May 2026 based on an independent evaluation of the NSAP commissioned by MoRD. The evaluation report said that the real value of the assistance fixed at ₹200 has "significantly eroded due to inflation, and that the amount should be increased to ₹353 to retain its original purchasing power".

An analysis by *The Hindu* based on the changes in the Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) (base year 2012) at the all-India level showed that since 2013, the value of ₹200 has eroded to just around ₹99. This means that beneficiaries can buy only half the quantity of food items they could earlier buy with ₹200. Conversely, they should be receiving a minimum of around ₹400 to be able to afford even the small quantity of items they could buy with ₹200 in 2013 **(Chart 2)**.

Notably, the survey findings in the latest report highlighted that over 95% of the beneficiaries cited increase in prices as the main reason for their demand to increase the pension amount. More than 80% of them stated that the current pension amount does not cover their daily needs **(Chart 5)**.

The task force's report in 2013, the PAC's 2025 report and the recent MoRD report have all recommended an increase in coverage, stating that the Union government was relying on outdated BPL data to fix ceilings on the number of beneficiaries. The MoRD report estimated that the IGNOAPS beneficiaries should be nearly 17 crore at present and about 20 crore by 2030, which is 10-fold higher than the present coverage of 2.2 crore people. **Chart 3** shows how the number of beneficiaries have remained stagnant when compared with the projected growth of the elderly population.

The report also surveyed 6,000 beneficiaries across 600 Gram Panchayats across 10 sample States. In nine out of these 10 States, less than 10% of respondents thought that the scheme was "fully adequate", with a majority stating that it was only "somewhat adequate" or not adequate at all **(Chart 4)**.

With inputs from Pon Vasanth B. A.

Old and unsupported

The data for the charts were sourced from the Lok Sabha replies, the Ministry of Rural Development's report titled "Impact Assement and Evaluation of NSAP", and the Minstry of Statistics and Program Implementation

CHART 1: The monthly pension offered by all States, barring few Union Territories, under the centrally-sponsored Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) as of 2023

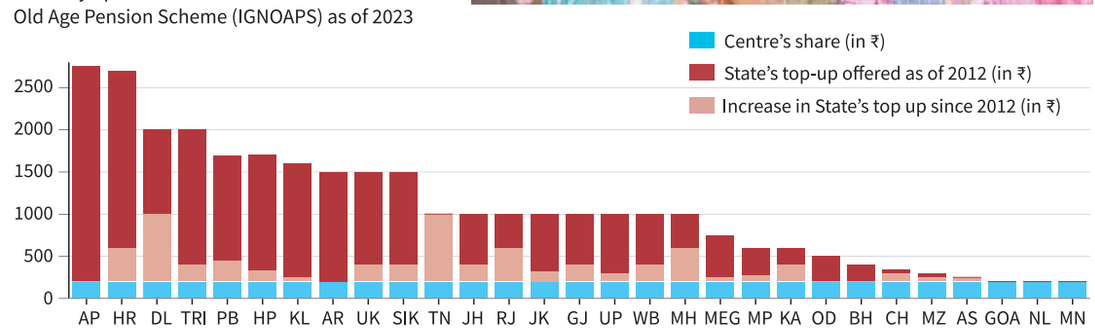


CHART 2: The erosion of the value of ₹200 as per changes in the Consumer Food Price Index (base year 2012) and the minimum assistance that ought to be paid to match that value

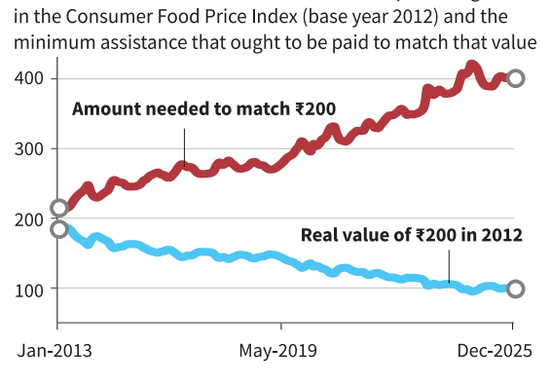


CHART 3: Number of beneficiaries who have remained fairly constant over the years when compared to the projected growth in the elderly population (in crore)

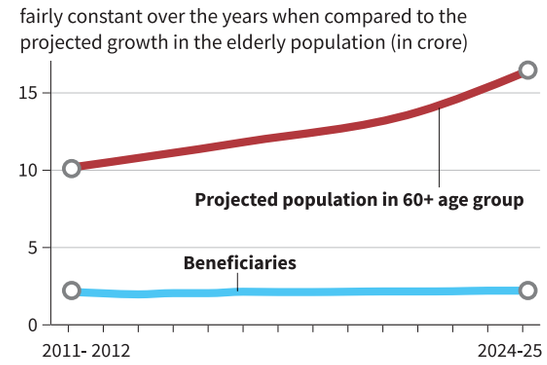


CHART 4: The response of surveyed beneficiaries in nine States and Jammu and Kashmir for a study commissioned by Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) on the adequacy of assistance under IGNOAPS

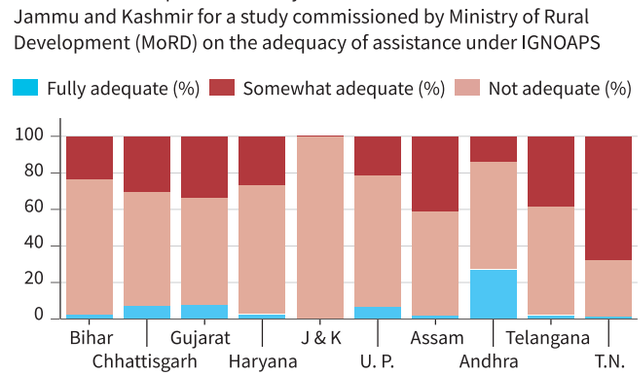
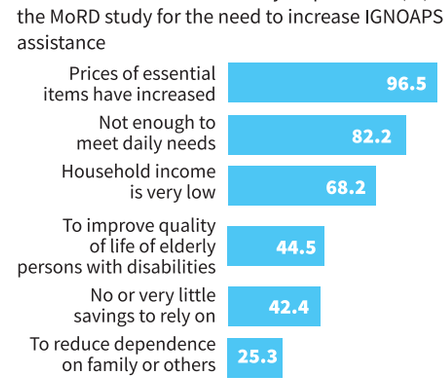


CHART 5: The reasons cited by respondents (%) of the MoRD study for the need to increase IGNOAPS assistance



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 8, 1976

Mango big money spinner for country

New Delhi, June 7: Mango, the king of fruits, is becoming a big money spinner for India. According to preliminary official estimates, exports of mango, mango slices, juice, jams, chutneys, and pickles will fetch the country nearly Rs. 10 crores this year. The exchange earnings through exports to Britain, Canada, West Asia, the Persian Gulf Sheikhdom and other countries in 1975-76 were nearly Rs. nine crores.

India produces annually about nine million tonnes of mango nearly 80 per cent of world's output. Of this Uttar Pradesh, the home of the succulent "dusehri" and "langra" contributes about 30 per cent (nearly 2.5 million tonnes).

Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, has been made famous by its sweet cream like "Dusehri" which attracted the Mughal kings to the abode of nawabs.

This variety is at its best and sweetest in the latter half of June. This year the mango crop in U.P. has been damaged by powdery mildew which has also attacked some areas in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi. The mango harvest in U.P. this year will be two million tonnes but the loss in northern India will be made up by the bumper mango crop in South India.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 8, 1926

A new anaesthetic

A demonstration of ethylene, an anaesthetic of American discovery, was given recently by one of the chief anaesthetists at the Manchester Royal Infirmary with such success as to assure its adoption in future in cases of a certain kind.

The drug represents a further step in the search for the ideal anaesthetic, but is as yet only supplementary to other methods of anaesthesia.

Its value lies particularly in its applicability to cases not met by the ordinary forms of anaesthesia, principally those in which the patient is at one or the other extreme of life, or in diabetic, consumptive, or other cases in which the administration of the anaesthetics in common use is attended by a certain amount of poisoning of the system. The drug has the advantage of giving immunity from certain distressing after effects – "The Manchester Guardian".

From Page One

'Not seeking mediation on border dispute'

Nepal's Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal addresses a press conference in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI

After a gap of a few years, the border issue between the two sides began simmering again when India on April 30 announced the Kailash-Manasarovar Yatra for 2026, scheduled to be conducted in 20 batches of 50 pilgrims each.

The Ministry of External Affairs announced that the pilgrimage would be conducted "in coordination with the Government of the People's Republic of China" through the Lipulekh pass that is claimed by Nepal, and the Nathu La pass in Sikkim. This announcement attracted a protest from Nepal, which communicated its objection to both India and China.

"We have expressed our position through an official diplomatic note to both India and China. We have clearly said to both countries that the land [Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura] belongs to us. That's been our historical claim," Mr. Khanal said in response to questions.

He said his visit to India had restarted the track of high-level interaction from the two sides, and more such visits would take place from Nepal's side soon with Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle expected to visit Delhi "very soon".

Mr. Khanal had held a formal meeting with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar during Saturday evening, when the two sides officially announced the operationalisation of peer-to-peer (P2P) cross-border payment transactions under a memorandum of understanding between Nepal Clearing House Ltd. and the National Payments Corporation of India, he said, which would enable digital and financial connectivity between the two sides.

The Nepal Prime Minister was focused on the "domestic front" as he was keen to show "early results" because of the "strong mandate" that the RSP had received in the May election, Mr. Khanal said, refusing to provide a "timeline" for Mr. Shah's visit to India.

The RSP led by Mr. Shah came to power after defeating the well-established, formerly dominant political players, including the Nepali Congress and the Maoist parties (Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist, or CPN-UML, and CPN-Maoist Centre).

Mr. Shah's rise to prime ministership took place against the backdrop of the "Gen Z uprising" in Nepal that overthrew the government of K.P. Sharma Oli after Mr. Oli launched a crackdown on Nepal's digital ecosystem in the first week of September 2025.

"Our rise is driven by an extraordinary and historic mandate from our citizens, centred on uncompromising good governance, strict meritocracy, and direct accountability. Because we are a new generation of leadership, we possess a unique asset – we are absolutely unencumbered by the past," Mr. Khanal said.

Neutralise armed miscreants: CRPF D-G

In the video, the officer said that the security forces should prepare for the coming days to deal with all types of miscreants.

"There are two scenarios here. One is the armed miscreants, some of them are active militant groups, or with surrendered militant groups, all of them have weapons. They are misusing the weapons to vitiate the situation in Manipur. The second is the law-and-order issue, which is connected to the armed miscreants. The crowd provides cover to these armed groups so that they can create tensions," Mr. Singh said.

Calibrated strategy

He further said a calibrated strategy would have to be formed to deal with both scenarios in collaboration with local police, and the strategy should be futuristic and not merely reactionary.

"Find out about the events planned in the next 24 hours or over a period of 7-30 days and how they can be stopped at source," he added.

"Whoever is found roaming in civilian areas with weapons should be neutralised. Please have no doubts over this, I am saying this in clear terms," the CRPF D-G said, adding, "If people continue to charge despite repeated warnings, then the use of force is completely justified."

The CRPF is one of the largest Central forces deployed in Manipur. Recently, two battalions of the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA), a specialised unit raised for anti-Maoist operations, were deployed in the State.

"When we said last year that Naxalism would be ended, no one believed us. The next turn is of Manipur," Mr. Singh said.

More than 260 people have been killed in the State since ethnic violence broke out in 2023, and the tensions between Naga and Kuki communities since February 7 this year have added a new dimension to the conflict.

Bangladesh to raise issue of 'push-ins' in BGB-BSF talks

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

Bangladesh said on Sunday that the issues of alleged "push-ins" by India and border killings will be discussed at an upcoming meeting between the heads of the two countries' border guarding forces.

The 57th edition of the bi-annual Director General-level border coordination conference between the Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) will be held in New Delhi between June 8 and 11.

"The situation on the frontier, bilateral cooperation and particularly the issue of illegal push-ins will be placed with importance (by BGB)," Bangladesh Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed told reporters at his office.

India maintains that "only illegal intruders" are pushed into Bangladesh following due procedures.

New Delhi says its policy is that "all illegal foreign nationals staying in India must be repatriated as per our laws, procedure and established bilateral arrangements."

The four-day conference comes as BGB intensified vigil along its frontiers with India to halt what it calls "illegal push-in" attempts in recent weeks.

4,800 'infiltrators' sent back to Bangladesh in one month: Bengal CM

Suvendu says 836 people in holding centres will be deported soon; BJP govt. in State giving priority to 'chicken neck' area in north Bengal, he says

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Sunday said that 4,800 "illegal infiltrators" from Bangladesh, who do not fall within the ambit of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, have been deported to Bangladesh over the past one month.

"There is a law of the Government of India, under which they [illegal infiltrators] could be handed over to the Border Security Force [BSF] instead of being sent to prisons. This law was used by other States, but here [in West Bengal], they were treated as guests and lodged in prisons, fed our food, given our clothes and treated with our medicines," said Mr. Adhikari, while speaking at an event organised by the West Bengal BJP, titled "Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Prashikshan Maha Abhiyan 2026".

Mr. Adhikari said holding centres had been set up in border districts of the State and 836 "illegal infiltrators" there would soon be deported to Bangladesh. He also referred to the voluntary crossing of undocumented migrants from the border outpost at Hakimpur in North 24 Parganas district to the neighbouring country.

Bangladeshi migrants, alleged to have crossed into India illegally, resting near a Border Security Force camp on the outskirts of Kolkata for verification on May 28. AFP

The Chief Minister said the demography of West Bengal was changed long ago and that deportation of "illegal infiltrators" was being done as a priority by the West Bengal government. On May 20, Mr. Adhikari had said that the policy of his government regarding "illegal infiltrators" was to "detect, delete and deport".

The Chief Minister said since the BJP government came to power, about 100 km of land had been handed over to the BSF and priority had been accorded to the strategically important "chicken neck" area of north Bengal.

West Bengal shares a 2,216-km border with Bangladesh and about 556 km of this border remains unfenced, according to the Chief Minister.

J&K tribal leader arrested for protest faces grave charges

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

A tribal leader who was arrested after he organised a protest at a demolition site in Jammu faces charges of "attempt to murder", "rioting", and "possessing deadly weapon".

Seeking his immediate release, former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti said he "has been jailed for fighting for the rights of the poor marginalised tribal community".

According to the first information report (FIR), the tribal leader, Talib Hussain Choudhary, faces charges under Sections 109, 126(2), 121, 132, 191(2), 191(3), 190, 125, and 125(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. They deal with the charges of attempted murder, voluntarily causing grievous hurt and assault of a public servant, rioting with deadly weapons and compromising public safety.

Mr. Choudhary, also a member of the PDP, was arrested on June 1 from Bandhi-Ragura village, where 32 structures belonging to tribals were demolished in an anti-encroachment drive.

The police said that at about 4 p.m., approximately 100-150 persons under the leadership of Mr. Choudhary and Molvi Makhan Din and some other local leaders assembled at Bandhi-Ragura.

> Treating him like a criminal sends a chilling message to Gujjar Bakerwals who have stood by India
>
> **MEHBOOBA MUFTI**
> PDP chief

They said the members attacked the police party with stones and other deadly missiles. "As a result, Sub-divisional police officer City East Jammu; Deputy Superintendent of Police; Station House Officer, Police Station Bagh-e-Bahu; and several other police officials sustained injuries," said the police.

Ms. Mufti said, "Treating him like a criminal simply for taking out a peaceful march against an arbitrary demolition drive in Sidhra sends a chilling negative message to Gujjar Bakerwals who have always stood by India."

Bengal couple held for the murder of DU assistant professor

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police have arrested a couple from West Bengal in connection with the murder of an assistant professor of the University of Delhi earlier this week, officials said on Sunday. A minor has also been held.

The police said the couple allegedly murdered Debosmita Paul over a property dispute. They had been residing in the property belonging to Paul in Burdwan in West Bengal since 2023.

"The victim had been repeatedly asking the accused to vacate the premises, leading to an ongoing property dispute. Following a final warning issued by the victim to vacate the property, the accused allegedly conspired to eliminate her and travelled to Delhi on June 3," a police officer said. Paul was found dead in her flat in New Ashok Nagar on June 4.

Following this, the East District police team carried out CCTV analysis around the scene of crime. The suspects were found moving through the building, changing their clothes, and hiding their faces.

"After committing the offence, the accused fled from the scene and travelled via Anand Vihar to New Delhi Railway Station, boarded the Poorva Express at 5.40 p.m. on June 3, and reached Burdwan on June 4," the officer said.

A razor allegedly used to slit the victim's wrists has also been recovered, the police said.

India, Indonesia review bilateral ties as Jaishankar meets his counterpart

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's expected visit to Indonesia, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his Indonesian counterpart Sugiono held the 8th India-Indonesia Joint Commission meeting here on Sunday.

In a press statement, the External Affairs Ministry said the two Ministers covered the "full spectrum" review of bilateral relations covering cooperation in defence, security, maritime, trade and investment, pharma and healthcare, digital, energy, connectivity, space, education, consular and culture domains, as well as political ties.

"The two sides exchanged views on regional and global developments of mutual interest and reaffirmed their commitment to closer cooperation and coordination in regional and multilateral fora," said the Ministry. Following the meeting, Mr. Jaishankar said the talks were "substantive".

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Indonesian Foreign Minister Sugiono in New Delhi on Sunday. ANI

The Joint Commission meeting was held after a gap of four years, Mr. Jaishankar said in his opening remarks, informing that during the past four years the two sides made "good progress" in bilateral ties.

Mr. Sugiono said Indonesia was looking forward to Mr. Modi's visit that is expected in the coming weeks. He said the visit would provide an "important opportunity to further deepen our cooperation and deliver tangible benefits for our peoples".

The visit will be a reciprocal one by the Indian side as Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto had come to New Delhi in January 2025, when he was the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations here.

CBI conducts searches in IDFC First, AU Finance case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has conducted searches at six premises in connection with a large-scale misappropriation and fraud case allegedly involving IDFC First Bank and AU Finance Bank.

It is alleged that about ₹661 crore in eight departments of the Haryana government, the Municipal Corporation Chandigarh, and CREST (Chandigarh Renewal Energy and Science and Technology Promotion Society) were siphoned off.

The search operations were carried out on Saturday in Chandigarh, Panchkula, and in and around Delhi. They included the residential premises of senior public servants of the Haryana cadre, and Vipam Consultancy Private Limited and its director.

The CBI searched locations in Chandigarh, Panchkula, and in and around Delhi.

The agency alleged that, during the investigation, evidence surfaced suggesting public servants had colluded with bank officials and facilitated the opening of accounts, transfer of funds, and subsequent diversion thereof.

"It is alleged that they have received undue advantages for their facilitation and inaction. Vipam Consultancy Pvt. Ltd., Noida, received the crime proceeds...which was subsequently transferred into the director's personal account," the agency said.

"Incriminating documents, digital devices, property documents and other relevant material were seized during the search operations," it said.

The CBI initiated the probe after taking over one case from the State Vigilance and the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Haryana, and two cases originally registered at the Economic Offences police station, Chandigarh.

The cases pertain to alleged criminal conspiracy, misappropriation of government funds, and related offences involving bank officials and public servants.

Prepare for 2029 polls, Nitin tells Jharkhand BJP workers

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national president Nitin Nabin instructed his party workers in Jharkhand on Sunday to gear up for the 2029 Assembly election in the state.

He was speaking during a meeting held at the party office in Ranchi as part of a two-day visit to the State that concluded on Sunday. State office bearers, presidents of State wings (*morchas*), district presidents, and districts in-charge were present for his first visit there after becoming BJP's national president.

Addressing the party workers and leaders, Mr. Nabin said that every worker must gear up for 2029 and learn from past polls.

"Jharkhand was, is, and will remain a BJP stronghold. Although the party did not achieve the expected success in the last election because opposition parties misled the public with false promises, people still hold more affection for the BJP in their hearts than for the 'INDI Alliance'," Mr. Nabin said.

BJP national president Nitin Nabin addresses a joint meeting with Jharkhand BJP president Aditya Sahu in Ranchi on Sunday. ANI

He pointed out that the party failed to win the public's trust, but now is the time to transform the atmosphere of disappointment into hope. He added that the organisation must be revived by motivating booth-level workers.

Monthly meetings

Mr. Nabin said regular monthly meetings should be held at all levels from the State down to the block level to maintain continuous communication with grassroots workers.

BJP govt. will pay a political price: Pawar slams hike

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party (SP) supremo Sharad Pawar on Sunday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's handling of gas and fuel price hike and said that it was being done in a phased manner to avoid public backlash while steadily disturbing household budgets.

Hitting out at the Prime Minister, Mr. Pawar said, "He [Mr. Modi] assured people of keeping inflation in check but that is not happening. The ruling party will have to pay a political price for this at the right time." Speaking to presspersons in Baramati, he said, "The hike started with two rupees but slowly it has only piled up, affecting people."

Mr. Pawar's statement comes in the wake of increase in price of domestic cooking gas by ₹29 per cylinder,which is the second rise in price in the past three months.

Maharashtra Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar alleged that the BJP was not concerned about issues affecting ordinary people like it had been when it was in the Opposition. "During the Congress government, they used to raise voice on the price rise of fuels and gas but now they are maintaining silence," he said.

Govt. cites oil firm losses for latest LPG price hike

Price of a domestic LPG cylinder has gone up by ₹29 after the second hike in three months; Centre says oil marketing companies are now absorbing under-recoveries at ₹700 per cylinder

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

The price of a domestic LPG cylinder has gone up by ₹89 overall since the beginning of the war in West Asia, following the latest hike by ₹29 on Sunday. This was the second increase since the crisis began three months ago.

With the latest increase, the 14.2-kg domestic LPG cylinder costs ₹942 in Delhi, ₹941.5 in Mumbai, ₹968 in Kolkata and ₹957.5 in Chennai. On March 7, the government last increased domestic LPG prices by ₹60 per cylinder.

There was no increase in the price of the 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder and the 5-kg free trade LPG (FTL) cylinder on Sunday. However, since the war began, prices of both variants have seen multiple hikes, with cumulative increase of ₹1,345 (per commercial LPG cylinder) and ₹323 (per FTL cylinder).

In a statement, the government said that state-owned oil marketing companies are now absorbing under-recoveries, that is, the difference between effective cost and selling price, on domestic LPG at about ₹700 per cylinder. At current rates, domestic LPG is discounted by about 45% as against current international pricing, it added.

On the rise

The government on Saturday increased domestic LPG prices by **₹29** per cylinder. This is the second hike in rates since the onset of tensions in West Asia.

The table shows the increase in the cost of a 14.2-kg cylinder in key cities

City	March 7	June 7
Delhi	₹913	₹942
Kolkata	₹939	₹968
Mumbai	₹912.50	₹941.50
Chennai	₹928.50	₹957.50
Bengaluru	₹915.50	₹944.50

Rising costs

Elaborating, the Centre stated that the cost of supplying a 14.2-kg cylinder would be over ₹1,600 had the present retail prices of domestic cylinders been in line with the Saudi Contract Price in June.

"The effective Ujjwala price of the first four cylinders at ₹642 (per cylinder) is at a discount of about 60% to the actual international prices of an LPG cylinder and the non-PMUY price of ₹942 (per cylinder) is at a discount of about 45% to the international price," it said.

According to Prashant Vashisht, senior vice-president at ICRA Limited, the latest hike may not suffice for oil firms struggling with under-recoveries.

"The bulk of the LPG in the country is consumed by households which have been insulated from hikes. Also, a major part of the under-recoveries absorbed by OMCs with respect to retail fuels [petrol, diesel and LPG] also comes from LPG," he stated. "The ₹29 per cylinder hike in domestic LPG would not help a lot, considering the ₹700 per cylinder under-recovery."

The conflict in West Asia has directly impacted about 54% of India's LPG demand.

(With inputs from Devesh Kumar Pandey)

Kharge takes a dig at Modi govt. over price hike

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday demanded to know why the government, despite its "grand claims" of diversifying fuel sources across 41 countries in response to the West Asia conflict, carried out one more hike in the price of LPG cylinders.

He said, "Modi *ji* had made grand claims in Parliament about diversifying fuel sources across 41 countries in response to the West Asia conflict. What became of that?"

The soaring domestic LPG prices, he said, threaten to disrupt the kitchens of common people.

"Modi*ji* and BJP leaders used to raise a hue and cry about inflation during the UPA era. Is it not true that the Modi government has increased domestic LPG prices by ₹530 over the last 12 years? Why aren't BJP leaders taking to the streets with LPG cylinders in protest now?" he said.

Ashok Gehlot says there was no revolt against Cong. high command in 2022

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Clearing the air: Congress leaders Ashok Gehlot and Sachin Pilot at an event in Jaipur. FILE PHOTO

Former Rajasthan Chief Minister and Congress veteran Ashok Gehlot on Sunday said he did not revolt against the Congress high command in September 2022 to remain in the Chief Minister's office.

Mr. Gehlot claimed a "wrong perception" was spread and there was a conspiracy to defame him. "It is repeatedly asked what happened on September 25, 2022. There can never be a revolt against the high command," he said, adding that 100 MLAs had reacted to speculation about a leadership change and Sachin Pilot taking oath as the Chief Minister.

In September 2022, the Congress high command had planned for a leadership change in Rajasthan, with Mr. Pilot being considered for the Chief Minister's post and Mr. Gehlot as a candidate for the Congress's presidential polls later that year. A meeting of the Congress Legislature Party was scheduled for September 25 but it could not take place as party MLAs defied the high command directive.

Mr. Gehlot said the MLAs took the view that they had demonstrated loyalty to the party high command and remained confined in hotels to save the Congress government.

"They wanted any of them to be appointed the Chief Minister and they would accept it, but Mr. Pilot was unacceptable to them because he was the one who took his MLAs to Manesar. Mr. Pilot should accept this truth," Mr. Gehlot said, referring to Mr. Pilot's unsuccessful rebellion against his government in 2020.

Mr. Pilot, who was then serving as Deputy Chief Minister as well as the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president, revolted against Mr. Gehlot's leadership along with some of his loyal MLAs who had stayed in a hotel in Haryana's Manesar.

Amid questions over the timing of Mr. Gehlot's latest comments about a simmering leadership tussle, the former Rajasthan Chief Minister said he had adopted a "forget and forgive approach".

The timing of the former Chief Minister, however, is significant as recently party leader Rahul Gandhi had hailed the unity among Rajasthan leaders.

While receiving Mr. Gandhi in Pushkar, PCC chief Govind Singh Dotasara and CLP leader Tika Ram Jully jointly offered him a bouquet, prompting him to make the remark."A very good example for all other States," he said.

Mr. Gehlot was reacting to comments made by Rajasthan BJP about factionalism in the Congress.

"These [the BJP] people keep taking jibes at us again and again over Manesar. This is a matter within our own house, and we will sort it out among ourselves," Mr. Gehlot said.

'Youth power': Rahul lauds student for flagging OSM issues

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Rahul Gandhi

Taking a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Sunday posted a video of his interaction with Sarthak Siddhant, the 18-year-old student who flagged the irregularities in the tendering process to select a vendor for the Central Board of Secondary Education's On-Screen Marking System (OSM).

He said that the Prime Minister wanted the youth to keep "making reels and frying *pakoras*".

"Mr. Sarthak is 18 years old, yet in terms of mindset, courage, and principles, he is second to none," Mr. Gandhi said in a post in Hindi, accompanying the video, on X.

Naming ethical hacker Nisarga Adhikary, who also exposed the vulnerabilities in the CBSE's OSM portal, Mr. Gandhi said that the duo had accomplished what the country's major media houses and investigative journalists could not. "They exposed the collusion between CBSE and COEMPT [edtech company] to the nation," he said. He lauded Mr. Sidhant for being "faster and sharper" than the Central Bureau of Investigation, and said this victory for the youth was, in the true sense, a defeat for the government.

"Mr. Modi *ji* wants our youth to keep making reels and frying *pakoras*, without asking questions or opening their eyes. But these young men did ask questions, and they found the answers, too. This is India's true youth power, inquisitive, aware, and informed. And remember, the country's future will not be led astray," he said.

Meet from last week

The eight-minute-long video is from Mr. Gandhi's meeting with Mr. Sidhant and his family last week. The video opens with Mr. Gandhi asking him whether he believes he had done "a good thing" or "a bad thing". Mr. Sidhant responded that he did what a "concerned citizen" should do, explaining how Mr. Adhikary and he had investigated the issue.

Panel looking into NEET, OSM issues seeks answers from NTA and CBSE

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A parliamentary panel has asked the National Testing Agency (NTA) to define what constitutes a "paper leak" in its definition and whether any paper leaks have occurred in exams it conducted since 2018, sources said.

The panel's questionnaire follows NTA officials' appearance before it last week, where they contended that there was no paper leak from their system, claiming that some questions from a guess paper were in circulation, the sources said.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, headed by Congress Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh, is investigating the NEET paper leak and the CBSE's On-Screen Marking (OSM) fiasco, and has summoned top government officials, including those from the NTA and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

The committee has sought written answers from the CBSE and the NTA on the issues of OSM system and the NEET exam respectively.

The panel has asked the NTA whether it conducted any inquiry into the allegations of irregularities in the NEET-UG 2024 (outside of the CBI investigations). The panel has also asked the NTA about its staff strength for the last three years and fresh recruitments made since 2022. It has also demanded the annual report the NTA submitted to the Higher Education Department for the last three years.

The Parliamentary panel looking into the issues is headed by Congress leader Digvijaya Singh.

Action taken report

It has sought a detailed report on each of the Radhakrishnan Committee Report's 101 recommendations and the action taken by the NTA on each of them, the sources said.

While the CBSE must answer the questions by June 8, the NTA has been asked to submit written answers by June 10. Both agencies are yet to respond, the sources add.

The panel has also asked the CBSE about reported "changes" between the various Requests for Proposals (RFPs) issued for the OSM contract and whether any background checks on the company COEMPT were conducted before awarding it the contract, the sources added.

The panel has also sought to know from the CBSE whether it was aware that COEMPT EduTeck and/or its directors were previously associated with Globarena Technologies, whose evaluation software was faulted in the inquiry into the 2019 Telangana Intermediate results and how this was factored in the award decision, the sources claimed.

Detailed answers

Seeking detailed answers from the CBSE, the committee has asked why the proviso disqualifying bidders with a past record of poor performance was removed in the third RFP for the OSM contract, the sources claimed.

It has also asked why the proviso prohibiting bidders who were previously blacklisted was "weakened" to exclude only currently blacklisted bidders in the third RFP and why the minimum company turnover for the bidder was specifically set at ₹50 crore, they said.

The committee has sought to know why the RFP provisions "changed" from favouring contractors with their own data centres to those using MeitY-empaneled data centres, the sources said.

It has asked why the provision for a robotic scanner was "dropped and replaced with a generic provision ('sufficient scanners')", and why the stipulation for contractors to scan answer papers without cutting the spine of the paper was removed.

It has also sought to know why the minimum scanning resolution desired by the CBSE in its RFP was reduced from 300 DPI (dots per inch, which describes the resolution of an image) to 200 DPI, according to sources.

The panel has also asked why the criteria requiring experience in handling large projects (involving at least five lakh students per project) was "dropped" in favour of a criterion allowing cumulative answer-book volume across multiple projects, the sources said.

The panel had also asked the CBSE to share the action taken on the report of the observers of the OSM dry run and whether the Board shared and/or discussed the observers' report with the Ministry of Education.

Defer three-language policy for Class 9, Digvijaya urges govt.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Urging the government not to implement the three-language policy for Class 9 CBSE students in the ongoing session, senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh, in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said enforcing the policy without adequate teachers, textbooks or transition time was likely to create "serious disruption".

Mr. Singh compared implementation of this policy midway through the session with the "hasty implementation of CBSE's On-Screen Marking System".

He said he had received several letters from parents who had flagged genuine challenges in implementing the policy. "The sudden enforcement of this policy mid-session – without adequate teachers, textbooks, or transition time – is likely to create serious disruption, not unlike the chaos witnessed during the hasty implementation of CBSE's OSM system, which adversely impacted lakhs of students across the country," he said.

He said that the CBSE's governing body had ratified the Curriculum Committee's recommendation that 'schools continue with the existing Scheme of Studies, especially with regard to language, until the release of graded textbooks of languages by NCERT'. Overriding the decision, the CBSE issued a circular on May 15, asking for the implementation of third-language instruction in Class 9 from July 1.

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS:TIRUPATI
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Adv.No.(1)TTD-44021(34)/2/2026-PRESS Sec (2)TTD-44021(34)/3/2026-PRESS Sec (3)TTD-44021(34)/4/2026-PRESS Sec (4)TTD-44021(34)/5/2026-PRESS Sec (4)TTD-44021(34)/6/2026-PRESS Sec (6)TTD-44021(34)/7/2026-PRESS Sec
e-tenders are invited for Printing and supply of 12 sheet calenders (13,50,000 Nos) Diary (deluxe) (8,50,000 Nos), Diary (small) (1,50,000 Nos), Desktop/Table-Top Calendars (1,25,000 Nos), 6 sheet Calendar (Special Edition) with 2 months datepad (75,000 Nos) and Telugu Panchangam Calenders (2,50,000 Nos) of 2027, as per Tender notice & Details Please log on to the website http://www.tirumala.org and https://tender.ap.eprocurement.gov.in. For further details contact : **0877-2264355 or 0877-2264292**
TTD-40021(31)/1/2026-PRO SEC(Adv.No.72),Date:06.06.2026 EXECUTIVE OFFICER

AMARAVATI GROWTH and INFRASTRUCTURE CORPORATION LIMITED (AGICL)
2ND FLOOR, APCRDA OFFICE, RAYAPUDI, THULLURU MANDAL, (A.P.)
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
NIT. No. 08/MD/CE/AGICL/2026 Dated 06-06-2026
Name of work: Construction of Amaravati Eye (Ferris Wheel) at Amaravati on PPP (DBFOT) mode.
The bid can be downloaded on AP e-procurement portal from 09-06-2026. For further details, please refer to **www.apeprocurement.gov.in** and **www.agicl.org.**
Sd/- **S.V.R. Srinivas**, IAS (R), Managing Director, **AGICL**, Amaravati.

Eggs thrown at Trinamool leaders

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

More than a month after the defeat of the Trinamool Congress in the West Bengal Assembly election, public anger against local party workers has not subsided. People across the State have found a new way to express their anger - throwing eggs at Trinamool leaders accused of corruption and wrongdoing.

On Saturday night, eggs were allegedly hurled at senior Trinamool leader MLA Madan Mitra's convoy in Kamarhati constituency.

On Sunday, people threw eggs at Trinamool councillor Bappaditya Dasgupta, arrested on serious charges including extortion, even as the police escorted him to the Alipore court amid tight security.

Reports indicate that the Trinamool had to cancel a meeting of its councillors scheduled for Sunday afternoon at Trinamool Bhavan in Kolkata fearing 'egg attacks' on party councillors.

In another incident, a local Trinamool worker from Amta was found hiding under a pile of sarees during a police raid.

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NOTICE INVITING TENDER UNDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
1. Name of the Work : Construction of Block level Stadium (without Indoor Hall), Purusottampur Block under Ganjam District
2. Value of the Work : Rs.9.62 Crore
3. Period of completion : 09 (Nine) Calendar Months
4. Availability of tender online for Bidding :
i. Start Date : 18:00 Hours of dt.10.06.2026
ii. End Date : 15:00 Hours of dt.24.06.2026
iii. Opening date : 16.00 Hours of dt.24.06.2026.
Tender details can be seen from the e-procurement portal: **www.tendersorissa.gov.in.** Corrigendum or Addendum if any will not be published in newspapers and can be seen in **e-procurement portal** as well as in **IDCO website.**
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4001/124/2627 OIPR-4001/4075/1/26-27/0038

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INBRIEF

Modi congratulates Major Abhilasha Barak on UN Award

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday congratulated Major Abhilasha Barak on being conferred the UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award and said the honour is a recognition of her exemplary service and also of India's longstanding contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping efforts. Major Barak, currently serving with the United Nations mission in Lebanon, has been honoured with the award for her outreach efforts with women and girls during her deployment in the West Asian nation. She is also the first woman combat helicopter pilot of the Indian Army. PTI

4 workers die while cleaning tank at Surat jewellery unit

Four workers died allegedly after inhaling toxic fumes while cleaning a tank at a jewellery manufacturing unit in Surat, Gujarat, on Sunday morning, the police said. While asphyxiation is likely the primary cause of their death, the exact cause will be confirmed by the post-mortem report, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Zone-1, Alok Kumar said. The incident occurred at the septic tank, which collects waste from the jewellery cleaning process, in Ashwini Kumar area, he said. "We are examining whose negligence led to the incident, as preliminary investigations show that safety protocols were not followed," he said. PTI

Law student dies at concert in Mumbai, woman falls ill

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

A 28-year-old man died and a woman fell ill during the 'Klangkuenstler All Night Long' concert at the NSCI Dome in Mumbai on Saturday night.

The deceased has been identified as Rishabh Gangurde, a law student from Mahim. He was reportedly heavily intoxicated. The 31-year-old woman, a friend of the deceased, was taken to a hospital. She is in a stable condition, the police said.

The Mumbai Police have filed an accidental death report and the body has been sent for post-mortem examination. According to a preliminary inquiry, the deceased experienced a medical emergency during the event. "The cause of death remains unclear, forensic reports are awaited," a police official said.

"Based on enquiries with the woman, [it was found that] she had consumed alcohol and energy drinks. No drug use was revealed." The police are examining if it was a "rave party". A similar incident had taken place in April at the NESCO centre in Goregaon, where two students died from a drug overdose.

Efforts on to establish AI ecosystem for the judiciary, says CJI

SC has consciously approached technology as an aid to human reasoning rather than substitute for independent judicial thought, Justice Kant says

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Observing that the Supreme Court has consciously approached technology as an aid to human reasoning rather than as a substitute for independent judicial thought, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant said that considerable emphasis has been placed on developing "Swadeshi jurisprudence".

Delivering a lecture at the Oxford Union and the Oxford Law Society on the theme "Constitutional promise to digital reality: safeguarding justice in the age of AI and technological advancement", the CJI said that in addition to ongoing technological initiatives, serious efforts are under way to explore establishing an indigenous AI ecosystem for the judiciary.

"The Supreme Court of India has consciously approached technology as an aid to human reasoning rather than as a substitute for independent judicial thought. Considerable emphasis, however, has been placed upon the development of what may be described as a distinctly Indian or 'Swadeshi jurisprudence': One that remains attentive to our own constitutional values, institutional realities, linguistic diversity, and social conditions rather than relying solely upon imported technological models or assumptions," the CJI said.

He said technology has contributed to something beyond the constitutional promise of access to justice.

"It has, in many ways, brought judicial systems across the world into far closer conversation with one another and strengthened what may now fairly be described as an increasingly interconnected global judicial community," he said.

Young lawyers, judicial officers, and legal professionals are an encouraging source for the judiciary's technological transformation, the CJI said.

He also emphasised that technology can never replace human judgment.

He added that an AI system can process immense volumes of legal text with astonishing speed.

> It [technology] has, in many ways, brought judicial systems across the world into far closer conversation with one another and strengthened what may now fairly be described as an increasingly interconnected global judicial community
>
> **JUSTICE SURYA KANT**
> Supreme Court

'Detailed NFHS report will provide a broader picture'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Union Health Ministry sources addressed criticism directed at "missing" indicators, such as anaemia, sanitation, and coverage of clean cooking fuel, in the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-6 factsheets saying those are being monitored through dedicated national surveys and administrative databases, and were not "duplicated" in the preliminary release.

Responding to "commentary in sections of the media regarding the absence of certain indicators", official sources said the factsheets represent the first stage of dissemination and cover 101 major indicators intended to provide a concise snapshot of India's most critical health and demographic trends.

"The factsheets are the first stage of dissemination. The detailed national report will provide a much broader picture," sources said. The report will be released subsequently with a much wider range of indicators, detailed analyses and methodological documentation.

"The aim is to ensure that each indicator is reported through the most appropriate and authoritative source, reducing duplication and improving overall data coherence," sources said. They said several indicators cited as "missing" from the factsheets are being monitored through dedicated national systems. Sanitation and clean cooking fuel coverage, for instance, are tracked through specialised surveys and administrative platforms such as Swachh Survekshan Grameen and the Statistics and Programme Implementation Ministry's surveys, making duplication within the factsheets unnecessary, they said.

Key statistics relating to mortality, birth registration and population characteristics continue to be generated through systems such as the Sample Registration System, Civil Registration System and Census framework.

On the absence of anaemia estimates in the factsheets, they said that haemoglobin testing was not undertaken in NFHS-6 due to concerns surrounding the capillary blood sampling methodology used in previous rounds.

Toll in Delhi fire rises to 22 as a foreign national dies

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A Nigerian national injured in the fire at a hotel in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar died during treatment at a hospital, taking the death toll in the tragedy to 22, the police said on Sunday.

The blaze ripped through Flourish Stays B&B in the Hauz Rani area on Wednesday morning, killing 21 people, including a 16-year-old girl and several foreign nationals from Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Iraq, Congo, Mozambique, and Liberia.

A foreigner, who was undergoing treatment at a hospital in Delhi, died on Saturday night, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Anant Mittal said.

The deceased has been identified as Okale, a Nigerian national. He had sustained severe burns.

Farmers protest against 'Third Mumbai' project in Raigad

Snehal Mutha
RAIGAD

Social reformer and former judge B.G. Kolse Patil on Sunday issued a strong warning against the "Third Mumbai" project under way in Raigad district of Maharashtra, declaring that it would be built "only over our dead bodies".

Addressing a farmers' meeting, he asked the attendees to take an oath to oppose the project. The meeting was organised by the Raigad-based MMRDA KSC Navnagar (Third Mumbai) Virodhi Samiti.

"Today our fight is on another level. Earlier judges did their job, lawyers did their job, and the police did theirs. The political leaders in power are shameless, " Mr. Patil said.

The Third Mumbai project, or Karnala-Sai-Chirner (KSC) New Town, includes 124 villages and spans a land area of 323 sq. km. The land is spread across Uran, Panvel, and Pen talukas in Raigad district, and strategically links to Mumbai via the Atal Setu Road. Farmers are agitated over the compensation provisions made by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority , the authority managing the project.

According to the Government Resolution issued in March, the landowners are to receive 22.5% developed land in return for the land sold or opt for compensation in the form of floor space index and transferable development rights.

Activist Ulka Mahajan criticised the government, saying the project ignores laws, democracy and constitutional norms. Samiti representative and farmer Rupesh Patil advised his peers not to fall prey to inducements that could ruin their homes. "If we sell today, we won't be able to buy even half a *gunta* of land. Our land is no more farmland but has become a real estate hub."

A meeting organised by the Raigad-based organisation MMRDA KSC Navnagar (Third Mumbai) Virodhi Samiti on Sunday. SNEHAL MUTHA

Poor facilities, stigma force Odisha girls to skip school during menstruation: study

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
BHUBANESWAR

Absenteeism from school during menstruation continues to be a major concern for female students across Odisha, with nearly 74% of them missing anywhere between one to eight days of classes per cycle, according to a study on menstrual health released here recently.

Pain and discomfort were identified as the primary reasons for absenteeism, with lack of privacy, inadequate facilities, and social stigma also major factors. The assessment, conducted from April 28 to May 25 across several districts, revealed persistent gaps in menstrual hygiene management, sanitation infrastructure, awareness, and institutional support systems. The survey covered 177 respondents – 121 schools and 56 public institutions – from rural and urban areas, and was conducted by organisations, including UNICEF, Aaina, WaterAid, AIIMS-Bhubaneswar, and IIT-Bhubaneswar.

While 94% of the schools surveyed had separate toilets for girls, the lack of basic menstrual hygiene support systems, and non-availability of water and soap were cited as major hurdles. The study found that around 56% of schools either lacked menstrual waste disposal facilities or relied on unsafe disposal methods.

The lack of healthcare staff within schools is another concern, with only 27% of schools having a nurse or health worker and 44% reported having first aid kits.

Over the past three years, public spaces in Bhubaneswar, have been audited by adolescents using the Public Spaces Assessment Framework developed by the World Resources Institute India, a global non-profit, with inputs from over 800 young people.

"Here, too, one of the key issues that persists is the lack of inclusive and period-friendly toilets in public spaces. Building on three years of field insights, the Safe, Vibrant, and Healthy Public Spaces project offers a model for inclusive toilets that we aim to demonstrate at three strategic locations across Bhubaneswar. The initiatives will be led by adolescent champions of Aaina, seeking to support city agencies to build awareness around accessible and inclusive sanitation infrastructure, especially for women, girls, and persons with disabilities, while ensuring dignity, hygiene and comfort in public spaces for everyone," Mukti Swaroop Pradhan, programme associate, Urban Development, Sustainable Cities and Transport, WRI India, said.

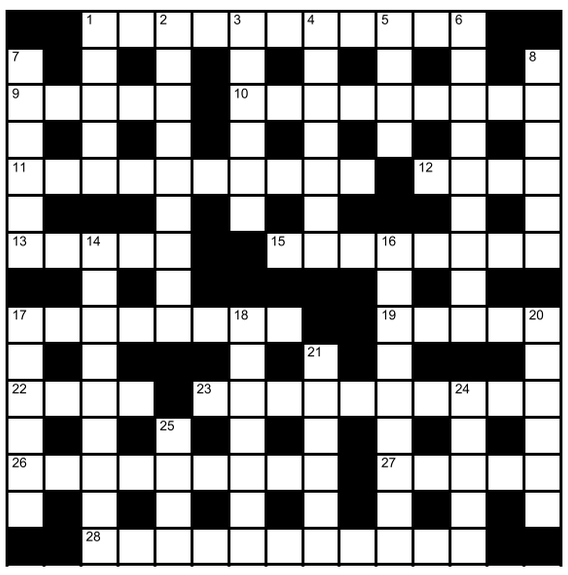
Pain and discomfort were identified as the primary reasons for absenteeism from school. BISWARANJAN ROUT

TH CROSSWORD + 14814

(set by Incognito)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Local going after vehicle on highway from London to Leeds? It can lead to reduction in gas (11)
9 Wife leaves lawyer's coat (5)
10 Grand proposal to install gas lines to every house is fanciful thinking (4,5)
11 American consuming sodium first? Disgusting! (10)
12 Money held by masseur obtained (4)
13 Cut off from Chris Evert (5)
15 Warped space on 1st for wool gatherer (8)
17 Following friend, on this day, turning into a follower of an Oriental faith (8)
19 Pertaining to quality of sound arising from ventilator after losing rivet (5)
22 Gas used in Cochrane, Ontario (4)
23 A kind of presentation for electrical socket (5,5)
26 So, large things are thrown with this (9)
27 Son has fun returning female's ground tobacco (5)
28 Point carton out to get device (11)

Down

1 Rodent is shy at first, perhaps unsettled, for starters (5)
2 Are rather confused about metal not available in pure form in nature (4,5)
3 Start to produce units manufactured to make feedstocks (6)
4 Adds, "Badly snapped" (7)
5 Indian and Yankee in a motor sport (4)
6 Entice ox running around university for performance (9)
7 Throws fine fish on top of salver (6)
8 Meaning: One drink, after commencement of May (6)
14 Cod dives strangely consuming current media storage device (5,4)
16 A new advice: With Italian wine, for starters (9)
17 In absence of war, brainwash distraught and exile (6)
18 After school, parent gets choke (7)
20 The French aristocrat is pardoned (3,3)
21 Rose, you and I punt badly (4,2)
24 Put in vase and badly ruin before noon (5)
25 Against rebellious Anglican leaving clan (4)

SUDOKU

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		8				1	6	
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

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Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Azhwar's thirst for Krishna

Born under the Visagam star in the Tamil month of Vaikasi, Nammazhwar, also referred to as the original Periyar, Periyavar, numero uno, the first preceptor among gurus, etc., expounded the system of Visishtadvaita in clear terms and is accorded the greatest importance. Parasara Bhattar uses the term *Krushna trushnaa tattva* to portray Nammazhwar's thirst for Krishna. He is a true personification of Krishna bhakti, said Tirukkudanthai Dr. Venkatesh.

Immersed in Perumal and His qualities, the works of the Azhwars are an outpouring of divine bliss. Poigai Azhwar, Peyazhwar and Boothattazhwar composed on Vaikuntam and Ulagalandha Perumal. Tirumazhisai Azhwar focused on Antaryami, Kulasekhara Azhwar sang on Rama, Tondaradipodiazhwar and Tiruppanazhwar had eyes only for Lord Ranganatha, Madhura Kavi sang paeans on his guru, Tirumangai Azhwar sang about the Divya Desams. Nammazhwar, Periazhwar and Andal sang about Krishna but while the latter were Krishna devotees (bhaktas), Nammazhwar epitomised Krishna bhakti. In Periya Tiruvandhadhi, when he engages Perumal in a debate on who is greater, Nammazhwar says, 'I am greater than You. You hold the entire universe, but since I hold You (with my devotion) I am greater.' Krishna Himself is fond of the devotee who places complete faith in Him. In Chapter VII of the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna says, "The man of realisation I regard as my very Self, for with his mind (fixed) on Me, he has taken refuge in Me alone as the highest goal. At the end of innumerable births, the man of realisation takes refuge in Me, considering that Vasudeva as everything for him. Such a saint is exceedingly rare."

Health is wealth and both wear away

COVERNOTE

K. Nitya Kalyani

Health is wealth and conversely, ill-health is erosion of wealth. Conventional wisdom says this is where health insurance comes in. Until health insurance itself becomes a large drain on the pocket, ironically.

Things have been taking this direction in the last few years and now we have entered a stage where many are questioning the high premiums for reasonable levels of cover. And, by extension, wondering about health insurance economics and what it will become in the future. We will come back to this question in a bit but first let's take specific examples of premium increases.

Steep increase

A ₹10 lakh hospitalisation policy for a 45-year-old costs ₹20,000 to 25,000 today compared with about ₹18,000 to ₹20,000 a year ago. As much as 15% increase in a year is quite a shocker but still tame compared with the 25-30% increases for older people.

Catch 22: As much as 15% premium rise in a year is quite a shocker. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Premium rates vary quite a bit by coverage, age, location and definitely insurance company, but the direction is clear, namely upwards, steeply. Before you think the premium jump is due to age 45 when you enter a new slab with higher rates, that was the case until last year. Annual increases have started across insurers and there are differentiations by zone as well.

Rising medical inflation

The reason offered is rising costs, centrally, medical inflation which is reportedly about 15% in recent years. The customer is still left wondering where this is all going. Going by this trend, in six or seven years our 45-year-olds would be paying double the premium for the same coverage. Or, her premium today will get her only half the sum insured. (Today's 45-year-old, at 52 will be looking at a more intimidating premium situation!).

All this if today's morbidity trends remain the same. Cancer diagnoses are growing, as are lifestyle diseases and God forbid another pandemic.

Sure, top-up policies help increase coverage for relatively much lower premiums and has been the portfolio tweak many have taken. It has taken the heat off those who want higher coverage but cringe at the premium rates of basic hospitalisation policies. Coming back to the basic policy, questioning the worth of insurance is an inadequate response. What about the cost of medical care WITHOUT insurance? Here is a creative idea – suggested in CoverNote a couple of years ago – which is now becoming the topic of family conversations and even decisions. Why not have only a top-up cover with a ₹10 lakh threshold and desired sum insured and be ready with funds to meet the first ₹10 lakh?

I know families that opted for this. Perhaps because paying an average of ₹1,00,000 a year for a ₹10 lakh policy for 10 years with no claim means you have paid the entire sum insured as premium and are set to keep paying.

Also, perhaps as they were denied hospitalisation cover due to age or medical reasons and they did not have much of a choice. In this situation, the top-up policy takes care of peak risk and the emergency medical fund pays bills of up to ₹10 lakh. Can this work? Yes and No. Let us see some scenarios in the next installment of CoverNote.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history.)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

ILLUSTRATION—SAAI

The retirement trap India is walking into unprepared

India is entering a phase where ageing, healthcare, personal finance will become deeply interconnected public issues; retirement can no longer be limited to tax-saving instruments

TWILIGHT ZONE

Vishwajeet Goel

India is growing older, at a pace most households are financially unprepared for. As per the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), almost one of five Indians will be over the age of 60 by 2050. The elderly population in India is likely to rise from about 15 crore today to more than 34 crore over the next three decades. At the same time, healthcare costs continue to rise sharply, while inflation steadily chips away at household savings.

Yet, retirement planning in India still largely operates on assumptions built for another era.

We are living longer

Better healthcare access, improved sanitation, rising incomes and medical advancements have helped Indians live longer than previous generations.

But the longer people live, the more years they must fund without a regular income. For most people retirement calculations are based on current spends than future costs.

A family spending ₹75,000/month today may believe a few crores will comfortably sustain retirement. But inflation changes the picture dramatically. Even with moderate inflation, everyday expenses can multiply several times over two or three decades. The impact becomes even sharper in healthcare.

> In recent years, medical inflation in India has stayed at 12-14%, much higher than the overall inflation. Treatment can now cost a chunk of retirement savings.

> Even with moderate inflation, everyday expenses can multiply several times over two or three decades. The impact becomes even sharper in healthcare.

This is why retirement planning can no longer rely on traditional savings instruments. India needs stronger pension participation and long-term retirement-focused investing habits. Instruments such as the National Pension System (NPS) encourage sustained retirement planning via regulated and relatively low-cost structure. Its flexibility across equity, government securities and debt allocation allows investors to gradually align risk with age and retirement goals. More importantly, NPS addresses the absence of a structured pension culture outside of government employment.

In recent years, medical inflation in India has stayed between 12-14%, significantly higher than overall inflation. Treatment can now use a huge chunk of retirement savings.

India is witnessing a rapid rise in chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and cardiac disorders which are long-duration illnesses requiring continuous medication, diagnostics, follow-up care and, in many cases, repeated hospitalisation.

While earlier generations often associated retirement with reduced spending, modern retirees may experience the opposite. Healthcare, assisted living, home care support, diagnostics and medicines can become recurring monthly expenses changing the role of health insurance in household financial planning. Health cover today is increasingly becoming central to retirement protection. Without adequate coverage, even disciplined long-term savings can erode quickly after a major medical event.

Starting early

The advantage of starting early in instruments such as NPS is the ability to build a retirement corpus gradually over decades while benefiting from compounding and professional fund management. For younger earners especially, time is the biggest asset. Small but consistent contributions made early can potentially create significantly larger retirement outcomes compared with delayed investing later.

Traditional retirement strategies are not able to keep pace with realities.

Fixed deposits, long considered the safest retirement instrument, often fail to generate inflation-beating post-tax returns over long periods. Realty is illiquid and does not always provide reliable rental income. Pension cover in India is also limited.

At the same time, Indian society is changing. Urbanisation, migration, nuclear families and changing career patterns mean many retirees may no longer have the same family- support structures similar to earlier generations. Financial independence during retirement is an economic and a social necessity.

Starting early allows compounding to work over decades rather than years.

But retirement planning cannot be reduced to chasing market returns or accumulating the largest corpus. The larger objective is sustainability. People need savings that can survive inflation, market cycles and rising healthcare costs over long retirement periods.

India is entering a phase where ageing, healthcare, and personal finance will become deeply interconnected public issues. It's retirement conversation can no longer remain limited to tax-saving investments or fixed deposits.

The challenge is, how does a country prepare millions of people to financially sustain lives becoming longer, more expensive and medically more demanding? This would define the future of retirement planning in India.

(The writer is Head, Pensionbazaar)

Investing in gold and silver

THINKINVESTOR

Geopolitical tensions around the world have made gold and silver important assets to have in one's investment portfolio. But you must be mindful of differences between the two assets.

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

You would have observed how gold and silver prices have moved in recent times. It is also highly likely you gained from the price movements over the last year. With gold prices near record highs and silver prices very volatile, many appear undecided on the next course of action on the two metals. Should you buy now or wait for a dip? If so, should you buy physical or financial asset? Here, we discuss why market timing on gold and silver exchange traded funds (ETFs) is optimal.

Market timing?

The important decision you should make is whether to buy the physical asset or its financial equivalent viz. ETFs. It is optimal to invest in ETFs for two reasons. One, it is operationally efficient to buy and sell ETFs. And two, gold and silver ETFs closely track the spot price of the underlying metal. True, these ETFs trade at a premium to spot price but you may be able to capture a similar premium when you sell the ETF. Selling price of 24-carat physical gold is typically lower than its spot price.

The question of whether you should buy ETF units now or wait for a dip depends on how you invest in gold and silver and manage the positions. Typically, gold and silver form part of satellite portfolio within the core-satellite framework. In this framework, the core portfolio is goal-based and the satellite is trading portfolio, geared to capturing short-term price fluctuations in the market. That means you must be comfortable with market timing. To do this, you must be good at reading price charts – applying technical analysis. Otherwise, you could buy such research from investment professionals. Another choice would be to set up short-term systematic investment plans (SIPs) and take profit whenever the investment generates predefined absolute gains. This choice, however, removes market timing out of the decision process.

Conclusion

The geopolitical tensions around the world have made both gold and silver important assets to have in one's investment portfolio. But you must be mindful of the difference between the two assets. Gold is typically considered as safe haven during global crisis (referred to as flight to quality). Also, central banks across the world invest in gold to build reserves. Silver is primarily an input in manufacturing processes. So, their returns and price volatility may not always be similar.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges — Loan amount 5 lakh, Tenure 5 years; Loan amount 1 lakh, Tenure 5 years; (% of loan amount)

Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
HDFC Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	2,124 onwards	Up to Rs 6,500
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Flat Rs. 99
State Bank of India	10.00-15.00	10,624-11,895	2,125-2,379	Up to 1.50% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
ICICI Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	2,124 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda*	10.15-18.00	10,660-12,697	2,132-2,539	Up to 2% (Max. Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	8.95 onwards	10,367 onwards	2,073 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 5%
Bank of India	10.85-16.15	10,834-12,199	2,167-2,440	Up to 1% (Min. Rs 250; Max. Rs 15,000)
Canara Bank	9.70-15.15	10,550-11.934	2,110-2,387	0.25% (Rs 500 - Rs 2,500)
Punjab National Bank	10.25-16.80	10,685-12,373	2,137-2,475	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	9.75 onwards	10,562 onwards	2,112 onwards	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.75 - 18.99	11,059 - 12,968	2,212 - 2,594	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	8.90 - 12.65	10,355-11,287	2,071-2,257	Up to 1% (Max. Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	10.00-30.00	10,624-16,177	2,125-3,235	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	9.60-13.85	10,525-11,595	2,105-2,319	0.50%-1%
Indian Overseas Bank	10.25 onwards	10,685 onwards	2,137 onwards	Up to 0.75%
UCO Bank	9.95 - 13.20	10,611-11,428	2,122-2,286	Up to 1% (Min. Rs 750)
IDFC FIRST Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	2,124 onwards	Up to 3.5%
Bank of Maharashtra	8.75-13.55	10,319-11,518	2,064-2,304	Up to 1% (Max. Rs 10,000)
Central Bank of India	11.25 onwards	10,934 onwards	2,187 onwards	Up to 1%
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 3.5% (2% for instant personal loans for limited period)

*Interest concession of 0.10% to customers opting for group credit life insurance.

Car Loans

Rates and Charges — Loan amount 5 lakh, Tenure 5 years; (% of loan amount)

Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
Union Bank of India	7.50-10.00	10,019 - 10,684	Up to Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	7.60-10.70	10,043 - 10,797	Up to 0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	7.60 - 11.35	10,043 - 10,959	Up to Rs. 2,000
Canara Bank	7.45-11.45	10,007 - 10,984	50% waiver on [0.25% (Rs 1,000 - Rs 5,000)]
Bank of India	7.60-12.55	10,043 - 11,262	Up to 0.25% (Rs. 2,500 - Rs. 10,000)
UCO Bank	7.35-10.00	9,983 - 10,624	0.5% (Max. Rs 5,000)
State Bank of India	8.80 - 9.85	10,331 - 10,587	Rs 750 - Rs 1,500
IDBI Bank	7.75-9.30	10,078 - 10,452	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	7.45-11.75	10,007 - 11,059	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
Indian Overseas Bank	7.55-12.00	10,031 - 11,122	NIL
ICICI Bank	8.35 onwards	10,222 onwards	Up to 2%
HDFC Bank	8.15 onwards	10,174 onwards	Up to 0.5% (Rs. 3,500 - Rs. 8,000)
Karnataka Bank	8.02-11.52	10,143 - 11,001	Up to 0.60% (Rs. 2,500 - Rs. 11,000)
Federal Bank	7.60-9.00	10,198 onwards	1% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 50,000)
Punjab and Sind Bank**	7.50-14.00	10,019 - 11,634	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
Indian Bank	7.50-9.65	10,019 - 10,513	Rs. 1,200
Central Bank of India	7.60-9.30	10,043 - 10,452	0.50%(Rs. 2,000 - Rs. 20,000)

*0.25% interest rate concession for home loan borrowers,other customers with at least 6 months of banking relationship
**Concession of up to 50% on processing fee for PSB Apna Vahan Sugam.

Rates and charges as on June 3 — **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

WASHINGTON

U.S. sees nuclear renaissance with micro-reactor, eyes global markets

AP

A small nuclear reactor developed by a private U.S. company has achieved first criticality, a stepping stone in the development of small modular reactors which Washington plans to sell to countries including India. The Mark-0 demonstration reactor, built by Antares Nuclear, achieved first criticality on June 4. PTI

WASHINGTON

Pentagon raises threat of Israeli spying to 'critical', say U.S. media

AP

The Pentagon has raised its counter-intelligence threat level for Israel to its highest level, U.S. media reported on Saturday. The move came after concerns that Israel had been attempting to spy on top U.S. officials to get information on "Trump administration's internal deliberations on the conflicts in West Asia". AFP

SEOUL

South Koreans protest over ballot mishap, demand local poll rerun

AFP

Thousands of South Koreans were demanding a rerun of local elections as they protested into the early hours of Sunday over ballot paper shortages that disrupted this week's vote. Wednesday's election was the first nationwide vote since President Lee Jae Myung took office following conservative Yoon Suk Yeol's ouster. AFP

TAIPEI

Taiwan Coast Guard says its vessels are in a 'stand-off' with China ships

AFP

Taiwan's Coast Guard said that its vessels were in a "stand-off" with Chinese ships involved in an operation in waters southeast of the island democracy. The coast guard said that it "strongly condemns China's use of Japan-Philippines negotiations as a pretext to conceal its attempts to create the illusion of 'jurisdiction'". AFP

Israel strikes Beirut's southern suburbs days after ceasefire deal

The strike without prior warning kills two and wounds 11 persons, damaging a residential building; Israel says strikes target Hezbollah 'command centres' in retaliation for earlier fire into northern Israel; Netanyahu says militant group is retreating

Associated Press
MREIJEH

Israel struck Beirut's southern suburbs without warning on Sunday, days after a ceasefire agreement in Washington went into effect and despite a U.S. request not to attack Lebanon's capital. Lebanon's state-run national news agency said two persons were killed and 11 wounded in a preliminary count.

Iran had warned that an attack on Beirut would renew full-scale war across the West Asia, even as Pakistan tries to restart talks between Tehran and Washington. Iran wants a deal to include ending the war in Lebanon.

Lebanese security officers gather at the site where an Israeli strike hit a building in Dahiyeh in Beirut's southern suburb on Sunday. AP

There was no immediate White House comment. The strike hit a residential building, damaging four of its seven floors. An unexploded weapon was found in the rubble.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the strikes were in retaliation for the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group firing at northern Israel earlier, and that the attacks targeted "command centres" in the sprawling urban neighbourhoods.

"We are striking them very hard, and we know that Hezbollah is on the run," Mr. Netanyahu told his Cabinet.

Hezbollah did not immediately claim responsibility for firing at Israel.

Meanwhile, Lebanon's army commander, Gen. Rodolphe Haikal, went to Pakistan on Saturday at the invitation of Pakistan's army chief, who has been involved in mediating talks between the U.S. and Iran.

Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi was in Tehran in a fresh bid to restart negotiations between Iran and the U.S. He hheld talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Sunday, according to official Iranian media.

Elsewhere, U.S. President Donald Trump said in an interview broadcast on Sunday that he will not unfreeze Iranian assets before reaching an agreement with Tehran.

Asked whether he would be willing, as part of a potential agreement, to unfreeze Iranian assets or lift certain sanctions against Iran, Mr. Trump replied: "No."

Russian strikes kill five, hit nuclear storage facility: Kyiv

Agence France-Presse
KYIV

Russia fired waves of drones and other munitions at Ukraine on Sunday, killing at least five persons and damaging a nuclear storage facility in the Chernobyl exclusion zone, Ukrainian officials said.

Radiation levels at the facility remained within normal limits following the attack, although the building's reception was "partially destroyed", according to Ukraine's Energoatom nuclear energy operator.

Moscow and Kyiv have intensified drone strikes on each other in recent months as U.S.-led diplomatic efforts to end the war, now in its fifth year, remain stalled and sidetracked by the conflict in the West Asia.

Critical strike: Damage to a spent nuclear fuel storage facility, following a drone strike, near Chernobyl in Ukraine. REUTERS

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is set to meet his allies in London later on Sunday for talks on how to pressure Russia to end the fighting, after Russian President Vladimir Putin rejected direct peace talks with the Ukrainian leader.

"A 'shahed' hit one of the buildings of the Centralised Spent Fuel Storage Facility," Mr. Zelenskyy said in a post on X.

"As of now, there are no readings exceeding normal background radiation levels. But there is certainly an increase in Russia's brazenness, which long ago went off the charts."

N.Korea calls U.S. push for denuclearisation 'anachronistic dream'

Associated Press
SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's sister called a U.S. push for the denuclearisation of North Korea an "anachronistic dream," saying on Sunday the North will steadily expand its nuclear arsenal in the face of U.S.-led threats.

The statement came a day before Chinese President Xi Jinping visits North Korea for talks with Kim Jong-un, in his first visit to the country in seven years.

"The United States' assertion to backbite the status of the DPRK as a nuclear weapons state has no legally binding force and no one will be bound by the U.S. unilateral rhetoric," said Mr. Kim's sister and senior official, Kim Yo Jong, using the abbreviation for North Korea's official name.

Kim Yo Jong

"Some officials in the United States have failed to wake from their escapist and anachronistic dream," Kim Yo Jong said.

Gunman kills one, wounds 5 in drive-by shootings in Israel

Reuters
JERUSALEM

A gunman in a car opened fire at three locations in Israel close to the border with the occupied West Bank on Sunday, killing one man and wounding five other persons, Israeli authorities said.

The police said they killed the suspected gunman following a brief pursuit and recovered the firearm and vehicle used in the shootings, which took place in and around Kochav Yair, inside Israel close to the West Bank city of Qalqilya.

A second suspect was later arrested after he "made statements suggesting involvement in the attack", the police said, without giving details of his alleged role. He tried to assault officers with a glass bottle when he was arrested.

"This morning, a heinous terrorist went out, reached Kochav Yair, and unfortunately managed, before being eliminated, to murder an Israeli citizen and injure others," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

The gunman was identified by police as in his twenties and a resident of Tayibe, a nearby Israeli city mainly populated by Arab citizens of Israel.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack.

Court in Bangladesh awards couple death sentence for rape, murder of girl

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

A court in Bangladesh on Sunday sentenced a couple to death for the rape and murder of an eight-year-old girl, delivering its verdict after just five days of hearings in what prosecutors said was the fastest murder trial in the country's history.

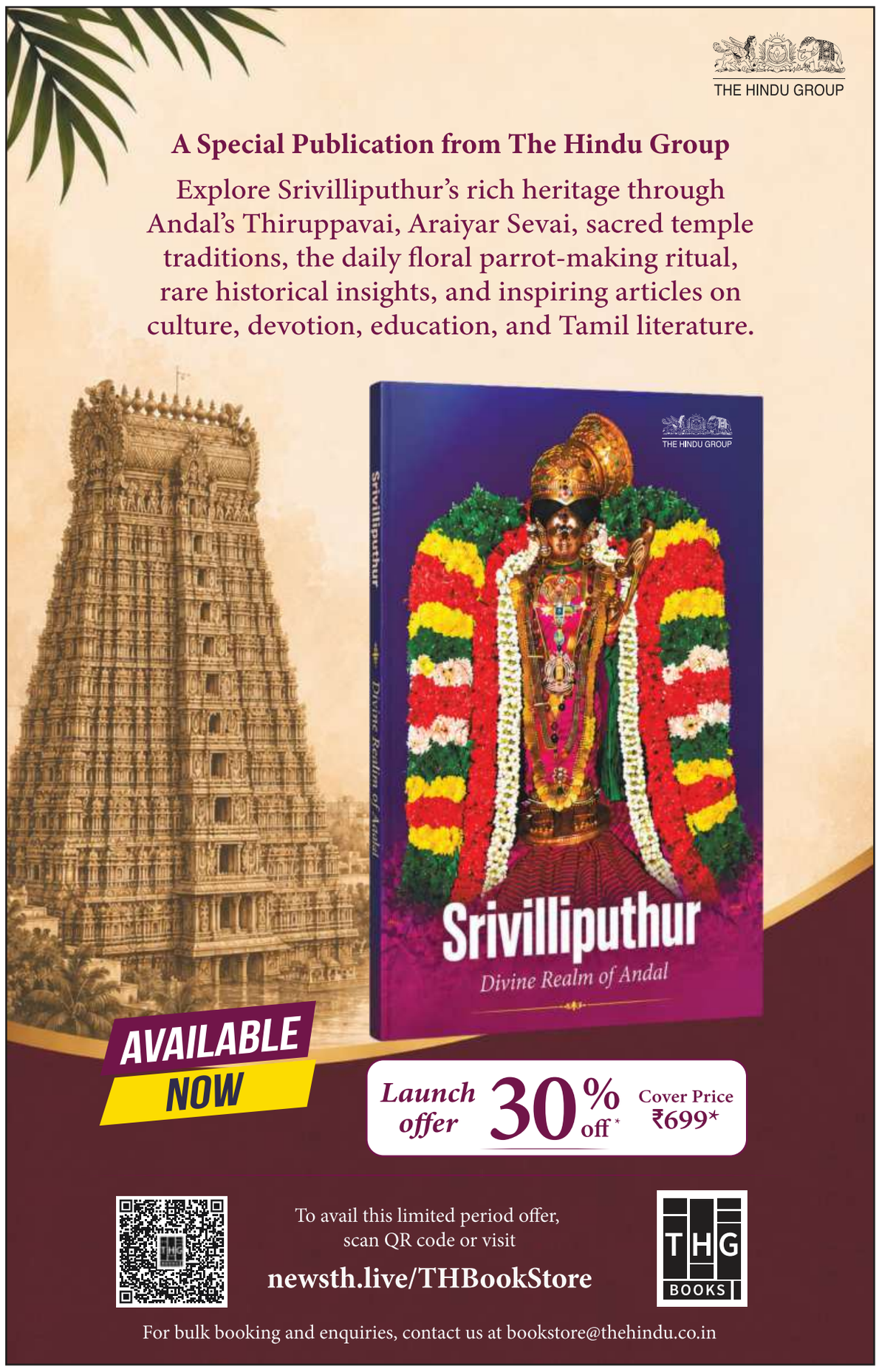
The Dhaka Metropolitan Child Repression Prevention Tribunal handed down the sentence 19 days after the incident, which triggered nationwide outrage and renewed concern over violence against women and children.

Judge Masrur Salekin sentenced Sohel Rana and his wife, Swapnaa Khatun, to death and imposed fines of Taka 5 lakh (3.9 lakh Indian rupees) and Taka 2 lakh, respectively. The court ordered that the compensation be paid to the victim's family.

Civic rage: A police vehicle set ablaze by demonstrators protesting against the alleged rape of a girl in Chattogram on May 21. AFP

"They will be hanged by the neck until they are dead," the judge said as the two convicts were produced before the packed courtroom. The court said that if the fines were not paid, the convicts' movable and immovable properties could be confiscated and auctioned to recover the amount. No private lawyer agreed to represent the accused, prompting the court to appoint a state lawyer to defend them. The state-appointed lawyer sought life imprisonment instead of the death penalty for Rana and a lesser sentence for Khatun.

The police recovered the girl's dismembered body from the couple's apartment in Dhaka's Pallabi area on May 19. The case drew widespread attention amid reports of rising incidents of child abuse and sexual violence in Bangladesh. A recent study found that the conviction rate in such cases stood at about 3%, while around 70% of accused persons were eventually released.



LACKING CONVICTION

Have to work on our process of taking reviews: Afghanistan coach

R.V. MOORTHY

For the second day in succession, Afghanistan was left to lament its failure in using DRS effectively. While K.L. Rahul was let off on Saturday, Shubman Gill and Rishabh Pant enjoyed reprieves on day two. "Without throwing anybody under the bus, there was a lack of conviction in the decision-making," said head coach Richard Pybus.

PICTURE PERFECT

Women's T20 World Cup takes shape with captains' carnival

AFP

Bangladesh's Nigar Sultana takes a selfie with Hayley Matthews (West Indies), Nat Sciver-Brunt (England), Amelia Kerr (New Zealand), Fatima Sana (Pakistan), Harmanpreet Kaur (India), Sophie Molineux (Australia) and Chamari Athapaththu (Sri Lanka) at the Women's T20 World Cup captains' carnival in London on Sunday.

ETCHED IN MEMORY

Former umpire Vikram Raju, who officiated tied Test, passes away

FILE PHOTO: SUSHANTA PATRONOBISH

Former umpire Vikram Raju, who officiated in the historic tied Test between India and Australia in Chennai in 1986, passed away on Sunday. He was 92. Raju had adjudged No. 11 batter Maninder Singh leg-before as Test cricket witnessed its second tie. He officiated in two Tests, five ODIs and 42 First Class matches.

TICKET BOOKED

Animesh breaches 200m CWG mark, wins silver in Taipei City

X@AFIINDIA

National record-holder Animesh Kujur finished second in men's 200m at the New Taipei City Athletics Open as he breached the Commonwealth Games qualification mark on Sunday. The 23-year-old Indian clocked 20.47s, well inside the mark of 20.61s set by the Athletics Federation of India.

Manav impresses as India has Afghanistan on the mat

The left-arm spinner's three-wicket haul leaves the visitor reeling at 113 for five, 451 runs in the red, after the host declares its first innings at 564 for eight; speedster Saleem scalps six

AFGHANISTAN IN INDIA

Vivek Krishnan
NEW CHANDIGARH

The first Test wicket resides in a bowler's memory for eternity. For some, it could be the beginning of a long and fulfilling journey. For others, it could be the peak of a brief career.

Manav Suthar and Mohammad Saleem will hope to belong to the former category. The India left-arm spinner and Afghanistan pacer opened their accounts in this format on day two of the one-off Test at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh Stadium on Sunday.

Saleem claimed six for 140 in his second Test appearance even as India, which resumed on 368 for three, amassed 564 for eight before declaring its first innings.

While Shubman Gill (126, 177b, 15x4, 1x6) and Rishabh Pant (81, 121b, 6x4, 3x6) were dismissed without adding significantly to their overnight tally, Washington Sundar scored an unbeaten 52 (68b, 5x4, 1x6). In response, Hashmatullah Shahidi's side reached 113 for five at stumps.

Manav enjoyed a dream start on debut, picking up the wicket of Abdul Malik in his very first over. Having been beaten three balls in a row, Malik looked to counter the 23-year-old's vicious turn with a sweep. All he managed was a top edge that lobbed to Mohammed Siraj at short fine-leg.

The youngster from Rajasthan, who runs in diagonally whilst operating around the wicket, continued to beat the bat frequently. He also accounted for Rahmanullah Gurbaz, whose torturous time against the left-armer ended when he nicked one to Sai Sudharsan at second slip.

Manav ended the day with figures of 15.5-7-21-3, with Afsar Zazai caught and bowled off what turned out to be the final ball. Prasidh Krishna chipped in with two scalps. The pacer cleaned up Sediqullah Atal and trapped Shahidi leg-before.

In the morning session, Afghanistan's bowlers showed admirable heart in oppressive heat. Soon after the second new ball was taken, Azmatullah Omarzai struck Gill on the pads for a leg-before shout, and induced a nick from Pant off the very next delivery. Neither appeal was entertained by umpire Sharfuddoula, but television replays confirmed Afghanistan's blunder in not using its remaining review.

Stepping up

Saleem stepped up soon after being brought on. With Gill's feet static as he drove a back-of-a-length delivery, the outside edge was snaffled by Afsar.

Dhruv Jurel shouldered arms to a nip-backer from Saleem before the speedster sent back Manav and Siraj for his fifth and sixth wickets. On Monday, Manav could end up with a five-wicket haul too.

Our time to shine: Manav showcased his discipline and guile, while Saleem worked hard for his spoils. R.V. MOORTHY

SCOREBOARD

INDIA — 1ST INNINGS

Yashasvi Jaiswal c Afsar b Saleem 24 *(32b, 5x4)*, K.L. Rahul c Gurbaz b Ziaur 100 *(165b, 11x4)*, Sai Sudharsan c Afsar b Saleem 81 *(104b, 13x4)*, Shubman Gill c Afsar b Saleem 126 *(177b, 15x4, 1x6)*, Rishabh Pant c Omarzai b Shahidi 81 *(121b, 6x4, 3x6)*, Dhruv Jurel b Saleem 19 *(20b, 4x4)*, Washington Sundar (not out) 52 *(68b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Manav Suthar c Afsar b Saleem 28 *(41b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Mohammed Siraj b Saleem 22 *(12b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Kuldeep Yadav (not out) 9 *(26b, 1x4)*; Extras (b-4, lb-13, nb-4, w-1): 22; Total (for eight wkts. decl. in 127 overs): 564.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-41 (Jaiswal, 11.6 overs), 2-180 (Sai Sudharsan, 42.4), 3-247 (Rahul, 60.2), 4-416 (Gill, 95.5), 5-452 (Jurel, 101.5), 6-456 (Pant, 102.4), 7-510 (Manav, 116.5), 8-540 (Siraj, 120.4).

AFGHANISTAN BOWLING

Ziaur 24-2-91-1, Omarzai 22-5-67-0, Saleem 27-3-140-6, Kharote 23-0-115-0, Malik 7-0-43-0, Shahidi 24-1-91-1.

AFGHANISTAN — 1ST INNINGS

Abdul Malik c Siraj b Manav 16 *(18b, 3x4)*, Sediqullah Atal b Prasidh 17 *(27b, 3x4)*, Rahmanullah Gurbaz c Sai Sudharsan b Manav 12 *(40b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Rahmat Shah (batting) 43 *(81b, 6x4, 1x6)*, Hashmatullah Shahidi lbw b Prasidh 20 *(48b, 4x4)*, Afsar Zazai c & b Manav 3 *(26b)*; Extras (nb-1, w-1): 2; Total (for five wkts. in 39.5 overs): 113.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-28 (Malik, 5.4), 2-40 (Sediqullah, 8.4), 3-62 (Gurbaz, 19.2), 4-98 (Shahidi, 32.2), 5-113 (Afsar, 39.5).

INDIA BOWLING

Siraj 6-1-24-0, Prasidh 7-0-27-2, Manav 15.5-7-21-3, Kuldeep 7-0-29-0, Washington 4-0-12-0.

It was a treat to watch Manav bowl: Washington

Vivek Krishnan
NEW CHANDIGARH

Washington Sundar is no stranger to promising debuts.

In his first Test, against Australia at the Gabba in Brisbane in 2021, the Tamil Nadu all-rounder contributed a nerveless 62 in the first innings as India pulled off a storied series triumph.

On Sunday, Manav Suthar, although not against an opponent of the same calibre, made a striking impression in his maiden outing.

The left-arm spinner took just four balls to take his first wicket, and ended the day with three wickets to leave Afghanistan reeling at 113 for five.

Blessed with a high-arm action and a languid approach to the crease, Manav imparts a lot of revolutions on the ball to extract appreciable turn.

Left in awe

Washington, who is also Manav's teammate at Gujarat Titans in the IPL, is thoroughly impressed with the 23-year-old.

"He has been brilliant. Those who have played with him in the last few years know what he could bring to the table, especially in this format. It was a genuine treat to watch. For him to bring out his best skills, especially at this level for India, is amazing. You can expect a lot more from him in terms of him winning a lot of games for India," Washington said in praise of the debutant.

When Washington was pressed on the virtues of the left-armer that impress him, he elaborated: "He is a genuine spinner in terms of how much he can actually spin the ball and how many revs he can put on the ball. That has always been his strength. He uses a lot of his body and gives all his energy on the ball every single delivery".

Quick off the blocks: Manav needed only four deliveries to get his first Test wicket. R.V. MOORTHY

> He is a genuine spinner in terms of how much he can actually spin the ball and how many revs he can put on the ball. That has always been his strength

Saleem's consistency was superb: Pybus

Vivek Krishnan
NEW CHANDIGARH

In Afghanistan head coach Richard Pybus' view, consistency of length was the driving factor behind Mohammad Saleem's six-wicket haul in the first innings of the one-off Test against India at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh Stadium here.

Having not returned a wicket in his first four appearances at the international level, comprising a Test, two ODIs and a lone T20I, the 23-year-old quick was grandly rewarded for his labour in the sweltering heat against Shubman Gill & Co.

"What I enjoyed about him was his consistency today (Sunday). He was super consistent. The SG ball has got a proud seam. So, it grips the surface. He was just fantastic...he just held a length. And I think if you hold a length, you're in the game the whole time," Pybus said after the day's play.

According to the 61-year-old, the entire bowling unit learnt from where it went wrong on the opening day. "We showed a lot of naivety with the ball yesterday (Saturday). It wasn't Test-quality bowling in any conditions. We weren't bowling channels, we weren't building pressure. So, we had a conversation around that, and we were much better," Pybus said.

Lone-ranger: Saleem stood out in an otherwise disappointing show from Afghanistan. R.V. MOORTHY

Important to be the same person as before: Shreyas

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Barely 24 hours after being handed the responsibility of leading India's T20I side into a fresh World Cup cycle, Shreyas Iyer made one thing clear: captaincy will not alter who he is.

Shreyas, speaking at an event here on Sunday, insisted that the challenge of leading the side excites him but stressed that authenticity rather than reinvention would define his approach.

"Even when I have got this job right now, or responsibility as a captain, it's a great challenge at the same time," Shreyas said. "I don't have to change my personality. I have to be the same person how I was before, and not try to be someone else or be under someone's shadow."

Shreyas' elevation as captain perhaps completes one of Indian cricket's more dramatic recent turnarounds. Eighteen months ago, he had fallen out of India's T20I plans altogether. On Saturday, he returned not merely to the side but directly into captaincy role after replacing Suryakumar Yadav at the helm.

For Shreyas, however, the foundations of leadership were built much earlier – in Mumbai cricket's famously unforgiving ecosystem.

"I obviously loved challenges growing up, especially being from Mumbai, where the cricket is pretty big, competition is high," he said. "Every other kid on the street wants to represent Mumbai. My mindset was always about winning, against everyone that I challenged."

Shreyas suggested that the competitive culture shaped not only his cricketing journey but also his appetite for responsibility.

"Learning or winning is secondary, but (its about having) more fun growing up. The more competitive nature you have, especially while you play cricket or any other sport in general, the better it is," he said. "I think that takes you to another level and you want to take that sort of responsibility".

Big responsibility: Shreyas has been entrusted with the task of leading India in the new T20I World Cup cycle. FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

Brazil targets title No. 6; Mexico hopes for a fine show

Switzerland the favourite to make it to knockouts for the fourth straight edition; burden of expectation on Morocco after its semifinal run in Qatar 2022; Scotland desperate to end group-stage jinx

FIFA WC COUNTDOWN

P.K. Ajith Kumar

In focus: Brazil has the highly rated striker Endrick in its ranks. Mexican goalkeeper Ochoa is all set to feature in his sixth World Cup while the Swiss will look up to its inspirational captain Xhaka. AP & AFP

With the FIFA World Cup – hosted by the United States, Canada and Mexico – starting on June 11, *The Hindu* begins its Countdown, analysing the 48 teams in the fray.

Group A (Mexico, South Korea, Czechia, South Africa)

The majestic Azteca Stadium in Mexico City, where more than 114,000 people watched Diego Maradona's Argentina beat West Germany in a five-goal thriller to lift the World Cup in 1986, will host the opening match on June 11. The pressure will be on the co-host when it takes on South Africa, which itself memorably conducted the 2010 edition. Sport's biggest show is returning to Mexico after 40 years. The Mexicans had reached the quarterfinals in 1986, as they had 16 years earlier, when they first hosted the World Cup. They should be hoping they would do it again on home soil. Mexico has played every World Cup since 1994 and is the highest-ranked team in the group, at No. 15 (as of April 1, 2026).

Mexico starts very much the favourite to top the pool. It boasts stars such as Santiago Gimenez, Raul Jimenez, Edson Alvarez and Guillermo Ochoa, who will be appearing in his sixth World Cup. Also watch out for the 17-year-old Gilberto Mora, the youngest in the tournament.

South Korea is the team most likely, after Mexico, to advance from the group. A regular since 1986, the Asian giant is ranked 25th in the world. The Koreans have come with an unbeaten record in the qualifiers, spanning over 16 games. For inspiration, they could look to captain Son Heung-min, who is poised to become their all-time leading scorer at the World Cup.

Unlike South Korea or Mexico, Czechia is no regular at the World Cup. This is only its second World Cup. With talented performers like Patrik Schick, Pavel Sulc and Tomas Holes, the Czechs are capable of surprises.

South Africa is ranked 60th, the lowest in the group. It will require something extraordinary, from the likes of Teboho Mokoena and Lyle Foster, to upset the fancied opponents.

Best finish: Mexico: Quarterfinals (1970, 1986); South Korea: Semifinal (2002); Czechia: Group stage (2006); South Africa: Group stage (1998, 2002, 2010).

Group B (Switzerland, Canada, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Qatar)

Switzerland reached the knockout stage at the last three World Cups. It will be a huge shock if the Swiss don't make it four in a row. They are placed 19th in global rankings and start the clear favourite to top the group that features no big teams. There are big stars, though. Switzerland's captain Granit Xhaka, for instance. The Sunderland skipper is the most capped player for his country and he is still the man his team looks up to. And there is class up front in the form of Breel Embolo, Dan Ndoye and Noah Okafor.

Canada has lost all its games at the World Cup. You may not quite be able to say that by the end of the group stage this time around. It is possibly the best-ever Canadian side, and being the co-host is a bonus. The team has players with enough experience in Europe, such as Jonathan David, Alphonso Davies, Ali Ahmed and Cyle Larin. Davies, though, is likely to be available only from the second game against Qatar.

Bosnia booked the ticket to its second World Cup in dramatic fashion, knocking out former champion Italy in a penalty shootout. Coached by its former captain Sergej Barbarez – his target was actually Euro 2028 – the team is returning to the tournament after missing the last two editions. And it could feel at home as thousands of Bosnians moved to North America because of the war in the 1990s.

It has some fine players, including the 40-year-old superstar Edin Dzeko, 18-year-old Kerim Alajbegovic and Esmir Bajraktarevic, who took that winning penalty against Italy.

The last World Cup's host Qatar is looking to score its first-ever point in the showpiece. It is pinning hopes on men like Akram Afif, Almoez Ali and Mohammed al-Mannai. India, especially Kerala, will be wondering Tahsin Jamshid, whose parents are from Kannur, could get on to the field at some stage.

Best finish: Switzerland: Quarterfinals (1934, 1938, 1954); Canada: Group stage (1986, 2022); Bosnia & Herzegovina: Group stage (2014); Qatar: Group stage (2022).

Group C (Brazil, Morocco, Scotland, Haiti)

Brazil has played at every World Cup. Nobody else has. Brazil has won five World Cups. Nobody else has. But the last of those triumphs came in 2002. The Latin American giant, which has traditionally enjoyed popularity around the globe for its flair, is not quite the force it used to be. It has appointed, for the first time, a foreign coach. Italian Carlo Ancelotti is one of the best in history, having won the title in all the five major European leagues.

Ancelotti has brought Neymar back, though Brazil's all-time top-scorer has injury concerns. Brazil also hopes a lot from the gifted Vinicius Junior and the experienced Casemiro. And there is the 19-year-old Endrick, for whom Bebeto has forecast greatness.

Morocco made history in Doha, becoming the first African team to reach the semifinals. The expectations are also high from the current squad, featuring the likes of Achraf Hakimi, who helped Paris Saint-Germain win successive UEFA champion league titles over the last two seasons, Abde Ezzalzouli, Neil El Aynaoui, Brahim Diaz and the 18-year-old Ayyoub Bouaddi, who had captained France's under-21 team not so long ago.

This is Scotland's first World Cup in nearly three decades. And the Scots achieved qualification in spectacular style, beating Denmark 4-2, thanks in no small measure to a Scott McTominay's overhead-kick goal that has now been immortalised on a bank note. John McGinn, Ben Gannon-Doak, Lawrence Shankland and Ryan Christie would also be trying hard to take their team past the group stage for the first time in history.

Haiti making it to its World Cup was a huge achievement, given the troubles the country has been facing. It is ranked 83rd, only New Zealand at 85 is ranked lower among all the teams in the finals. But it has fine players like Duckens Nazon and Wilson Isidor.

Best finish: Brazil: Champion (1958, 1962, 1970, 1994, 2002); Morocco: Semifinal (2022); Scotland: Group stage (1954, 1958, 1974-1990, 1998); Haiti: Group stage (1974).

The big boys versus the teams with a point to prove

S. Shrivathsan

The show-stoppers: Pulisic will bank on home support while Havertz and Depay, centre, will look to efficiently lead their forward lines. GETTY IMAGES & REUTERS

A pool devoid of big teams is set to be highly competitive, while Germany and The Netherlands are overwhelming favourites to top their groups.

Group D (USA, Turkiye, Australia, Paraguay)

The USA team is chasing the American dream. Competing on home soil in the global competition for the first time since 1994, the national side, now led by Mauricio Pochettino, is locked in to Make America Great Again in 'soccer'.

The World No. 16's first task will be to get out of a tricky pool that consists of two other top-30 teams but none of the perennial powerhouses – Turkiye at 22 and Australia at 27.

The close win over Senegal and narrow defeat to Germany in World Cup warm-up games should have given Pochettino a fair idea of where the finishing touches to the preparation have to be applied.

Playing in front of jam-packed galleries could be both a boon and a bane. While stars like Christian Pulisic, who is no stranger to elite football, can live up to the heightened expectations, some may wilt under the enormity of the situation. How they tackle battles not only on the field but also off it will be crucial to USA's chances.

For Turkiye and Australia, the focus will be much beyond spoiling the co-host's carnival.

Having earned the right to perform on the global stage after 24 years, the European outfit cannot afford to pass up the golden opportunity.

The wait has been so long that Arda Guler and Kenan Yildiz, two of the most exciting prospects in the current squad, were not even born when Turkiye last caught the World Cup fever. Something close to the fairytale run of 2002 – which ended in a third-place finish – will be required if Vincenzo Montella's contingent is to make inroads.

Australia, a regular at the finals since 2006, is no pushover but is yet to win a knockout fixture. Meanwhile, Paraguay, the lowest-placed team in the group at World No. 40, will be itching to prove that rankings do not directly translate to results.

Best finish: USA: Semifinals (1930); Turkiye: Third place (2002); Australia: Round of 16 (2006, 2022); Paraguay: Quarterfinals (2010).

Group E (Germany, Curacao, Ivory Coast, Ecuador)

Germany was forced to board the first available flight back home after being knocked out in the opening round of the last two editions. Ghosts from the past may resurface, especially for those who had endured the pain first-hand in Russia and/or Qatar, but the 2014 title-winner must avoid the ignominy of three early exits in a row without fuss.

The top-level experience in Julian Nagelsmann's squad, recent form of four victories in as many matches since March and superior ranking (10) – the other teams in the pool are placed well below the European side – provide the Germans the head start in the race to top the group.

The four-time World champion should, however, be eyeing bigger things. That Germany has flown under the radar in discussions pertaining to title contenders may free up the additional baggage it has usually carried. But it has catching up to do in the overall scheme of things.

First up for Germany is Curacao, the smallest nation (both in terms of population and land area) ever to qualify for football's biggest spectacle. Adding intrigue, only one player in the 26-member squad – Tahith Chong – was born in the Caribbean island, yet the place of birth hardly matters within the group because "you are accepted into the family once you come here."

Curacao is home to Dick Advocaat, the 78-year-old who is poised to become the oldest coach at the quadrennial event. The 82nd-ranked outfit will have to punch well above its weight in the Americas to inscribe its name in the history books once again.

As for Ivory Coast, which is back in the World Cup fold after 12 years, it has not got to this point "to make up the numbers or go sightseeing." The African country is likely to be involved in a tussle with Ecuador for the second automatic qualification spot.

Best finish: Germany: Champion (1954, 1974, 1990, 2014); Curacao: Debut; Ivory Coast: Group stage (2006-2014); Ecuador: Round of 16 (2006).

Group F (Netherlands, Japan, Sweden, Tunisia)

Come hell or high water, The Netherlands has guaranteed itself knockout football in every edition it has competed in since 1974. And it looks well placed to extend that streak under Ronald Koeman, who had donned the Oranje as a player in 1990 and 1994.

The Netherlands, the highest-ranked team in the pool at World No. 7, was sounded a warning in the recent 0-1 defeat to Algeria in a pre-tournament friendly. But the Dutch side is too good to not pass the preliminary test, with Japan being the closest challenger for the top spot.

It has the resources to even be fourth time lucky – it had finished runner-up in 1974, 1978 and 2010 – but consistently rising to the occasion against the 'favourites' will be vital.

Although not among the 'big boys', Japan cannot be ignored.

The Asian nation came agonisingly close to qualifying for the quarterfinals in 2018 and took centre stage four years later when it topped the group that included Spain and Germany.

So, not many eyebrows were raised after England great David Beckham termed Japan as a potential "surprise" package to upset the apple cart. "It has a really strong team... it could be kind of a secret," Beckham told *ABC News* recently.

While Japan will miss the injured Kaoru Mitoma's box of tricks in the final third, it has the experience and variety to crack complex codes. Hajime Moriyasu's men may first have to overcome the Swedish challenge to secure a direct ticket to the eliminators.

Despite having a bumpy ride in the lead-up to the World Cup, Sweden possesses the dash of enviable quality that is required to get through to the next phase. With regards to Tunisia, it should play out of its skin to even stand a chance of making the cut for the first time.

Best finish: Netherlands: Runner-up (1974, 1978, 2010); Japan: Round of 16 (2002, 2010, 2018, 2022); Sweden: Runner-up (1958); Tunisia: Group stage (1978, 1998-2006, 2018, 2022).

Eriksen collapses but is conscious

Reuters
ODENSE

Denmark football player Christian Eriksen collapsed on the pitch in a friendly match against Ukraine here on Sunday. But the Danish football federation said in a social-media post that he was conscious.

"Christian Eriksen is conscious and is doing well under the circumstances," the federation said in a statement, adding that the friendly had been called off.

In 2021, Eriksen had collapsed during a European championship match in Copenhagen and was given life-saving CPR treatment. He was later fitted with a special heart-starting device known as an Implantable Cardioverter-Defibrillator (ICD).

England labours to win; Germany, Portugal notch up victories

Reuters
TAMPA

Harry Kane's 79th international goal helped England bag a 1-0 win over New Zealand as the Three Lions' World Cup preparation got off to an underwhelming start in the Florida heat on Saturday.

In Chicago, Germany earned a 2-1 victory over World Cup co-host United States of America in its final warm-up match.

Portugal defeated Chile in an ill-tempered clash in Oeiras, where both teams finished with 10 men as Rafael Leao and Ivan Roman received their marching orders late in the first half following a brawl. Romelu Lukaku continued his comeback from injury for Belgium with 25 minutes off the bench as his side enjoyed a 5-0 victory over 10-man Tunisia in Brussels.

Argentina eased to a 2-0 victory over a lacklustre Honduras in the reigning champion's penultimate World Cup warm-up game in Texas.

Lionel Messi, who suffered a hamstring injury on May 24, was on the bench but not used by head coach Lionel Scaloni.

In Cleveland, Endrick and Bruno Guimaraes netted the goals as Brazil defeated Egypt 2-1. The victory completed a smooth build-up for Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti, whose team had routed Panama 6-2 in Rio de Janeiro.

Goal machine: Kane, left, extended his excellent run. GETTY IMAGES

INBRIEF

Marc wins Hungarian MotoGP for weekend sweep

Reigning World champion Marc Marquez won on a Sunday for the first time this season as he held off young Spanish compatriot Pedro Acosta to take the Hungarian MotoGP. Francesco Bagnaia finished a distant third while the top two in the standings, Aprilia pair Marco Bezzecchi and Jorge Martin, crashed out on the first corner.

Second West Indies-Sri Lanka one-dayer washed out

The second One-Day International between the West Indies and Sri Lanka was abandoned because of rain on Saturday in Kingston without a ball being bowled. Sri Lanka leads the three-match series 1-0 after winning the first match by 41 runs. West Indies had earlier won the toss and elected to bowl first before unrelenting rain forced the umpires to call off the match.

Argentina centre-back Balerdi out of World Cup

Argentina's central defender Leonardo Balerdi has been ruled out of the World Cup with a calf injury, the world champion announced on Saturday. The 27-year-old has suffered a muscle injury in his right leg. Argentina has not yet named a replacement and will kick off its tournament on June 17 against Algeria in Kansas City.

Iraq names Makenzie as replacement for Yahya

Iraq has called up Ahmed Hassan Makenzie to its FIFA World Cup squad to replace Ahmed Yahya, who has been ruled out of the tournament with a hamstring injury. "Based on the medical report, head coach Graham Arnold has decided to call up Makenzie and register him in the final squad for the finals in place of Yahya," the national team said in a statement on X. The tournament marks Iraq's first appearance at the World Cup since its sole participation 40 years ago. It is set to compete in Group I alongside France, Senegal and Norway.

Iran squad arrives in Mexico ahead of the World Cup

Iran's football team arrived in Mexico on Sunday morning for training ahead of the FIFA World Cup, before three group matches in the United States later this month. Ehsan Hajsafi was the first player to exit the plane with markings for German charter airline USC, which arrived around 5.05 a.m. The team's participation in the World Cup has been complicated by the Iran war. Problems with processing visas earlier led Iran to move its training base from Tucson, Arizona, to Tijuana, Mexico, which is on the border with California. The team has been training in the Turkish city of Antalya. It flew directly to Mexico on a private jet from the Mediterranean city.

Former captain Tamim elected as BCB president

Former national team captain Tamim Iqbal has been elected as the president of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB). Tamim has previously served as head of its ad-hoc committee. "Tamim was elected unopposed at a board meeting held following Sunday's BCB elections, having secured the highest number of votes in the Club Category contest," said BCB official Rabeed Imam.

LIVE TELECAST

India vs Afghanistan: One-off Test, day 3, Star Sports 2 & JioHotstar, 9.30 a.m.

Women's T20 World Cup (warm-up): India vs West Indies, Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 2.30 p.m.

West Indies vs Sri Lanka: 3rd ODI, FanCode, 1 a.m. (Tuesday)

You cannot judge a player by his World Cup performances alone

The Portuguese superstar believes fitness is more mental than physical; the 41-year-old stresses that he doesn't care about outside noise

INTERVIEW

Cristiano Ronaldo

Cristiano Ronaldo, the global icon of football, reflects on the past and speaks about the future in a freewheeling chat. **Excerpts:**

Upbeat: Ronaldo feels Portugal has the perfect blend of youth and experience to go the distance. AP

You are set to appear in your sixth World Cup...

That says I have survived the test of time! My first World Cup was in 2006 in Germany, and I shall be there in the United States to complete 20 years of playing the tournament. It was a great feeling to score at least one goal in each of the five tournaments I have played so far.

Football is said to be all about scoring goals and you are the highest scorer!

Yes, I know the numbers and the numbers don't lie! I took the challenge of playing in different leagues in top European countries and scored. Now I am playing in Saudi Arabia and scoring goals here, too. It's satisfying. Moreover, I have been scoring for my country at the same rate as well. Feels nice!

Experts feel Portugal has a bright chance to win the World Cup this time...

We have a great team. Our footballers have been playing well in top European leagues for so many years. The team has a perfect blend of youth and experience. So, why not? We had always given our best in the last 20 years, but it did not click somehow. We shall be having another go this time. The spirit of the team is high as always. Let's see what is in store for us in the United States.

What are the secrets for your supreme fitness at 41?

It's more mental than physical! I want to improve every time. That motivates me to be at the best of my abilities. To achieve that, I am ready to do everything. Football is a lovely game, and I want to continue playing at the top level as long as possible. The hunger for success is eternal which keeps me going. Being a true professional, I know the things I must do and I follow the routine, make sacrifices. At the end, it gives me immense pleasure to be on the field and contribute to the team's cause.

It is said that you don't speak much outside, but inside the dressing room, you are a true motivator...

I am not concerned about what people outside my team say or think about me. I have always said that if they love me, it's great and if they hate me that pushes me more to succeed. So, I do not speak much. But inside the dressing room, I am with my teammates who will be there in the middle trying to perform at their best abilities for a common cause. We need to work together to achieve success. We need to believe in each other's abilities. Dressing room is a place solely for the players, the managers, the trainers. What we do inside stays inside, among us.

Have you ever thought of life without football?

Yes, and that's not all pleasant for me. My life is football. The game has given me everything I wanted to achieve in life. Those moments on the field will stay with me forever. I can remember every minute detail about the games I played since I wanted to relive those memories. However, at this age, I know I cannot continue doing so year after year. The day will come when I have to say goodbye. At the same time, I love to live in the present.

Having said that, we shall be playing in another World Cup in a few days, which is more important to all of us now.

Since this will be your last World Cup, can we expect something special from you?

Well, I have always said that you cannot judge a player by his performances only in the World Cup, which is basically, a six or seven-match tournament. I have been playing professional football for more than 20 years now. For me, performance of the whole career is important rather than a specific tournament. People might differ; they have every right to do so. But I do have my opinion, too. And whenever I play a tournament, I try to give my hundred percent, always. I shall be doing so again.

(Professional Management Group).

Ruthless England bundles out New Zealand, takes 1-0 lead

CRICKET

Associated Press
LONDON

Sealing it: Atkinson castling Henry signalled England's 115-run win. REUTERS

England wrapped up a 115-run victory over New Zealand before lunch on day four of the first Test at Lord's on Sunday, marking a positive start to its Bazball reset after the Ashes humiliation Down Under.

Resuming on 55 for five and requiring 254 for an unlikely win, New Zealand lost its remaining five wickets inside the first two hours of play and was dismissed for 138.

England pacer Gus Atkinson finished with team-best figures of five for 30 on what has been a bowler-friendly surface at the home of cricket that has seen 24 batters out bowled or lbw, and no spinners getting a single delivery.

Glenn Phillips was New Zealand's top scorer (44 n.o., 52b, 7x4, 1x6).

This first Test series of the summer has been regarded as a fresh start for England and its under-pressure leadership after a 1-4 loss to Australia.

The scores:
England 140 & 226 bt New Zealand 113 & 138 in 40.3 overs (Conway 41, Phillips 44 n.o., Atkinson 5/30, Robinson 2/38, Tongue 2/48); **PoM:** Robinson.

It's been a great journey for him: Deshpande on Shreyas

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

As teenagers spending endless hours at the nets of Shivaji Park Gymkhana in the early 2010s, Shreyas Iyer and Tushar Deshpande had a simple wager to make practice sessions more competitive.

If Deshpande's pace bowling got the better of Shreyas' stylish strokeplay, the batter would buy him an egg sandwich at the gymkhana canteen. If Shreyas dominated, Deshpande paid the bill.

More than a decade later, the stakes have changed.

"Of course the friendly matches will continue in the nets but for a different prize, the prize will be the World Cup (in 2028)," Deshpande said on Saturday.

Shreyas. AFP

Deshpande believes Shreyas' rise from the maidans of Shivaji Park to becoming India's T20I captain hardly surprises those who know him closely.

"Everyone knows he's a brilliant player, brilliant cricketer and a great leader," Deshpande said. "He has shown that for Punjab Kings as well. Winning the IPL for KKR, taking Delhi Capitals to the final when I was a part of Delhi Capitals. It's been a great journey for him, and I wish him well."

While Shreyas' appointment dominated conversations, Deshpande himself continues searching for consistency in opportunities. Despite enjoying an impressive start to his maiden season with Rajasthan Royals in IPL 2026, the Mumbai pacer featured in only six matches.

"Personally it was disappointing to get only six games even though I bowled a superb last over under pressure in the first game, but it all boils down to the team balance and the team's requirements," Deshpande said.

"Everyone in Mumbai knows what I can do with the bat, too".

AROUND THE CITY

Sudha Shah XI gets the better of Khalili XI

Sudha Shah XI registered a five-wicket victory over Fowzieh Khalili XI in the Freyer-Thiruvallur DCA Women's League match on Sunday.

The scores:
Fowzieh Khalili XI 174/9 in 40 overs (C. Yaazhini Evangelin 64, M. Jeni Plautila 3/30) lost to Sudha Shah XI 177/5 in 33.1 overs (V. Hashini 56, M. Jeni Plautila 35).

GFCA clinches under-12 crown

GFCA defeated SJCA by four wickets in the final to emerge champion of the 20th Freyer International Logistics-LMCA Trophy under-12 tournament on Sunday.

T.J. Srinivasaraj, president, TNCA, Dr. J. Radhakrishnan, IAS, Addl. Chief Secretary, TNEB & TNPDCL, and P.G. Subramanian, principal, Bhavan's Rajaji Vidyashram, Kilpauk, were present on the occasion.

The scores (final):
SJCA 127/9 in 25 overs (Sachin Sai 33) lost to GFCA 128/6 in 24.4 overs (S. Lishan 3/18).

Perfect finish: The GFCA team, winner of the Freyer International Logistics-LMCA Trophy u-12 tournament, with the dignitaries.

Moment to cherish: Rajesh Ramesh honoured during the KESPA-HITS World Cup Football Quiz. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

MSN Lions posts facile victory

MSN Lions cruised to a six-wicket triumph over Sachin Cricket Foundation in the semifinal clash of the 41st SMCA Champions Trophy tournament on Sunday.

In the other last-four fixture, MSN Stars inflicted a 42-run defeat on Mighty Warriors.

Kishore Kumar starred with the ball, claiming four wickets for just 16 runs.

The scores (semifinals):
Sachin Cricket Foundation 127/7 in 27 overs (C. Dhilipan 31, Pravin Tny 33) lost to MSN Lions 128/4 in 18.5 overs (M. Sridhar Raj 48, R. Karthikeyan 32).
MSN Stars 171 in 29.2 overs (A.S. Santhosh 46, N. Dinakar 3/22) bt Mighty Warriors 129 in 28.3 overs (Arunachalam 34, Ashuthosh Yadav 3/32, Kishore Kumar 4/16).

Rajesh Ramesh feted

Olympian and Asian Games gold medallist Rajesh Ramesh received the KESPA-V.P. Sathyan Award, instituted by the Kerala Sportspersons Association-Chennai, during the valedictory function of the KESPA-HITS World Cup Football Quiz at Hotel Aadithya in Vadapalani.

He was presented the award and prize money of ₹25,000 by chief guest P.V. Manoj, IRTS, Deputy Chief Commercial Manager (Passenger Marketing), Southern Railway.

Zuccaro claims the H.H. Krishnaraja Wadiyar Cup

BENGALURU: P. Shroff trained Zuccaro (G. Vivek up) won the H.H. Krishnaraja Wadiyar Cup (1,600m), the feature event of the races held here on Sunday (June 7).

The winner is owned by Five Stars Shipping Co Pvt Ltd rep. by Mr. K.N. Dhunjibhoy, Mr. Z.K. Dhunjibhoy, Ms. Anosha Meyers, Mr. Vispi R. Patel, Mr. A.S. Narielwala, Mr. Eruch Adi Mody, Miss. Anita J. Captain, Mr. Dinshaw P. Adenwalla & Mrs. Jasmine D. Adenwalla.

THE RESULTS

1. MYSTIC MEMORY PLATE (1,400M): GLORIOUS STRIDES (Neeraj) 1, Eagle Eye (Akshay K) 2, Hazel (Antony) 3 and Sicyon (Yash) 4. 1/2, 2-3/4 and 2. 1m 25.52s. Rs. 41 (w), 12, 11 and 17 (p), SHP: 31, THP: 38, FP: 140, Q: 50, Trinella: 376/245, Exacta: 741/224. Favourite: Eagle Eye.
Owners: Mr. Daulat Chhabria, Mr. Teja Gollapudi & Mr. Ashok Ranpise. Trainer: S. Narredu.

2. NANDI PLATE (1,400M): STAR COMET (Akshay K) 1, Southern Force (Antony) 2, Elveden (Aleemuddin) 3 and Dynamic Force (S. Sachin) 4. 2-3/4, 1-1/4 and 4. 1m 26.74s. Rs. 78 (w), 18, 14 and 23 (p), SHP: 38, THP: 54, FP: 304, Q: 93, Trinella: 915/485, Exacta: 2,948/1,263. Favourite: Dynamic Force.
Owner: Mr. Kapil Dev M. Trainer: Aravind G.

3. CNN FAMILY AND FRIENDS LEGACY TROPHY (1,200M): REGAL BEAUTY (Sandesh) 1, Sensuous (Suraj) 2, Legacy Field (Akshay K) 3 and Heimirich (Sai Kiran) 4. 1, 3/4 and Nose. 1m 13.69s. Rs. 31 (w), 10, 19 and 14 (p), SHP: 50, THP: 35, FP: 254, Q: 143, Trinella: 483/130, Exacta: 3,933/1,555. Favourite: Legacy Field.
Owners: Mr. Chaduranga Kanthraj Urs, Mr. Aditya P. Thackersey & Manjri Horse Breeders' Farm Pvt Ltd. Trainer: Darius Byramji.

4. SPEAKER'S CUP (1,200M): RIEKO (S. Sachin) 1, Flight On (Akshay K) 2, Power Of Beauty (Arul) 3 and Victoria Doresaani (L.A. Rozario) 4. 2-1/2, 2-1/4 and 1-1/4. 1m 12.36s. Rs. 16 (w), 12, 16 and 27 (p), SHP: 42, THP: 74, FP: 71, Q: 45, Trinella: 658/384, Exacta: 5,153/1,152. Favourite: Reiko.
Owner: Mr. P. Arun Kumar. Trainer: Pradeep Annaiah.

5. H.H. KRISHNARAJA WADIYAR CUP (1,600M): ZUCCARO (G. Vivek) 1, Mayne Magic (Antony) 2, Siege Courageous (Suraj) 3 and Positano (Sandesh) 4. 2-1/2, 1 and 1-1/2. 1m 40.97s. Rs. 14 (w), 14 and 15 (p), SHP: 25, THP: 29, FP: 37, Q: 29, Trinella: 54/16, Exacta: 86/56. Favourite: Zuccaro.
Owners: Five Stars Shipping Co Pvt Ltd rep. by Mr. K.N. Dhunjibhoy, Mr. Z.K. Dhunjibhoy, Ms. Anosha Meyers, Mr. Vispi R. Patel, Mr. A.S. Narielwala, Mr. Eruch Adi Mody, Miss. Anita J. Captain, Mr. Dinshaw P. Adenwalla & Mrs. Jasmine D. Adenwalla. Trainer: P. Shroff.

6. ASTOUNDING PLATE (1,600M): TURF PARADISE (A. Asbar) 1, Imperador (Vishal) 2, Pledge (Akshay K) 3 and Amazing Stride (Antony) 4. 6-1/2, 1-3/4 and 4. 1m 41.83s. Rs. 32 (w), 15, 26 and 11 (p), SHP: 68, THP: 37, FP: 861, Q: 568, Trinella: 1,332/285, Exacta: 6,137/4,734. Favourite: Pledge.
Owner: Mrs. S Jagadamba. Trainer: V. Lokanath.

Jackpot: Rs 2,768; Runner-up: 231; Mini Jackpot: 553; Treble (i): 925; (ii): 154.

Zverev wins a dramatic finale, ends wait for his maiden Slam

The second seed edges Cobolli in a five-setter to become the first German man to clinch a Major since Becker at the Australian Open in 1996; the Italian 10th seed produces a spirited fightback before losing steam in the decider

FRENCH OPEN

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Alexander Zverev finally secured his maiden Grand Slam title with a dramatic five-set victory over Italy's Flavio Cobolli in the French Open final on Sunday.

The second seed became the first German man to win a Major tournament since Boris Becker at the 1996 Australian Open with a 6-1, 4-6, 6-4, 6-7(5), 6-1 win after four hours and 16 minutes on Court Philippe Chatrier.

It was Zverev's fourth Grand Slam final and second at Roland-Garros after some heartbreaking near misses in his career.

Cobolli, the 10th seed, was bidding to become the first Italian man to win the French Open in 50 years.

The 24-year-old had never even played a Slam semifinal before, let alone a final, after his last-four opponent Matteo Arnaldi withdrew from the tournament through illness.

Nervy affair

Both players appeared to struggle with nerves at various points in the match, especially Cobolli during an error-strewn first set. But Zverev's greater experience showed in a deciding set that was far tenser than the scoreline suggested, as he managed to get over the line.

The 29-year-old was handed a golden opportunity to break his Grand Slam duck by the injury-enforced absence of reigning champion Carlos Alcaraz and surprise early exits for Jannik Sinner and Novak Djokovic.

The World No. 3 was not always in control, making 54 unforced errors, but did enough to finally shed the tag of being one of the best players to have never won a Major.

The now-retired Thiem was watching from the stands as Zverev belatedly put the memories of that match to bed six years later.

Mission accomplished: Zverev is relieved at realising his dream of being a Grand Champion in his fourth final. REUTERS

Alexander rules

2 Since 128-player draws were introduced at all four Majors in 1988, Zverev is the second man after Johansson (Australian Open 2002) to win a maiden Slam without defeating a top-10 opponent en route

3 Zverev is the third German man to win a Major after Becker and Stich

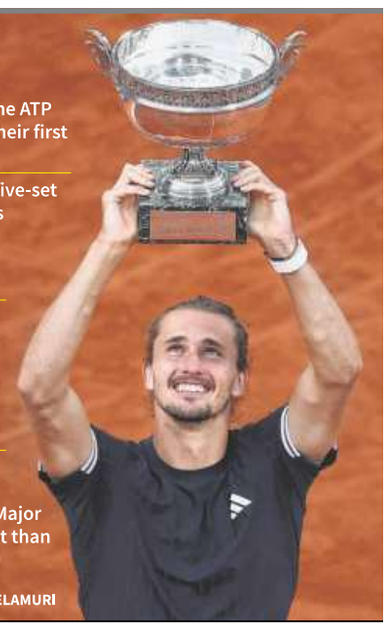
4 The fourth man to clinch a Grand Slam, Masters 1000, the season-ending championship and the Olympic gold after Agassi, Murray and Djokovic

25 Only Lendl (41) and Muster (29) have won more career titles at the ATP level before bagging their first Major crown

32 The number of five-set matches in Paris this year. Only 1992 and 2001 (33 each) had more

41 Zverev won a first Slam in his 41st main draw appearance. Only Ivanisevic (48, Wimbledon 2001) has taken more

125 No player has figured in more matches at a Major before winning his first than Zverev



Compiled by ANIRUDH VELAMURI

Antonelli extends run of victories to five races

FORMULA ONE

Reuters
MONACO

Formula One championship leader Kimi Antonelli stayed ice-cool to win a chaotic Monaco Grand Prix and extend his run of victories this season to five on Sunday.

The 19-year-old Italian built a commanding lead after starting from pole in his Mercedes but that evaporated after a late red flag to inspect a crumbling surface at the final corner following a crash that took out Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

After a delay of around 40 minutes while repairs were carried out, the race resumed with a standing start but Antonelli remained unfazed as he became the youngest ever winner of the iconic race.

Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton was runner-up for the second successive GP with Red Bull's Isack Hadjar provisionally third, although he was one of a number of drivers under investigation for a variety of infringements.

Hamilton, who equalled the late Ayrton Senna's eight Monaco podiums, moved above Antonelli's teammate George Russell into second place in the standings, 66 points behind Antonelli.

"It's been an incredible weekend and an incredible race," said Antonelli, who was not even born the last time an Italian won the Monaco GP – Jarno Trulli in 2004. "We had incredible pace and it all came so natural and that gave me the confidence to push."

A year after finishing last on his F1 debut at Monaco, Antonelli showed incredible poise to shrug off the red flag drama that meant he effectively had to win two races.

"I wasn't super keen on re-starting but once the notification came out I just gathered my emotions and re-focused again. Once I got away and was P1 into the first corner I could enjoy the last few laps".

The results:
1. Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes) 2h:23m:31.243s; 2. Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari) + 6.271s; 3. Isack Hadjar (Red Bull Racing) 23.394; 4. Oscar Piastri (McLaren) 24.261; 5. Liam Lawson (Racing Bulls) 26.553; 6. Arvid Lindblad (Racing Bulls) 29.010; 7. Pierre Gasly (Alpine) 30.369; 8. Alexander Albon (Williams) 33.413; 9. Esteban Ocon (Haas) 37.140; 10. Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin) 41.899; 11. Gabriel Bortoleto (Audi) 42.748; 12. George Russell (Mercedes) 43.353; 13. Nico Hulkenberg (Audi) 44.102; 14. Franco Colapinto (Alpine) 48.964; 15. Sergio Perez (Cadillac) 49.153.
DNF: Carlos Sainz (Williams); Charles Leclerc (Ferrari); Lance Stroll (Aston Martin); Lando Norris (McLaren); Oliver Bearman (Haas); Valtteri Bottas (Cadillac); Max Verstappen (Red Bull Racing).
Standings: Drivers: 1. Antonelli 156; 2. Hamilton 90; 3. Russell 88; 4. Leclerc 75; 5. Piastri 60.
Constructors: 1. Mercedes 244; 2. Ferrari 165; 3. McLaren 118; 4. Red Bull Racing 72; 5. Alpine 41.

The journey in numbers after the 78-lap race at Monaco

1 Antonelli (19y 9m 13d) becomes the youngest to win in Monaco, breaking Hamilton's 2008 record (23y 4m 18d)

1 The Italian is the youngest to record a Grand Slam (pole position, leading every lap, fastest lap and race win)

1 Antonelli is the first Italian to win in Monaco after Trulli in 2004

8 Hamilton equals Senna for most podiums in Monaco

9 Antonelli and Hamilton together have as many podium finishes this season as the rest of the grid combined

10 The teenager is the 10th driver to secure five wins in a row. Every other driver who has done so has gone on to win the title that season

13 Mercedes overtakes Ford Cosworth for most wins in Monaco

15 After six Grands Prix, Antonelli has made the best start to a season since Vettel in 2011

95 Albon equals Mansell for most starts with Williams

100 Hamilton becomes the first driver to stand on the podium 100 times in races he did not win

Compiled by Anirudh Velamuri

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It's not just about Magnus, you have to do well against everyone

FLICKR/NORWAYCHESS

Grandmaster Praggnanandhaa says every tournament is unique in its own way; the 20-year-old admits that he will have to prioritise taking breaks to ensure he isn't burnt out; the Indian, who had a tough time at the Candidates, feels he is someone who quickly recovers from disappointments

INTERVIEW

R. Praggnanandhaa

C. Shyam Sundar

He's been around for so long that one forgets that he is just 20. Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa's rise has been steadily spectacular.

Having been drawn to chess quite early, his growth was impressive. Winning became a habit for him and the International Master title at the age of 10 turned the spotlight on him firmly. He has come a long way since, pursuing excellence in the sport with unwavering focus and dedication.

The Chennai GM was a hugely popular player at the Norway Chess 2026 along with compatriot and World champion D. Gukesh with fans swarming the duo to get pictures taken and for autographs.

Praggnanandhaa or simply Pragg as the chess fraternity and fans like to call him, took time off to share his thoughts with the Indian media about life on the road, the pressures of top-flight sport, hobbies and friends in a freewheeling chat. Excerpts:

The strangest place you have played chess in? You are playing a library right now...

I can't think of one, probably the library. Usually a library is calm... but here there is always something happening in the background

In this tournament, you defeated World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen twice... What do you think about that?

I think everyone is strong here, it's not just about Magnus, there are also other strong players, so you have to do well against everyone, I didn't have good moments early in the tournament.

Given your busy schedule, what facet of the game motivates you to give your best?

I enjoy playing the game, so whenever I sit at the board, I just enjoy it, so I try to give my best. Nothing specific, I think every tournament is different, you are facing different opponents, different formats, so every tournament is exciting in its own way.

At this stage of your career, what is it that most interests you about chess?

I think it just depends on the tournament.... like here the format is so exciting that I am just happy to play, also the players are super strong, I mean there are tournaments where the goal is simple, just to try to win the tournament.

Which are these tournaments that you are just there to enjoy?

It just depends on the tournament, it just depends on my mood, how I feel before it, how I feel during the tournament and all these things.

You played around 16 tournaments in 2025. Is there a conscious idea to maybe play less tournaments?

Yeah, that is something that I decided I will try to do (play less), try to have breaks in between. Last year... even though the results went my way, it was a bit too much to play... so much of chess. I'm still probably going to play almost all the (big) tournaments, but I'll probably skip the EWC (Esports World Cup) and all these other tournaments. I mean at some point you just have to prioritise.

Did you feel that playing so many tournaments kind of affected your tournament play at some point because you didn't have time to reset, you didn't have time to retool in terms of tactics and strategies and things like that?

For sure, I think at some point you are just burnt out, you don't have energy like even if you have physical energy, you just don't have the mental energy to do the same thing pretty much every tournament, same routine and everything gets tiring at some point. It just becomes automatic that you just don't enjoy it anymore, it just happens. So, that's why I think these breaks are important.

When did you feel burnt out or feel why am I playing so much?

I can't really say the exact moment but at some point like I was, I counted this like in three months I travelled to seven countries, which I think is too much for anyone... Look, one is not going there to just have a look at the place, you are going there to fight in every tournament and all these tournaments are super strong. It is mentally tiring, but you know it's me that signed up for all these tournaments so I have to take it whatever that comes.

You became an International Master at a young age and 10 years down the line you are one of the strongest chess players in the world, so how do you look at being a role model...

I don't really think too much about it. I just do what I do, I just try to play a game, but it's nice to see that people look up to a chess player and want to take up chess... you know whenever there is some kid coming to take a picture or for an autograph I try to do my best, I try to give them a little bit of time, so yeah, I think it's great. When one starts, they look up to someone and get started. So, it's nice that people are looking at not just me but also the other Indian players too.

Has there ever been a time in the recent past, when you thought maybe I could have had a normal childhood, school, and finished college?

You have to give (up) certain things for certain things. I don't really regret it, but I would have loved to have some school friends or college friends. But when I'm going for something much bigger, I'm happy with how things are.

When you are in Chennai, who are the people that you call to maybe go to the beach or cinema. Is it someone like Gukesh or Arjun (Erigaisi) or others?

No, I think we look at each other too much in tournaments... (laughs). If I am going out when I am in Chennai, it's usually like my sister (R. Vaishali) is there, my family is there, they are the ones.

Don't you get to look at Vaishali as you play a lot of tournaments together..

As brother and sister, we have to look at each other in tournaments and at home too.. There is no escape. I have a few chess friends and we sometimes go out to play some sports.

Do you think that Indian youngsters focus maybe too much on chess and is there too much pressure?

I can only answer from my part. At times, I do feel like I focus too much on chess. Certainly, I think having a different hobby could help chess as well. There are some things that I want to try in the future. There is nothing specific, it's just that sometimes you just read something and you are excited.

On the disappointment after missing out in the Candidates

Certainly that (disappointment of not doing well in Candidates) is something that I have to deal with because in the last two years I was thinking only about this cycle... I sort of gave everything for this. There was nothing else I was thinking about. You can also see from the tournaments I played last year that I was just going for this one spot in the FIDE circuit (to qualify for the Candidates). I have to try and get back to playing tournaments. I just want to play chess and chill (now). I don't want to think about the next two-year cycle.

How long does it take for you to recover from such disappointments, like the one in the Candidates

I am usually quick to recover from disappointments. And, I think, in this Candidates specifically like my sister (Vaishali) winning certainly helped me cope with my own disappointment.

You have a growing fan base in Taiwan though you have not played there... Any message for them?

I'm pleasantly surprised to hear that. It's nice to know that as you don't really hear Taiwan as a chess culture nation, so I think any country starting to grow a chess culture is great. I hope more tournaments will be held there and more kids will be coming up from there.

Do you use Artificial Intelligence (AI) in your training?

I wouldn't say I use proper AI, but of course I use engines and computers and they do play a vital role in opening preparation. But also you learn a lot from just looking at the engine, the way it thinks, the way it analyses and so on. I think everyone uses that.

(The writer is in Oslo at the invitation of Norway Chess).

Homo erectus fossil yields secrets long thought to be beyond genetics

That modern humans carry DNA fragments from two other members of the genus *Homo* raised the possibility that they may also harbour genetic material from other extinct human species; but in the 14 years since the Denisovan genome was published, no new genome from any other extinct human relative has been uncovered — until now

Arun Panchapakesan

For much of modern history, human evolution was thought to progress in linear fashion, with one species replacing another, one by one. The famous 'ape turning to human' cartoon illustrating a stooped primate gradually straightening into a modern man essentially captures this idea.

That picture began to change in the second half of the 19th century when scientists started to unearth human-like fossils. At the time, scientists used geological clues such as the depth at which a fossil was found and the rock layers surrounding it to determine the age of fossils. This method could establish which fossils were older or younger than others but did not reveal precise dates.

The timeline suggested an intriguing possibility, however. It appeared that these different kinds of humans had not followed one another in succession but had lived alongside each other. Radiometric dating techniques later confirmed this idea: multiple human species had coexisted on the earth at various points.

Representative image of the bones of the *Homo erectus* fossil 'Turkana Boy', the most complete fossil of the species found to date. EINSAMER SCHÜTZE (CC BY-SA)

Series of surprises

In 2003, the Human Genome Project announced the first high-quality sequence of the human genome. Human beings finally possessed the secret to their own identity – the reason(s) they were unique. That sense of identity, however, proved to be short-lived.

In 2010, scientists published the genome of the Neanderthals, our closest extinct relatives. When they compared Neanderthal DNA with the genomes of living people, they uncovered a remarkable result. Most humans alive today carry around 1-2% Neanderthal DNA in their own genomes. In Africans, this percentage is slightly lower, but even their DNA is 0.3-0.5% Neanderthal.

The surprises did not end there. In 2012, scientists sequenced the genome of Denisovans, another human lineage, finding that some present-day populations, particularly in Oceania and parts of Southeast Asia, had 3-6% Denisovan DNA.

That we carry DNA fragments from two other members of the genus *Homo* raised the possibility that we may also harbour genetic material from other extinct human species. But in the 14 years since the Denisovan genome was published, no new genome from any other extinct human relative has been uncovered.

DNA after death

The difficulty lies in the nature of DNA itself. The moment an organism dies, its DNA begins to break down. Enzymes released from dying cells cut DNA into small pieces. Microbes and fungi invade the remains and further degrade the genetic material. Water and oxygen promote chemical reactions that further damage DNA. Then there are temperature fluctuations, solar radiation, and UV damage. Over a few tens of millennia, the DNA is reduced to a few small pieces.

To recover DNA from these ancient humans, scientists need to be very lucky. The specimen must have been exposed to cold, dry, and stable environments such as permafrost, frozen sediments, or the inside of a deep cave. This is very rare – and why only a small fraction of fossils contain usable DNA.

One such species whose DNA sequence has evaded us for a long time is *Homo erectus,* the species estimated to have originated over 2 million years ago and thought to be one of the first human relatives to spread widely across Africa, Europe, and Asia.

Acid etching

A recent study published in *Nature* has provided the first molecular sequences from *Homo erectus* fossils from China. Rather than attempting to recover DNA directly, the researchers extracted proteins preserved within the enamel of six *Homo erectus* teeth dated to around 4,00,000 years ago. Because proteins are the products of the DNA, their sequences can reveal portions of the underlying genetic information, providing a rare, albeit narrow, view into the genome of an extinct human species.

The method used to recover the genetic information is notable. Usually, recovering ancient DNA or proteins requires scientists to grind up part of a fossil, so museum curators are reluctant to permit such analyses, especially when there is no guarantee that usable genetic material will be recovered.

To overcome this problem, the researchers used acid etching, a technique where a small area of the tooth enamel is briefly exposed to a dilute acid solution, which dissolves microscopic amounts of tooth enamel and releases the proteins trapped within it. The fossil is left largely intact. Since tooth enamel is a highly mineralised tissue, it can trap and protect proteins for a long time.

The researchers proceeded to successfully recover enamel proteins from five male and one female *Homo erectus* individuals. When they compared the protein sequences with those of modern humans, Neanderthals, and Denisovans, they made two interesting discoveries.

First, all six *Homo erectus* individuals had a protein variant that has never been found in any other known species in the genus *Homo*. Second, they carried another variant present in Denisovans. This suggests populations related to these Chinese *Homo erectus* may have interbred with Denisovans in East Asia.

Shared story

However, because the results come from only the enamel proteins and not the entire genome, they are not conclusive. It was long known that the Denisovan genome contains DNA from a much older species of the human lineage. While this study points to *Homo erectus* as a possible candidate, it does not prove it.

Nevertheless, the study represents an advance far beyond the information it has generated, which by itself is tiny. This is the first effort to recover meaningful molecular data from *Homo erectus* fossils, long thought to be beyond the reach of genetics.

Though Neanderthals, Denisovans, and others have vanished from the earth, traces of their existence endure within our DNA. The more we look, the more we find that the story of humans is not only ours: it is theirs as well.

(Arun Panchapakesan is an assistant professor at the Y.R. Gaitonde Centre for AIDS Research and Education, Chennai. arun.panchapakesan@gmail.com)

THE GIST

- Radiometric dating techniques have confirmed that multiple human species had coexisted on the earth at various points
- While the Human Genome Project in 2003 provided humans with a sense of unique identity, later studies showed the presence of Neanderthal and Denisovan DNA in the modern human genome
- A recent study on enamel from *Homo erectus* teeth has revealed a protein variant never found before in the genus as well as another variant present in Denisovans
- It was known that the Denisovan genome contains DNA from a much older species of human lineage and the study, while not conclusive, points to *Homo erectus* as a possible candidate

BIG SHOT

As part of the Wilderness Project, wildlife experts who visited Angola's Lisima plateau in February have reported eight new species of dragonfly, three unknown grasshoppers, and some 60 new butterflies and moths in vivid hues. They have also found a spider species that fluoresces under ultraviolet light (shown). REUTERS

WHAT IS IT?

Pyroprocessing: heat shows the way

Vasudevan Mukunth

Pyroprocessing is a way to change a solid material physically or chemically using high temperature. It is a dry process and very energy-intensive. The three sectors that use it most are cement-making, metallurgy, and nuclear power.

Of these, cement-making uses pyroprocessing the most. First, finely ground limestone, clay and iron — the raw materials — are fed into a rotary kiln. As the temperature increases to 900° C, the limestone loses its carbon dioxide, and at around 1,450° C, the mix partly melts to form marble-sized nodules called clinker. The clinker is then ground to produce cement.

In metallurgy, pyroprocessing is used to extract metals from their ores in multiple stages. For example, sulphide ores are heated in air — or roasted — to convert them into metal oxides, like zinc sulphide. Smelting melts an ore to separate the metal from waste impurities called slag. Heating limestone to yield lime is likewise called calcining.

In the nuclear industry, pyroprocessing has a slightly different meaning. It is used to reprocess spent nuclear fuel, in techniques developed in the 1980s and 1990s. First, used nuclear fuel is broken up into pieces and placed in a salt bath — usually a mixture of lithium and potassium chlorides at 500° C or more. Then, an electric current is passed through the salt bath, causing different elements to become separated depending on their electrochemical properties. Operators then recover the elements of interest in separate streams.

A rotary kiln is visible as the rust-coloured horizontal tube at the centre in this image of a cement plant in the U.S. GREG GOEBEL (CC BY-SA)

This form of pyroprocessing has been the subject of study in Japan, South Korea, and the U.S. and is used as part of programmes involving advanced fast reactors.

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

Persons injured in violence that erupted in Somalia's capital

55 One person was killed and 55 were injured in political violence that erupted in Somalia's capital this week, according to a government statement on Sunday. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has sparked a fresh political crisis by announcing a one-year extension of his term, which had been due to expire on May 15. AFP

Share of grassland lost by Assam's Manas National park

60 in per cent. Assam's Manas National Park & Tiger Reserve rolled out the State's first grass nursery as it has lost more than 60% of the park's grasslands over the past 35 years. The nursery has been developed over an area of 7.5 bigha with financial support from the State Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority. PTI

Deaths linked to unsafe use of pesticides in Rajasthan

535 As many as 535 farmers have died while using pesticides in Rajasthan between January 2024 and January 2026, according to information provided in response to a legislative assembly question. The agriculture department said that ₹5.10 crore in assistance was provided to the families of deceased farmers under the CM's farmer welfare scheme. PTI

Amount invested by Swiss firms in the U.S. after tariff deal

27 in $ billion. Swiss companies invested $27 billion in the U.S. between January and April, as Switzerland moves to fulfil a pledge to sharply increase investment following a tariff agreement with Washington, *NZZ am Sonntag* reported. The figure was contained in an internal email from the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce to its members, it said. REUTERS

Number of fatalities reported during Char Dham Yatra

161 More than 31 lakh pilgrims have visited Uttarakhand since the Char Dham Yatra began in April, while 161 fatalities have been reported among the devotees during the ongoing pilgrimage season, officials said on Sunday. According to the latest report, Kedarnath Dham recorded the highest footfall with 11,05,676 pilgrims. PTI

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The Ordinance question before the SC

The Collegium's acceptance of an Ordinance that creates four additional judges' posts raises questions about judicial independence, security of tenure and the appearance of detachment from the executive; court has taken a calculated risk by staking its independence on the goodwill of the government and Parliament

LETTER & SPIRIT

V. Venkatesan

In February 1937, the President of the United States of America, Franklin D. Roosevelt, asked Congress to enlarge the nine-judge Supreme Court. He sought a new justice for each one past 70 who refused to retire, up to 15 in all. The Senate Judiciary Committee saw through it. It preferred "an independent Court, a fearless Court," to one that bent "out of fear or sense of obligation to the appointing power." The Senate refused, with 70 members voting against and 20 in favour, and the plan was dead.

In Delhi last week, five judges took the oath; three occupy chairs, that no statute has created. They sit because the President, by Ordinance, lifted the sanctioned strength from 34 to 38.

Ordinance-made seats

The five are fit for office: four sat as Chief Justices of High Courts, the fifth came from the bar. Their elevation is not the grievance; the manner of it is. The Ordinance was promulgated on May 16, when the Court sat at 32 against a sanctioned 34. Two lawful vacancies existed; two of Tuesday's appointments filled them. The other three rest on the Ordinance alone.

Article 124(1) leaves the number of judges to what Parliament may prescribe. An Article 123 Ordinance carries, for its life, the force of an Act. Independence of the judiciary is a basic feature of the Constitution. It is also about whether the court holds its seats free of obligation to the political branch. A court that owes three chairs to a six-week renewable Ordinance holds them at the executive's sufferance.

A test of principle

In 2015, a Constitution Bench decided *Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association vs Union of India*. It struck down the 99th Amendment and the National Judicial Appointments Commission. Parliament had passed it 367 to nil in the Lok Sabha, with the States ratifying. The commission was to have six members: the Chief Justice, the two senior-most judges after him, the Union Law Minister, and two eminent persons. The eminent persons were to be chosen by a panel of the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice, and the Leader of the Opposition. That composition was meant to keep the choice neutral. Yet the Act provided that any two members could veto a name. The court feared that the Law Minister and even one eminent person could thus block a candidate the judges favoured. It held that this destroyed the judiciary's primacy in its own appointments.

Yet the Supreme Court Collegium has accepted an Ordinance that seats three of its own, despite the uncertainty over its fate. Under Article 123, the President may withdraw an Ordinance at any time. Both Houses may disapprove it by resolution. Otherwise, it ceases to operate six weeks after Parliament reassembles.

The court itself taught the country to distrust the Ordinance. In *D.C. Wadhwa vs State of Bihar* (1986), it called governance by repromulgated ordinance a fraud on the Constitution. In *Krishna Kumar Singh vs State of Bihar* (2017), a seven-judge Bench ruled against using ordinance-making power as a parallel source of legislation.

If the Bill replaces the Ordinance, the anomaly closes. If not, the apex court's strength reverts to 34, and the executive cannot bridge the gap by repromulgation, the fraud Wadhwa condemned. Whether a judge appointed to an Ordinance-created post can be removed once that post lapses is untested. Their judgments hold under the de facto doctrine, affirmed in *Gokaraju Rangaraju vs State of Andhra Pradesh* (1981). The subtler harm is to appearance: in any matter touching the Union, the government whose majority must regularise their seats may appear before them. A judge whose tenure lies, even loosely, in one party's gift cannot wear the detachment the office demands.

GETTY IMAGES

CJI Surya Kant administers the oath of office to Justice V. Mohana as a judge of the Supreme Court, in New Delhi on June 2. She is only the second woman to be elevated directly from the Bar to the court. PTI

The calculated risk

The court sits at 37; the 38th and last sanctioned post is empty, the calendar suggests why. Justice Pankaj Mithal retires on June 16 and Justice J.K. Maheshwari on June 28. Their retirements reopen two lawful seats, into which two of the three Ordinance judges move. A judge in the 38th post would be the junior-most. Its occupant would reach a lawful seat only at Justice Satish Chandra Sharma's retirement on November 29, months after the Ordinance expires. Leaving it empty spares the court a judge stranded that long.

That leaves Justice V. Mohana, alone of the five from the bar and so junior-most, on an Ordinance post. She can reach a lawful seat only when Justice Sanjay Karol retires on August 22. Here, the Collegium seems to have taken a calculated risk. Justice Karol's retirement all but coincides with the Ordinance's likely lapse, six weeks into the monsoon session. The replacing law should thus arrive first, and even a short delay is caught by his vacancy, which absorbs her. Her position turns precarious only if the Ordinance is rejected or lapses before August 22. Then the strength reverts to 34, the court still sits at 35, and she holds a post that the law no longer recognises. That a judge of the highest court should depend on which reading prevails, and on when Parliament meets, is the disquiet.

The five are fit for office: four sat as Chief Justices of High Courts, the fifth came from the bar

Larger question

The wager will likely be won; the government has the numbers, and the Opposition will not unsettle freshly sworn judges. But that is not the point. The court has staked its independence and its judges' security of tenure on the goodwill of the executive and Parliament.

The U.S. Senate's warning of 1937 was against a court bound by obligation to the appointing power. The graver danger is a court that no longer notices the obligation. Independence of the judiciary is not only the right to say no to the executive. It is the instinct to want to.

(V. Venkatesan is Contributing Editor at Supreme Court Observer. Views expressed are personal)

THE GIST

- Five judges were sworn in to the Supreme Court after the sanctioned strength was raised from 34 to 38 through a Presidential Ordinance; while two appointments filled existing vacancies, three were made to newly created posts.
- The Supreme Court has previously held in cases such as *D.C. Wadhwa vs State of Bihar* and *Krishna Kumar Singh vs State of Bihar* that ordinance-making power cannot become a parallel source of legislation and that repeated promulgation of ordinances is unconstitutional.
- If Parliament does not replace the Ordinance with a law, the court's sanctioned strength would revert to 34, raising unresolved questions about the status of judges appointed to Ordinance-created posts and the legal implications of such appointments.

CACHE

Meta rolled out its AI support assistant chatbot on Facebook and Instagram in March. REUTERS

Did Meta's own AI support bot help hack Instagram accounts?

Hackers allegedly used Meta's AI support assistant to change account details and hijack Instagram profiles; the incident has raised concerns about AI-enabled cyber-attacks and the security of customer support chatbots

Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

In May, a number of Instagram users were locked out of their accounts by hackers. Many of the affected users took to other social media platforms like Reddit and X (formerly Twitter) to post their complaints. Screen recordings later circulated online suggested that their Instagram accounts were hacked with the help of Meta's own AI support chatbot. Adding to the users' worries was the lack of transparency from Meta's side about the security lapse, fuelling fears of an AI-enabled hack.

How were users' Instagram accounts hacked?

Meta rolled out its AI support assistant chatbot on Facebook and Instagram in March. The feature is different from the company's better known Meta AI. The AI support assistant can take action for users when it comes to requests such as reporting content, understanding content takedowns, managing privacy settings, resetting passwords, and updating profile settings.

Several widely-circulated recordings and images of the hack revealed hackers purportedly instructing the Meta AI support assistant to use an email ID that was different from the one associated with users' Instagram accounts. After the switch was made, hackers were able to access the verification code sent to the new email ID. They used this to reset the account password and hijack the user's Instagram account.

Many affected users claimed they were logged out of their accounts and that trying to contact Meta for help led them to another AI chatbot. Some noted they had been unfairly penalised after being hacked.

Multiple high-profile accounts were also hacked around this time period, such as the White House Instagram account of former U.S. President Barack Obama (@obamawhitehouse), which last posted in 2017. At the time of writing this story, Meta did not confirm whether this specific security breach is linked to hackers who used the Meta AI support chatbot.

According to *TechCrunch*, the attacks on users' accounts continued even after Meta addressed the issue.

What was Meta's response?

While the company did not issue a formal statement about the hack, Meta spokesperson Andy Stone replied to users on the X platform about the cyber-attack. "This issue has been resolved and we are securing impacted accounts," Mr. Stone told one user, without offering further confirmation or denial.

Mr. Stone told another X user that Instagram was trying to restore access to affected individuals, which meant that some users could see password reset notifications or security question verification while logging in. This, in turn, triggered alarm and suspicion amongst some users who worried they were being targeted by additional phishing attacks.

The Hindu reached out to Meta multiple times in order to clarify the details of the exploit and learn how many users were affected, but did not receive an official response.

Are such AI-enabled attacks common?

While malicious actors have adopted Generative AI and agentic AI technologies to launch phishing attacks or social engineering attacks at scale, Meta's case is unique. Here, the shared evidence points to the company's own AI customer support chatbot helping hackers commit cyber crimes. Unlike other cyber-attacks that use third-party AI tools, this incident breaks the trust that a customer places in a company's supposedly vetted AI chatbot.

Satnam Narang, Senior Staff Research Engineer at the cybersecurity company Tenable, said that the Meta incident was "one of the most consequential abuses of AI chatbots" seen thus far. He warned that as companies begin using AI to power their chatbots, more such incidents can be expected.

"The incident with Meta was believed to have been addressed, but persistent attackers still found ways to continue to leverage the chatbots for nefarious purposes. It is believed that this incident is now resolved, but once Pandora's box is opened, we can expect attackers to start hunting for and probing other chatbots for potential exploitation," said Mr. Narang.

He added that most everyday internet users did not have to worry about their accounts, observing that many hacked targets were those with high-demand Instagram usernames, or accounts belonging to high-profile users.

"The downstream effects are more likely to affect users if an account is hijacked, and it is used to conduct follow-on attacks, whether it's phishing or financial-fraud related, that is where most everyday internet users may be impacted," explained Mr. Narang.

As experts have stressed in the past, multiple layers of security – two-factor authentication (2FA) and multi-factor authentication (MFA) – help to safeguard accounts.

This is especially crucial for celebrities, business users, official bodies, influencers, or those working in sensitive fields who might end up losing their reputation and livelihood due to hacks.

But after an unprecedented AI-enabled hack impacting one of the world's most valuable tech companies, Instagram users want to see Meta taking responsibility with more than just a few tweets.

THE DAILY QUIZ

A quiz to test your knowledge of oceans on World Oceans Day

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
Why was June 8 specifically chosen for World Oceans Day and when was it first observed officially?

QUESTION 2
Oceans cover about 70% percent of the Earth. According to the International Hydrographic Organization, how many oceans are officially recognised and which is the smallest?

QUESTION 3
Which distinct characteristic of oceans is because of mineral runoff from land and hydrothermal activity on the seafloor?

QUESTION 4
If the average global temperature rises by 1.5°C, the estimated loss of which remarkable biodiverse natural feature is 70 to 90%?

QUESTION 5
In one of the biggest environmental disasters, the Aral Sea dramatically shrank because of massive water diversion projects in the 1960s on two major rivers. Name the rivers.

QUESTION 6
What is a 'seamount'?

QUESTION 7
What body of water separates Madagascar from the African continent?

QUESTION 8
Which 'colourful' sea's name is a direct translation of its ancient Greek name Erythra Thalassa?

Visual Question:
Name this member of the deepest-living fish family that have been recorded in trenches of over 8000m.

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. What was the name of the World Cup before it was changed to the FIFA World Cup Trophy since 1974? **Ans: Jules Rimet trophy**
2. Who scored the first-ever goal in World Cup Football history? **Ans: Lucien Laurent of France**
3. Which country has taken part in all 22 editions of the Football World Cup held so far? **Ans: Brazil**
4. Which country has the dubious distinction of having played the World Cup final the most times yet still to win it on a single occasion? **Ans: Netherlands (3) – 1974, 1978 & 2010**
5. Which country has reached the semi-finals the most times in World Cup history? **Ans: Germany (12 times – played as West Germany before unification)**
Visual: Identify this player who holds a unique record in World Cup history of having played in three consecutive finals? **Ans: Cafu, Brazil (1994-2002)**
Early Birds: Prem Raj P. | Sadhan Panda | Prem Nath Tiwari | Keshav Raturi | Pulkit Sathe

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

The teenager is being called a wunderkind

The die was cast the moment he accepted the bribe

S. Upendran

What is the meaning of 'wunderkind'? How is the word pronounced? (Sandeep Reddy, Ongole)

'Wunderkind' has been borrowed from German, and it consists of two words - 'wunder' and 'kind'. The first word, 'wunder', consists of two syllables; the vowel in the first, sounds like the 'u' in 'full', 'pull' and 'bull', while the following 'e' is pronounced like the 'a' in 'china'. The 'i' in 'kind' sounds like the 'i' in 'kid', 'bid' and 'hid'. The word is usually pronounced 'WUN-de-kind', with the stress on the first syllable. It is also possible to pronounce the 'w' like the 'v' in 'vet', 'vase' and 'village'.

In German, 'wunder' means 'wonder' and 'kind' means 'child'; the term literally means 'wonder child'. In English, the word is frequently used to refer to a very young individual who has achieved tremendous success in his chosen field. Another term for such a person is 'child prodigy'. During the recently concluded IPL tournament, commentators were waxing lyrical over the batting exploits of the teenager, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. In the past two years, he has demonstrated that he is highly skilled with the bat. Many experts of the game believe that he is a 'wunderkind'. The term can be used with anyone young who excels in any field - not just sports.

Neither of his parents are interested in music. So, they are surprised that he is frequently referred to as a musical wunderkind.

The wunderkind had published five successful novels by the time he turned 20.

What is the meaning and origin of 'the die is cast'? (J Arun, Kanchipuram)

The 'die' in the idiom has nothing to do with death. When we play board games like Snakes and Ladders and Monopoly, we roll the dice to determine how many squares we can move. When you are referring to two or more of the cubes, then you say 'dice'; if you are making use of only one cube to play the game, then you refer to it as 'die'. In other words, 'die' is the singular form of 'dice'. When you say that the 'die is cast', what you are suggesting is that you have made certain decisions that cannot be reversed or changed; the chain of events are no longer under your control. There is no turning back. When the die leaves your hand, your fate has already been determined; you have no control over the number that the die will land on.

The moment he accepted the bribe, the die was cast. He could never go back to leading the life of an honest man.

The die was cast when Joseph started making fun of her father. She called off the engagement the very same day.

According to scholars, when Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon in 49 BC to invade Rome, he is supposed to have said, 'Alea iacta est', meaning 'the die is cast/thrown'. In other words, by crossing the river, Caesar was declaring war against Pompey and the Roman Republic – the decision he was taking was irreversible. The civil war that resulted, lasted over four years; and the rest, as they say, is history. The translation of this Latin idiom became part of the English language only in the 16th century.

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Word of the day

Tarry:
be about a place without any apparent purpose

Synonyms: stay, drag, linger, loiter

Usage: *He tarried outside the station, waiting for a friend.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/tarry

International Phonetic Alphabet: /tæri/

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