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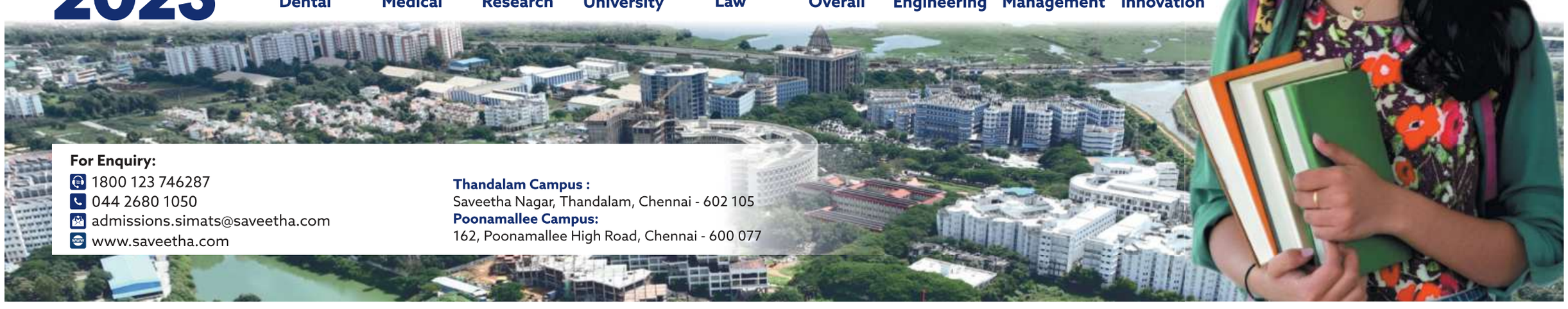

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ECOSYSTEM BALANCE

The silent guardians of nature

Protecting the endangered Asiatic elephant indirectly helps safeguard India's forests as powerful carbon stores, finds new scientific study

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Fake patents poisoning India's race for academic excellence

SCIENCE » PAGE 16

What does the FCRA amendment mean for NGOs?

FAQ » PAGE 17

India meets Australia, needs a win to make it to the semifinal

SPORT » PAGE 20

NEARBY

Manickam Tagore appointed new TNCC president

CHENNAI
Three-time Lok Sabha MP B. Manickam Tagore has been appointed as president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee. » PAGE 6

Scattered showers likely in T.N. till June end

CHENNAI
Scattered rainfall is likely to continue across the State till the end of June, while near-normal temperatures are expected to prevail. » PAGE 6

CLASSIFIEDS » PAGES 8, 9 & 10
MAGAZINE » 8 PAGES
DOWNTOWN » 8PAGES (TABLOID) (IN SELECT AREAS)

Ram Temple row: Trust general secretary quits

Trust promises fair investigation into the donation embezzlement case as its general secretary and another member submit resignation; it assures devotees that offerings made by them are safe

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Amid the uproar over the Ram Temple donation embezzlement case, the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust on Saturday announced that its general secretary Champat Rai and member Anil Mishra had submitted their resignations.

"At its next meeting, the trust will take a decision on their resignations," Trust treasurer Govind Dev Giri said in a statement on Saturday.

The statement comes a day after the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) denied reports of Mr. Rai's resignation. Mr. Rai is also the vice-president of the VHP.

In its first public statement amid the controversy, the Trust, which administers the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, said it would ensure a fair investigation into the incident. "We are deeply pained, shocked, and extremely saddened by the incidents that have come to light in recent days at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. As agents of all Ram devotees and Ram sevaks serving the lord, we are committed to ensuring a fair investigation and restoring the confidence of devotees," the statement added.

Mr. Rai and other Trust members are facing criticism over the donation theft case in which eight people have been arrested on charges of embezzlement, criminal conspiracy, fraud and breach of trust.

In the statement, the Trust said silver bricks, jewellery, and other offerings that the devotees had personally handed over to its officials are "safe and fully accounted for".

"As regards the alleged embezzlement of money from the temple's donation boxes, an FIR has been filed, based on the interim report submitted by the Special Investigation Team. Legal proceedings are under way, truth will come out and the guilty will be punished," reads the statement.

The Ram temple Trust general secretary, Champat Rai, and other members are facing criticism over an embezzlement case. FILE PHOTO

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DISSOLUTION DEMAND » PAGE 13

Iran says U.S. violated peace deal as both sides trade fire

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran on Saturday accused the U.S. of violating their deal to end the war, after Washington launched strikes on Iranian territory and Tehran responded with attacks on U.S. targets in the Gulf.

The trading of fire, which came after Washington accused Tehran of attacking a cargo ship in the Strait of Hormuz, raised doubts about efforts to keep the crucial waterway open while both sides negotiate a final deal.

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said the latest American strikes, which targeted Iranian missile and drone storage sites and coastal radar positions, were a response to "unwarranted aggression against commercial shipping by Iranian forces" that "clearly violated the ceasefire". It described the latest strikes as "a powerful response" to the "attack on a commercial ship that was transiting the Strait of Hormuz". "Violence will be met with violence" if Iran carries out any further attacks, U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance said.

Iran said "these brutal attacks... are a blatant violation" of the deal to end the war, which began with U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February. Its Revolutionary Guards said they had struck U.S. sites in the Gulf region and that "if the aggression is repeated, our response will be broader".

Bahrain said it was targeted by several Iranian drones early on Saturday and accused Tehran of "sabotaging peace efforts".

On the U.S. strikes, Iranian media reported an explosion at a pier in the southern city of Sirik late on Friday. It quoted a military source saying a "projectile impact" caused the blast. "Sirik Port is operating normally," Mehr news agency later said.

Vessels seen in the Strait of Hormuz near Bandar Abbas in Iran following the signing of the deal with U.S. to end the war. REUTERS

A SHIPWRECKED HEGEMON » PAGE 18
'GRAVE BLUNDER' » PAGE 19

Maharashtra TET put off over 'paper leak'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government on Saturday postponed the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) 2026 over allegations of a "paper leak". Around six lakh candidates were expected to appear for the examination on Sunday.

"This decision was taken to make the examination transparent," the government stated in a press release. The new date for the examination will be announced later. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has ordered a probe.

The Opposition slammed the government over the alleged leak. "Why is the government not capable of holding a single exam transparently? If it does not act strictly, we will hit the streets," State Congress president Harshwardhan Sapkal said.

The decision to postpone the exam was taken after an investigation by the Bhiwandi police in Thane found people in possession of questions similar to those in the TET paper.

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'THEFT OF FUTURE' » PAGE 14

Safer playground

Friendly fight: Greater one-horned rhinoceros calves play on higher ground at the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary in Morigaon, Assam, on Saturday as low-lying regions remain inundated after heavy rainfall in the State and neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh. PTI

MDMK cuts ties with DMK, backs TVK govt.

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) has officially severed ties with the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance. A formal resolution to withdraw from the coalition was passed unanimously during the party's 32nd General Council meeting here on Saturday.

Following the meeting, MDMK general secretary Vaiko announced that the party would extend its support to the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) government and will abstain from contesting the upcoming byelections to back the ruling party.

23 resolutions passed

The general council passed a total of 23 resolutions, with the primary resolution focusing on the exit from the DMK alliance.

According to the first resolution, the decision to sever ties was prompted by post-election developments, where arrangements were allegedly made to install the AIADMK – which won only 47 seats in alliance with the BJP – in power.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 6

Two BJP-ruled States question VB-G RAM G financial burden

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

At least three States, two of them with BJP-led governments, have raised concerns over the increased financial burden on them under the new rural employment programme, the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G), which comes into effect on July 1.

Under the scheme, a majority of the States have to bear 40% of the total expenditure, in contrast to its predecessor legislation, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Under MGNREGA, the Centre bore 100% of the wage bill and the States had to pay only a part of the material bill, which accounted for only 10% of the total budget.

As per a Right to Information reply, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh – both ruled by the BJP – and Jharkhand have explicitly asked for a reconsideration of the funding pattern with analysis showing that the 40% share of interim allocation under the scheme will be inadequate to keep the promise of 125 work days.

Budget concern

States are required to bear **40% of the total expenditure** under the VB-G RAM G scheme

	Current share*	For 125 days of work
Bihar	₹4,477 cr.	₹15,939 cr.
M.P.	₹4,168 cr.	₹20,037 cr.
Jharkhand	₹1,804 cr.	₹9,293 cr.

The new scheme is set to come into effect on July 1

*As per interim fund allocation

STATES SEEK REVIEW » PAGE 13

Screenplay maestro, everyday hero takes his last bow

B. Kolappan
CHENNAI

Renowned Tamil actor, director, writer, and screenwriter K. Bhagyaraj, whose mastery over screenplay was widely acknowledged and who created a storytelling formula that has influenced generations of filmmakers, died on Saturday. He was 73.

Sources said he suffered a massive heart attack. Speaking at his residence, actor Suhasini Maniratnam said Bhagyaraj had returned to Chennai on Friday night after attending actor Khushboo's daughter's wedding in Goa.

On Saturday morning, he went for a walk with his wife Poornima, but complained of chest pain on his return home. He was rushed to Apollo Hospital and efforts were made to resuscitate him, but they proved futile.

Bhagyaraj directed, produced and starred in numerous hit films celebrated for their engaging storylines, memorable songs, and relatable characters. *Mounageethangal*, *Antha Ezhu Naatkal*, and *Munthanai Mudichu* are some of his films being studied even today. Nearly every film of Bhagyaraj spoke loudly about an idea which found an echo within Tamil society.

K. BHAGYARAJ
(1953-2026)

An assistant of Bharathiraja who also died recently, Bhagyaraj forever changed the perception of the Tamil film hero by proving that wit, intelligence, and ordinariness could be as compelling as physical prowess and a striking presence. He uniquely combined the qualities of a hero and a comedian, making his bespectacled appearances as hero both entertaining and deeply human. His idea of a hero was not even the man next door, but one among the many on the streets.

He also tried his hand at politics, being an ardent fan of M.G. Ramachandran, though he was not very successful in this sphere. He edited the Tamil weekly magazine *Bhagya* and authored several novels as well.

His funeral will be held on Sunday afternoon at the Besant Nagar Crematorium with State honours.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 12
MORE REPORTS ON » PAGES 2 & 6

In mourning: Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay consoling the family of Bhagyaraj in Chennai on Saturday. ANI

Paying respects: Leader of the Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin placing a garland on Bhagyaraj's mortal remains. ANI

Homage to an artist: Actor Rajinikanth at Bhagyaraj's residence to pay final tributes. J. JOHAN SATHYADAS

Solemn visit: Minister Vanni Arasu arrives at the residence of the late actor-director. J. JOHAN SATHYADAS

The quintessential man-next-door hero of Tamil silver screen

Bhagyaraj and Shobana in *Idhu Namma Aalu*. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

K.C. Vijaya Kumar
CHENNAI

Earthy humour, man-woman dynamics, and rooted stories defined K. Bhagyaraj's legacy. The ace director and actor, who passed away on Saturday, was Bharathiraja's favourite assistant director. The guru passed away on June 10, and the disciple followed suit after a fortnight.

As a bespectacled hero, Bhagyaraj cut through the preconceived notions of how a celluloid figure should appear. He was the quintessential man next door, often landing in a pickle and then finding endearing ways to extricate himself, while also offering a social message through his films.

Having started as an assistant to Bharathiraja in *16 Vayathinile* (1977), Bhagyaraj caught the eye of the lead stars Kamal Haasan and Rajinikanth.

"Bhagyaraj was the one who made me utter the iconic dialogue '*idhu yeppadi irukku*' with a particular tonal variation," Rajinikanth said recently. "At that time, we were not fully aware of the rich talent that was present in that film," Mr. Haasan stated, referring to Bhagyaraj.

After learning the ropes from Bharathiraja, Bhagyaraj branched out as a director and often cast himself as the hero.

He could laugh at himself, a rare attribute in an industry where self-obsession is presumed to be the norm.

If many stars had their distinctive fan bases, ranging from college-goers to senior citizens, Bhagyaraj drew in the women.

Homemakers found time to catch his hits, usually the matinee show, after finishing their household chores. Be it *Mundhanai Mudichu* or *Chinna Veedu*, Bhagyaraj kept the box-office humming. He launched actress Urvashi and in his films, women were never props, they had agency and spoke their minds.

He even directed Amitabh Bachchan's *Aakhree Raasta*, a remake of *Oru Kaidhiyin Diary*, helmed by Bharathiraja and starring Kamal Haasan.

A multifaceted figure

The multifaceted skills that Bhagyaraj possessed, ranging from writing to acting, inspired many others to follow suit, notably R. Parthiban and Pandiarajan.

Even at his peak, Bhagyaraj found time to direct Vijayakanth in *Chokka Thangam*. Later, he became a character actor, often lending believability to the roles he essayed.

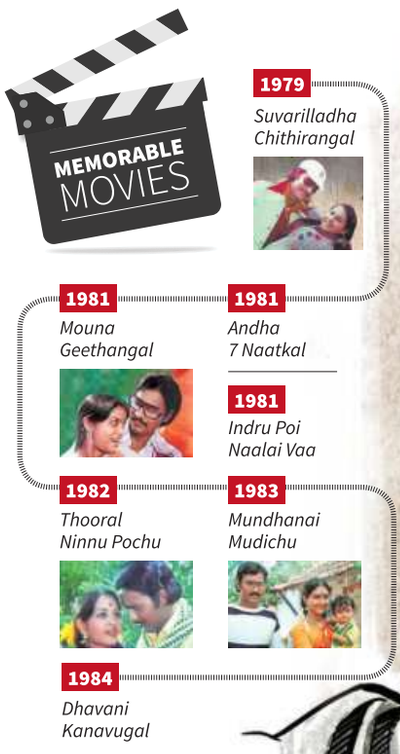
Hailing from Erode district, Bhagyaraj came up with cheeky one-liners, something that also defined his buddies from the same *Kongunadu* region, including Sathyaraj and Goundamani.

Bhagyaraj defined a certain era in Tamil filmdom that was all about nuance. His departure is a massive loss to Tamil's creative space.

A master of screenplay and storytelling

The success formula of Bhagyaraj's hit movies was simple — stories woven around relatable everyday conflicts and sprinkled with good songs and situational humour

K. Muralitharan
CHENNAI



K. Bhagyaraj is one of the very few directors in the Tamil film industry who has been widely acclaimed for his screenwriting. During the late 1970s – a period when stalwarts like K. Balachander and C.V. Sridhar were actively dominating the industry – Bhagyaraj carved out a niche for himself through his engaging and interesting screenplay design.

Arriving in Chennai with the aspiration of becoming a film director, the first movie Bhagyaraj worked on, was as an assistant director for *Ezhai Panakkaran*. Directed by G. Ramakrishnan, the shooting of this film ground to a halt within just two days. It was after this setback that Bhagyaraj went on to join director Bharathiraja. Having worked on films like *16 Vayathinile* and *Kizhakke Pogum Rail*, he wrote the dialogues for *Sigappu Rojakkal*.

Although Bhagyaraj was highly skilled in writing screenplays and dialogues, a film featuring him as the lead actor was released even before a film under his own direction could hit the screens.

When Bharathiraja wanted to make the film *Puthiya Vaarpugal*, he chose Bhagyaraj as the protagonist. Bhagyaraj also penned the dialogues for the movie. Becoming a massive success, this film effectively established Bhagyaraj among the masses.

However, his talent truly shone on the silver screen when his directorial debut, *Suvarillatha Chithirangal*, was released in 1979. Structurally, it was a deeply melancholic story. Yet, it was the lively and entertaining screenplay of the first half that turned the movie into a noteworthy success.

The movie *Indru Poi Naalai Vaa* is a prime example of Bhagyaraj's signature style. The film about the hilarious struggles of three young men trying to charm a young woman remains a cult classic comedy 45 years after its release.

Similarly, the movie *Antha 7 Naatkal* is a pivotal milestone in Bhagyaraj's career. The screenplay, dialogues, songs, and comedy of this film were all exceptionally well-crafted.

With a string of movies such as *Oru Kai Osai, Mouna Geethangal, Vidiyum Varai Kaathiru, Thooral Ninnu Pochu, Darling Darling Darling, and Munthanai Mudichu*, Bhagyaraj rapidly emerged as one of the most successful directors in the Tamil film industry. Many of the films he directed ran for over 100 days.

A prime example of Bhagyaraj's genius was reviving a stalled M.G. Ramachandran (MGR) film after several years by seamlessly weaving it into a brand-new screenplay. The film *Anna Nee En Deivam*, starring MGR, was originally being directed by C.V. Sridhar. However, since MGR became the Chief Minister, the film was shelved after shooting only about 5,000 feet of reel. Bhagyaraj took those existing scenes, wrote a completely fresh screenplay around them, and filmed it under the title *Avasara Police 100*. Released after MGR's demise, the movie enjoyed a successful run at the box office.

Beyond the script

Bhagyaraj's cinematic prowess, however, did not stop at acting, directing, and dialogue writing; he also demonstrated remarkable talent in music composition. Several songs from the movies he scored – such as *Idhu Namma Aalu, Aararo Aariraro, and Pavunnu Pavunuthan*– became chartbusters at the time.

However, post-*Munthanai Mudichu*, critics noted that adult-themed and sexual humour became noticeably prominent in his work. His film *Rasukutti*, in particular, marked the peak of this trend.

Over time, this style evolved to become a definitive hallmark of his cinema.

"As far as Bhagyaraj is concerned, he expanded the boundaries of Tamil cinema in the '80s and amplified its entertainment quotient. He achieved popularity by blending a lot of music, comedy, and glamour with realistic storytelling. It was because of these elements that his films achieved massive commercial success," said Tamil film historian Theodore Baskaran.

For fifty years, in the Tamil film world, through his extraordinary talent and creativity, he has given many successful films and earned an indelible place in the hearts of Tamil people—our friend Mr. Bhagyaraj. His sudden passing causes me immense sorrow and shock

RAJINIKANTH

The news of K. Bhagyaraj sir's passing is truly heartbreaking. A visionary filmmaker, brilliant storyteller, and exceptional actor. He brought laughter, warmth, and meaningful social messages through his work. Tamil cinema has lost one of its finest creative minds

SIMRAN

Deeply shocked and saddened by the sudden passing of our beloved Bhagyaraj sir. His untimely demise leaves a huge void in our creative world and we all mourn the loss of an icon. A renaissance man who has been relevant to every generation, he leaves a lasting legacy for ages to come

GAUTAMI TADIMALLA

RIP Bhagyaraj. Heartfelt condolences. Deeply shocked and heartbroken beyond words

MAMMOOTTY

Bhagyaraj garu was full of life and joy. To wake up to the news of his passing this morning is simply unbelievable. A brilliant filmmaker, exceptional screenplay writer, and fine actor, his contribution to Indian cinema will always be remembered

CHIRANJEEVI

He happily attended actor Khushbu's daughter's wedding in Goa with us. He was very happy

SUHASINI

India's legendary screenwriter, director, and actor Bhagyaraj has passed away. I pay my heartfelt tributes to him and extend my deepest condolences to his family. Sir, when will we ever see a storyteller like you again?

ROHINI MOLLETI

The genius director who effortlessly melded comedy and crisis

Ramya Kannan
CHENNAI

Acknowledged as an ace wordsmith and famed for his intuitive comic timing, K. Bhagyaraj, interestingly, believed that out of crisis comes comedy. The comic scenarios in his films do not run as a parallel track alone, but inside the main plot; they run alongside the conflict vein, mixing drama and crisis with comedy, elevating the resolution and making it Bhagyaraj's own.

This is particularly prominent in films where he donned hero roles. The fact that he brought down the hero from a pedestal - a bespectacled, skinny youngster not afraid of being vulnerable, poor, or self-deprecatory, and willing to be laughed at - lent itself to the humour track. While in his later films he came to be known for infusing his comedy dialogues with a tinge of the bawdy and risqué, his signature was his craft of wedging situational humour into melodramatic situations.

As a result, the tension created feels human, not unresolvably heavy. There are relatable flaws, miscommunication, and a quiet desperation that drives the plot.

Take his classic *Antha 7 Naatkal*, for instance. The comedy in the movie initially derives from the reduced circumstances of a musician, Palakkad Madhavan; it soon gets intense as his lover Vasanthi (essayed by Ambika) is forced into a marriage with a stranger, played by Rajesh.

As the young woman finds her heart locked with her lover and her fortunes tied with her husband, Bhagyaraj, the master scriptwriter, introduces a climax that hinges on the value of the *thali*, a symbol of marriage and a sentiment many Tamil movies have exploited. The climax becomes bittersweet and predictable for the times he lived in, as Bhagyaraj leaves, respecting the woman's newfound love for her husband and the *thali* that he has tied. Even when the situation looks tense, he finds a way to make the audience notice vanity, awkwardness, or emotional self-deception and the disrobing of all of these.

Bhagyaraj and Radhika in *Indru Poi Naalai Vaa*. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

If you believe life's toughest situations are also life's funniest, Bhagyaraj was your man. He would place his characters in morally or emotionally tricky situations, sometimes even contrived, drawing drama from their responses to the situation. His genius was to find comedy not out of conflict but inside it.

Humour and heartache

In *Indru Poi Naalai Vaa*, the plot of the film that Bhagyaraj claimed to have written overnight revolves around three men who vie for the attention of one girl. The humour sits on social and romantic confusion, slipping into a comedy of errors at the end. A legendary scene from this film is the comic track involving a Hindi master and the now-famous "*Ek gaon mein ek kisan Raghu thatha*," a dig against Hindi imposition.

While Bhagyaraj, as the hero Pazhanisamy, eventually wins the girl, played by Radhika, the film is another strong illustration of the director's ability to squeeze comedy from real-life situations and pressures.

In another of his much-loved films, *Mundhanai Mudichu*, the tension is already present - a girl falls in love with a widower who works as a teacher in the village and marries him by falsely accusing him of having had sex with her. But does she have his love yet? The central relationship is already charged with emotional and social conflict, but Bhagyaraj's touch allows the pressure to be moulded into playful, awkward comedy.

In *Darling, Darling, Darling*, again tensions between the hero and the heroine form the scaffolding for the movie. In a series of miscommunication and missed cues, emerges pathos but also situations where the audience is laughing and crying at the same time. Finally, technically as a hero, he manages to get the girl, but has to sweat for it. The later *Rasukutty*, where Bhagyaraj plays a spoilt landlord, also presents an endearing, clown-like hero who has to undergo a trial by fire in order to surface. The comic sequences in them are again intertwined with pathos, but he finds a way to smile inside it.

Few directors or actors could yoke together situational comedy and pathos so well. With the departure of Bhagyaraj, his movies remain as sterling examples of how to take a complex situation and effortlessly squeeze comedy out of it.

Police open fire at murder suspect attempting to flee after youth dies in assault

Accused shot in knee during arrest; he and seven others were held after entering a house and attacking its occupants, resulting in death of the youth and injuries to his father and brother

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Chennai police apprehended a murder suspect Rupesh, 23, after opening fire at him, and arrested seven others who allegedly trespassed into a house and attacked its occupants, resulting in the death of a youth.

Two others, including the deceased youth's father and brother, were stabbed.

The police said a 48-year-old woman, Selvi, residing on Union Road, Chinna Nolambur in Chennai, lodged a complaint stating that on Friday night, her sons, Sharath, 27, and Sanjay, 24, were filling water from a tanker lorry near their house when they got into an argument with Udhayaraj, 21, a resident of the same locality.

Rupesh

During the altercation, Sharath and Sanjay allegedly assaulted Udhaya before returning home.

A short while later, Udhaya allegedly returned with his brothers, Rakesh Raja, 26, and Karthik Raja, 28, and several friends.

The group allegedly trespassed into the family's house and attacked Sharath and Sanjay with knives.

When their father, Murugadas, attempted to intervene, he was also stabbed before the assailants fled the scene. All three injured were rushed to the Kilpauk Medical College Hospital.

However, Sanjay died on the way, while Sharath and Murugadas are undergoing treatment.

Case registered

Based on Selvi's complaint, the Nolambur police registered a case under sections relating to murder and attempt to murder and launched an investigation.

Following instructions from the Greater Chennai Police Commissioner, A. Amalraj, three special teams headed by the Inspector of Nolambur police station were formed to trace and arrest the accused.

During the operation, the police attempted to apprehend the prime accused, Rupesh, of Perumal Koil Street, Maduravoyal. The police said Rupesh allegedly attacked the officers and tried to escape. Acting in self-defence, the police said they shot him in the knee before taking him into custody.

Probe on

The police also arrested seven other accused: Naveenkumar, 24, of Bethel Nagar, Injambakkam; Udhaya, of Perumal Koil Street, Maduravoyal; Surya, 20, of MMDA Colony, Maduravoyal; Karthik, of Perumal Koil Street; Rakesh, of Perumal Koil Street, Maduravoyal; Meshak, 22, of Perumal Koil Street, Maduravoyal; and Suryaprakash, 27, of Perumal Koil Street, Maduravoyal.

Further investigation is under way, the police said.

Outgoing DGP urges T.N. Police to be a citizen-centric force

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A farewell parade was conducted on Saturday in honour of senior IPS officer and Director-General of Police/Director of Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services Seema Agrawal. The 1993-batch IPS officer is retiring from service on attaining the age of superannuation at the end of this month.

Director-General of Police and Head of Police Force Mahesh Kumar Agarwal and other senior police officers greeted her on the occasion and the personnel of Armed Reserve conducted the parade at Rajarathinam Stadium.

Reflections on career

In a farewell address, the outgoing DGP urged Tamil Nadu Police personnel to build a more humane, compassionate, and citizen-centric police force, while reflecting on her 36 years of service.

Recalling her career across law and order, investigation, and various specialised units, the senior officer said her assignments in special wings gave her a unique perspective on policing. "Sometimes, the view from the sidelines is far more vivid, like the sky at sunrise and sunset," she remarked, adding that years of mindful observation had prompted her to reflect on the future direction of policing.

Describing the Tamil Nadu Police as one of the country's finest forces with a rich legacy, Ms. Agrawal said continuous self-assessment would help the organisation reach greater heights.

Outgoing DGP Seema Agrawal felicitated by DGP/HoPF Mahesh Kumar Agarwal in the city on Saturday.

THE HINDU
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Timings
CHENNAI

SUNDAY, JUN. 28		
RISE	05:46	SET 18:39
RISE	17:29	SET 04:04
MONDAY, JUN. 29		
RISE	05:46	SET 18:39
RISE	18:19	SET 04:54
TUESDAY, JUN. 30		
RISE	05:47	SET 18:39
RISE	19:09	SET 05:47

Chennai Weather	max	min
Tiruvallur	40	26
Chennai Airport	39	28
Chennai City	38	28

Chennai Airport Today
36°C The weather will be very warm and uneasy. Night will also be uneasy. Spell of light rain and thundershowers may occur.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
37°C Morning will be comfortable. Day will be very warm and uneasy. Chances of light rain and thundershowers. Night will also be uneasy.

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Experts stress need for measures to tackle global health emergencies

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Emphasising the need for preparedness measures ahead of the next pandemic or global health emergency, experts at *The Hindu's* webinar, 'Ebola: Preparing for the Next Pandemic', said there was an urgent need for better lab and testing infrastructure, for training and resources for healthcare workers, data to be shared across stakeholders and for trust to be built within communities to combat misinformation.

Ebola outbreak

Parthesarathy Rajendran, executive director, Médecins Sans Frontières South Asia, dwelt on the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and neighbouring Uganda, explaining how cases shot up, why contact tracing remained a cornerstone of controlling infection spread, the need to work with communities to build education and awareness around infection protocols and prevention measures, and to ensure dignified burials for all patients.

Hamsadvani Kuganantham, consultant, WHO South-East Asia Regional Office; global health research manager, The Global Health Network, University of Oxford, stressed the need for countries, including India, to be part of preparedness protocols, to strengthen disease surveillance across the country, for data to be shared to allow for research to be carried out and the importance of incorporating the One Health Approach with public health measures.

Vijayalakshmi Balakrishnan, senior consultant in infectious diseases at Kauvery Hospitals, Chennai, explained how zoonotic infections were handled, clinically: from diagnosis to management, treatment and patient education.

She also highlighted the need for data analytics from the State government that could help clinicians anticipate an outbreak.

The webinar was part of *The Hindu's* Health Webinar Series.

It can be viewed at: https://newsth.live/Ebola-prep

Govt. cancels tender for Detailed Feasibility Report after backlash

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has cancelled a tender to appoint consultants for preparing a Detailed Feasibility Report (DFR) on overhauling solid waste management contracts in 12 municipal corporations, after backlash.

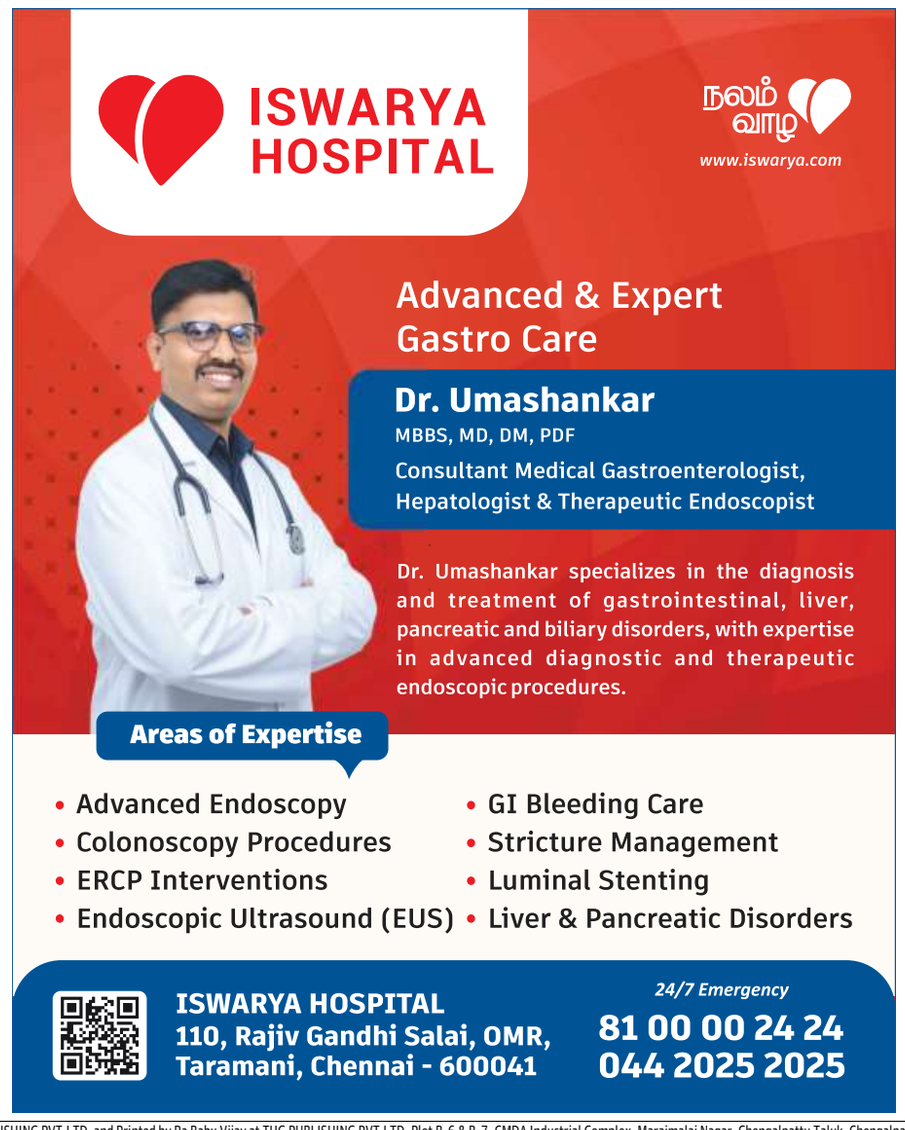
The solid waste management in these urban local bodies had already been privatised in 2022. However, the recently floated ₹4.05-crore tender for preparing the DFR was misconstrued by many as a fresh attempt to privatise waste management operations, a source in the Corporation told *The Hindu*.

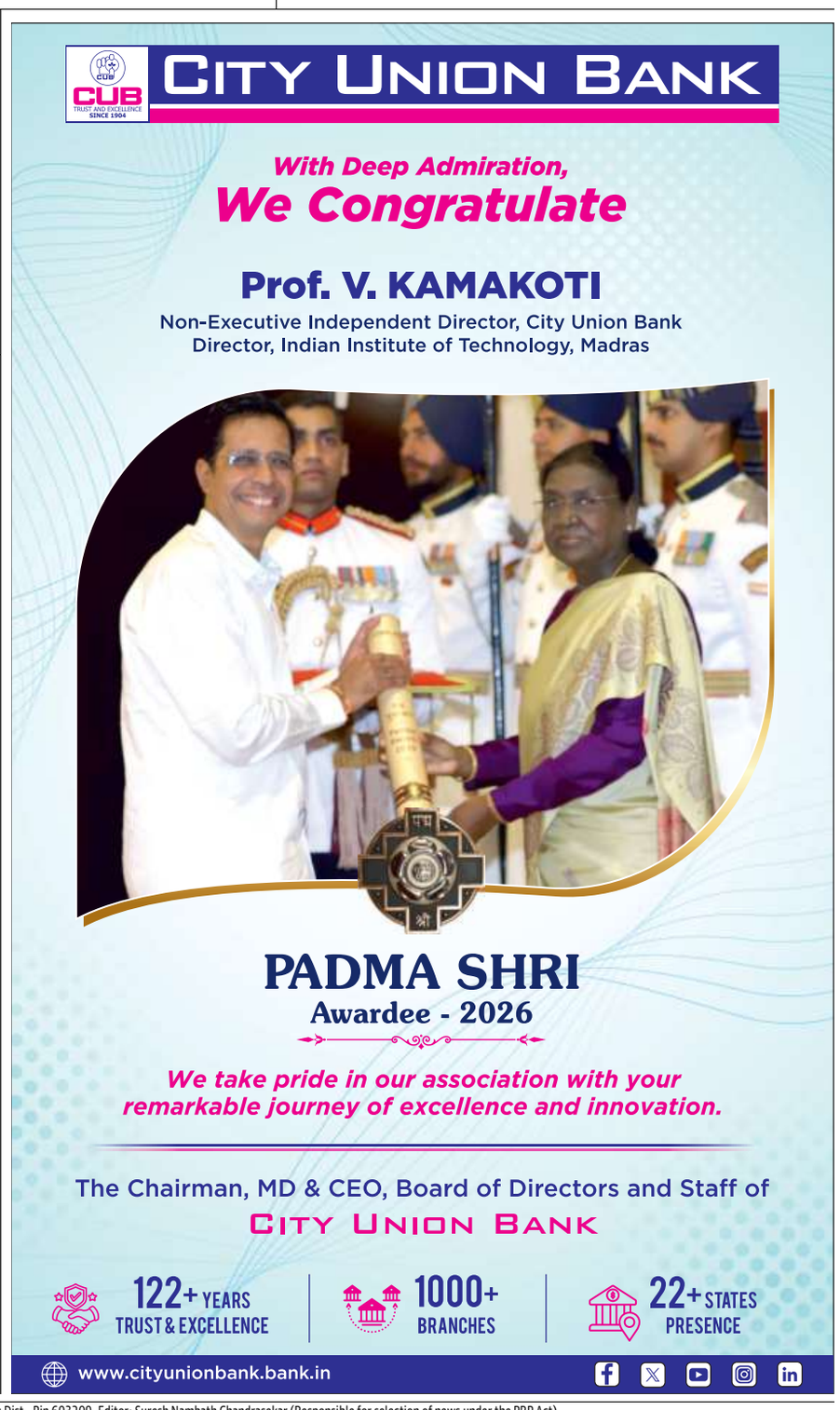
The tender was intended to develop a framework for fresh sanitation contracts

To clear the confusion, the State has decided to review the existing system, identify gaps, bring further improvements, and take a decision in due course, the official said. The tender, floated earlier this month through the Tamil Nadu Urban Infrastructure Financial Services Limited (TNUIFSL), was intended to develop a framework for fresh sanitation contracts as the existing three-year outsourced conservancy agreements neared completion in the municipal corporations of Tambaram, Avadi, Kancheepuram, Tiruvannamalai, Vellore, Salem, Erode, Tiruppur, Tiruchi, Madurai, Tirunelveli, and Thoothukudi.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
(CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION)
ERNAKULAM JUNCTION
TENDER NOTICE No. 14-CE-CN-ERS-2026-OT, DATED: 26.06.2026
Name of Work: Proposed construction of New Railway Health Unit (G+1) at Ernakulam Jn, Proposed finishing and balance works of SSE/P.way, S&T Building and yard, P.way Depot Building, Stores sheds and yard etc. at Ernakulam Junction Station in connection with Re-development of Ernakulam Jn.; Tender Value : ₹ **893.86 Lakhs;** Bid Security : ₹ **17,87,700/-** ; Completion Period : **12 Months.**
Date and time of tender closing: **20.07.2026 at 15.00 Hrs.**
Complete details and tender document will be available at https://www.ireps.gov.in
Chief Engineer / Construction, Ernakulam Jn

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





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Caution thrown to the wind: A government committee has recommended the permanent closure of the company where an ammonia gas leak has claimed 16 lives so far. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Inside Tiruvallur's ammonia nightmare

The ammonia gas leak at a seafood processing unit in Tiruvallur district, near Chennai, has emerged as one of T.N.'s deadliest industrial disasters in recent years. **R. Sivaraman** traces what exactly happened, through eyewitness accounts, survivor testimonies, and medical evidence. The incident also raises serious questions about industrial safety, emergency preparedness, and the conditions of migrants employed far away from home

It was a seemingly routine Sunday morning on June 21 at St. Peter & Paul Sea Food Export Private Limited at Kannigaipair village in Tiruvallur district. The unit stands along the busy road connecting Karanodai with Periyapalayam and Uthukottai, surrounded by agricultural fields, a few industrial establishments, and an educational institution. The factory processes prawns, fish, and other seafood products, all of which are meant for export markets.

Inside the factory, work was progressing as usual. On the ground floor, migrant workers were busy sorting, cleaning, and packaging shrimp and other products. Nearly 80 workers were going about their tasks, unaware that danger was silently building above them. On the first floor, around 60 women workers were asleep after completing their shifts. The floor also housed machinery and refrigeration equipment used in the processing operations. Ammonia is a key component in the cooling/refrigeration process.

Trapped!

As temperatures rose and pressure built up within the system, an ammonia pipeline suddenly ruptured. Within moments, the toxic gas spread rapidly through the first floor. The workers woke up gasping for breath, their eyes and throats burning. Panic swept through the dormitory area as the women scrambled to escape. Disoriented and suffocated, many were even unable to call out for help. Some ran aimlessly through the smoke-filled floor, while others sought refuge in restrooms, huddling together in fear as the ammonia cloud engulfed the premises.

The men working on the ground floor took a few moments to realise what had happened. As the pungent smell spread through the building, they abandoned their work and rushed out of the premises to safety. Amid the chaos, they noticed a woman hanging from a window, desperately trying to escape. Several workers bravely re-entered the gas-filled building to rescue those trapped. However, the concentration of ammonia was so high that rescuers could hold their breath for only 20 to 25 seconds at a time before being forced to retreat.

Within 15 to 20 minutes, a large volume of ammonia gas had escaped from the damaged pipeline and spread across the facility. A few quick-thinking workers took the initiative to bring the situation under control. They began pouring water inside the premises and on the leaking pipeline to suppress the gas. Their faces covered with wet cloths, they repeatedly entered the building and pulled the stranded women out one by one.

Many of the rescued women had suffered severe exposure to the toxic fumes. Some developed blisters on their skin, while others had swollen and irritated eyes. Several workers experienced breathing difficulties and were unable to speak properly or even open their mouths comfortably.

Jitendra Besra, a worker from Jharkhand, said, "The gas leak occurred around 11 a.m. near the women's accommodation located above the factory premises. The sleeping women workers in the dormitory near the machinery were exposed before anyone realised what was happening. Many were asleep after completing their night shift and were unable to escape in time. The air on the first floor was so toxic that rescuers themselves struggled to breathe." He and several male workers repeatedly entered the gas-filled rooms, carrying the unconscious and semi-conscious women to safety. "The rescue operation was slow and chaotic because visibility and breathing were severely affected, and the rescuers did not know where each worker was sleeping."

> A loud blast was heard before ammonia gas began spreading through the facility. Several workers who were sleeping in their rooms were unable to come out immediately. I had no hope that I would survive and escape
>
> **HIMASRI,** a worker of the factory

Chaos and desperation

Another employee, Gabriel, who participated in the rescue efforts, described the chaos and desperation that unfolded. "We were working when we heard that there was a gas leak. Those of us in the cold storage section were immediately told to evacuate and move outside the factory gate. Shortly afterward, we saw thick white smoke billowing from the upper part of the building. We were then instructed to move towards the boys' quarters located next to the factory. As we were heading there, we noticed a woman hanging from a window, desperately trying to escape. That's when we realised that all the women workers from the night shift were inside the accommodation block. The leak or blast had occurred directly in front of their rooms," said Mr. Gabriel.

The worker explained, "Initially, it was impossible to enter the building because the gas concentration was extremely high. I tried entering two or three times but could not rescue anyone. The fumes were overwhelming and I had to retreat. During my second attempt, I managed to carry one person halfway out, but I became too weak to continue and had to leave them temporarily before returning. On subsequent attempts, I was able to bring out two or three workers, while my colleagues rescued others."

"Many of the workers remained trapped inside for nearly 25 to 30 minutes, which, in my opinion, worsened the situation and contributed to the fatalities," he added.

Painful memory: Doctors said many workers arrived at hospitals in a state of panic, suffering from giddiness, difficulty in breathing and lip oedema, or swelling. Some patients required immediate intubation. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

The fire service arrived much later. By the time firefighters entered the building, most of the rescue work had already been carried out by factory workers. By then, ambulances had arrived to transport the victims to hospitals. Had emergency responders reached the site 40 to 50 minutes earlier, the consequences might not have been so severe, the workers said.

Another worker said, "As for the cause of the incident, I believe there may have been excessive pressure in the ammonia system. There was a loud blast upstairs, and it appeared to have occurred because of gas build-up. Minor leaks had happened before – perhaps two or three times a month – but they were never this serious. The gas system had reportedly been refilled just a few days earlier, and there might have been excessive pressure. The rupture occurred directly in front of the women's accommodation area, which is why the impact was so devastating."

A survivor, Himasri, 26, from Rangia in Assam, has been employed at the factory for the past six years, and is undergoing treatment. Recounting the incident, she said a loud blast was heard before ammonia gas began spreading through the facility. "Several workers who were sleeping in their rooms were unable to come out immediately and trapped by the gas. I had no hope that I would survive and escape." Another survivor, Paulina, a young worker from Assam who has been employed at the factory for the past six to seven months, described the panic. "The gas quickly spread and filled the entire room. It came in like smoke, and we couldn't open our eyes at all. We couldn't breathe properly and there was a severe burning sensation in our eyes and mouth. Our eyes were shutting, and we could not move," she said.

Ms. Paulina said she survived because she was able to make a quick escape from the room. "We ran away immediately, and that is why nothing serious happened to us. Those who couldn't get out in time were seriously affected," she said.

Villagers join rescue effort

The Inspector of the Periyapalayam police and the Deputy Superintendent of Police, Uthukottai, and villagers from neighbouring Kannigaiper and Manjakaranai helped in rushing the affected workers to hospitals. Personnel of the Fire and Rescue Services and the National Disaster Response Force joined in later. M.J. Sudhesh Kumar, State vice-president of the Puthiya Jananayaga Thozhilalar Munnani, said, "Some were being carried on people's shoulders, while others were transported on stretchers. There appeared to be only two stretchers available at the site. Many workers had to be carried manually, with people holding their hands and legs to move them. Water was continuously poured over them as they were being evacuated. Several workers were bleeding from their noses and mouths by the time they reached the factory gate."

The 108 ambulance network received a call reporting the gas leak. Over the next few minutes, more than 20 ambulances, primarily from Tiruvallur district and a few from Chennai, including 10 advanced life support vehicles, were dispatched to the site. The Health Department mobilised officials and doctors to the private hospitals receiving the affected workers.

Doctors reported that many workers arrived in a state of panic, suffering from giddiness, difficulty in breathing and lip oedema, or swelling. Examination of the throat revealed laryngeal oedema caused by ammonia inhalation. Some patients required immediate intubation, while steroids were administered to reduce inflammation. E. Theranirajan, Additional Director of Medical Education, noted that there is no specific antidote for ammonia inhalation, making a supportive line of management essential. "Exposure affected the eyes, nose and respiratory tract. When lungs are involved, it can cause acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), while tissue hypoxia can compromise the heart, causing myocarditis. The pumping mechanism fails, heartbeat variations occur, leading to cardiogenic shock and even death," he said.

> **Some of the rescued women developed blisters on their skin, while others had swollen, irritated eyes. Several workers experienced breathing difficulties and were unable to speak properly or even open their mouths comfortably**

A senior government doctor who treated the critically ill patients said ammonia concentrations of above 250 ppm (parts per million) can be detrimental to organs, while levels around 300 ppm are potentially life-threatening. "On Sunday, severely affected patients were transferred to the hospital. They had multiple organ dysfunction, and lung, brain and cardiac involvement. Medical teams prioritised decontamination by washing exposed areas with water, followed by supportive therapy and protective strategies for the lungs, brain, and heart. Their food pipe and trachea were swollen. We connected patients to the ventilator," he explained.

A major challenge during treatment was communication. "Many workers were from Odisha, Assam, and Jharkhand and could not communicate effectively owing to the language barrier. Identifying unconscious patients was particularly difficult. It was resolved after job coordinators arrived to assist," a doctor said.

"We could not communicate with them verbally. Many were unable to open their mouths or speak. So we had to identify them in a different way," a police officer recalled. "In fact, our team went from bed to bed carrying a list of names. We would read out each name individually to every patient. When we called out the correct name, the patient would blink their eyes or make a slight movement, proving their identity. We had 10 to 15 such people who were identified like this," the officer said.

Fatalities continue

Two women workers succumbed to their injuries on the day of the disaster itself. The next day, six more women lost their lives. From Tuesday, the death toll rose steadily. Almost every day, another woman breathed her last, turning the industrial accident into a prolonged human tragedy. Overall, 16 fatalities were reported. Of the deceased, 13 were from Odisha, two from Assam, and one from Jharkhand. Twenty-six individuals are still under treatment. Other workers were sheltered at a wedding hall at Periyapalayam and sent home by the district administration.

Many were tribal migrant workers from remote villages in Assam, Odisha, and Jharkhand with limited access to education, employment opportunities, and mobile connectivity. They had travelled 1,500-3,000 km in search of regular employment and wages, relying on relatives, neighbours, or labour agents from their villages. Some of them were found to be minor girls too. A team of officials from Odisha also visited the affected workers. Their investigation found that several workers had reportedly obtained jobs using forged or borrowed Aadhaar cards. The irregularities came to light after officials discovered that an Odisha woman initially listed among the deceased was actually alive and working in Andhra Pradesh.

Labour Department officials in Odisha suspect that a former supervisor, Srikant Juanga, arranged jobs for the workers using fake or borrowed Aadhaar documents, particularly for young women. Akash Bisoy, District Labour Officer of Odisha, said most of the victims and affected workers migrated from the Juanga tribal community in Keonjhar district. They were farm labourers, dependent on the forest.

Benoy Peter, executive director of the Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development, an NGO, said, "Recruiters often target young women because their nimble fingers are considered well-suited for seafood peeling work. Girls from economically vulnerable and marginalised communities are also easier to persuade to migrate for such jobs."

A migrant worker said workers received their salaries regularly, though the work was physically demanding and wages were relatively low – from ₹14,000 to ₹17,000. They worked for 12 hours. Many employees had remained with the company for years, some for as long as eight to 10 years, because they considered it a stable source of employment.

"There was one major issue," he said. "There was no proper medical support. If a worker fell ill or required treatment, the medical expenses were often deducted from their salary."

Immediately after the incident, the Periyapalayam police arrested owners M. Joseph Jegan, 49, of Royapuram and M. Mohan, 59, of Tondiarpet; manager R. Daniel, 70; and labour agent Suresh of Odisha under Sections 105 (punishment for culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and 125(a) (act endangering life or personal safety of others) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

A senior police officer said, "We have also added the provisions of the Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. An officer from our Forensic Science Lab collected samples. Officers of the Industries Department and the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board [TNPCB] also collected samples. After receiving their reports, we will file a chargesheet."

A three-member expert committee constituted by the Tamil Nadu government has recommended the permanent closure of the company. Sources said the committee has also recommended that 1,774 factories across the State that use hazardous chemicals be inspected. It has noted that around 60 seafood export companies, similar to the one in Tiruvallur, are operating across the State, and a decision has been taken to conduct continuous inspections at these units.

(With inputs from Serena Josephine.M)

INBRIEF

AEC Chairman reviews progress at Kalpakkam

A.K. Mohanty, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and Secretary of the Department of Atomic Energy, visited the 500 MW Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor at Kalpakkam on Saturday to review critical technical milestones. He assessed the plant's current status along with P.A. Suresh Babu, Chief Managing Director of Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited, and other senior officials. The review focused on ongoing low-power physics experiments and the overhauling of the Turbine Generator (TG) system. The TG overhauling is being executed by its Original Equipment Manufacturer, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL). During the visit, the Chairman also interacted with the BHEL engineering team.

GCC removes unauthorised hoardings in Teynampet

The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) removed 54 unauthorised advertisement hoardings and collected ₹2.29 lakh in penalties during a special enforcement drive in Teynampet zone on Saturday. According to a press release, action was taken against hoardings erected without the mandatory licence. The civic body said licences for advertisement hoardings are issued only after scrutiny by a single-window committee and compliance with prescribed norms. It added that drives to remove unauthorised hoardings and penalise violators would continue across the city.

Rotary Club donates neonatal ambulance to city hospital

The Rotary Club of Madras East, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Irvine and Rotary district 5320, Irvine, USA, donated a neonatal ambulance worth ₹72 lakh to Kanchi Kamakoti CHILDS Trust Hospital in Chennai under Project SHISHU. According to a release, it is equipped with a transport incubator, neonatal ventilator, and advanced life-support systems. The ambulance will ensure critical care for extremely premature neonates born as early as 24 weeks and weighing under 600 grams. The ambulance was handed over by chief guest Muruganandam M., RI Vice President 2026-2027, RI Director 2025-27 in the presence of Guest of Honour Vinod Saraogi to Medical Director of Kanchi Kamakoti CHILDS Trust Hospital Janani Sankar.

Metro commuters struggle to get paper QR tickets; staff issue handwritten slips

Owing to network and UPS issues, CMRL staff have been unable to generate paper tickets with QR code on some occasions over the past 15 days; airport station sees long queue as ticketing services get affected; commuters complain on social media; official says CMRL will address the problem

TRACK TALES

Sunitha Sekar
CHENNAI

Ticketing services of Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) faced glitches on Friday morning. Metro staff issued handwritten slips to commuters as they were unable to generate tickets with QR code.

Later that night, the online ticketing services failed to work again for a while, causing inconvenience to commuters.

This was not the first such incident. In the past 15 days, there have been instances where paper QR tickets could not be issued owing to network issues. According to CMRL officials, on Friday morning, the issue was with the UPS.

Official's assurance

"We have already identified the problem. We will ensure this does not happen again," a Metro official said.

While CMRL has a significant number of regular commuters who use the National Common Mobility Cards for their travel, nearly 20% of the CMRL travellers still opt to buy paper QR tickets from the counters at the stations.

Ticket trouble: Nearly 20% of the CMRL commuters buy paper tickets from the counters at the stations. REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

Sources said that issuing paper QR tickets had been difficult for the staff in the past two weeks.

"There were network outages during peak hours, as a result of which we had to hand out handwritten slips that passed off as tickets. Though it occurred for a brief period, since it was rush hour, it caused the commuters much inconvenience. The downside of such manual tickets is we could lose the actual count of passengers and there may be potential revenue leakage as well," a source said.

Long wait

Vinoba Bhoopathy, a frequent commuter, said that because of the network issue, the Chennai International Airport station was packed on Friday night. "There was a long queue. The staff said they were issuing manual tickets. Several air passengers and regular commuters suffered due to this issue. I waited for nearly 20 minutes, and only after the network issue was rectified did I get the QR ticket. In the past too, I have had problems getting the WhatsApp ticket," he added.

Commuters flagged this problem on social media, too. One of the commuters, Gunasekar, posted: "Chennai Metro QR & site Downtime. None of the app nor Ticket counter functions. Only NCMC cards & Physical literally Handwritten tickets are being issued @cmrlofficial @CumtaOfficial please resolve soon and make announcements!"

Activists' body urges NCPCR to take action against Minister for touching athletes' legs

Meghna M.
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Child Rights Watch (TNCRW) has urged the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) to take action against Higher Education Minister P. Viswanathan for touching the legs of girl athletes at a school programme in Madurai.

In a letter to the commission, the child rights body requested that it take *suo motu* cognisance of the incident, and called for a report from the State government.

At an event held recently at the Government School in Melur, the Minister had approached a group of girl athletes, touched their outstretched legs and cracked their toes while conversing with them.

Stating that the matter concerns the fundamental obligation of the State and all public authorities to protect children, TNCRW convener Jesu Rathinam said, "Every allegation involving the physical boundaries of children deserve prompt, transparent, and independent scrutiny so that public confidence in child protection mechanisms is maintained."

Appropriate protocols

It also urged the NCPCR to recommend appropriate protocols for all government departments, educational institutions, and organisers of public events involving children to ensure that interactions by public officials strictly respect children's bodily autonomy, consent, dignity, and child protection norms.

TNCRW co-convener A. Devaneyan said the commission should also direct the Tamil Nadu Director-General of Police to ensure that the matter is examined, and if facts disclose a cognisable offence, an FIR should be registered and an impartial investigation conducted in accordance with the provisions of the POCSO Act and other applicable laws.

School events

Additionally, the child rights body has written to Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay regarding the programmes organised at a few government schools to celebrate Mr. Vijay's birthday.

"The events held in schools were neither educationally appropriate nor consistent with the purpose of schools," co-convenor Stegana Jency said.

The TNCRW urged the Chief Minister to direct the School Education Department to inquire into the incidents and take appropriate action in cases where educational institutions were been used for activities inconsistent with established educational norms.

"Initiate appropriate disciplinary action against any individuals, including political functionaries or school authorities, who may have encouraged such activities that compromise the neutrality of educational institutions," the letter added.

It also urged the department to issue comprehensive guidelines prohibiting the use of schools for political publicity, personality-centred celebrations, partisan campaigns, or any such activities.

"The department must also establish a mechanism for reporting and addressing instances where external individuals or organisations attempt to use educational institutions for purposes unrelated to children's education," Mr. Devaneyan added.

Man from Bengaluru arrested for murder of pregnant woman

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Sankar Nagar police have arrested a 30-year-old man from Bengaluru for allegedly stabbing to death a 29-year-old woman, with whom he was in a relationship, after she refused to accompany him to Bengaluru and live with him.

The investigation began after the police recovered the body of Reshma from her house in Anakaputhur on Wednesday.

Special teams were formed to trace the suspect, Venkatesh, who had fled to Bengaluru. He was arrested there, brought to Chennai, and then interrogated.

Venkatesh allegedly told the police that he had been in love with Reshma before she married another man about 10 years ago. The couple had two children.

Police say he stabbed her after she refused to accompany him to Bengaluru

Despite her marriage, Venkatesh continued to visit her and maintain their relationship. The police said she was pregnant with his child.

According to investigators, Venkatesh had visited Reshma a day before the murder and insisted that she leave with him for Bengaluru so they could live together. When she refused, he left but returned the following morning. Reshma then allegedly used pepper spray to send him away.

Enraged at this, Venkatesh stabbed her multiple times with a knife, killing her on the spot. He then fled to Bengaluru by flight.

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH AND IDENTIFICATION WORKS

E-Tender Notice No. GEM/2026/B/7711041 Dated: 25-06-2026. Works tenders through "E" Tendering system for and on behalf of the president of India are invited for the works as detailed below:- **Name of work:** Archival Research and Identification of Land Associated with Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR)/ Cart Road in Compliance with CCMP, ICOMOS, WHC Reports/Guidelines. **Tender Value:** ₹1,12,10,000/-. **Earnest Money:** ₹2,06,050/-. **Date & time of Closing of tender:** At **15.00** hrs. & opening at **15.30** hrs. on **16-07-2026.** The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available in the website **https://GeM.gov.in**

Director/DHR/Kurseong

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OUTSOURCING OF OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF TRACK MACHINES

E-Procurement Tender Notice No.: R2_Outsourcing_TMachines; Date: 25-06-2026. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following works: **Tender No.:** R2_Outsourcing_TMachines; **Name of work:** Outsourcing of Operation and Maintenance of 25 nos. Track Machines for a period of two years in Northeast Frontier Railway. Estimated Cost: ₹18,34,60,385.04/-; Earnest Money: ₹10,67,300.00. **E-tender will be closed** at 15:00 hrs. on 17-07-2026 and **Opened at** 15:30 hrs. on 17-07-2026. The complete information along with the tender document of the above e-Tender will be available upto 14.30 hrs. of 17.07.2026 in the website **www.ireps.gov.in**

Deputy Chief Engineer/TMC, Maligaon

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SOUTHERN RAILWAY

Salem Division

Tender Notice No.: SA-M-DSL-ED-OT-26-27-2A

Dated: 25.06.2026

For and on behalf of the President of India the Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer, Loco Shed, Southern Railway, Salem Division, Erode - 638002 E-Tenders are invited for the following work:

Sl No.	Description	Details
1	Tender Notice Number and Date	**SA-M-DSL-ED-OT-26-27-2A Dated: 25.06.2026**
2	**Name of the Work:** Repairing & overhauling of IRAB 9/10 Tri plate panel of Electric locomotives at Southern Railway, Salem Division, Loco Shed, Erode. **Qty - 15 Nos.**	
3	Estimate Value	**₹ 6475174/-**
4	Tender Closing Date and Time	**17.07.2026 at 15:00 hrs**
5	Web address	**https://www.ireps.gov.in**

Complete details of the above tenders are given on the e-portal **"www.ireps.gov.in"**

For Details of bid submission, please refer website portal **"www.ireps.gov.in"**

For Details about scope of work, approximate value of tender, location and other documents, please refer website portal **"www.ireps.gov.in".**

The online bids for tenders floated through the above portal are required to be digitally signed

Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (Rolling Stock) / Loco Shed / Erode

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Email: deansmm@imu.ac.in -Sd/-
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Notice inviting Electronic Tenders

On behalf of President of India Principal Chief Materials Manager/PLW/Patiala invites tenders in electronic form for following items:
e-Tender Notice No. 13 ET/2026-27

SN	Tender No.	Description	Qty.	Tender closing date
1	21261154	Pressure Sensor Oil Circuit Transformer	422 Nos.	03.08.2026*
2	02261080	Rotor (Scheme-1)	437 Nos.	23.07.2026*
3	20261120	Waterless Urinal System for WAP-7	41 Nos.	20.07.2026
4	11255349A	Transformer Oil Filtration Plant 5000 LPH	01 Nos.	10.07.2026
5	21261071	Axle Box Bearing	1303 Nos.	31.07.2026**
		Suspension Tube Bearing	910 Sets	
6	11261003	Bench Drilling Machine	38 Nos.	20.07.2026
7	02261088	POLYMIDE PAPER (NOMEX)	1618 Kgs.	13.07.2026

Non VD item
Above tender has been published on IREPS on 19/06/2026.
Tender closing Time 15:00 Hrs
Item marked with * is reserved for procurement from CLW approved sources.
**** is reserved for procurement from RDSO approved sources.**
The prospective Tenderers are advised to visit the website **http://www.ireps.gov.in** or **http://www.plw.indianrailways.gov.in** for detailed description of items & other terms and conditions of tender document. Please note that Tenderers can submit their quotations only through **http://www.ireps.gov.in.**

Corrigendum to e-Tender Notice No. 09 ET/2026-27
Closing date of Tender No. 20261116 may be read as 30.06.2026.

Corrigendum to e-Tender Notice No. 06 ET/2026-27
1) Closing date of Tender No. 20261066 may be read as 10.07.2026.
2) Closing date of Tender No. 20261099 may be read as 07.07.2026. and Qty may be read as 121 Nos.

Corrigendum to e-Tender Notice No. 08 ET/2026-27
Closing date of Tender No. 02261032 may be read as 14.07.2026 **2218/2026**

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CINEMA ARTS EVENTS

MUSIC DANCE DRAMA

Ambattur, Gandharva Gana Sabha, +918072219608
Today 6:30 p.m at Sathsangam Hall, Sathsangam Street, Ambattur Bharat Sundar-Vocal, L. Ramakrishnan -Violin, Praveen Sparsh-Mridangam, Anirudh Athreya-Kanjira All are welcome!

Mathangi, 24992672.
Today 4pm Shreya Ravikumar & Party. 6 p.m Prithvi Harish & Party. Ragasudha Hall.

Narada Gana Sabha
Phone: 24993201
Today Main Hall (Sathguru Gnanananda Hall) 6.45 p.m - Drama - Koothapiran Navabharat Theatre's "Veera" Dialogues Ratnam Koothapiran Story & Direction - R. Vignesh. Tickets at the Hall.

Pushpanjali Cultural Trust
Today 4 p.m at R.K. Swamy auditorium Mylapore Bharathanatyam by Kum. R SREE VARSHINI & Kum. R SREE SHIVANI (Dis of Smt Chitra Rajkamal) 5.30 p.m Bharathanatyam by Kum ADYA APPASWAMY (USA) (Dis of Smt Raji Krishna) 7.pm Bharathanatyam by Smt BHARATHI THAMIZHSELVAN, Smt. ARCHANA HARIBABU & Smt. NITHYA VIVEK(Dis of Dr. Archana Mahesh).

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From Page One

MDMK cuts ties with DMK, backs TVK govt.

Against this backdrop, a vast majority of party executives expressed their unwillingness to continue the partnership, formalising the exit. "Everyone who spoke at the general council advocated for leaving the DMK alliance," Mr. Vaiko stated, adding that the final decision was unanimous.

Reflecting on their nine-year-long steadfast commitment to the DMK alliance, Mr. Vaiko said leaders from various parties, including the CPI(M) and IUML, had exposed backroom arrangements to help the AIADMK form the government. "If that had happened, there could not have been a bigger 'political fraud'," Mr. Vaiko remarked.

Significantly, both of the MDMK's sitting MLAs R. Senthilselvan (Sirkazhi) and T.M. Rajendran (Kadayanallur) were conspicuously absent from the high-level meeting. When questioned about their absence, Mr. Vaiko clarified that Mr. Senthilselvan had already stated he had joined the DMK, while Kadayanallur MLA Mr. Rajendran had indicated that he would continue to remain with the party. Mr. Vaiko also revealed that during a meeting with Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, the latter had promised to personally campaign for the MDMK if the two MLAs resigned to trigger byelections. However, Mr. Vaiko said the MLAs had refused to resign.

Explaining the party's pivot toward the TVK, Mr. Vaiko said the MDMK chose to support Mr. Vijay's government because it operated free of "corruption and commission" and firmly adhered to the foundational principles of socio-political leader C.N. Annadurai.

Having left the DMK alliance, Mr. Vaiko said they would extend their support to the TVK government. He added that they would not contest the byelections but would support the TVK instead, and their future actions would be geared toward forming a friendship with the TVK for the local body elections. Notably, the party's principal secretary Durai Vaiko was also absent from Saturday's meeting. Mr. Vaiko explained that Mr. Durai Vaiko had to travel to visit an unwell acquaintance.

Manickam Tagore is new TNCC president

A three-time MP and Rahul loyalist, his appointment comes after the Congress left the DMK alliance to join the TVK-led State government

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Three-time Lok Sabha member and Rahul Gandhi loyalist B. Manickam Tagore was appointed president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) on Saturday. The All India Congress Committee (AICC) made the decision after K. Selvaperunthagai requested AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge to relieve him as the TNCC chief.

Mr. Tagore's appointment comes at a time when the Congress has left its trusted ally, the DMK, and joined the government led by the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK). The new alliance is likely to continue for the upcoming local body and Lok Sabha elections. A vocal critic of the DMK, he called for "share in power", thus causing friction in the party's alliance with the Dravidian major. The Congress joined Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay's Cabinet after the polls.

Though Mr. Selvaperunthagai oversaw a remarkable victory in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, he also presided over a difficult period for the TNCC marked by internal squabbles. Public remarks by leaders had threatened to disrupt the alliance with the DMK in the Assembly election.

B. Manickam Tagore

Party sources said that Mr. Selvaperunthagai could not enlist the support of party colleagues during his tenure and that his removal was widely expected after TNCC vice-president A. Gopanna wrote to AICC leaders about Mr. Selvaperunthagai's recent interview, in which he attacked the TVK government and Mr. Vijay.

Mr. Tagore was elected to the Lok Sabha from the Virudhunagar constituency for the first time in 2009, and later in 2019 and 2024. He is presently the whip of the Congress in the Lok Sabha. He is also the AICC in-charge of Andhra Pradesh and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, State Selection Committee Observer of Haryana, and a Member of the Parliamentary Housing and Urban Affairs Committee and the Committee on Welfare of Other Backward Classes.

A vocal critic of the DMK, he had called for 'share in power', thus causing friction in his party's alliance with the DMK

Mr. Tagore joined the National Students Union of India (NSUI) – the student wing of the Congress – in 1994. In 1998, he became its national president. He also held the post of national general secretary of the Indian Youth Congress between 2002-05 and served as election commissioner of the IYC in 2008.

Extending his wishes to the new TNCC chief, Mr. Selvaperunthagai said, "I extend my heartfelt wishes to Manickam Tagore who has been appointed as president of TNCC. Wishing you success and continued service towards welfare of the people."

June to end on wet note as scattered showers likely to continue across State

Respite from heat: North Tamil Nadu districts, including Chennai and its neighbouring districts, Vellore, Tirupattur, and Ranipet, may receive moderate rainfall on Sunday. C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Scattered rainfall, which may be heavy in some districts, is likely to continue till the end of June, while near-normal temperatures are expected to prevail across Tamil Nadu. June may end on a wet note, with the State likely to record surplus rainfall.

The Regional Meteorological Centre has forecast that light to moderate rainfall would continue over the State, Puducherry and Karaikal area till Tuesday. North Tamil Nadu districts, including Chennai and its neighbouring districts, Vellore, Tirupattur and Ranipet, may experience rainfall of moderate intensity on Sunday. Gusty winds with speeds reaching 40-50 kmph would prevail.

Western Ghats districts, including the Nilgiris and Theni, may receive heavy rainfall on Sunday. Similar weather pattern may continue on Monday as well. Officials of the RMC said the prevailing weather systems would keep the maximum temperatures near normal in the State till the month-end.

V.R. Durai, Head, Regional Weather Forecasting Centre, RMC, said an upper air circulation over west-central Bay of Bengal would influence wet weather over the State. Moreover, a trough along the north coastal T.N. would also trigger rainfall for a few days. However, there may be a drop in rainfall after June 30.

Cloud cover is expected to keep daytime temperatures near normal over the next few days. The southwest monsoon has been in its normal phase in the State. Most districts have received their normal share or surplus rainfall so far this June.

The State has recorded an overall rainfall of 67 mm – 44% more than its seasonal average since June 1. Districts, including Chennai, Chengalpattu, Nilgiris and Tirupattur, have recorded a rainfall deficit, he said.

Arlekar, Vijay, and other leaders condole death of actor-filmmaker Bhagyaraj

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Condolences poured in from film and political personalities in Tamil Nadu for actor-director K. Bhagyaraj, who passed away at the age of 73 following a heart attack on Saturday.

"The passing away of veteran Tamil film director and writer Thiru. K. Bhagyaraj is a great loss to the world of cinema," wrote Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar on X. "His unique storytelling, creative brilliance, and immense contribution to Tamil cinema have earned him a special place in the hearts of audiences. His legacy will continue to inspire generations of filmmakers and film lovers. I extend my heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and countless admirers. May his soul rest in peace," he said.

Announcing that Bhagyaraj will be laid to rest with full State honours, Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, in a post on X, said: "Through films that reflect unique storytelling, humour-infused performances, and the profound emotions of rural life and family relationships, Thiru. K. Bhagyaraj has carved an everlasting place in the hearts of Tamil people. His contributions to the Tamil film world are immeasurable."

"Each of his creations will endure forever as timeless memories that entertain while speaking to humanity and social values. His demise is an irreplaceable loss to Tamil cinema. I convey my deepest condolences and sympathies to his grieving family, relatives, friends, members of the film industry, and fans. I pray that his soul rests in peace at the divine feet of the Lord," Mr. Vijay wrote.

'A realistic hero'

Former Chief Minister and DMK president M.K. Stalin, referring to legendary Tamil film director and actor Bharathiraja who passed away earlier this month, said: "Within just a few weeks of the teacher's passing, the Tamil film world has now lost his student as well!"

"In Indian cinema, as the emperor of unfinished screenplays, as the realistic hero who captivated everyone, as a writer endowed with the ability to navigate complex situations with brief dialogues, and as an extraordinary director who triumphed in every aspect, Bhagyaraj made his mark," Mr. Stalin said in a post on X.

Expressing shock and sadness, AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami hailed Bhagyaraj as a multifaceted personality and a unique screenplay writer. He recalled that the relationship between AIADMK founder and former Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran and Bhagyaraj was based on mutual affection.

DMK president M.K. Stalin pays tribute to the mortal remains of late film director and actor K. Bhagyaraj, at his residence in Chennai. PTI

Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs L. Murugan said: "Having recently completed his 50-year landmark journey in the film industry and being specially praised by members of the film world and fans alike, his demise is an irreplaceable loss to the Tamil film industry."

MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi said through his immensely popular films, he left an indelible mark on Tamil cinema and made significant contributions to the industry over a career spanning five decades. DMK MP Thamizhachi Thangapandian said Bhagyaraj, through his various creations, carved a niche for himself in Tamil cinema.

BJP State president Nainar Nagenthran, expressing his condolences, said, "His works continue to serve as exemplary lessons even today on how the screenplay of a film should be structured. By seamlessly blending simple narratives, humour, family sentiments, and engaging screenplays in his distinctive style, he has gifted Tamil cinema with timeless creations that will endure for countless generations."

MP and VCK founder-president Thol. Thirumavalavan described Bhagyaraj as a towering figure in the world of cinema. "AIADMK founder and former Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran referred to him as his 'film heir'. He earned the reputation of being one of the finest screenplay writers. Many would look forward to his films," he said.

Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) chief coordinator Seeman said: "Bhagyaraj was an encyclopedia in screenplay. The films he took, the subjects he touched upon, and his screenplays were welcomed by audiences. Bhagyaraj was the first student of the legendary director K. Bharathiraja and he gave several hit films, and touched phenomenal heights."

Actor Chiranjeevi, in a post, said he was deeply shocked and heartbroken beyond words.

'Unique creative vision'

Kerala Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan too said he was deeply saddened by the passing of Bhagyaraj. "Revered as the 'Screenplay King', he redefined storytelling in Tamil cinema with his unique creative vision and unforgettable performances. He also shared a special bond with Malayalam cinema – his memorable role in *Mr. Marumakan* continues to be fondly remembered by fans in Keralam," Mr. Satheesan said. Former Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said he left a unique mark in the Tamil film world and earned the love of Malayalis through his excellent creations. "His demise is an irreplaceable loss to the film industry and the cultural sector," he said.

Other leaders, including actor and MNM chief Kamal Haasan, DMDK MLA Premallatha Vijayakant, MP D. Ravikumar, former BJP State president K. Annamalai, TMC(M) president G.K. Vasan, and AMMK general secretary T.T.V. Dhinakaran, condoled Bhagyaraj's death.

People taking out a march for the late actor at Vellankovil.

Vellankovil residents pay their respects to Bhagyaraj

The Hindu Bureau
ERODE

More than 300 residents of Vellankovil, near Gobichettipalayam, took out a silent procession on Saturday to pay homage to actor-director K. Bhagyaraj, who passed away on Saturday.

The filmmaker was born and brought up in Vellankovil. The procession was organised by villagers and his childhood friends. Participants, wearing black badges and carrying candles, paid floral tributes to a portrait of Bhagyaraj at Anna Thidal before beginning the procession.

Politics, an arena where the versatile Bhagyaraj could not make a dent

T. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

Veteran film director K. Bhagyaraj had once tried his hand in politics but, despite being known as the "film heir" of AIADMK founder and former Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran (MGR), he could not come to terms with the rough and tumble of politics.

As a devout follower of MGR, Bhagyaraj was naturally associated with the AIADMK. While launching a Tamil newspaper in January 1984, MGR called Bhagyaraj his *kalai ulaga vaarisu* (successor in the world of arts). A few weeks later, MGR attended Bhagyaraj and Poornima's wedding. All this gave Bhagyaraj considerable mileage.

At the time of the AIADMK's first split in 1988, he sided with the Janaki Ramachandran faction. After the AIADMK (Janaki Ramachandran) group fared poorly in the Assembly election in January 1989, Bhagyaraj left the party and launched the MGR Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam the next month, purportedly to "carry on the legacy of MGR" by dovetailing his fan clubs with those of MGR supporters.

K. Bhagyaraj receiving the Kalaimamani award from Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran on January 26, 1984. MGR had called him his *"kalai ulaga vaarisu"*. THE HINDU ARCHIVES

Supporting the DMK

Later that year, when the Lok Sabha election took place, the MGR Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam supported the DMK-led front.

After realising that his solo performance did not yield dividends, he returned to the AIADMK.

In April 2006, on the eve of the Assembly election, Bhagyaraj, after meeting DMK president M. Karunanidhi, joined the party. At that time, he told this newspaper that as a supporter of the AIADMK, he had thought that Jayalalithaa was the "fittest person" to lead the country. But after she launched a personal attack on some national leaders, he decided to keep away from politics.

His decision to join the Dravidian major was because only the DMK-led front could "fulfil people's aspirations and take the State forward."

In April 2022, Bhagyaraj participated in the launch of a publication on the welfare policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the State BJP headquarters. His remarks at the event triggered a row and he later expressed regret.

The story behind *Bhagya*

K. Muralitharan
CHENNAI

While actively working in the film industry, K. Bhagyaraj also harboured a strong desire to run a weekly variety magazine. During the filming of *Idhu Namma Aalu*, he launched a variety magazine named *Bhagya*, appointing his friend Sanjeevi to manage its operations. The inaugural issue featured a photograph of his children on the cover.

The core objective of *Bhagya* was to entertain its readers. In line with this, the magazine featured simple modern poetry (*Puthu Kavithaigal*), short stories, and photo-caption commentaries.

However, the most critical and successful feature of the magazine was its 'Q&A Section'.

Questions would pour in for this segment, where Bhagyaraj directly answered the queries of readers, recalls N.S. Nana, who served as the chief designer during the magazine's initial days. "The director would arrive at the magazine office on Sundays specifically for the Q&A Section. He would sift through the received questions to choose the ones that could be answered interestingly and would dictate the replies in his signature style. On certain occasions, he would already have some interesting anecdotes in mind, and questions would be tweaked to fit them," says Mr. Nana.

A leisurely read: The magazine featured simple modern poetry, short stories, and photo-caption commentaries. N.S. NANA

Mr. Nana also notes that Bhagyaraj wrote the editorials for the magazine entirely by hand. Just as in his movies, some of the humour snippets published in this magazine were also adult-oriented. According to Mr. Nana, the magazine had a print run of approximately 1,00,000 copies during its initial days.

INBRIEF

Madras West Round Table 10 hosts Unified Sports Carnival

Madras West Round Table 10 (MWRT10), hosted the 30th edition of the Unified Sports Carnival 2026 at the ICF Indoor Stadium in Ayanavaram, continuing a tradition that began in 1996. This year too, nearly 1,000 children with intellectual and developmental disabilities participated in sports, games, and recreational activities with mainstream school children. The organising team said, "The Unified Sports Carnival is a celebration of acceptance, dignity, and human connection. For thirty years, we have witnessed barriers dissolve when children come together on the same playground." Chief Guest, actor Harshath Khan, leaders from Round Table India and Ladies Circle India attended the event.

Mahaveer Ashray Hospice marks nine years of service

Mahaveer Ashray Hospice, the hospice facility of Cancer Institute (WIA), Adyar, celebrated nine years of service and marked the beginning of its tenth year at its Sriperumbudur campus on Saturday. The celebration is being held in the centenary year of V. Shanta, honouring her vision of compassionate and patient-centred care. According to a press release, it is a 60-bed, stand-alone hospice that provides comprehensive palliative and end-of-life care free of charge to patients with advanced stages of cancer.

'Gateway of Chennai' project set to beautify stretch from Airport to Kathipara flyover

The project will provide modern city-scaping elements along the 4.8-km stretch; initial survey has started and meeting of senior officials has been scheduled next week to discuss the project

STORIES FROM THE ROAD

Aloysius Xavier Lopez
CHENNAI

The Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) will turn the 4.8 km stretch from Airport to Kathipara flyover into the "Gateway of Chennai" and provide modern city-scaping elements along the stretch.

Initial survey has started and a meeting of senior officials has been scheduled next week to discuss all aspects of the project. Land acquisition may not be required for the project. The project involves landscape architecture and beautification with native flowering plants, shrubs and trees, better lighting without affecting air traffic.

Two parks along the stretch will receive a makeover as part of the works. A park which is owned by the Corporation along the stretch and another park owned by the Highways Department will receive a makeover, officials said. The key aspects of the project will be finalised next week. K.P. Subramanian, former professor of Urban Engineering, Anna University, said: "The elements of the urban design project may include among others a distinctive welcoming flex boards depicting the inspiring Tamil culture, classical art, and the heritages of the city."

Urban gateway: The project involves beautification with native flowering plants, shrubs and trees, better lighting. FILE PHOTO

The streetscape design components such as aesthetic sign boards, elegant road markings, street furniture, bus shelters with modern design, footpaths, and cycle tracks, follow a common design language. The features of landscaping are similar to native shade trees, seasonal flowering trees, plants, shrubs, and green medians, he said.

K. Kumar, visiting faculty, SAP, Anna University and former Chief Planner, CMDA, said: "The idea of making the transit from the Chennai airport to the city centre pleasant and attractive to the visitors is worthwhile provided everything else is in order."

Mr. Kumar said, "The purpose of the very idea hinges heavily on the prospective international visitors to the Chennai. That the airport is already on the brink of over-saturation of capacity has forced many airlines to shift their operation to the neighbouring airports at Bengaluru or Hyderabad. What has added fuel to the fire is all the serious efforts made in the last 15 years to expand the capacity to the existing airport or developing a second greenfield airport have fallen through."

Unless and until the airport is attractive enough, neither global direct investments nor foreign tourists would make a beeline to Chennai. "The alternative site for the second international airport is not yet ready and the long gestational time needed before its commissioning militate against the idea of beautifying the airport travel corridor," he noted.

Sashi Kumar releasing Asan Coffee Table Book at an event in Asan Memorial School in Chennai on Saturday. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Education must mean acquiring wisdom, says Sashi Kumar

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Education must mean acquiring, not knowledge and information anymore, but wisdom," said Sashi Kumar, chairman of Asian College of Journalism at the Diamond Jubilee Valedictory event held at Asan Senior Secondary School in Chennai on Saturday.

Releasing the Asan Coffee Table Book, he said, "This stays with you because you can adjust your personality, mental abilities to understand context and perspectives that evolve in a fast-changing world. The human capacity to understand and cope with this is going to be a big challenge."

Noting social media is a space where everybody interacts, he said that it is also rife with a lot of disinformation and misinformation. "It's a dangerous space for young vulnerable minds. Many countries today have decided to keep social media away for children below 16 years of age. This is another area that needs serious thought," he said.

General secretary of Asan Memorial Association Shyamala Jayaprakash said that alongside traditional schooling, the school also embraced vocational education as practical skills are as essential as exams and debates.

The coffee table book released on the occasion chronicled the 60 years of the institution.

President of the association C.K. Revi and other members also spoke on the occasion. Alumni, teachers and students of the institution were also present.

Soumya Swaminathan honoured as Super Chennai's 'Icon of the Month'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Scientist and Chairperson of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), Soumya Swaminathan was presented with Super Chennai's 'Icon of the Month' award on Saturday, in recognition of her contributions to science and public health.

The award was presented by Ranjeeth Rathod, Managing Director of Super Chennai, and Chella Krishna, Partner, SRSV & Associates, after Dr. Swaminathan's conversation with Akhila Krishnamurthy at Super Chennai Arattai. During the discussion, Dr. Swaminathan spoke about artificial intelligence in healthcare, lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the importance of empathy in science.

Soumya Swaminathan receiving the award at Super Chennai Arattai event in Chennai on Saturday. R. RAVINDRAN

Speaking on the growing role of artificial intelligence in healthcare, she said technology should be deployed to improve health outcomes and make healthcare delivery more efficient, rather than increase the burden on frontline workers. Referring to healthcare staff who are often required to enter the same information in both physical registers and digital applications, she said digitalisation would be meaningful only if it streamlined workflows.

Dr. Swaminathan said the COVID-19 pandemic showcased unprecedented scientific collaboration, with researchers across disciplines openly sharing data to accelerate understanding of the virus. At the same time, it exposed deep inequities, with poorer countries receiving vaccines much later and vulnerable communities bearing the brunt of job losses, food insecurity, and prolonged school closures, she said.

Drawing from her early work on tuberculosis and HIV in Chennai, Dr. Swaminathan said these experiences reinforced the need for an interdisciplinary approach, with social scientists working alongside clinicians and researchers. She said that while her father taught patience, her mother instilled the courage to speak up for what she believed in.

Man arrested for allegedly cheating private schools of over ₹100 crore

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Central Crime Branch (CCB) of the Greater Chennai Police, on Saturday, arrested B.T. Arasakumar, 59, who has been running an unregistered association of private schools.

He was arrested for allegedly cheating private school managements across the State of more than ₹100 crore by promising to secure government approvals and recognition for their institutions. The police said the accused allegedly operated the unregistered organisation under the name of 'Tamil Nadu Private Schools Association' and claimed to have political and bureaucratic influence to obtain permanent recognition, school upgradation, DTCP/CMDA approvals, and other statutory clearances for private schools.

According to the police, the case was registered following a complaint filed by Ilangovan, secretary of the Federation of Associations of Private Schools in Tamil Nadu. The complainant alleged that over the past two years, several private school managements facing difficulties in obtaining approvals were induced to pay large sums of money after Arasakumar assured them that he would secure the required clearances.

The police said the accused neither obtained the promised approvals nor returned the money.

Based on the complaint, the Central Crime Branch registered a case and launched an investigation.

Acting on the directions of Chennai Police Commissioner A. Amalraj, a special team from the Economic Documents Fraud Wing, led by Assistant Commissioner V.E. Senthil, arrested Arasakumar on Saturday.

The accused would be produced before the court after interrogation, the police said.

Toll in Tiruvallur factory ammonia leak rises to 16

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The death of another woman took the toll in the ammonia gas leak at a seafood processing and export facility in Tiruvallur district to 16 on Saturday, according to a bulletin issued by the Health Department.

The deceased was identified as Kabita Juanga of Odisha.

At present, 26 persons – 25 women and one man – are undergoing treatment.

HPV vaccine awareness rally held

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Kancheepuram Obstetric and Gynaecological Society (KOGS), in support of Indian Medical Association, Tambaram Branch, organised a rally to raise awareness of the importance of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for girls aged below 14, in Tambaram on Saturday.

President of KOGS Umaiyal Murugesan spoke.

WESTERN RAILWAY - AHMEDABAD

ENGAGEMENT OF DETAILED DESIGN CONSULTANT

E-TENDER NOTICE No. Dy.CE(C)III/ADI/SEJ-DSIR/DDC/01

Dy. Chief Engineer (Construction)-SHSR, Western Railway, Ahmedabad for and on behalf of President of Union of India issued E-Tender Notice as under: **(1) Name of work with its location:** Tender No. Dy.CE(C)III/ADI/SEJ-DSIR/DDC/01: Engagement of Detailed Design Consultant (DDC) for Construction of New BG Double line between Sarkhej to Dholera (109.16 Kms) with Spur lines to Lothal NMHC and Dholera International Airport. Total Length - 134.06 Kms in the jurisdiction of Chief Administrative Officer (Construction), Ahmedabad of Western Railway. **(2) Approx. cost of the work:** ₹ 22,04,87,541.00 **(3) Earnest money to be deposited:** ₹ 44,09,800.00 **(4) Completion Period**: 48 (Forty Eight) Months, **Bid Due date:** 22-07-2026 at 15.00 Hrs. **(5) Physical submission of Original BG of Bid Security:** upto 21-07-2026 upto 18.00 Hrs., **Opening of Technical Bid:** 22-07-2026 at 15.30 Hrs., **Pre-Bid Conference:** 03-07-2026 at 12.00 Hrs., **System of Tender:** ***Two Packet System*** **& Website particulars Notice Board location where complete details of tender can be seen & address of the office:** Web Site: www.ireps.gov.in Office of Dy. Chief Engineer (Construction)SHSR, Western Railway, 1st Floor, "C" Wing, Nirman Bhavan, Opp. GCS Hospital, Asarva, Ahmedabad-382345.

CPM-020

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CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF CLASSICAL TAMIL
(An Autonomous Institute, Ministry of Education, Govt.of India)
Chemmozhi Salai, Perumbakkam, Chennai-600100.

RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION FOR ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
NOTIFICATIONNo.03/CICT/Professor/2026-2027

Date:28.06.2026

Central Institute of Classical Tamil, Chennai (CICT) invites applications from Indian Nationals, who fulfill the prescribed qualification, experience, age and other conditions as per the UGC Regulations for filling up the following posts sanctioned on regular basis, as per the details given below:-

S.No	Name of the Post	Academic Level	No. of Post	Category	Method of Recruitment
1.	Associate Professor	Level 13A of 7th CPC as per UGC	06	UR-5 OBC-1	Direct

The details of the posts, educational qualification, age, experience and application format are available in the Institute's website www.cict.in. Applications complete in all aspects along with requisite application fee and all necessary documents should reach within 60 days of publication of this advertisement to "The Registrar, Central Institute of Classical Tamil, Chemmozhi Salai, Perumbakkam, Chennai-600100".

Sd/-
Registrar

SECTION 1 – INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)
Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs,
Birsa Munda Football Stadium, Morabadi, Ranchi - 834008, Jharkhand.
Email: directorsportsjharkhand@gmail.com
Bid Number: GEM/2026/B/7712986 Date: 25-06-2026

The Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs, Jharkhand, Ranchi hereby invites Tender for the Durand Cup (Ranchi) 2026 for the following work in two parts Part-I (Technical Bid) and Part-II (Financial Bid). The contract will remain valid until the completion of the financial year 2026-27. Only eligible and reputed bidders, possessing substantial experience in similar works and demonstrating sound financial stability, are invited to submit their bids.

Name of the Work: Durand Cup (Ranchi) 2026	
Earnest money to be deposited	Rs.5,00,000 /- (Five Lakh Only) DD/FDR/Bank Guarantee in favour of Director, Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs, Govt. of Jharkhand, Payble at Ranchi, Jharkhand.
Availability of tenderdocuments on website of this Directorate https://sports.jharkhand.gov.in	From 25th June 2026
Last date of submission of queries from bidders	29th June 2026
Pre bid query meeting	Pre Bid Meeting- Hiring of EMA for Durand Cup at Ranchi Monday, 29 June · 3:00 – 4:00 pm Time zone: Asia/Kolkata Google Meet joining info Video call link: https://meet.google.com/mgsysgi-rxt
Last date and time for submission of Tender & Earnest Money Deposit	06th July, 2026 (As notified in GeM porta)
Mode of submissionof EMD	Scanned copy of the EMD shall be uploaded on the GeM Portal, and the original hard copy must reach the office within 02 (two) days from the last date of bid submission. (As per the Jharkhand Procurement Policy, 2014, exemption from submission of EMD shall be applicable only to MSEs having their manufacturing/service unit located within the State of Jharkhand. Bidders not fulfilling the aforesaid criteria shall mandatorily submit the EMD.)
Date and time for opening of Tender	As notified in GeM portal
Date and time for opening offinancial Bid	Immediately after finalizing the technical part of tender
Tendering Officer and address for communication	Director, Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs, Birsa Munda Football Stadium, Morabadi, Ranchi
Contact/E-mail Id	directorsportsjharkhand@gmail.com

1. The detailed tender document can be downloaded from the website of this Directorate - https://sports.jharkhand.gov.in or www.gem.gov.in .
2. Earnest Money deposit (EMD) shall be deposited as per the above schedule in the office of Director, Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs, Birsa Munda Football Stadium, Morhabadi, Ranchi. Only those tenders will be entertained whose Earnest money deposit is received till schedule mentioned above.
3. Any corrigendum regarding this short tender will be published in the GeM portal & will be available in the website of this Directorate - https://sports.jharkhand.gov.in.
4. The Director, Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs reserves the right to cancel the whole tender process or any part of it without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
Director,
Directorate of Sports & Youth Affairs,
Jharkhand, Ranchi.

PR 383391 Art Culture Sports and Youth Affairs(26-27)D

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

OBITUARY

Moti Soli Daruwala
(1931–2026)
Co-founder-Sarala's Art Centre, Chennai. Estb: 1965
Passed away on 23 June 2026.
Fondly remembered by the family, who pray for her peaceful onward journey .

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

2nd YEAR ANNIVERSARY

MANGALAM SRINIVASAN
W/o T. V. Srinivasan IAS (retd)
Fondly remembered by Family and Friends

4th ANNIVERSARY

Mrs. Margaret Mangaladurai
Retd. Physical Directress, Stella Maris College
W/o Mr. A.D. Mangaladurai
DOB: 30.09.1929 DOD: 28.06.2022
Remembered by loving Family Members

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Harshada R, wife of Aravinth Thirumoolanathan and mother of minor daughter NAAMYAA, hereby declare that my daughter's name NAAMYAA shall henceforth be known and used as NAAMYAA ARAVINTH by adding her father's name as surname. Both names refer to one and the same person - Harshada R

I, P.S. Amalu Lourdumary, wife of Thiru John Bosco, born on 27th May 1962 (District of Birth: Tiruvallur), residing at No. 260, 12th Block, Subedhar Garden, Choolaimedu High Road, Chennai – 600 094, shall henceforth be known as AMALU LOURDUMARY. P.S. AMALU LOURDUMARY

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CHROMEPET 3200 sq.ft New Commercial Space, Phone: 7358581123.

ADYAR PRIME 6000sft Commercial Space in Adyar Ideal Jewellery & High–End Showroom. 9940697989/ 9444728899

RENTAL – COMMERCIAL

BUILD–TO–SUIT : land 33,000 Sq.ft avbl. 100 metres from Radial Road & behind Dr. Kamakshi Hospital Pallikaranai.Cosmic Properties 9047734343

ECR, MUTHUKADU Prime main road facing 22 grounds vacant land for long term rent. No Brkrse. 98840 72500

T.NAGAR OFFICE Space AC 350Sft Power Backup Ct:9283111213 / 9962994848

NEAR MOUNT ROAD Ground/First/Second Floor Rent. 9941473000, 9381000999

OFFICE SPACE for Rent @ Ashok Nagar 100 Feet Main Road, 1200 sq.ft, 44 Seater, Fully furnished. Plug and Play. Rent Rs.2,10,000/– 7358533086

OPEN SPACE For Rent Vandalur to Kelambakkam Road Near Tagore College@ Vengampakkam Next to Eastern Bypass Total 40000 Sft X 2 nos @ Rs.8 Per Sq.ft Ct:8122910079, 7338714079

OMR - COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR RENT
AT TNHB ROAD, SHOLINGANALLUR
TOTAL BUILT-UP AREA
12,150 SQ.FT.
STILT + 3 FLOORS
IDEAL FOR
Dark Stores | Healthcare Facilities | Corporate Offices
Diagnostic Centres | Co-working Spaces | Professional Firms
BROKERS KINDLY EXCUSE
CALL: 98840 72500

PREMIUM 3413–SQ.FT. Plug–and–Play Office Space in Egmore, Chennai. Fully furnished with 37 Work. Stations., Exec. Cabins, Conf. Room, 24x7 Pwr.Bkp., 4 covered Car Parks, and ample free parking. Prestigious business address with excellent connectivity. Ideal for MNCs, IT/ITES, GCCs, consulting firms, and corporateoffices. Ct: 9384828103.

Anna Salai Teynampet Century Plaza
Prime Commercial Property
Newly Renovated with High End Fittings
BUA - 1040 sq.ft,
OCP - 1, Unfurnished
Suitable only for Corporates
Ct: 99621 73753

VADAPALANI, ARCOT Road, Doshi Gardens,Basement suitable for Office/ Shops/ Godown. 370 to 4350 sq.ft. Ct.9282333425

SHENOYNAGAR OPP Metro 700sft FF Work Stn Cabins & Pantry 9840724509

MYLAPORE 6300SFT 3rd Floor fully furnished Office. Immediate occupation. Redesigning/ rooms repositioning possible for your specs. Off Dr. Radakrishnan Salai, Ct:7358 303019

RESTAURANT VEG & Non–Veg + tea shop, Fully furnished 18 rooms, swimming pool nr Paramenkeni boat house ECR – 9500003959 & 9840060352

RENTAL – COMMERCIAL

SUITABLE FOR BANKS / SOFTWARE / BACKEND
11000 SFT ON ECR MAIN ROAD
5 car & 24 two wheeler parking
Baid Hi-Tech Park ECR, Thiruvanmiyur
9094094037

OFFICE SPACE Rent in Royapettah, 3rd Floor, Lift, hall type, 1200 sqft, Rent 50000 Contact: 72995 44542

NR ARUMBAKAM Metro and 100Ft Rd 2200sft Suit Office/ Godown 9841032452

THIRUVANMIYUR POSH Indpt Newly Painted G+2, 5000sft 9BHK 6CP Terrace–Corp/Gt.House/Commrcl WA 9606889004

ANNANAGAR WEST 19th Mn Rd, Indiv. bldg, 2000sft Grd + 1st flr, Ideal for Office/ IT/ Coaching. 9884068285

TNAGAR VN Rd Posh 1850sft RoomType IT,CA,Lab,Ofice Lift CCP 9444116320

COMMERCIAL SPACE FOR RENT
SHOW ROOM FOR RENT SRIPERUMBUDUR TO ORAGADAM HIGHWAY
10000 Sq Feet
Contact: 9677008715

FACTORIES & SITES

BRANDNEW SHED 20000sft Sriperumbudur, 40000sft Gummidipondi 7200134198

WAREHOUSE FOR RENT
MADHAVARM
Bldup: 65000 Sq.Ft, 35000 Sq.ft open space with RCC concrete
1) loading Bay-8, hydrolic -4 Normal-4
2) 6 Emergency Door 3) Power 150KV
4) Height Side 10Mtr,center 13.6Mtr
Fire Hydrant, Smoke Detector & Sparkle with Fire NOC Approved
ORAGADAM
55,000 Sq.Ft & 20,000 Sq.Ft
With All Modern Amenities
9360588800, 9765565816

RENTAL – GENERAL

INDEPENDENT HOUSE 2000 sft, Car Park in Katpadi Nr Railway stn & Bus stop for family /Office 6379909963

RENTAL – GENERAL

CHINTADRIPET BACHELOR Double Sharing Fully Furnished AC, Kitchen. Monthly Rent. 99405 88883

GUEST HOUSE

P&T CARE – Corporate Guest House, OMR, Siruseri, Navalur & Sholinganallur. 55 fully furnished A/C rooms, Wi–Fi, housekeeping. Ideal for corporate employees, business travelers & company guest stays. Corporate tie–ups welcome. Contact:98840 40221

RENTAL – RESIDENTIAL

ADYAR

RENT - ADYAR
POSH READY to Occupy Fully furnished 3BHK 1700 SQFT Flat with AC, FAN, COT, BED, FRIDGE, OVEN, COOKING GAS, CHIMNEY, WASHING Mc with GYM
Car Park Swimming Pool for Rent available in BAASHYAAM PLUTUS, Adyar LB. Road.
Contact Sridhar 79048 67683

ADYAR 3BHK Flat 1800 Sft, Lift, 2CCP, Genset. Rent 80k.Ct. 9941767671

ANNA NAGAR

NR TOWER Metro Stn 1500sft 2BHK semi–furn 2nd Flr Lift CCP. 9444061611

ANNA NAGAR WEST

2BHK/ 3BHK– 30k to 85k / Adyar & All area in City & PG Single / Sharing / Group Stay @ We'Bro/ 8438768755

ARUMBAKKAM

OFF PH Road 2/3 Bedroom Flats, Lift, CCP Rs. 20/30K. Ct: 9841449349

EAST COAST ROAD

KANATHUR SEASIDE 2.5BHK GF B'Low FullFurn AC CCP Grdn Owner 9841078666

KANATHUR, SEA view, 4 BHK spacious Apt. Fully furnished. 98840 72500

JAFFERKHANPET

3BHK FLAT (semi furnished), with car parking available for rent immediately at Jaffarkhanpet, Chennai–83. Contact property owner @ 9884203035 or Whatsapp @ 7428031978.

KOLATHUR

KOLATHUR 2BHK 13000 4BHK 28000 Rnt 2ndFlr, No Carpark Lift 7418711886

KOTTIVAKKAM

Kottivakkam Individual Villa house Duplex 2400 Sqft large Service area Pvt terrace, Pooja room & 3 Toilets, CCP, Borewell, Semi Furn., Rent 47k. Visit Sunday 28th june 9am to 1pm, Veg preferred. 189 Kamaraj salai Hiconvilla Kottivakkam. Ct: 93821 60493

MEDAVAKKAM

RIVERIA 3BHK 1550 sqft, 1AC, Semi Furn, 4th Floor, Lift, 2 car parks – 40K Contact:9787706860

NEELA NAGAR Compact 2BHK FF CCP Rs.14K Ct: 95854 92253 / 9940261166

MYLAPORE

MYLAPORE SAI Baba Koil Narasimhapuram 2BHK, CP, GF 40K. Ct: 9444165153

NEW 3BHK 3rd Flr Flat CCP / Lift Vegetarian 9444128741 Broker Excuse

PERUNGUDI

OPP APPOLLO Hospital 3BHK, GF, Semi Furnished 1500 Sqft CCP 9962502711

T NAGAR

2BHK + Car Park. Independent house– Gr.Flr. Off N.Usman Rd. Family only.Rent: 25000/– . Ph:9952055333

VELACHERI

ASHTALAKSHMI NGR 6th Street –2BHK 950Sft 1st Flr CCP for Rent. Rs.22000. Family Only. No Brks. 9087064506

VIRUGAMBAKKAM

NR.BALALOK SCH GF–2BHK–23K,SF–3BHK–CCP–42K,Lift,Only Family.9159914150

AUTOMOTIVE

INDEX OF AUTOMOTIVE

FINANCE
RENTAL/HIRE SERVICES
SPARE PARTS/ GARAGE
BUYING
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AUDI Q7 45 TDI Quattro Tech – Diesel 2019 1st owner 46865 Kms. CHN Exec Used CO Call/WA: 87544 09677

MERCEDES

BENZ AMG GLE53 4MATIC+ Feb 2025 1st Owner 9671 Kms. CHN Exec Used CO. Call/WA: 87544 09677

MERCEDES BENZ c 220d. 2019 Single owner . Insurance till 2026 November. Mojave Silver . Immaculate condition.9840043176

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FARNAZ

Matrimonial

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

THE HINDU

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED
BRIDES WANTED
BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED
Classification Common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms
ASSAMESE
AWADHI
BENGALI
BHOJPURI
BIHARI
CHHATTISGARHI
ENGLISH
GUJARATI
HARYANI
HINDI
KANNADA
KASHMIRI
KONKANI
MALAYALAM
MANIPURI
MARATHI
MARWARI
NEPALI
ORIYA
PARSI
PUNJABI
SAURASHTRA
SINDHI
TAMIL
TELUGU
TULU
URDU
ADVOCATE
BUSINESS
DEFENCE
DOCTOR
ENGINEER
FINANCE/ BANKING
GOVERNMENT/ QUASI-GOVERNMENT
IAS/ ALLIED SERVICES
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
MBA/ CA/ ICWA
NRI
COSMOPOLITAN
DIVORCEE
PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED
MARRIAGE BUREAUS
WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

BIHARI

Bihari Rajput Family settled in Hyderabad invites alliance for Daughter, 32Yrs / 152.5 cm, B.A. LL.B (Hons.), M.A. (Psychology), Counselor. Father retired Central Govt. Class-I Officer, Mother Homemaker, elder sister settled in Hyderabad. Seeking well-educated, cultured Groom from respectable Rajput/ Bhumihar/ Kayastha/ Brahmin Family. Contact: 9711184100

COSMOPOLITAN

SUITABLE GROOM sought for our daughter, a well–educated professional in her late twenties, working in the UK. Looking for a well–settled groom (3033 years) with progressive values, an egalitarian outlook, and free from rigid patriarchal or caste–hierarchical beliefs. Mob:9840993455

WANTED GROOM
Balija Naidu Bride, Chennai - Born, 32, 5'7", Fair, Qualification: IIM (Calcutta) - PG Dip. in Digital Marketing, well-settled family seeks educated, cultured groom from a suitable family
Contact:
9769263777
balajilenka@gmail.com

WANTED GROOM
Tall, Elegant, Dr. from Biz Family
'93 Born, 5'5", M.D., High Profile, Cultured & Respectable Family looking for an equal Match.
SUDHIR BHATT
9920099889 / 9619101019 / 20
sudhirmatrim@gmail.com

HINDU.50YR ISSUELESS divorcee ACS working MNC seeks issueless groom CNB. 8778873501

Groom required for a Girl 32 yrs old, MTech from IIT Chennai, working in Chennai drawing 30 L / years, from Kerala SC, Vishakam. Contact whatsapp 9447763685.

COSMOPOLITAN

QUALIFIED GIRL, well educated abroad, 1990/165cm (Hindu), father cardiologist, seeks qualified groom, open to all backgrounds. Indian/NRIs, contact: 9266863038

DOCTOR

VANIYAR 31, MBBS/ MS, Midhunam, Thiruvadurai, Slim seeks MBBS/ MS Doctor Groom only. Contact: 9444259255

DOCTOR MD, DM, Salary 3 Lakhs pm, 1992/155cm Hindu (BC) Girl, fair, slim, cultured family, well settle in Bangalore, upper middle class seeks bridegroom MD/MS/DM or Highly qualified engineer with good Salary, caste no bar. Contact: 9845522122

KONGU VELLALAR Gounder Othala Kootam Anusham Viruchigam Girl 26/ 165 Studying MD, seeks MD/MS same caste. Whatsapp only 9025823332/ No Broker

ALLIANCE INVITED for my daughter born in Dec 93 fair 160 CM completed MS General Surgery and now doing Mch Neuro Surgery 3rd year from Doctors with PG or suitably qualified from Mudaliar/ Vellallar Contact 9444012939.

STUDYING IN chennai MD(Gen Med) first year girl, Mudaliyar family, magaram/Avittam, Nonveg, DOB 9jan2000/23:47. Expecting grooms MD/MS completed or studying, only medico grooms only contact 9840909460

GOVT / QUASI GOVT

BRIDE GROOM WANTED
Hindu Nadar 26 yrs, 168 cm, Civil Judge Seeks Bridegroom Below 30 yrs from Same Profession / Group I / Group II Officer in Tamilnadu Only.
9710209761, 9840425972

KANNADA

SEEKING A well–educated groom (Kannada/Tamil speaking) for a Kannada Smartha Brahmin girl (MBA, born 1990, divorced, no issues). Proposals from divorced, unmarried,or widower (without issues) grooms settled in Bangalore, within the age of 37 to 40 years welcome. Contact Phone Number: 8105404780

MALAYALAM

HINDU NADAR girl, 30, Govt. Agriculture Officer seeks suitable groom. Caste no bar. Contact : 9495036447.

EZHAVA GIRL, White Fair, 23, Bharani, 168 cm, B.Tech. EEE. Contact: 9495245179, 8848862175.

THIYYA GIRL, 24/160cm. B.E., working in MNC. Seeking a suitable, qualified groom, same caste. Contact 9789084177

✔ **ALLIANCE INVITED for Hindu Ezhava girl, 29 years, MBBS, 152 cm, Ernakulam.Seeking professionally qualified Hindu Ezhava groom from a respectable family. Contact:9544589706.**

NAIR DOCTOR Girl DM 32 Yrs 161 Cm seeks Doctor - Professional. Mob : 8089 584220, 9249 920550.

NRI

30 Years/175 cm, Employed in Canada, Divorced, looking for a Genuine understanding life Partner. Contact 93810 57689

TAMIL

TAMIL MUSLIM girl 32/158cm, AVP-Principle Product Engineer, MNC, 34LPA, well-settled family, seeks Tamil speaking never married groom with similar bg. Ct. 63832 76233

NATHAMAR UDAYAR, catholic, 1993 borned, HR professional–MNC , with null and void order looking for Christian boy below 35 yrs, premier institute or IT professional with legal, church orders with clean habits, WhatsAp 9940099429

CHRISTIAN CSI, Doctor, looking for same profession groom in any caste, settled or working in USA, UK, Canada and Australia from 24-29. 8138900652

CSI, ADIDRAVIDAR, B.Tech, Government staff, searching for a groom in Qatar from 28-31 in equal caste. 8137003550

CSI, ROYALE profile, BE, Business, seeking for a Rich/affluent match in CSI or Christian nadar. 8138900487

UDAYAR CHRISTIAN, 32, divorced, UK, looking for a Rich/affluent groom from 31-36 from Hindu or Christian. 8137001257

✔ **PARENTS OF** Tamil Muslim doctor girl doing MD and Residentship in govt medical college, 27yrs, 160cm, smart, reputed family, seek matching proposal from parents of doctor groom only. 9489465536 / 6381615274

CHRISTIAN, PILLAI, 36,M.Sc.,M Phil., Asst.Prof. Pondy,Seeks Groom FC/BC, below 39yrs. Ct: 98946-77892.

CHRISTIAN/ VELLALAR/ 26/ B.E, M.E., looking for professional grooms in Chennai. Ct: 9444466802

CHRISTIAN (BC) Girl, 36/172, B.Tech, MBA, Strategy Consultant at a MNC based in Chennai. Seeking a suitable Christian Groom with good family values. Caste no bar. Ct: 8778907487

PILLAI/MUDALIAR PROF qufd working Groom wanted for Hastham 38, fair MCA Chennai.8220757159/ 9444136336

SEEKING GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL for 44yrs unmarried Tamil SC Hindu Adi Dravida Female IT professional (20yrs exp) from Chennai holding Singapore PR. Contact +919790921761/+91 7200942776.

LOOKING FOR Bridegroom for 28 yr. smart Girl, (Nadar) MBA from NUS Singapore, not particular about Horoscope. Broad Minded with Modern outlook. What'sapp details to : 93421 04357

TAMIL

Hindu Agamudaiyar, 1997, MS (USA) serving in the EU, seeks suitable and Qualified Groom. 9442614293

MUDALIAR 29 165cm BE MBA Chennai seeks professional Handsome Mudaliar Pillai Grooms Geetham 9884858014

VALLUVAN 40/160 BE Remarriage 2 Daughters Kerala seeks Educated Broad Minded Groom CNB Geetham 9884858014

MUDALIAR 40/163 BE MBA Phd doing Madurai seeks Educated Employed Mudaliar Pillai Groom Geetham 9884858014

GROOM WANTED CNB,26yrs, MBBS, MD, Running schools & Institutions in ChennaiPh: 6385293227

MUDALIYAR DOCTOR MS Ophthalmologist 35/165 Fair Chennai seeks well educated good family groom. 9962830417

HINDU SC Arunthathiar Jana Kilai 38, Asst. Professor Rs.5 Lakh Per Annum 6379366910

INTERCASTE, M.TECH, Private, Ireland, looking for a 29-33 groom in European countries, rich/affluent any caste. 8138900575

ADIDRAVIDAR, CZECH republic, MS, looking for a same caste groom from 27-30 in rich/affluent. 7356483111

Tamil Iyengar Kausiga Uthram Doctor 29/165 working London seeks alliance from UK based Grooms. Contact: 9841031480 / 9444034369, Email Id: kodiyalam@gmail.com

WELL Qualified Tamil Intercaste Parents seek alliance for their Software Engineer Daughter, 25 years,working in Bangalore.Looking for Professional working in India, Vegetarian, Teetotaler, non-smoker Caste no bar. Contact: 94446-42214.

HINDU MARAVAR PhD,32/155,divorced within a week.Seeking groom. 8643853147

HINDU VANNIYAR Girl May 1998, 162cm Kettai BE,Asst Manager Govt Bank. Seek Suitable Grooms.Ct: 9894128789

AGAMUDAYA MUDALIAR, Rich / affluent, MD, Fair, seeking for a suitable groom from equal caste in good looking from 27-31. 8138900412

DKV/SC, 32/ May 94, 167cm, Fair, BE (CS), Parents Hindu / CSI, Seeks Groom Dr./Er. / Abroad. Ct:8056143638

HINDU MUDALIAR, 31 Age, 160cm, BE, Working in IT MNC 21 LPA, Seeks Suitable Groom CA, BE or Btech from Mudaliar or Sub Caste Call 7550251015

HINDU MARUTHUVAR well–educated, affluent family seeks suitable groom for their daughter, 26 years, Software Engineer, Currently in USA. Same community preferred. Others welcome. Ph. 9384816370

HINDU SC AD 26/151,MSC Thiruvonam Magaram Fair Good Looking Chennai. Seeks Govt /Pvt Employed Groom From Chennai Good Family Wh:9629412661

FASHION DESIGNER SaivaMudaliar Anusham 33 Very Fair Propertied NeedVeg IT/ Govt Employed Groom 9566268349

FAIR GOOD looking 26 yrs living at Chennai M.com(P.hd) working as Asst.Prof in pvt college 5.5ft (165cm) seeking pure vegetarian bridegroom of sozhiya vellalar/ any pillai with expectation of height 5.11 to 6 feet and fair, with age 3yrs difference chennai based with any profession. Contact 9445428534 / 9940338846

ALLIANCE FOR 26, Pretty pursuing Ph.D in US seeks professionally qualified groom. Caste nobar. 8248569028

MUDALIAR PARENTS seek professional groom settled in UK for their daughter age 34 height 172 cm Revathi studied medicine in UK and working as surgeon. Ph: 9884452926

ISAIVELLALAR, MBBS Preparing for PG, May 98, Kruthigai, Mesham, Doctor Parents in Chennai, Seeks Suitable Groom Preferably Doctor. Caste no bar. Ct: 9003204007

VANNIYAR, RE Marriage, Age 30, Ayilyam, Employed in Bank, Groom Needed from Thanjavur, Kumbakonam & Madras Area only. Cont: 9840961251

PILLAI 30/165CM BE Canada seeks IT professional Canada PR/Citizen only. Geetham 9884858014

HINDU, SC, 38 yrs, BE, MBA, 80,000 P/M, Divorcee, No Children. Looking for Groom in Chennai under 42 in a well Settled Job 9840429449

HINDU VISHWAKARMA Goldsmith girl B.Pharm, working in PRS Hospital, 24, 156 cm, TVM, Ph: 9387820222.

HINDU NADAR– Divorcee Unconsummated Marriage – 35 JPMC /IT, Bangalore Sr.Associate 40LPA Own House. Seeks blw 38yr. Call / WA : 94421 26376

HINDU, CIVIL Servant (UPSC - IRMS (A)/Southern Railway)Post in Chennai, 32/164cm, Fair, Native: Tirunelveli, Mother: DRO - Revenue Dept. seeks Groom, well educated family with Civil Servant/ Medical/ Successful Entrepreneurs. Thevar/Caste no bar from equal community. Ct: 94878 35626

GROOM WANTED 28yr, Mudaliyar,M. Tech, Affluent Business family in Chennai Ph: 6385293227

MUDALIAR 26/160, Pretty MS, Logistics & Warehousing, ATO 15 Cr. Elite 100 Cr CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

GROOM WANTED Hindu Nadar 26yrs,BE, MBA,SWE 1 L p/m Elite Business Family Ph: 9841329471/9380791999

HINDU NADAR Affluent Business Family invites alliance for their daughter born in 1990/Fair/174 cm/ MSc graduate. Looking for educated well settled groom from same community in India. Please contact: vsr9026@gmail.com

MUDALIAR (200CR): 26/V.Fair & Beautiful, MBA, doing father Business, Chennai, Elite Family – seeks groom Business / Doctor – 8925019776

28 NATTU Kottai Chettiyar BE Architect, Seeks Same Caste, Job/ Business Groom. Chennai. Ph: 9600057121 / sairamravi708@gmail.com

MUDHALIYAR, BE, Age 34, Ayilyam, Never Married Work in USA, Well Settled Seeks groom from USA. 8754756329

Looking for Brahmin, non-Kaushika groom for Iyer girl, 42/165, BE, MBA, earning 30 Lakhs pa. Contact: 9441243172

Vadamal-Girl 24 Yrs, Iyer Athreyam B.E Sr. Engineer TAFE Chennai. Contact: 9543411210 / 9894679685.

TAMIL

Seeking alliance for a Ph.D.
Cultured, Naidu Girl 35 yrs, 165cm from a respectable family. Looking for a qualified well settled groom not exceeding 37 years.
Caste no bar
97909 08109

SUNNI MUSLIM
Doctor MS, 27yrs, Fair, Ht. 5.7
Seeking Tamil Nadu & Karnataka BRIDE GROOM
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Chettiyar,Arya vysyar,BE,IT,looking for chettiyar, mudaliyar and pillai groom from 31-35 from TN and Banglore,9072777822

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TAMIL

Doctor MD FRCEM, Unmarried 37 Years/175, Working in UK seeks Hindu Professional Groom with clean habits Contact: 8826501199

COSMOPOLITAN

DM DOCTOR(6'1–Tamil–Hastham) seeks a virtuous, tall, slim, v.fair PG Doctor/ well edu bride (29–31 yrs) at Bangalore.Parents: 9342529547 / 9072118800

TAMIL

Hindu Valluvan 41yrs, MBA, IT. MNC Working, seeks Suitable Groom, CNB, First Marriage only. Ct: 98862 34181

Mudaliar 27/160/ Fair / Normal / MBA daughter of an affluent family looking for a Groom of Chennai based - 9600136660

Tamil SC Brides- 29 yrs, B.Tech, MBA, IT, 13 LPA & 26 yrs, B.Sc. Seeking suitable Grooms. Contact - 9441677205

B.ARCH State Govt Girl 31/165cm Divorced No issues seeking handsome & qualfd groom from good family. CNB. 9445954257/9498385494

SozhiaVellalar B Tech unmarried 40/155 officer PS Bank CNB Contact: 9246899599

TELUGU

ANDHRA LADY Doctor, MD, 35, Fair, Slim, Good looking, Divorcee, Balija, highly Educated family, Well to do, requires suitable Bridegroom, Language No Barrier. Call: 9380273428

CAVARA NAIDU age 30 Software Engineer Thiruvonam maharam D/B 3.7.1996 groom wanted Contact number: 9790548816

29YR NAIDU Divorce Bride,MA,BEd. from an affluent, educated family seeks alliance Ph 6385293227

GIRL 32 fair 168cm we are looking for groom intrested moving in our house only ct9363714007 divorced no issues.

HINDU, GAVARA, Age 29/ 162, B.E Comp. girl seeks suitable groom from naidu/subcaste from Tamil Nadu.9443009611.

INVITING TELUGU Groom, 35y, ht 160+cm. W: 9994032994 (industrialist parents only).

GAJULU BALIJA Naidu, Chennai, 26/ 158, fair, attractive seeks professional from good family. Ct:9600013579

NAIDU 27/167 Fair, Beautiful, ME, Manufacturing Unit, ATO 12 Cr, Elite,150 Cr CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

Naidu Girl 30/165cm Aswini pursuing PhD Doctoral studies in Satellite Communications Neuromorphic Computing European space agency Europe-completing by Dec 2026 seeking suitable Groom PhD / MS in USA. 9840103686

BRIDES WANTED

COSMOPOLITAN

BRIDE WANTED
Affluent Teli / Gandla / Telikula Telugu Family based in Hyderabad looking for an alliance for their son
35 Years; M.S.; Industrialist; Divorcee in short period.
Seeking a well-educated HINDU BRIDE from a like-minded - cultured family who is willing to support him in business. Caste-no-Bar.
Mobile No : +91 80083 16663

HINDI

1985/175CM, 50 Lakhs PA, Never Married, Bangalore. WhatsApp: 96290 12248

MALAYALAM

MUSLIM GROOM, (34/182 cms), Slim/ fair from Calicut. B.Tech (Mech) MIT Manipal, MBA HEC Paris. Manager at McKinsey, Dubai. Seeking well-educated bride, preferably in Gulf. Contact: 9292012137, shk.yusuf99@gmail.com

CHENNAI SETTLED Nair Boy 29/173, BE,MBA, Mageeram Shudha Jadhagam, Consultant in MNC Chennai. 9840838971

THIYYA 28/170CM B Tech,PGDPP 12L per annum Technical Expert Virtual Production Chennai Settled 9445421968

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN NADAR, Doctor, Divorcee 37yrs/178cm, MBBS, Dip in Cardiology better earning lives in Nagercoil seeks qualified/ Divorced Bride. 9003983230

CHRISTIAN DOCTOR, 39/169, M.D. Paediatric, Neonatologist, Profession in Trivandrum, Fair, Handsome, Divorce - no kids. seeks Fair Doctor/ Non Medico bride, age 30 to 35. Preferably South India. Caste no bar. 93420 06119, 94433 26119

TAMIL MUSLIM, 30/170, BE Mech, Asst Manager in Auto OEM, Chennai seeks Tamil Muslim bride, Ct: 9444297042

AGE–39, MBBS, MD, Well settled, Bangalore. CSI, Never married. Caste no Bar. 7305460763 / 8754756329

SC, CHRISTIAN, 30, M.Tech, Software Engineer working MNC Chennai, salary Rs.75,000 pm, seeks suitable employed (either working in govt or MNC) Bride. CNB. Ct: 89391 77665

CSI CHRISTIAN Nadar Kanyakumary District, 27/168, MBBS, MD (Clinical Subject) seeks same sect Doctor PG/Entry (G.M) preferred. Send bio-data. 6381784394/ 9487452271.

TAMIL MUSLIM 28/182 MS Ortho Seeks prof qualified bride Ct : 8220042091 mdullahsafi@gmail.com

TAMIL YADAVA Boy, M.B.A, 38, Ayilyam, System Er. TCS, Chennai. Rs.60000/-pm. Seeks Yadava bride within TN. Contact through Tamil. Whatsapp : 9965673354 / Cell :7373386474

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TAMIL

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BRIDE WANTED Naidu,28yrs,B.Tech, MBA, civil service background Ph:6385293227

HINDU SC Arunthathiar Jana Kilai 34, TNEB AE Rs.1Lakh Per Month 6379366910

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MUDALIAR 42yrs 170cm MCA divorcee well settled in USA. Looking for a Bride employed in USA or India willing to relocate in USA, Cast No bar P-9842079504, 9443263629

CHETTIAR, 27YRS, 180cm, IT Job Chennai 12LPA. Well Settled (CNB) (7cr) seeks suitable Bride – 94870 33503

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VANNIYAR 35/164 Consultant Psycho–Oncologist Chennai, seeks PG/UG Caste no bar. Ct:9884726806/ 8939522967

TAMIL

Mudaliar SWE BE PGPML Sr TL 36/170 Bangalore seeks SWE BDS MBBS BArch Bride. Ph-9444176384, umasat26@gmail.com

HINDU 64 yrs, divorcee, well settled, looking for widow 50 yrs for remarriage. WA 8220822951.

BRIDE WANTED Rich Mudaliyar,28yrs, MCA, Central Govt, Elite business in Chennai Ph:6385293227

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MUDALIAR/NAIDU REMARRIAGE 38 / 170cm MBA Business Chennai Seeks Not working Bride CNB Geetham 9884858014

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EGMORE HIGH Road 1480Sqft Land BUA G+2, 4440Sqft. Ph: 94440 19191

COMMERCIAL LAND

OMR THORAIPAKKAM Opp ASV Towers 4Grd 3.50Cr/ Per Gr.Suit All Commercial Ct No: 98419 71947/ 044–4806 4520

THAMAL ON Bangalore High Rd 100ft Front 20Acres P/Acre 3Cr. 9090656533

AMBATTUR INDL Est (42x196) 8232sft North fac indl Land sale 9705422567

INVESTMENT OPPURTUNITY Investor Required for Layout Development: 3 to 5 Acres in Maraimalai Nagar & Singaperumal kovil . Secured and Good ROI Opportunity. Cosmic Properties 90907 55000

GUINDY
Industrial Estate
4 Grounds
90907 55000
COSMIC PROPERTIES

OMR, PADUR Tradewinds 8.3 grds On Road Opp to Urbanrise Flats Next to Hindustan College.West Facing. 9789522759

OFF OMR Prime 3Grs Commercial Site 200m from the Metro, Ideal for Offices Space. 9444728899/9940697989

SRIPERAMBADUR ULLUNTHAI 100Mtr frm Mn Rd 31Cents 13526Sft EastFacing 50ft Rd Opp KothariSugar: 9940286299

INDUSTRIAL LAND FOR SALE
2.55 ACRES OF LAND
WITH BUILDING & 3PHASE POWER CONNECTION
FRONTAGE 100 METERS COMPOUND WALL
LOCATED AT ALAMATTI, REDHILLS
18KM FROM CHENNAI
98431 - 48386
77080 - 02355

✔ **SRIPERUMBADUR, PAPPARAMPAKKAM** High Road, 4Acres, fully compounded, 3.8 Crore per Acre, Suitable for Factories / Warehouse. Ct : 89258 48889

THANDALAM, MANNUR 11,000 sqft on Main Road, East facing fully compound. Ct: 9962290352, 9841454322

ADYAR 2.7 Grds 40Ft Rd EF / Chrompet 1.5 Grd 30Ft Rd 8903197967 NoBrk

6ACRE GST Rd,Chengalpatu–Suitable Commercial Lnd 6382570234/ 9344429118

CHENGLEPUT GST on Rd 9600sf Prime Comercial Land 9381081899, 9994194859

GUDUVANCHERRY APP School Site 26400Sft. Per Sft Rs.1800.Ct: 9087737373

KANCHEEPURAM TO Arcot On Main Rd 54Cent per Cent 2Lacs Nego 9444498866

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU High Road, Ch–91. Near Adambakkam MRT Railway Medavakkam Main Road, 13200 Sqft for Sale. Contact : 9382808083 / 9840676760

COMMERCIAL CORNER Plot 3299sft @ Ayyapakkam : 10,000/ Sft. 9941665522

4800 sqft. Plot with Shed, Sy.No: 4055/19-BLOCK. No: 78, in the Residential Area with Electricity Connection of Veeraraghavan Street, Tondiarpet-Chennai, is for Immediate Sale. Phone - 93924 44710/ 93800 03927

FACTORIES & SITES

MADHAVARAM 1,2,3–ACRES with Shed Ready for occupation Ct: 9381016843

FACTORIES & SITES

INDUSTRIAL WEARHOUSE Land 8250 square feet on 40 feet road Valapuram 50 cent in 33 feet road Valapuram 1 acre on 60 feet road Nayappakkam for Industries.ct : 9381093477

SRIPERUMPUDUR MANNUR Ashtalakshmi Nagar 2400 SqFt DTCP Approved Near Hundai Glovis. 9840941952

FARMHOUSE / LAND /RESORTS

NEAR MAHINDRA World City & SP Kovil : Very Close to Proposed CPRR (Chennai Peripheral Ring Road – Katupalli / Ennore Port to Mahabalipuram New Ring Road) : – Premium 1,2 & 5 Acres. Assured Good ROI Cosmic Properties 90477 34343

ARCOT NEAR 50cents Suitable for Farm 26Lakh Contact: 9360024487

ECR HAPPY Bay Beach Layout 10 grounds Mugaiyur village Cheyyur Taluk Chingleput Dist. Ph: 9381897124

ECR–MAHABALIPURAM PREMIUM–PLOTS Backwater & Hill Sunset Views Ideal for Villa Development. Ct– 9500095421

ECR GREEN Acre Farm Poonthandalam Village Half Acre 1.5Crs. 9940181752

GENERAL

WALAJAPET DTCP plots 1.3km frm Bangalore highway 9840170230/ 6379894902

RESIDENTIAL

NORTH EAST corner 2165sqf behind vr mall vgn. ch40 anna nagar 32k sqf contact 9884388335

RESIDENTIAL FLAT – NEW

TVS PENNISULA BUA1896sft 758UDs 1.96cr New 3BHK Mugalivakam 9840573876

✔ **VALASARAVAKAM 2BHK** 2 Flats Build 1005sft Lift CP Rs.9999/Sq. 9361475535

READY TO move Kundrathur, Manancheri 828 sq.ft., 2 bhk BNC Nagappa shelterrs 9566264333.

MYLAI & Ramapuram Brand New 2&3 BHK,CCP,Lift, Quality Work. 9884438888

BESANT NGR Premium 4BHK Kalakshetra Colony 2560SF 22000psf 86678 93964

VIRUGAMBAKKAM @ Venkatesa Nagar Ext n. 3 BHK, Stilt + 3 Floors, 1455 & 1370 sft, CCP, Lift, Power backup, Meenam Constructions (P) Ltd. 93810 40832 / 93446 33544

ADYAR, READY to Move 2BHK, 966 SFT, 2nd floor, Solar, Access Entry, Genset, EV, Lift till Terrace, 1.95 Cr, Ph: 9342912618 www.vamanas.co.in

KODAMBAKKAM 3BHK 1508 & 1440 sft. Solar, Access Entry, Genset, EV, Lift till Terrace, SEP 2026. Ph: 93429 12618 www.vamanas.co.in

SALIGRAMAM NEAR Kariappa School premium 3BHK Flats sale. 9962099997

ALWARTHIRUNAGAR, LUXURIOUS 1050sqft , 2BHK, CCP, LIFT, Close to Metro. SRK CONSTRUCTIONS: 9080397355, 9840 957621

READY TO move 3BHK Flat for sale @ Adyar. Ct : 98409 58383

IYYAPPANTHANGAL, OIL Mill Road, 1400Sft, 3 BHK, Lift, CCTV, CCP, Ready to Occupy. Contact: 97897 99552.

NUNGAMBAKKAM NEW Flat 1009 Sft 3BHK Last 1 Flat for Sale/ Possession On Sep '26. Ct:6262575761/ 9840472738

✔ **VALASARAVAKKAM ASHTALAKSHMI** Nagar, 3BHK, CCP, 1700 Sq.ft, 1.80 Cr. Ct:9677019193

NUNGAMBAKKAM FANTASTIC 5BHK Flats Sale (1 Flat in 1 Floor). 9840965103

RESIDENTIAL FLAT – NEW

RA PURAM 6.cr Nungambakam 4.3cr Teynampet 5.2cr 3BHK 220Sft 8148896685

THIRUVANMIYUR PRIME Location LB Rd 2BHK Flats with CCP Lift Etc Ct: 9080824533 / 9840602954

NEWLY CONSTRUCTED 3 & 2 BHK Fully Furnished flat for sale @ Anna Nagar, Chennai–40. Ct–9444052987

Kolathur Next to DRJ Hospital
Deluxe 2 & 3 BHK Flats @ 73.5* onwards with Double Carparking, Lift, CCTV & Inverter
DEVI BUILDERS:
9840145991
9840281351

MANAPAKKAM: MODERN 2BHK Compact Homes at IPS Colony. Minutes from Trade Centre, MIOT Hospitals, Metro & Airport. Ready for fitout. Starting From Rs. 79L. (819–832). Ct: 044 – 4949 4468

PERUNGUDI: READY to Occupy Premium 2 & 3 BHK Lake View Apartments at Perungudi, OMR (Behind world Trade Centre). Special Price Rs. 1.10 Cr Onwards. Limited time Offer. Ct: 044 – 4618 4486

PALLAVARAM: PREMIUM Ready–to–move 2 & 3 BHK Apartments from Rs. 58L. Possession in just 10 days! Hurry, limited units! (962 to 1431). Ct: 044 – 4949 4512

LAST CHANCE – PADUR, OMR! Sea–Facing 3 BHK Apartments. 1455 sq.ft. Opp. Chettinad Healthcare. Rs. 93 Lakhs onwards. Handover in Just 10 Days! Don't Miss! Call: 044–4949 4514

THORAIPAKKAM: READY to Occupy Lake Facing Homes 2 & 4 BHK from Rs. 88L. Handover in just 15 days (1033 to 2432 sq.ft) Ct: 044 – 4949 4515

GUDUVANCHERRY: OWN a dream home behind SRM College!! 2 & 3 BHK with Rs. 25,000 assured monthly rent! Call: 044–4618 4425

KORATTUR NR.THIRUMANGALAM Metro, 200Ft Rd 1584sft to 2330sft 3BHK Ready 2 Occupy 8124740247, 9489455554

THORAIPAKKAM NEW Customizable 2 / 3 /4 BHK Flat for Sale. 78100 25909

PUZUTHIVAKKAM NEW Customizable 1 / 2 BHK Flat for Sale. Ct:78100 25909

RAMAPURAM NEW Customizable 2 / 3 / 4 BHK flat for sale.Ct: 78100 25909

ALWARTHIRUNAGAR NEW 2 / 3 BHK for sale. Contact: 78100 25909

NANGANALLUR THILLAI Ganga Ngr 450 Sft Cmrcl, 1450 Sft 3 BHK 7200303131

RESIDENTIAL FLAT – OTHERS

OMR PERUNGUDI Prime 600m , 2Bhk 835 SF, Fully Renovated Interiors, Gf with cc,15+yr old, Rate – 82L 9363778077

RESIDENTIAL FLAT – RESALE

APARTMENT WITH 6 flats for sale @Santhoshpuram, nr Medavakkam. Land 1980 sqft. Builtup: 4034 sqft. Rental income: 60,000. Ct: 9585555973.

T NAGAR–CEEBROS Apt 1300 Sqft, UDS–762 Sqft, 3BHK + 2T, 1CC Budget: 2crs. Cosmic Properties: 90805 88930.

KODAMBAKKAM 1BHK 419 SFT, UDS 234, GF, Rs.40L. Ct: 9940251166

RESIDENTIAL FLAT – RESALE

MANAPAKKAM TVS Peninsula 1215sft, 2BHK 1yr, 2Bath, Car Park 9003190991

MUTTUKADU, SPACIOUS 2BHK 1350 sqft Fully Furnished UDS 710 sqft seaside approved with Solar, Car Park, Lift, power backup. 9789522759

THIRUVANMIYUR
Prime Location
Premium 3BHK, 1837Sft, Ist Floor, 888Sft UDS, SeaView from Terrace.
Price: ₹4.30Crs.
Genuine Buyers Only
9886064364

ADYAR 3BHK 1950sft North Face Gym, Swimming Pool 4.45Cr. Ct:9159188888

✔ **VALMIKINAGAR, THIRUVANMIYUR** 3BHK, 1551Sft, 3rd Flr, Lift, Genset, CCP, Rs.2.5 Crore Ct: Sohail 9841012781

ASHOK NAGAR Near Pillar Brand New 4BHK 2750sft East Facing Gym, Swimming Pool Rs.5.45Cr. Ct:9159188888

KATTUPAKKAM NEAR Metro Station, Prime Area, 2BHK, CCP, Bank Loan Property, Ready to Occupy, Immediate Sale. Rs.48 Lacs. Contact: 99404 48473

BARNABY RD Kilpauk Penthouse 3BHK-Study Cp Lft 2434sf 840UDS 9884091114

MYLAPORE KARANEESWAR Koil St Near AIR 450sft, UDS 227sft Un Approved 2nd Floor No Lift 2WP Ct: 9840941952

ANNANAGAR EAST Nr Metro 3BHK Flats 2Units avbl 1500&1200sft UDS 960 & 680.3&2Crs 25yrs Old..Ct 9940173505

MADAMBAKKAM NOOTHENCHERRI Near Bank of Baroda Gated Community 867Sqft 467 UDS 2BHK CCP Lift 9Years Old Loan Arranged. Ct 9840941952

ADYAR NR Shastri Ngr Main Rd 2BH FF Plth 750/HiUDS490 55L 9884000932

PALLIKARANAI IIT Clny Nr MRd 2BHK 865sf BUP 569 UDS CCP 55L 7824935585

BUILDING FOR Sale, Salma Classic Tower Arcot Road, Kodambakkam Land Mark Opp to Padma Ram Kalyana Mandabam, 1st Floor office sq feet 987, UDS 430 4TH Floor sq feet 1217, UDS 450 Residential Flat Second Sale, Lift Facility,Car & Bike Facility Available. Ct: 9840871145/ 9840809250

2BHK VIRUGAMBAKKAM Jains Ashreya, Vembuli Amman kovil st, Block 3, 4th Floor, 855Sft with UDS 419Sft Lif & CCP Rs.80L 9444363429/ 9282122121

ZAMIN PALLARAVAM Dharga Rd 3BHK 1200sft II Floor 92L Nego. 9940884198

OMR THORAIPAKKAM 2BHK 1227Sft UDS 413Sft 9th Flr Lift, CCP. 9841732166

RESIDENTIAL HOUSE

PORUR NR Saravana Stores 3&4BHK Ind.House starts from 1.5Cr. For Booking Call KRE: 8807150099, 9384007499

TRIPLICANE BIG Street– Income Property 3ft passage property. Land 3300 sft (60x55 approx). East facing. G+2 floors, 18 units. Total built–up 8500 sqft. Rental income Rs 2 Lakhs/month. Contact: 98842 99227

CHOOLAIMEDU NEAR Gill Nagar 1200Sqft Indp House for Sale Ct 9884386381

RESIDENTIAL HOUSE

ECR 3800SFT 5BHK Villas At Vettuvankeni @ 3.5Cr, With Lift, OMM Builders. 98419 71947 / 044 – 4806 4520

WALAJABAD TOWN – I.HOUSERS.35L BANK LOAN AVLCt.7604 93 93 93

GUDUVANCHERY PANDUR Villa Sakundha Gated Community 1374sft. 9444874739

ECR PALAVAKKAM On Road Nr.Signal Villa House 1969 Sft Land 2800 Sft Build,800Sft UDS,G+1 with Lift.VGP Layout Beach side, 4.1Cr. 9176304651

KILPAUK HALLS–ROAD 3750Sft Spacious G+2 Hi–End Villa 5BHK 2CCP Price Rs.6.8Crs Call: 9886064364

ECR INJAMBAKAM 9.5Grd Luxry Bungalow All Amenity 9884588199/ 9841277857

PUZHUTHIVAKAM INDIVIDUAL house for sale 3Nos 4BHK 3BHK 2BHK 9380914556

ECR KANATHUR Sneha Garden 8Grs S/F Bldg & Land Appd Owner. 9677219352

VILLA AT Kanathur, ECR Road, 700M from Sea and 150M from Road. Grd Floor and 1st Floor built up area 2425 sft Land 1744 sft. Ct: 9884065411

ECR AKKARAI Ind House 2530sft Land 2500sft Built–up Rs.2 Cr 9884511238

MADAMBAKAM NOOTHANCHERI Land 1069sf Bldup 1722sf 9841708030/ 9889889194

SANTHOME HIGH Rd RESI/COMM 1.25Gr 5000sft G+2 Bltup 2CPLift 9677031181

Kolathur Shasthri Ngr, Opp.Meredian Hosp. Rd, Back side of RTO office, G+2, Duplex type, Individual house, Approx., Rs. 2.50Cr. Ct: 95000 77966

PERUNGALATHUR G+2 L–925sft, B–1637sft,CCP,90% Loan Arranged. 6369128844

ADYAR LAND 3220sft individual bungalow built–up5000sft CP. 6379446589

KUNDRATHUR IND House 4BHK Nr.Regd Off, CCP, Ready to Occupy. 9884514646

ANNANAGAR POSH area 60' Road corner 1000sft b/up 3600sft 5BHK furnished G+3 Solar 2CCP 6.9Cr. 9840075040

ECR – Muttukadu – 4 BHK Villa 3900 sft. Resale – Contact – 9865176828

RESIDENTIAL LAND

UTHIRAMERUR NR New Highway Road 2.5 Acres 2L/Cent Ct: 8608539545.

SEMBAKM TAMBRM Velchry Rd Durga Clny 2Grd Super Plot CMDA 8220521047

VEPPAMPATTU PLOT, Balaji Nagar, Nr New Bridge, 2940sft. Ct: 9444675720

KUNRATHUR PERIYAR Nagar Rahmaniya Nagar 2Plots each 2405sft 9444165153

OMR NAVALLUR Nr 30mtr Haris Garden DTCP & RERA 9962772672 / 9444282372

CHENGALPATU–PALUR BYE Pass On Road Apprvd Plot. 9500034742/ 7200856789

PADAPPAI 4087 sq land (with compound wall) for sale in M.I.T Nagar, 0.8km from Mn rd at Rs2800/ sqft. No brkrs. Ph: 9444407487

WEST MAMBALAM, Near T.Nagar, Land with Bungalow, 1.5 Grounds. Bysani Property Advisors: 9789000737

MAHALINGAPURAM – Nungambakkam Land with Bungalow, 1.5 Grounds. Bysani Property Advisors: 9789000737

ANNA NAGAR Nr 18th Mn Rd 1.3 ground 30ft Rd. Ct: 9994661145 No Brokers

ECR: SEA side 3600 Sq ft, DTCP & CRZ approved plots @ Rs.49.9LAKHS, Nr.Koovathur, securedGated Community & Bank Loan Avl.Ct: 7540054006

RESIDENTIAL LAND

MAHINDRA CITY DTCP Freehold Plots 705 – 3071sft Next to Club, Aqualily, School 96262–92424/98840–30000

THIRUMULAIVAYAL BEHND All India Radio 1000&1250sf, Rs.2200/– 9380709073

URAPAKAM 1800SF DTCP 50Yr Docs Boundary Patta 70L NO BROKER 9079671667

GUDUVANCHERY,URAPPAKKAM PLOTS Prime location Clear title – 9841783303

EKKADUTHANGAL POSH Location Nr Defense Colony,Plots for Sale 2132 & 2552sq.ft, Rs.9999 per sft. 6379411008

ECR PREMIUM Plot for Sale 1.5Grd Beachside, Prime Location Investment/Residence Ct: 8680081110

KEELKATTALAI 2465SF 2.4Cr 41x60 No Brokers Ph: 9940251166, 9940261166

ADAMBAKKAM 2400SFT, Rs.12000/sft, Approved, 30ft Road. Ct: 94449 27746

VELACHERY RING Rd 6 Grd on 200 Ft Rd Rs.30Cr. No Broker Ct: 9840125863

AVADI KANNAPALAYAM CMDA Approved Land 5000 Sq.Ft for sale. 7010756651

THIRUKAZHUKUNDRAM, EAGLETOWN Gated Community 1.5 grounds approved plot,near Esthell Resort/ Anupuram township.Off 100ft road. 9789522759.

ECR NEELANKARAI Seaside 2Grd N/F Rs 3.75Crs/Gr. AR Realty 9884053786

OMR THORIAPAKAM CMDA Apd N/E Cornr 40Ft Rd 1Gr&5Gr 4Cr/Grd. 9380444555

ECR KOTTIVAKKAM AGS colony around 2500sft Aprd Brks Exe :98402 65559

NOOMBAL 1GR 30ft Rd CMDA Connect to PH&Arcot Rd 9840144880/ 7200151525

NEELANGARAI, ECR
300 MRTS FROM BEACH
2.21 GROUNDS
CMDA APPROVED PLOTS
₹3.25 CRS PER GROUND
GATED COMMUNITY
GRANITE INTERNAL ROADS
LANDSCAPE GARDEN

74185 67812
RERA NO: TN/29/Layout/4294/2024, TN/29/Layout/4161/2024, TN/29/Layout/4160/2024
www.rera.tn.gov.in

Vandalur Near Rathanamangalam 2730, 1365sqft Appd plot. 9841946369

2400 SQFT East facing plot on OMR next to Siruseri SIPCOT new TCS, near Metro &Malls 14K psqft 9884561690

ECR NEMELI Village Beach Opp Side 8850sf Rs 50 Lakh per ground 100 metres from ECR 8754501224 / 9841293555

ANNA NGR TNHB 20th Mn Rd 3462Sf N

INBRIEF

Bhadrachalam temple redevelopment work begins

The much-awaited redevelopment works at the renowned Sree Seetha Ramachandra Swamy temple in the temple town of Bhadrachalam in Telangana commenced on Saturday, marking the start of the Phase-I works. In March this year, the State government accorded administrative sanction for ₹351 crore for the redevelopment and rejuvenation of the historic 17th-century temple in Bhadrachalam. A comprehensive master plan has been approved in three phases.

Five youth fined in Munnar for reckless driving; car seized

Five youth were spotted hanging out of the windows and the sunroof of a moving car along the Gap Road stretch of the Munnar-Bodimettu highway on Saturday. Upon noticing the dangerous behaviour, Munnar Dy.SP S. Chandrakumar intercepted the vehicle and had it moved to the Munnar police station. Mr. Chandrakumar stated that fine was imposed on the offenders and an awareness class will be conducted for them.

There are no grounds to book actor Tiny Tom: Kerala Police

The Kerala Police have decided not to register a case over a complaint filed by actor Ansiba Hassan against fellow actor Tiny Tom, accusing him of making communal and defamatory remarks against her. In a report submitted to the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Ernakulam Central, the station house officer of the Kadavanthra police station stated that the investigators could not find solid grounds to register a FIR after a preliminary investigation.

SIT set to submit Sabarimala case report to HC tomorrow

Probe team questions key accused Unnikrishnan Potti again; it looks at board's decision to resend temple's gold-plated copper panels to a firm in Chennai, though they were refurbished in 2016

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala High Court-appointed Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the Sabarimala gold theft case has reportedly questioned Unnikrishnan Potti, the prime accused, again, ostensibly to tie up any possible loose ends concerning the previous Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB)'s decision to re-send the temple's gold-plated copper panels to Smart Creations, a metal works factory in Chennai, for electroplating in 2025.

Probe on: The SIT is probing whether fake defects were cited to send the panels at the Ayyappa temple for replating. LEJU KAMAL

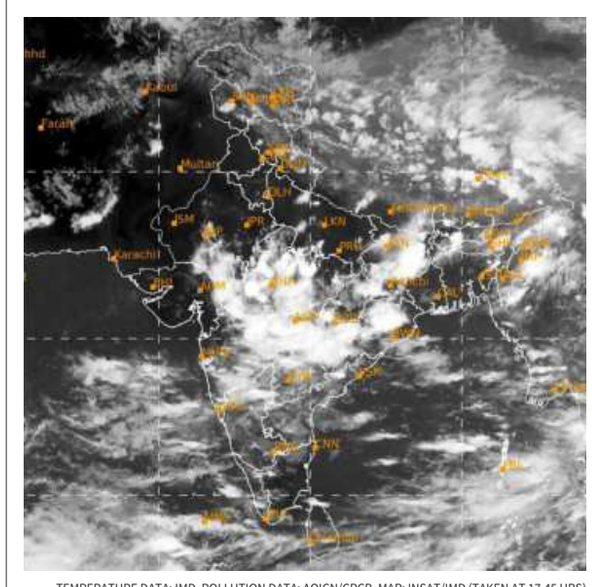
The SIT is scheduled to submit its latest report in the case to the High Court on Monday.

According to officials privy to the investigation, the SIT was reportedly probing whether the previous TDB administration under the LDF government had cited non-existent defects to dispatch the gold-plated copper panels covering the Dwarapalaka statues to Smart Creations for replating to facilitate the suspected pilferage of gold through an in-house chemical process.

They noted that SIT officials were sceptical of the decision's authenticity, given that the TDB had sent the same gold-plated copper panels to Smart Creations in 2019 for repair and refurbishment. The firm then issued a warranty, guaranteeing that the panels would retain their golden sheen for at least 40 years. The firm also promised to repair or replace the panels free of charge if the warranty failed.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: AQICN/CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.45 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Konkan & Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	35.8	27.3	Kurnool	—	36.2	26.9
Ahmedabad	—	40.8	29.5	Lucknow	—	41.9	29.5
Aizawl	—	32.0	23.8	Madurai	0.4	38.6	24.8
Bengaluru	—	30.6	21.3	Mangaluru	13.2	31.7	22.9
Bhopal	—	36.3	24.8	Mumbai	0.5	33.4	25.9
Bhubaneswar	—	36.0	27.6	Mysuru	—	32.0	20.0
Chandigarh	—	40.2	27.4	New Delhi	—	41.3	30.8
Chennai	—	38.8	28.2	Patna	—	39.6	30.8
Coimbatore	2.4	34.0	22.8	Port Blair	16.3	30.0	24.2
Dehradun	2.3	37.0	26.3	Prayagraj	—	43.2	28.8
Gangtok	14.2	24.8	18.8	Puducherry	—	37.9	28.8
Goa	15.4	30.5	23.8	Pune	1.5	33.5	25.2
Guwahati	—	34.0	27.4	Raipur	—	38.9	26.6
Hubballi	—	30.0	23.0	Ranchi	—	32.5	24.1
Hyderabad	—	31.2	26.0	Shillong	0.1	28.1	17.0
Imphal	—	30.2	25.0	Shimla	12.6	27.8	16.2
Jaipur	—	39.8	29.4	Srinagar	0.4	33.0	18.0
Kochi	10.2	29.2	25.0	Thiruvananthapuram	10.4	31.5	25.4
Kohima	—	26.0	19.0	Tiruchirappalli	—	39.3	27.0
Kolkata	—	36.2	27.8	Vijayawada	22.5	33.0	25.6
Kozhikode	2.5	34.6	26.0	Visakhapatnam	—	31.4	28.5

(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	19	20	37	31	80	—
Bengaluru	10	32	60	—	103	—
Chennai	6	6	30	35	286	—
Delhi	—	13	10	158	300	■
Hyderabad	11	16	61	65	56	—
Kolkata	9	20	25	77	92	—
Lucknow	8	26	43	104	93	—
Mumbai	7	11	56	31	70	—
Pune	—	30	80	35	50	—
Visakhapatnam	8	26	43	104	93	—

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Modinagar, Uttar Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 261 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Ambernath, Maharashtra recorded a healthy AQI score of 25

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

ED attack case: plea in HC to cancel bail

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has moved the Kerala High Court seeking the cancellation of bail granted to Harish Kumar, the ninth accused in the attack on Enforcement Directorate officials, during the raid on former Chief Minister of Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan's residence in May.

The bail was granted by the Thiruvananthapuram Sessions Court on June 24.

The ED expressed apprehension that the prosecutor of the Sessions Court may have misinformed the court when the bail plea was considered, which resulted in the court granting him bail. The agency suspects that there could be other leaders who have called for the alleged attack, and they have not been investigated.

A PIL is also pending before the High Court, seeking a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the attack.

The court has asked the State to file a statement regarding the steps taken after the FIR was registered for the offence.

Farmers block YSRCP leaders in Amaravati

V. Raghavendra
VIJAYAWADA

Tension flared up in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh, as a large number of farmers blocked the entry of YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders, including Perni Venkataramaiah, Ambati Rambabu, Lella Appi Reddy and Devineni Avinash, into Undavalli, Penumaka and other villages on Saturday.

The YSRCP leaders, under the banner of the CRDA Rythu Parirakshana Committee, wanted to visit the villages to highlight the injustices allegedly meted out to the farmers who have parted with their land for the construction of Amaravati. Several farmers blocked the entry of the YSRCP leaders into their villages, strongly objecting to the latter's claim of fighting on their behalf. The farmers insisted that the YSRCP leaders had no right to visit Amaravati, accusing them of creating unrest for political gains.

The situation became tense due to stone-pelting.

They eventually left as the farmers refused to let them inspect the lands.

Tax rates on low-alcohol liquor to be included in Finance Bill

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Amid the political row over lowering the sales tax on low-alcoholic beverages in Kerala, the revised tax rates have been included in the Finance (No. 3) Bill, 2026, which will be introduced in the Legislative Assembly on July 1.

Section 3 of the Bill says the words 'low-alcoholic beverages' is to be inserted after 'horti-wine' in the Kerala General Sales Tax Act, 1963.

The rates have been pegged at 120% and 175% respectively for alcoholic beverages with alcohol strength ranging from 0.5% v/v (volume by volume) to 10% v/v, and those with strength above 10% v/v and up to 20% v/v. These were the rates announced by Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan in the Revised Budget.

Gazette notification

At the same time, the specific amendment will not come into force immediately even if the Bill gets passed. The Bill notes that it will come into force when the government notifies it in the official gazette.

The announcement had kicked up a major political storm with the Opposition Left Democratic Front (LDF) alleging that it promotes alcohol addiction.

Mr. Satheesan had informed the Assembly on Wednesday that a final decision rests with the UDF. Mr. Satheesan had also pointed out that low-alcohol beverages as a new category was notified by the LDF government as part of its 2022-23 liquor policy.

Farm fresh

Tradition revived: A farmer uses a bullock-driven wooden 'ghani' to extract oil through traditional methods on his field on the outskirts of Warangal in Telangana. The age-old practice is seeing renewed interest as consumers seek healthier options. NAGARA GOPAL

Global bids invited for Amaravati riverfront plan

Sambasiva Rao M.
AMARAVATI

The Amaravati Growth and Infrastructure Corporation Limited (AGICL) has invited global bids to appoint a consultant for preparing a comprehensive master plan, detailed project report (DPR) and financial plan for the proposed Amaravati Riverfront Development Project along the Krishna River, with implementation support for a pilot project targeted for completion before Krishna Pushkaralu-2028.

According to the Request for Proposal (RFP), the project is a part of the Andhra Pradesh government's vision to develop Amaravati into a world-class, sustainable and future-ready capital city.

A satellite map showing the location of the proposed Amaravati Riverfront pilot project. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The proposed project covers nearly 27 km of the Krishna River, extending from Undavalli in the east to Vykuntapuram in the west, including seven river islands spread over about 20 square kilometres.

As the first phase, a priority pilot project has been identified at Uddandirayunipalem.

The selected consultant will prepare the master plan, engineering designs, landscape concepts, environmental management strategies and implementation roadmap. The consultant will also assist AGICL in obtaining statutory approvals, preparing tender documents, supporting bid management and supervising implementation of the pilot project.

Kerala HC seeks report on 'gold theft' from *Ezharapponnana*

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Kerala High Court has ordered the Chief Vigilance and Security Officer of the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) to inspect the temple registers as well as the *Ezharapponnana* of Ettumanur Mahadeva Temple and to submit a report with his opinion and findings on allegations pertaining to the gold plates on the elephant statuettes.

The *Ezharapponnana* (which translates to seven-and-a-half golden elephants) consists of eight statuettes of elephants – seven of them two feet high and the eighth one, half the height. The officer was also directed to use the services of a goldsmith so that the weight, quality, and originality of the gold are duly examined. The Division Bench of Justices Raja Vijayaraghavan and K.V. Jayakumar was considering the *suo motu* case based on a request by a devotee for an inquiry into the suspected misappropriation of gold on the *Ezharapponnana* and the alleged illegal occupation of temple properties.

The *Ezharaponnana* idols at the Mahadeva temple, Ettumanur, Kottayam.

The complaint further said that during the repair works carried out on the gold plates covering the *Ezharapponnana*, the original plates were removed and replaced with copper or other low-value metals.

The Administrative Officer and the Assistant Devaswom Commissioner had filed reports stating no records indicated any maintenance work or any misappropriation on the *Ezharapponnana*.

Telangana govt. launches e-autos to ease travel woes of persons with disabilities

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government on Saturday launched e-autos for 14 neighbourhood centres as part of its efforts to strengthen welfare services for persons with disabilities.

Inaugurating the e-autos on the birth anniversary of Helen Keller, Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Dansari Anasuya, popularly known as Seethakka, said the newly launched e-autos would address transportation challenges faced by families and ensure free door-step transport for children requiring regular therapy and training, particularly those with autism and intellectual disabilities.

The government views persons with disabilities as equal partners in society, Seethakka said. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Launching the service at Jyotirao Phule Praja Bhavan, she also announced that the government would further strengthen neighbourhood centres and establish new facilities wherever necessary to ensure that disability-related services are available closer to people's homes.

Stating that the government views persons with disabilities as equal partners in society rather than as recipients of charity, the Minister said the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP),which has been playing a key role in women's empowerment for over two decades, had also been entrusted with disability welfare initiatives.

More than 13,000 Self-Help Groups (SHG) of persons with disabilities (PwD), with a membership exceeding 82,000, have been formed across the State under the aegis of SERP, she said.

Ms. Seethakka said the Community Managed Rehabilitation Services programme was currently being implemented through 74 neighbourhood centres spread across 26 districts.

From Page One

Ram Temple row: Trust general secretary quits

However, the war of words over the episode intensified on Saturday, with the Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav vowing to "restore and nurture the eternal glory of Ayodhya as a centre of faith and devotion".

He claimed that a new SP-led Uttar Pradesh government will develop 'Ayodhya' as a unique and exemplary religious city, where devotees will experience true spirituality.

Congress leaders continued to demand the arrest of Mr. Rai and alleged that the government was shielding him.

"Champat Rai is a small fish of the whole nexus, the real thieves are sitting in Delhi. The whole BJP-RSS ecosystem stole money from common devotees and used it to generate hate in society against marginalised sections," senior U.P. Congress leader Anil Yadav said.

It was on June 25 that the Ayodhya police registered a first information report (FIR) in the case, on the basis of a petition from the Trust. Eight accused were booked on charges of embezzlement, criminal conspiracy, fraud and breach of Trust under sections 305, 306, 317, 317 (5), 61 and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

All the eight - Avinash Shukla, Anukalp Mishra, Luvkush Mishra, Manish Kumar Yadav, Karunesh Pandey Rama Shankar Mishra, Subhash Srivastava, Rama Shankar Yadav alias Tinnu - were arrested the same day and sent to judicial custody for three days till June 29.

Maharashtra TET put off over 'paper leak'

"Officials of the Maharashtra State Examination Council [MSEC] were immediately called to the spot. They verified the seized papers. During the investigation, it was observed that some of the questions found with the suspects and the questions in the TET paper were the same," the government statement said.

"The process of organising an examination of this scale typically takes around three weeks. Candidates who had already registered for the examination will not have to register again. Since the candidates are not at fault, no re-registration fee will be charged," MSEC Deputy Commissioner Priya Shinde said. A first information report (FIR) has been registered against three persons, she said, adding that strict action will be taken against those found responsible.

The new date for the examination and other related information will be published on the official website of the MSEC.

The Chief Minister constituted a Special Investigation Team under Thane Joint CP Panjabrao Ugale to probe the paper leak. He also directed School Education Minister Dada Bhuse and DGP Sadanand Date to take strict action against the culprits. Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said the accused should be booked under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA).

Screenplay maestro and hero takes his last bow

Bhagyaraj began working in the Tamil film industry in the mid-1970s as an assistant director under his guide and mentor Bharathiraja, working in iconic films such as *16 Vayathinilale, Kizhakke Pogum Rail,* and *Sigappu Rojakkal*. He developed his skills as a dialogue and screenplay writer.

His debut as a hero was in the movie *Pudhiya Vaarpugal,* co-starring Rati Agnihotri, and his directorial debut was with the film *Suvarillatha Chithirangal*.

In 1981, he married co-star Praveena, but she died in 1983. The next year, Bhagyaraj married Poornima, his co-star from the movie *Darling, Darling, Darling*.

Hindi remakes

Bhagyaraj has directed a total of 27 feature films across the Tamil and Hindi languages. When the hit Tamil film *Oru Kaidhiyin Diary* (1985) – originally directed by Bharathiraja and starring Kamal Haasan – was remade in Hindi as *Aakhree Raasta* (1986), Bhagyaraj was roped in as the director. For the Hindi version, Bollywood icon Amitabh Bachchan stepped into the shoes of the lead.

Following this success, Bhagyaraj went on to direct *Mr. Bechara* (1996), the Hindi remake of his own hit Tamil directorial venture, *Veetla Visheshanga* (1994), casting Anil Kapoor and Sridevi in the lead roles.

He later helmed *Papa the Great* (2000), a Hindi remake of his 1998 Tamil film *Vettiya Madichu Kattu,* starring Krishan Kumar and Nagma. However, this particular venture failed to make a mark at the box office.

In the subsequent phase of his directorial career, the only film that stood out as noteworthy was *Chokka Thangam*.

Beyond his work behind the camera, Bhagyaraj has had a prolific acting career, appearing in over 80 films across Tamil and other regional languages, in lead, supporting, and cameo roles. Demonstrating his true versatility, he also composed the music for five films.

His corneas were donated to an eyebank in Chennai.

(With inputs from K. Muralidharan and Ramya Kannan)

Modi hands over 'Made in India' vessel to Seychelles

Press Trust of India
VICTORIA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday handed over a 'Made in India' Fast Patrol Vessel to the Seychelles Coast Guard, reaffirming New Delhi's commitment to strengthening the archipelago nation's maritime capabilities.

Mr. Modi and Seychelles President Patrick Herminie participated in the handover ceremony at the Coast Guard Base in Victoria, Seychelles, during Mr. Modi's three-day visit to the Indian Ocean archipelago.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the vessel, *PS LESPWAR*, will strengthen Seychelles' maritime surveillance and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) patrol capabilities.

The MEA said Mr. Modi also handed over six ambulances, 10 utility vehicles and five laser radial boats.

"Together as partners. Stronger as one," the MEA said in a post on X, adding that the two countries continue to deepen their defence partnership under India's Vision MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions).

SIR enumeration in Delhi and four States to begin on June 30

There are about 19.79 crore voters in Karnataka, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, and Delhi; final electoral lists post the SIR will be out on Oct. 7

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The enumeration phase for the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Karnataka, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, and Delhi is set to begin from June 30.

There is a total of 19,78,94,740 voters in these four States and Delhi as of May 12. The final voter lists for these States post the SIR process will be published on October 7.

The ongoing third phase of the SIR is being conducted in 16 States and three Union Territories. Over 3.94 lakh Booth Level Officers (BLOs) will go house to house to verify 36.73 crore electors, assisted by 3.42 lakh Booth Level Agents (BLAs) appointed by political parties in this phase.

Pruning the rolls

With this phase, the exercise will cover the entire country except Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. The SIR schedule for these will be announced later after considering the completion of Phase-II of the Census and due consideration of the weather in the upper reaches or snow bound areas, the Election Commission of India (EC) said.

When the second phase of the SIR was announced for 12 States/UTs by the EC on October 27, 2025, their cumulative voter base stood at more than 50.99 crore. It now stands at 45.81 crore post the SIR, a decline of over 5.18 crore or a 10.2% cut in the electoral rolls of these States and UTs.

With a number of those States going to the polls in subsequent months, the SIR exercise triggered acrimony between the Opposition and the poll body, and has been challenged in courts as well.

In March, however, the Supreme Court unanimously upheld the constitutional validity of the EC's move to carry out the SIR.

Door-to-door: In the ongoing third phase of the SIR, over 3.94 lakh Booth Level Officers will verify 36.73 crore electors. G. RAMAKRISHNA

NIA chargesheets 3 more accused in Red Fort blast case

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

With this, 13 persons, including the prime accused who died in the blast, have been chargesheeted

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has chargesheeted three more accused, including an absconder, in connection with the November 2025 car bomb explosion near the Red Fort.

In its supplementary charge sheet, the NIA has named Zameer Ahmad Ahanger, Tufail Ahmad Bhat, and Muzafar Ahmad alias Faraz/Zafar, all from Jammu and Kashmir, as accused. This takes the number of persons chargesheeted to 13, including the prime accused, Umer Un Nabi, who died in the blast.

"Absconding accused Muzafar Ahmed, a paediatrician (MBBS, MD), has been identified as the elder brother of co-accused Dr. Adeel Ahmed Rather and a founding member of Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH) – an offshoot of al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS)," the agency said.

According to the NIA, Mr. Muzafar could be one of the prime architects, along with co-accused Umer, Muzammil, Adeel, and Mufti Irfan, of the conspiracy that led to the vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (IED) blast on November 10, 2025.

"One of the founding members of AGuH Interim, Mr. Muzafar, had attended the secret Eidgah meeting at Srinagar in June 2022, during which the terror module AGuH Interim was established," it said.

The agency alleged that Mr. Muzafar was deeply involved in the manufacture, testing and safekeeping of TATP (triacetone triperoxide)-based IEDs at a clandestine facility run by Umer and Muzammil at Al-Falah University in Haryana's Faridabad. A non-bailable warrant has been issued against him.

As per the NIA, Mr. Zameer is an Overground Worker (OGW) of AGuH Interim. "Tufail, a former OGW of the proscribed Lashkar-e-Taiba terror organisation, had procured ammunition and delivered them to the main accused Dr. Umer Un Nabi," it said.

Parliament was misled by govt. on casualties during Operation Sindoor: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

> ...the House was told our soldiers suffered no loss... a year later, the govt. itself released names of 6 soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice. Is this how the govt. chooses to honour them?
>
> **GAURAV GOGOI**
> Congress MP

A day after the government officially released the names of the soldiers who died during Operation Sindoor, the Congress on Saturday accused Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh of misleading Parliament by stating that no Indian soldier had died during the military operation.

The government's disclosure had exposed a contradiction between the Defence Minister's statement in Parliament and the official record, the party said, demanding the Centre place the complete facts relating to the operation before the House during the forthcoming monsoon session.

The Congress's deputy leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi said that during the parliamentary debate on Operation Sindoor, he had urged the Defence Minister to present "the complete truth" before the Parliament and the nation.

"Instead, the House was unequivocally told that our soldiers had suffered no loss," he said in a post on X. A year later, the government itself had officially released the names of six personnel who had made "the supreme sacrifice" during the operation, Mr. Gogoi added.

'Stark contradiction'

"The government's own admission exposes a stark contradiction. Parliament was misled on a matter of the highest national importance. The families of our martyrs deserve the truth. Our brave soldiers deserve to have their sacrifice acknowledged with honesty and dignity. Is this how the government chooses to honour those who gave their lives in service of the nation?" he said.

Congress general secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala also attacked the Centre, alleging that it had failed to speak the truth even on the issue of soldiers' sacrifices. "The age of a lie is short, the truth of martyrdom is indelible. Those who do not speak the truth even for martyrdom, what respect will they show to the martyrs! Those who shamelessly lie in the temple of democracy, who will believe them!" Mr. Surjewala said on X.

Casualties were an inevitable possibility in military operations, senior Congress leader and Chandigarh MP Manish Tewari said, questioning why the government had sought to conceal the facts.

"In a kinetic action casualties do happen. Why obfuscate the facts and dissimulate, and that too to Parliament – the supreme legislative institution of the nation?" he said.

"If there are some other facts pertaining to Operation Sindoor, government should squarely put them on the table of Parliament during the ensuing monsoon session without demur," Mr. Tewari said.

Defence Minister's remarks being taken out of context: govt.

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Saturday rejected the "misleading social media claims" that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had stated that no Indian soldier was killed during Operation Sindoor, asserting that his remarks in Parliament had been selectively quoted and stripped of their context.

On July 28, 2025, while speaking before the Lok Sabha, Rajnath Singh stated that no Indian soldiers were harmed during Operation Sindoor. While speaking for 55 minutes during the 16-hour-long discussion, he said, "If you want to raise a question, then ask whether any of our brave soldiers were harmed in this operation. The answer is, no, none of our soldiers were harmed."

"When the objectives are high then our attention should not be on irrelevant issues. Because by focusing on irrelevant issues at times, our attention gets diverted from important issues related to national security and morale of soldiers," he had said.

'Misrepresented words'

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) clarified in a statement that certain social media posts had misrepresented the Defence Minister's address in Parliament, by isolating a portion of his speech to falsely suggest he denied any Indian military casualties during the cross-border operation.

According to Saturday's clarification, Mr. Singh's remarks were specifically intended to counter a widely circulated false narrative at the time claiming that Indian Air Force pilots had been killed during the operation. "It was in direct reference to this specific and mischievous narrative that the Defence Minister made the statement in question," the MoD said, adding that his remarks were a targeted response to false claims and not a denial of casualties suffered by the armed forces.

The statement emphasised that the Defence Minister's address in Parliament highlighted the success of Operation Sindoor, during which Indian forces carried out precision strikes against terror infrastructure and military targets across the border. It said the operation resulted in the elimination of more than 100 terrorists and Pakistani soldiers, while inflicting significant damage on Pakistani air bases and military infrastructure along the Line of Control.

Despite dip in global fuel prices, Centre is denying relief: Kharge

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday accused the Narendra Modi government of refusing to pass on the benefit of falling global crude oil prices to consumers, alleging that the Centre was treating the public as a source of tax revenue rather than providing relief.

In a post on X, Mr. Kharge said international crude oil prices had fallen to pre-West Asia war levels, but petrol, diesel and LPG prices remained high.

Describing it as the BJP's "habit of looting and pickpocketing", he alleged that while crude oil prices had tumbled, the government had continued to "tighten the reins" on household savings instead of reducing fuel prices.

Posing a series of questions to the Centre, Mr. Kharge said that when the conflict in West Asia had pushed crude oil prices to about $138 a barrel, petrol was selling at a retail price of ₹94.77 a litre and diesel at ₹87.67 a litre. With crude oil now down to about $70.71 a barrel, petrol was still being sold at ₹102.12 a litre and diesel at ₹95.20 a litre, he said.

Plea in SC seeks fire safety protocol for high-risk buildings

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking the creation of a National Minimum Fire and Life Safety Framework for high-risk public occupancy premises, including schools, coaching centres, hotels, hospitals, and commercial complexes.

The petition, filed by advocate Narendra Kumar Goswami, comes in the wake of two devastating fire incidents in June – the Malviya Nagar guest house fire in Delhi and the Aliganj coaching centre fire in Lucknow, which together resulted in at least 37 deaths.

Mr. Goswami has argued that the recurring pattern of preventable fire fatalities constitutes a systemic constitutional failure.

"The right to life under Article 21 is not a right to be rescued after the fire; it is a right not to be knowingly exposed to preventable fire-death by a regulatory State that has the power, the codes, and the duty to prevent such danger," the petition said.

Rescue operations under way at the building where a massive fire erupted in Aliganj, Lucknow, a few days ago. ANI

The plea sought directions from the court to the government to introduce a system of time-bound fire and electrical safety audits for high-risk public premises; create a centralised, public digital portal displaying valid Fire NOCs, occupancy certificates, and audit compliance status; prohibit the use of basements, rooftops, and temporary structures for classrooms, coaching, or public assembly without explicit safety approval; introduce tamper-proof, QR-coded fire safety certificates carrying severe penal consequences for false certification; constitute District Fire and Life Safety Enforcement Committees headed by District Magistrates; and establish a strict liability compensation protocol for victims of fires occurring in non-compliant premises.

The plea said isolated FIRs and post-facto inquiry committees were constitutionally insufficient.

The petitioner has also asked the Supreme Court to retain a "continuing mandamus" of the fire safety issue until the first national audit cycle and public disclosure portal are fully operational.

States seek review of wages, funding pattern for new rural job scheme

Four States objected to the scheme's blackout period during peak agricultural season; Jharkhand and Punjab demanded wages in line with market conditions, shows Centre's response to RTI plea seeking records of consultations on VB-G RAM G

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

With the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G) for rural employment set to come into effect on July 1, at least five States have sought a revision of wage rates and four had flagged reservations over the provision of 60 non-working days during the peak agricultural season. Three States, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh – both ruled by the BJP – and Jharkhand have explicitly asked for a reconsideration of the proposed change in the funding pattern.

The Union Rural Development Ministry shared this information on a Right to Information (RTI) application filed by Chakradhar Buddha of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI). Mr. Buddha had asked for records relating to meetings and consultations organised by the Union Government with the States regarding VB-G RAM G and the transition from the preceding Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to the new scheme.

Cause for concern: At least five States sought a revision of wage rates and four flagged reservations over the provision of 60 non-working days during the peak agricultural season. ARUN KULKARNI

In its reply, the government shared responses of only 13 States. Of them, almost all States had pointed to delays in wage and related payments, seeking early clearance of dues.

As per the interim allocation made under VB-G RAM G, Bihar will have to pay ₹4,477 crore. As per an analysis done by NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, this amount is inadequate to keep the government's promise of providing 125 days of work. The analysis estimates that Bihar would have to pay ₹15,939 crore to achieve this goal. Similarly, in the case of Madhya Pradesh, the burden on the State is ₹4,168 crore, which would suffice only to provide 43 days of work. For 125 days, the financial liability on the State will be ₹20,037 crore. Jharkhand, to meet the 40% share, will have to shell out ₹1,804 crore as per the current allocation, which only suffices for 41 days. It will have to pay ₹9,293 crore to meet the 125-day commitment. Unlike Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, the two BJP-ruled States, Jharkhand explicitly said during the post-legislative consultation that bearing the 40% share will be difficult for the State.

Even States such as Sikkim and Uttarakhand, which fall under the 90:10 Centre-State sharing pattern [applicable to the northeastern and Himalayan States], had sought a review of the clause. Uttarakhand, citing its terrain-related challenges, argued that the Centre should continue bearing 100% of the wage bill.

Of the 13 States, five demanded a hike in the wages of workers. MGNREGA wages were far below the market rate. Bihar sought a hike in the wages from the present ₹255 to ₹413, while Jammu & Kashmir sought an increase in the wages from ₹272 to ₹311. Both Jharkhand and Punjab argued that the wages should be competitive and in line with market conditions.

Blackout period

At least four of the 13 States objected to the scheme's 60-day blackout period, proposed during the peak agricultural season. The government had hailed this break as an important step to make labour easily available, while activists had criticised it, saying it will reduce the workers' bargaining power. Among the States critical of this clause was Punjab, which is heavily dependent on agriculture.

In a policy reversal, Punjab govt. notifies VB-G RAM G scheme; Cong. slams move

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab, which had been opposing the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission Gramin (VB-G RAM G), has notified the rural employment scheme, which will come into force from July 1 in the State.

In December 2025, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's government had convened a special session of the Punjab Assembly, which had unanimously passed a resolution against the VB-G RAM G Act. The Assembly had accused the BJP-led Central government of "taking away" the livelihood of poor and Dalit labourers by scrapping the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) under a "deliberate conspiracy". The House had recommended that the Punjab government urge the Centre to immediately restore MGNREGA to its original rights-based form.

The June 26, 2026 gazette notification presented a U-turn from that position. "In order to align the

Bhagwant Mann

rural development framework with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 by providing an enhanced statutory wage employment guarantee of one hundred and twenty five (125) days in each financial year to such rural households whose adult members volunteer to undertake unskilled manual work... And to focus on employment, growth, convergence and saturation, the government of Punjab is pleased to notify the VB-G RAM G Scheme, Punjab 2026," the notification, issued by the Department of Rural Development and Panchayats, read.

Congress slams AAP

The Opposition Congress slammed the AAP government, asking under what "deal and compromise" with the BJP had it implemented this scheme in Punjab.

The timing of the scheme's implementation was as important as it was surprising, Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring said. "Does the sudden implementation of the scheme have something to do with the ongoing controversy related to the Chief Minister?" he said, referring to the recent sacrilege video controversy linked to Mr. Mann.

Mr. Warring also asked AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal to explain if he approved of Mr. Mann implementing the scheme in Punjab.

"Kejriwal must break his silence and clarify his position", he remarked, adding, "Otherwise it will be established that the AAP actually has struck some opportunistic deal with the BJP".

Leader of Opposition in the Punjab Assembly, Partap Singh Bajwa, asked AAP what had changed between December 2025 and today.

Punjabis deserve answers, he said, asking if the special session was merely political theatrics.

Uddhav calls for 'BJP-mukt' Ram; rejects 'temple-looting Hindutva'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Calling for a 'BJP-mukt' Ram, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday hit out at the BJP, alleging that the saffron party had betrayed the Hindus and Hindutva. He was speaking on the alleged charges of the swindling of donations in Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. "There was an emotionally charged environment [over the Ram Mandir issue]. Hinduhridaysamrat Balasaheb Thackeray had himself toured the State, asking for people's contribution. What happened to the money given by the Shiv Sena? Now, money, gold, silver is being stolen from Ram Mandir. They [the BJP] have betrayed Hindus, Hindutva," he said in a rally at Yavatmal on the first day of his three-day tour.

"Real Hindutva teaches

Uddhav Thackeray

humanity. We reject your [BJP's] Hindutva of looting temples. We want 'BJP-mukt Ram' and Shiv Sena (UBT) will lead such protests," he said.

Appealing to the people of Maharashtra, he said that the voters need to question not just the defected MPs, but also the BJP which wanted to finish off the Opposition. "This is the Maharashtra of Shahu-Phule-Ambedkar. Will it stand against them and ask them questions?" he asked.

Terming the BJP as 'Pakistan Janata Party', he said the party had betrayed not just its allies, but also lord Ram. Slamming the national party over the government's stand that a passport is not a proof of citizenship, he asked if BJP's membership was the only proof of citizenship. " This is not the Bhartiya Janata Party. If it behaves in this manner, we are concerned if it is the Pakistan Janata Party," he said.

'High-level discussion'

Earlier in the day, he took a jibe at reporters when asked about the discussion with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Mr. Fadnavis and Uddhav Thackeray travelled to Nagpur on the same flight on June 26, leading to political speculations.

"We had a high-level discussion. The details of the meeting will be out soon," he said.

Cong. demands dissolution of Ram temple trust over donation 'embezzlement' case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday stepped up its attack on the Union government and the Uttar Pradesh government over the alleged embezzlement of donations made to the Ram temple in Ayodhya, questioning Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence on the issue.

The party reiterated its demand to dissolve the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust.

The Prime Minister owed an explanation to devotees across the country as the Trust had been constituted by the Union government, and its members had been appointed under its watch, senior Congress leader Akhilesh Pratap Singh said, addressing a press conference in New Delhi.

"The entire nation, par-

Congress workers stage a protest against the alleged theft of donations from the Ram Temple, in Kanpur. FILE PHOTO

ticularly those who have faith in Sanatan Dharma, wants to know who stole donations worth thousands of crores of rupees," Mr. Singh said. Despite serious accusations against members of the Trust, no action had been taken against them, he alleged.

The Congress demanded that the Trust be disbanded and all those facing *prima facie* allegations be arrested to ensure an impartial investigation.

Mr. Singh also called for a probe under the supervision of a sitting judge of the Supreme Court.

Reports of irregularities had surfaced since the temple's construction began, he alleged, referring to the controversy over land acquisitions in Ayodhya as well as the alleged diversion of donations.

The internal inquiries commissioned by the Trust into earlier allegations were ignored, he said, questioning the removal of cash-counting agent Mahipal Singh after he reportedly flagged irregularities.

CCTV cameras had been removed and their footage deleted, Mr. Singh alleged.

"The Trust has lost the trust of the people. Daily donations have reportedly fallen from ₹10 lakh-₹15 lakh to about ₹80,000 following reports of the alleged theft," he said.

Speaking to journalists in Kerala's Wayanad, Congress general secretary and Lok Sabha member Priyanka Gandhi Vadra described the allegations as "tragic" and "shameful".

"People from all over the country, those who believe and those who have faith, gave donations, and now those donations have been stolen. It is tragic, it is shameful, and the government needs to inquire into what has happened, how it has happened, and why it has happened," she said.

"Women gave from their savings, poor people contributed from their homes. These are not just funds from big corporates; they were collected from ordinary citizens. If you collected them, it is your responsibility to keep them safe," she said.

The Congress also accused the government of applying different standards, alleging that while Opposition leaders were subjected to investigations by Central agencies on "minor suspicions", no comparable action had been taken against those facing allegations in the Ram temple donation case.

Akhilesh vows to develop Ayodhya as 'unique religious city'

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Amid the Ram Temple embezzlement case, Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday vowed to restore and nurture the eternal glory of Ayodhya as a centre of faith and devotion.

He claimed that a new SP-led government of Uttar Pradesh will develop Ayodhya as a unique and exemplary religious city, where devotees will experience true spirituality.

"We take this pledge with righteousness and truthfulness that by forming a new government, we will develop 'Ayodhya' as a unique and exemplary religious city, where devotees coming from all over the world will experience true spirituality. With the blessings of the Lord, we will restore and nurture the eternal glory of Ayodhya as 'Siyaram-Dham' of faith, devotion, unwavering belief and true spirit...," Mr. Yadav wrote on social media platform X.

The SP further said that the ideas of Lord Ram are inherently socialist and these ideals have been followed by the party and its ideological forefathers.

"Socialists in India believe in the ideas and teachings of Lord Ram. Our icon, Ram Manohar Lohia, was the first leader in independent India to start the Ramayan Mela in the 1960s. We want a socialist, democratic India based on the teachings of Lord Ram. Our leader, Akhilesh Yadav *ji*, is carrying forward Lohia *ji*'s rich socialist legacy...," said Sunil Singh Yadav 'Sajan', the SP spokesperson.

Sujata Rout no ordinary cadre; ex-IAS officer's entry key to BJD's revival push

NEWS ANALYSIS

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Biju Janata Dal supremo Naveen Patnaik recently inducted Sujata Rout, wife of his close aide V.K. Pandian, into the party stating that she would function as an "ordinary" member and learn over time.

However, the prominence she has quickly assumed suggests otherwise. Far from remaining a rank-and-file entrant, Ms. Rout already appears to occupy a central position in the party's affairs.

Over the past two days, photographs of her visit to the Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri accompanied by a Rajya Sabha MP and other senior leaders as well as her meeting with Pranab Prakash Das, a senior BJD leader known for his

Far from remaining a rank-and-file entrant, Sujata Rout already appears to occupy a central position in the party's affairs. PTI

organisational skills, have flooded social media.

According to BJD insiders, Mr. Das, once a powerful member of the party's core group, had in recent months appeared to distance himself from party activities following its defeat in the 2024 Assembly election. Ms. Rout's meeting with him is being viewed as an effort to bridge internal divisions and bring different factions together.

Seniors reach out

At Sankha Bhawan, which is the BJD party headquarters, senior women leaders on Thursday escorting her into the hall and senior leaders reaching out to her for small interactions during her inductions are important signals that Ms. Rout would play a key role in the party's regrouping.

"The BJD leadership recognises that the regional party retains inherent strength to counter the Bharatiya Janata Party's advance. Otherwise, it would have fallen apart like the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal. Even two years after its defeat, the party continues to remain politically active," said Vijay Mohanty, a political commentator. Mr. Mohanty added that leaders leaving the party represents only a temporary setback.

Former Chief Minister Mr. Patnaik's remark on Ms. Rout, "I am sure that as time passes and she settles into her new role, she will learn to help people, particularly women," suggests that the former IAS officer is not being positioned as an ordinary party worker. Rather, it indicates that she is expected to step into a leadership role.

Help end 'proxy war', Naga body urges PM

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The United Naga Council (UNC), the apex body of 21 Naga tribes in Manipur, has demanded the Centre and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's immediate intervention in the "rapidly deteriorating situation" in the Northeastern State, especially in Naga areas.

Leaders of the UNC told journalists in New Delhi on Saturday that the organisation, along with the Naga Women's Union and the All Naga Students' Association, Manipur, submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister, seeking action against the "proxy war" by armed Kuki groups against the Nagas.

The UNC also demanded a time-bound, independent, and court-monitored probe into the abduction and brutal killing of six Naga civilians earlier this month.

Kalyan Singh Super Specialty Cancer Institute
C.G. City, Sultanpur Road, Lucknow-226002
(An Autonomous Institute of the Govt. of Uttar Pradesh)
Website: www.cancerinstitute.edu.in email: procurementservices.ksssci@gmail.com

CANCELLATION OF NOTING INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

Kalyan Singh Super Speciality Cancer Institute (KSSSCI), Lucknow, the Expression of Interest (EOI) invited for the *One-Time Replacement of PVC Fills* vide Advertisement No. **KSSSCI/EOI-02/2026-27** dated 24.06.2026 is hereby cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

Advt.No. : KSSSCI/EoI-04/2026-27 DIRECTOR

INBRIEF

Vigil stepped up over security threat to Delhi, Uttarakhand

Intelligence agencies have issued a security alert for Delhi and Uttarakhand following a possible Khalistani terror threat, with key religious sites, government establishments and police installations put under heightened surveillance, sources said on Saturday. According to sources, the alert was triggered after an email surfaced warning of possible attacks in the coming days. This threat comes in the backdrop of a standoff at the Nagrasu gurdwara in Uttarakhand's Rudraprayag district between a group of Nihangs and the authorities. Sources said the Delhi Police have launched a probe into the email to ascertain its authenticity and trace its origin. PTI

Civilian dies in explosion near LoC in Jammu and Kashmir

A civilian was killed in an explosion near the Line of Control (LoC) in the Gulmarg area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Saturday, officials said. Officials identified the victim as Zabir Ahmad Bajad, son of Mohammad Rafiq Bajad, a resident of Baramulla district. Initial official assessment suggested that the civilian died after an unexploded shell went off. However, the Army and the police could not provide details about the exact circumstances leading to the blast. The unexploded shell was apparently lying close to the Asha Post near the LoC in Gulmarg.

Second body recovered after floods in Arunachal Pradesh

Rescue teams on Saturday recovered the body of one of the four persons missing after a cloudburst and resultant flash floods hit a hydropower project colony in Arunachal Pradesh's Keyi Panyor district on June 24. The district's SP, Angad Mehta, said locals identified the victim as 30-year-old Ballari Marak, hailing from Meghalaya's Ri-Bhoi district. Hers was the second body recovered after that of Nirmala Gupta, 35, a teacher at NEEPCO's Vivekananda Kendriya Vidyalaya, on the day of the disaster. "The State Disaster Response Force and Keyi Panyor police personnel are continuing the search and rescue operations for three other missing persons, despite adverse conditions," Mr. Mehta said.

Assam police arrest 2 ULFA(I) members, avert 'terror strike'

The Assam police claimed it averted a major terror strike by apprehending two members of the banned United Liberation of Asom (Independent) in Tinsukia district on Friday. They were identified as "second lieutenant" Humenjyoti Baruah (27), and Papu Moran (30). Tinsukia's Superintendent of Police, Mayank Kumar, said the duo was caught with the help of central agencies near Arunachal Pradesh border. Two AK-56 assault rifles, two hand grenades, 172 rounds of AK ammunition, opioids, and jungle survival kits were recovered from them. "The ULFA(I) had tasked them to target and kill people in Tinsukia town to create terror," he said.

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

How saving elephants helps forests breathe easier

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

Protecting the endangered Asiatic elephant (*Elephas maximus indicus*) indirectly helps safeguard India's forests as powerful carbon stores, a new scientific study has said.

The research, however, warned that long-term carbon stabilisation cannot be ensured merely by declaring more areas as elephant reserves but by improving habitat quality, restoring wildlife corridors, and strengthening forest management. Carbon stabilisation, a vital mechanism for removing greenhouse gases and mitigating climate change, is the process of trapping atmospheric carbon and locking it into stable, solid forms (such as in soil or organic matter). This helps resist decay, erosion, or the release of carbon back into the atmosphere.

The study, published in the latest issue of the *Journal of Threatened Taxa*, assessed the relationship between elephant conservation efforts, the expansion of elephant reserves, and wildlife-associated carbon stock enhancement in India from 1992 to 2025. Noida-based Amity University's Tarun Kathula and Tanu Jindal are its authors.

The researchers found that India's elephant reserve network expanded from 18,297 sq. km. (across three elephant reserves) to 80,777 sq. km. (33 elephant reserves), while the elephant population increased by about 6.7% from 25,604 estimated during 1992-93. Despite the marginal increase in the number of pachyderms, the estimated carbon stored within the elephant reserves increased by 38%.

Elephants remain ecologically vital, despite their limited contribution to faunal biomass, the researchers said. THULASI KAKKAT

The increase should not be interpreted as the elephants directly creating more forest biomass, the researchers said, as it "primarily reflects enhanced protection and reduced degradation of pre-existing forest carbon stocks."

The study estimated that about 95% of the increase in carbon storage resulted from the expansion of protected forest areas. However, elephant reserves are not uniformly conserved in the same manner as legally designated national parks or tiger reserves.

Ecosystem engineers

Elephants, often described as ecosystem engineers, remain ecologically vital, despite their limited contribution to faunal biomass, the researchers said. The gentle giants, they pointed out, disperse seeds, enrich soils with dung, create space for diverse vegetation, and help maintain healthy forests capable of storing carbon over the long term.

The researchers also found a weak relationship between the number of elephant reserves and the elephant population growth, suggesting that administrative declarations alone cannot secure the species' future if habitats remain fragmented or poorly managed.

Declining numbers

The study further underlined a worrying trend – the decline in elephant numbers under a new census methodology called Synchronised All-India Elephant Estimate (SAIEE) 2021-25, while the number of elephant reserves has stabilised. The SAIEE count of 22,446 was 4,065 elephants fewer than the 2017 estimate, but the enumerators asserted that the two different counting methods should not be compared.

Comparable patterns were observed in the African savannah ecosystems, where mega-herbivore management improved vegetation carbon stocks by 20-30%. "Such consistency across regions supports the ecological principle that mega-fauna protection complements forest-carbon goals," their study said. "Policy integration of these results can strengthen India's commitments to achieve 2.5-3 billion tCO_2 (total carbon dioxide) equivalent additional carbon sink by 2030. Incorporating wildlife-inclusive accounting within REDD+ frameworks could generate measurable ecosystem-service credits while ensuring co-benefits for biodiversity," the study said. REDD expands to 'Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation'.

U.S. names Indian firm, CEO in Sudan sanctions

Press Trust of India
WASHINGTON

The U.S. imposed sanctions on eight persons and entities, including an Indian national associated with an explosives manufacturing firm, for allegedly fuelling the civil war in Sudan.

The U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) on Friday said the targeted networks enabled both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) to expand and intensify civil war in the African nation and created the "world's worst humanitarian crisis and provided space for terrorist groups to operate".

Among the sanctioned individuals is Alok Choudhari of Raipur, the Chief Executive Officer of SBL Energy Limited, also known as Amin Explosive Private Limited, which allegedly supplied over 200 shipments of explosives and materials to a company that maintained the SAF's arsenal.

The Treasury Department also imposed sanctions on Raipur-based SBL Energy Limited.

Shah attacks cab aggregators over 'unfair' business model

Union Minister says newly launched cooperative ride-hailing platform Bharat Taxi is an alternative that will safeguard interests of drivers, passengers; it will expand to over 500 cities within 2 years

Abhinay Deshpande
AHMEDABAD

Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Saturday launched a sharp attack on private app-based cab aggregators such as Uber and Ola, alleging that their business model exploits both drivers and commuters through practices that prioritise corporate profits over fair treatment. He said the newly launched cooperative ride-hailing platform, Bharat Taxi, was conceived to provide an alternative that safeguards the interests of drivers while ensuring better service for passengers.

Addressing the launch of Bharat Taxi in 14 cities across Gujarat, Mr. Shah, without naming the companies, alleged that private platforms deduct hefty commissions from drivers, delay payments and suspend their registrations based solely on passenger complaints without giving them an opportunity to present their case.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah takes a taxi ride during the launch of 'Bharat Taxi' in Gujarat. PTI

He said the cooperative model was introduced to eliminate such practices and ensure that drivers are treated as stakeholders rather than service providers dependent on private companies.

Competitors' challenge

"I received phone calls today and some newspapers have reported that Bharat Taxi's fares are higher. I want to tell customers across the country that wherever Bharat Taxi begins operations, competing companies immediately slash their fares and are prepared to incur losses. Our intention is not to inflict losses on anyone, but reducing fares and offering higher commissions to *sarathis* (drivers) is being done only to prevent Bharat Taxi from entering the market," he said.

"They want Bharat Taxi to fail so they can once again function arbitrarily," he said, adding that such strategies would not succeed in India, where "the spirit of cooperation and the desire to work for the welfare of others are the greatest strength".

Bharat Taxi, which was soft-launched in Gujarat last December, is being projected as India's first cooperative-owned, driver-led ride-hailing platform. Operating on a zero-commission model, it allows drivers to retain the entire fare while also giving them ownership in the platform.

The platform was formally launched in Ahmedabad, Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot, Dwarka, among other cities across Gujarat. It will initially offer services in three categories – two-wheelers, auto-rickshaws and four-wheelers.

Mr. Shah said Bharat Taxi would begin operations in Nagpur, Pune, Mumbai, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Jaipur and Kolkata before July 31, and services would be extended to more than 500 cities and towns over the next two years.

Addressing the drivers, he said they had become part of the country's larger cooperative movement, which already includes crores of farmers.

It is theft of youth's future: Rahul on TET 'paper leak'

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday described the alleged paper leak and postponement of the Maharashtra Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) as "theft" of the future of youngsters.

"Another paper leak. Another exam cancelled. This time, Maharashtra's TET," he said.

"The country's education and examination system has been turned into a system of extortion, leaving every youngster in the country insecure," the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha said in a post in Hindi on X.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also voiced concern over the matter.

In a post on X, she said, "Youth, wake up!!! Until you raise your voice loud and clear, this terror with your future will continue unabated. You've been deceived once again."

Congress leader Pawan Khera slammed the government over the development, claiming that it seems determined to score a "shameful century".

Govt. to launch affordable digital management system for clinics

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Aimed at helping small outpatient clinics that face challenges with manual processes and lack of affordable digital solutions, the Union Health Ministry is all set to launch the e-Sushrut@Clinic.

eSushrut@Clinic is a light Hospital Management Information System (HMIS), created by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) to address these challenges by providing a simple, affordable, and user-friendly digital solution specifically tailored for small outpatient clinics.

"Large HMIS are often too complex and costly for these clinics and this results in small clinics struggling with inefficiencies in digitisation of the health system," said a release issued by the Ministry.

It added that the need of having a government-backed and affordable

Ministry proposes to open light HMIS for govt. primary health centres, sub-centres and private clinics

HMIS has been coming from various microsite participants in spite of a large number of private HMIS players. Many States/Union Territories have also expressed interest to use a light HMIS for their public facilities.

The Ministry proposes to open the light HMIS for government primary health centres, sub-centres and private clinics, etc.

C-DAC implementing it

Currently, over 800 health facilities are onboarded on eSushrut@Clinic, generating over 680 health records. C-DAC is also implementing the eSushrut software, which is being installed at more than 15 AIIMS and in various State government hospitals.

Listing the features, the Ministry said that e-Sushrut@Clinic provides a lightweight, cloud-based HMIS designed specifically for outpatient clinics which simplifies tasks like patient registration, billing, etc., thus making work easier and reducing mistakes. C-DAC will take care of maintenance and upgradation of the software.

"It is designed to be simple and intuitive, with no technical expertise needed from clinic staff. Also, this simple platform can be accessed from any device, without needing complex setups," said the release.

The cost of eSushrut@clinic is estimated to be ₹499 per month for five users. A discount of ₹200 will be given making the effective rate to be ₹299 per month. The software will be offered at no cost for the initial three months. Each additional user beyond the included five-user limit will be charged at a rate of ₹50 per user.

CGHS enhances financial powers of officials to expedite treatment

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

In a move aimed at reducing delays in medical treatment and reimbursement under the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS), the Union Health Ministry has now substantially enhanced the financial powers of senior CGHS officials to approve cashless treatment, settle medical reimbursement claims and sanction unlisted investigations and procedures.

The revised delegation of powers enables additional directors heading CGHS cities and zones, as well as senior officials at the CGHS headquarters, to approve significantly higher-value cases than before. The changes are expected to reduce the number of proposals that require referral to higher authorities, speeding up decisions on treatment approvals and claim settlements.

Under the revised dele-

Changes expected to benefit pensioners, elderly – accounting for a substantial share of CGHS users

gation, additional directors heading CGHS cities and zones can now sanction medical reimbursement claims and hospital bills at approved rates – of up to ₹15 lakh, compared with the earlier limit of ₹7 lakh, for directors the revised power stands at ₹25 lakh from ₹15 lakh, and for Additional Secretary and DG, CGHS has revised financial approval power of ₹50 lakh, up from ₹25 lakh.

Cases exceeding ₹50 lakh shall continue to be referred to the Union Health Ministry for approval with the concurrence of the Integrated Finance Division.

For unlisted investigations/procedures and implants, additional directors heading CGHS cities and zones, director, and additional secretary and DG, have revised approval powers up to ₹2 lakh, ₹5 lakh and ₹10 lakh respectively.

The order, dated June 25, now raises the financial limits for settling medical reimbursement claims submitted by beneficiaries after treatment. Such claims, particularly those involving high-cost procedures or emergency care, have often required multiple levels of scrutiny before reimbursement could be sanctioned.

Speaking about the revision, a senior health official said the changes are expected to particularly benefit pensioners and elderly beneficiaries, who account for a substantial share of CGHS users and often require costly tertiary care.

Delays in administrative approvals and reimbursement of medical expenses have remained among the most common grievances of beneficiaries.

INBRIEF

U.S. judge won't immediately dismiss charges against Adani

A U.S. judge on Friday ordered the Justice Department to justify its decision to drop criminal charges against Indian billionaire Gautam Adani, declining to rule immediately on Adani's lawyers' request earlier in the week to formally dismiss the case. Adani was charged in 2024 with agreeing to bribe Indian government officials so a subsidiary of his Adani Group could win approval to develop a solar plant, and then misleading U.S. investors by providing reassuring information about his company's anti-corruption practices. Adani Group has consistently denied wrongdoing. The Justice Department said last month it would no longer pursue the prosecution. Adani's lawyers on Wednesday asked Brooklyn-based U.S. District Judge Nicholas Garaufis to formally dismiss the case. REUTERS

Vaswani to quit as Kotak Bank MD after three-year tenure

Kotak Mahindra Bank on Saturday said its MD and CEO Ashok Vaswani will quit upon completion of a three-year tenure and will not seek re-appointment when his current term ends on December 31, 2026. The veteran banker assumed charge of the bank on January 1, 2024. "Ashok Vaswani, Managing Director & CEO of the bank, has informed the board that, for personal reasons, he does not wish to seek re-appointment upon completion of his current term on December 31, 2026," Kotak Mahindra Bank said in a regulatory filing. "The board has, at its meeting held today, respected his decision and has initiated the process for the appointment of a new Managing Director & CEO. The process will be completed within applicable regulatory timelines," it said. Mr. Vaswani replaced Dipak Gupta, who was the interim MD and CEO, following founder-director Uday Kotak's sudden stepping down as the head of the bank. PTI

Accenture's revenue growth guidance cut shocks tech industry

Stance to impact growth valuations, order books of Indian players, signal widespread deal slippage, slower pipeline-to-revenue conversion rates

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

The downward revision signalled that the tech sector is facing a profound slowdown rather than a temporary cyclical blip. REUTERS

Global tech bellwether Accenture's recent downward revenue revision seems to have further dampened the spirit of the information technology sector worldwide and Indian IT in particular, opined top sector analysts.

Accenture's cautious stance would impact the growth valuations and order books of Indian IT services players while it may also signal widespread deal slippage and slower pipeline-to-revenue conversion rates across the industry globally, they forecast.

Accenture recently narrowed its full-year 2026 revenue growth guidance to 3-4%, down from 3-5% earlier, triggering an immediate plunge in its own stock prices and throwing the rest of the global tech services industry, which is already hit by global uncertainties, into a new tizzy.

The longer decision-making cycles, partially impacted by regional conflicts in West Asia, costing roughly $100 million in expected revenue, have fundamentally slowed conv ersion rates for Accenture.

Avinash Vashistha, Chairman & CEO of Tholons, a New York-based tech consulting firm and former Chairman & CEO of Accenture in India said, "The macro numbers tell only a surface story and this downward revision is a macroscopic warning indicator. The immediate implication is a sharp re-pricing of firms that rely heavily on traditional linear headcount models."

Peter Bendor-Samuel, Founder and Executive Chairman of Dallas-based Everest Group said, an 18% reduction on the share price of Accenture on June 18 in a single trading session, was bound to have a cascading effect on the rest of the tech sector.

Global analyst firm Gartner also forecast that Accenture's downward revenue revision signalled the global technology sector was facing a profound structural slowdown rather than a temporary cyclical blip.

"Enterprises are tightening their financial belts in response to layered macroeconomic shocks and geopolitical conflicts, subjecting all large-scale digital initiatives to unprecedented, rigid return on investment scrutiny. This heightened caution has created a severe bottleneck where impressive, high-volume project pipelines are failing to convert into immediate revenue because clients are stretching out execution milestones to conserve capital," explained D.D Mishra, VP Analyst at Gartner.

According to him, corporate technology budgets have effectively frozen into a zero-sum game of forced reallocation. Instead of expanding total IT spend, boardrooms are aggressively flatlining or gutting traditional infra and maintenance budgets to fund mandatory cybersecurity and AI compliance mandates, he added.

Persistent to acquire Germany's Nagarro for €1.1 billion

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Anand Deshpande

Galaxy Germany Holding SE, a wholly owned direct subsidiary of Pune-based Persistent Systems Ltd., and its parent firm have announced a voluntary public takeover offer for all outstanding shares in Munich-based Nagarro SE for a cash consideration of €81 per share, valuing the company at €1.1 billion (₹11,820 crore).

Nagarro is into digital engineering with 18,500 employees across 40 countries, with deep roots in industrial, consumer, TMT and BFSI verticals and a total revenue of €1 billion (CY25), according to a company release.

The offer follows the signing of a Business Combination Agreement between Persistent and Nagarro. "The proposed combination is designed to create a scaled, globally diversified AI-led digital engineering and enterprise modernisation powerhouse with at-scale presence in North America and Europe and a meaningful Rest of the World exposure," the company said in the release.

The combined Persistent - Nagarro group would be better positioned to support multi-region enterprise clients requiring integrated AI, engineering, ERP / CX, data and cloud capabilities across local and global delivery models. The combination will create a $2.9 billion AI-led engineering entity with over 46,000 employees across more than 40 countries, it added.

Anand Deshpande, Founder, Chairman and Managing Director, Persistent Systems said, "AI is reshaping our industry at an unprecedented pace. Success will belong to companies that combine deep technical capability with global reach, while continuing to attract, develop and inspire exceptional people."

"Together, Persistent and Nagarro will be better positioned to help our clients navigate this new era, create greater opportunities for our teams, and build an organisation that will endure for many years to come," he said.

Sandeep Kalra, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, Persistent Systems said, "The next wave of enterprise transformation will be defined by AI, engineering excellence, and global scale. Bringing Nagarro and Persistent together is a defining milestone in our journey to build a global, engineering-led technology services leader," he said.

External review clears HDFC Bank of ex-chairman's concerns

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

HDFC Bank said an independent legal review conducted by two external law firms found no evidence to substantiate concerns raised by former chairman Atanu Chakraborty in his resignation letter or subsequent public statements.

The bank said the review, announced on March 24, examined whether any concerns flagged by Mr. Chakraborty were evident from the records, whether he had recorded any dissent during his tenure, and whether such dissent, if any, had been addressed.

Mr. Chakraborty resigned as chairman of the country's second biggest lender, HDFC Bank, citing ethical concerns. This was the first time that a part-time chairman of HDFC Bank left mid-way, raising concerns over its functioning. "Certain happenings and practices within the bank, that I have observed over the last two years, are not in congruence with my personal values and ethics. This is the basis of my aforementioned decision," he said in his resignation letter dated March 17.

The review was carried out by Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati, P C and Wadia Ghandy & Co. over a three-month period, HDFC Bank said in a filing.

The external law firms repeatedly requested Mr. Chakraborty to participate in the review, but the interview did not take place.

Conclave calls on MSMEs to innovate and scale up to expand their global footprint

BL Bureau
COIMBATORE

Making a point: Jairam Varadaraj, MD, ELGI Equipments speaking at the MSME Growth Conclave. BIJOY GHOSH

Innovation-led growth, technology adoption and stronger regional industrial collaboration emerged as the key themes at the fifth edition of *The Hindu businessline's* MSME Growth Conclave, co-powered by the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) and Central Bank of India, held in Coimbatore on Saturday.

Setting the context, Jairam Varadaraj, Managing Director of ELGI Equipments, in his keynote address, said Indian companies must stop depending on government support and low-cost manufacturing as their primary growth strategy and instead focus on building globally competitive, innovation-led businesses.

He urged companies to move away from 'Me-too' products and create 'Me-First products' by identifying customers' unstated needs rather than merely responding to existing demand. Businesses, he said, should build capabilities based on 'know why' – deep scientific understanding – rather than just 'know how', and look beyond India's relatively small domestic market to tap global opportunities.

Ravichandran Purushothaman, Chairman of CII Southern Region and President of Danfoss India, identified three major challenges confronting MSMEs – shortage of skilled manpower, rising electricity costs and uncertainty in order inflows. He called on MSMEs to invest in digital technologies, automation and energy-efficient solutions to improve productivity and operational visibility.

Rather than concentrating on asset ownership, entrepreneurs should build businesses around knowledge, IP and scalable business models, which he described as the 'new money' that would define future competitiveness. He also stressed the importance of corporate governance, stock market listing and stronger cash generation instead of focussing solely on topline growth, he said in a conversation with Richa Mishra, Resident Editor, *businessline*.

Making a pitch for Kerala as an investment destination, Arun K. Vijayan, Director of Industries and Managing Director of KSIDC, said the State was positioning itself as the next major manufacturing hub through the proposed Integrated Manufacturing Cluster at Palakkad.

The panel on 'Financing in the time of war', pointed to the difficulties faced by a large number of micro and small industries in accessing finance due to lack of awareness and bureaucratic hurdles.

In a discussion on clean mobility, the panelists said that clean mobility was more an opportunity than a threat. Since vehicle owning itself is yet to cover much of India's opportunity, there is a big market emerging for e-vehicles and therefore for MSMEs. The Associate Partners of the event were Bank of Baroda, Tally Solutions, SSVM Institutions, Indian Overseas Bank, Salzer Electronics Limited, South Indian Bank, Turbo Engineers, Zorian Systems, Suguna Pumps & Motors, Malles Construction, eRoyce Motors India, and Ruh Continuum School.

The Realty Partner is G Square and Lifestyle Partner is Lexus.

Amber Group eyes $2-bn revenue milestone in near term

Press Trust of India
JEWAR

Leading electronics and consumer durables contract manufacturer Amber Group expects to touch the $2 billion revenue mark in the near term, driven by strong growth across its consumer durables, electronics, and railway and defence businesses, its Executive Chairman and CEO Jasbir Singh said.

Amber Group, which reported consolidated revenue of ₹12,306.63 crore (around $1.3 billion) in FY26, held a groundbreaking ceremony on Saturday for manufacturing facilities at the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA), with a total proposed investment of about ₹6,785 crore.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Union Minister of Railways & IT Ashwini Vaishnaw and Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav were present at the event.

The projects include a high-density interconnect (HDI) printed circuit board (PCB) and semiconductor substrate manufacturing unit being set up through its joint venture Ascent-K Circuit, as well as an expanded air-conditioner and components manufacturing complex by Amber Enterprises.

According to Singh, Amber's electronics business is currently growing at 40-45% annually, while its railway and defence division has returned to a 30-35% growth trajectory.

However, the consumer durables business continues to grow in line with industry trends, he said.

This hardy coffee hybrid may be your morning cup of the future

Meena Menon

While the world's coffee drinkers favour Arabica or Robusta, a newly identified hybrid called Coffea x libex (the X denotes its hybrid status) – or just Libex – could be their brew of choice in future.

The world drinks roughly 17,000 tonnes of Arabica and 10,000 tonnes of Robusta beans (pre-roasting) every day. Together, they account for more than 99.99% of global coffee production. However, they are susceptible to rising temperatures and erratic rainfall. Libex on the other hand may be able to grow in warmer temperatures and under a wider range of rainfall patterns, according to research from the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in the U.K. It was recently published in *Scientific Reports*.

The researchers investigated coffee samples from Central America, Africa, and Asia to quantify hybridisation between Liberica and Excelsa and assess the hybrid's potential to be cultivated. While hybrids between these two species had long been inferred from their physical characteristics, their existence had not been confirmed using genomic evidence. The team analysed 113 individual plant samples to confirm that Excelsa and Liberica had indeed been hybridised in cultivation. The team also reported that improved genotypes of these hybrids can be brought to production using clonal propagation, micropropagation or by grafting to select rootstocks, such as those of Liberica or Excelsa. The Indian version of Libex is a "delicious coffee," Akshay Dashrath of the South India Coffee Company (SICC) and a study co-author, said. Material from the Malleshwara Estate near Ballupet in Hassan district, taken from trees planted between 1980 and 1982, was confirmed by Kew to be an Excelsa-Liberica hybrid.

On the SICC site, Mr. Dashrath wrote that according to a leading coffee roaster in the U.K. with whom he works, "Early tastings of Libex reveal a balanced and approachable cup, blending tropical fruit notes from Liberica with chocolate and dried fruit depth from Excelsa."

Traditionally, farmers grew Excelsa as a boundary marker in coffee estates. While Liberica is a low-yielding coffee, Mr. Dashrath said Libex has better yield and outturn (the conversion ratio of fresh fruit to coffee beans), which is good news for farmers. Libex also has thinner pulp and parchment, which can make post-harvest processing more efficient and improve quality relative to Liberica.

(Meena Menon is an independent journalist. She has a PhD from the University of Leeds. meenamenon@gmail.com)

Fake patents are poisoning India's race for academic excellence

Researchers have reported some firms selling U.K. design registrations to Indian academics to artificially boost institutional rankings; these registrations, often granted in 11 days without novelty checks, are misrepresented as international patents

T.V. Padma
NEW DELHI

A worrying new trend of 'fake patents', in which education companies sell thousands of patents registered in the U.K. to academics from India and elsewhere, has raised concerns among research integrity experts.

Authors, from the U.K. and the U.S., of a report published in the *International Journal of Educational Integrity* wrote "eight firms ... are likely involved in the sale of thousands of U.K. registered designs to Indian academics for the purpose of academic reputation manipulation."

Patent offices don't examine design applications for novelty, innovation or uniqueness, and they award them quickly. This is unlike the more stringent process for patents, which are typically used to commercialise a new discovery, Subhash Lakhotia, Distinguished Professor at the Cytogenetics Laboratory at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, said.

Not all filed patents are accepted either, and only a small fraction of the accepted ones end up being used by industry. "Thus, the real value of a patent is when it is used by industry for a process or product," Prof. Lakhotia, who is also on the advisory board of India Research Watch, a watchdog on Indian research, said.

'Fake' patents, filed without any original research by the person (or persons) in whose name the patent is filed, "refer to a non-existing entity," he said. "This unhealthy and ... unethical act is promoted by shady companies acting as patent-filing or facilitating agencies – they sell the authorship of a patent for a non-existing entity to academics, who gain by earning academic points during assessment for academic excellence."

In the report, the authors spotlighted firms selling inventorship positions on design patents in the U.K., but 'sales' have also been recorded from India and Australia. However, these countries don't issue design patents; they issue design registrations, Reese Richardson, a postdoctoral fellow at the Center of Science and Innovation at Northwestern University, U.S. and one of the authors of the report, said. According to her, design patents issued in the U.S. have to pass a novelty review and have a good chance of being rejected. Design registrations, on the other hand, are usually granted with minimal review.

Red herrings

'Eight firms ... are likely involved in the sale of thousands of U.K. registered designs to Indian academics'

- Academics are buying U.K. design registrations in a bid to manipulate their professional evaluations
- Design registrations are granted without rigorous novelty reviews, unlike actual patents that require innovation and uniqueness
- The misuse of these fake patents is driven by institutional rankings that prioritise quantitative data over quality
- Intense competition for jobs and rankings in India makes these unethical practices particularly attractive to many local academics
- These purchased roles are fraudulent because the designs cover only appearance and involve no actual scientific invention
- Experts have recommended removing quantitative IP metrics from rankings to discourage this unethical practice

Rubber-stamping: Some unscrupulous agencies exploit individuals' or institutions' desire to secure better ranks by selling fake patents or research papers. ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

Look and function

In the U.K., the design registrations Dr. Richardson's team studied were usually granted in around 11 days. "What clients are actually buying are ownership positions on these design registrations", she said. "Moreover, because these registrations are for 'designs', they cover the way an object looks, not how it functions," she added. So when an academic buys an "inventorship" on a "U.K. design patent", "there are a number of lies taking place," she added. "The academic has not invented anything; the device does not exist (let alone work); what they have obtained is not a patent; and it does not cover the functionality of the product even if it did work."

Yet these academics can then tell their employers they have obtained an "international patent", helping them towards a promotion. "As far as I am aware, selling fake patents has only emerged on the academic black market in India," Dr. Richardson said.

Prof. Lakhotia identifies three factors that contribute to this distinction: the large population seeking education and jobs, the use of quantitative metrics without any serious assessment of quality, and the reliance of nearly all international and national academic ranking agencies on quantitative parameters.

"Other related problems have emerged because of the insistence of Indian rankings on patents," Dr. Richardson added. "For instance, many private Indian universities have been filing thousands of utility patents in India in the hopes of pumping up their numbers, often more than the IITs, combined. However, ... less than 2% of these patents actually wind up being granted."

According to Prof. Lakhotia, an urgent step to curb the growing global menace of fake patents and papers is to stop all institutional rankings based on quantitative data. In the absence of independent verification, institutions unethically inflate these data, he said.

"The mere filing of a patent ... must not be used for assessment," he explained, and that only patents used by industry should be included. And "the agencies that brazenly broker such fake patents and research publications must be taken to task severely." "We need to have stronger mechanisms to identify, catalogue, and respond to scientific misconduct," Anant Bhan, adjunct professor at Yenepoya (deemed) University, Mangaluru, and an expert on bioethics, said.

Some research funders in India, like Anusandhan National Research Foundation, and some regulators have been looking into using retractions as indicators. "We do need to ramp up efforts" and have a nimble regulatory oversight and governance system, Dr. Bhan added.

(T.V. Padma is a science journalist based in New Delhi. tvpadma_10@yahoo.co.in)

Capturing sunlight in a bottle and using it when needed

SPEAKING OF SCIENCE
D. Balasubramanian

Thanks to the initiatives of UNESCO and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), most countries across the world have adopted 'green' solutions that reduce environmental carbon dioxide. The use of solar panels to capture sunlight and turn it into electricity has been a particularly successful strategy. Many countries across the world have seen a large-scale expansion in the installation of solar panels.

In India, a typical home solar panel installation connected to the grid today costs about ₹30,000 per kW after subsidies under the 'Surya Ghar Mufti Bijili Yojana'. A 2-kW system can cover the basic electricity needs of a typical household. And there are crores of such panels across the country. India's rooftop solar capacity is now 23 gigawatt (GW).

In all, India's land-based solar panels generate about 150 GW of power. Ingenious solar panel installations, such as those over irrigation canals, and floating solar panels in lakes and dam-based water reservoirs are expected to produce an additional 102 GW in the near future. Recently, India has also become 'greener' by installing wind turbines and introducing electric trains, trucks, buses, and cars.

Solar panels convert energy from the sun into electricity when photons excite electrons in silicon crystals, causing them to be freed and to flow from a positively charged layer in the solar cell towards a negatively charged layer, creating an electric current. Inverters are used to convert this flow of electrons into a usable alternating current.

But solar panels work during the daytime when the sun is shining. Home systems that have batteries to store power cost 1.5-times more. If there is a way by which we can more efficiently store captured energy, it would be ideal. This is what a group of researchers at the University of California at Santa Barbara, led by Prof. Grace Han, have done by designing what are referred to as molecular photo-switches (DOI: 10.1126/science.aec6413). These involve molecules that, upon absorbing solar light, convert themselves into a different shape (called isomerisation) and store the energy. This is referred to as photo-switching. Here, the molecule stores solar thermal energy in a molecular form, also known as molecular solar thermal (or MOST). The molecule the researchers have chosen, after consultation with a group at University of California at Los Angeles, is an alkaloid called 2-pyrimidone. It switches itself upon receiving photons into an isomer called Dewar pyrimidone. The latter isomeric molecule is highly strained and releases heat as much as 1.65 million joules per kg of MOST molecules. This heat allows this technology to be a practical tool to store heat and deliver it when needed for water heating, cooking, and other needs.

In India, a typical home solar panel installation connected to the grid today costs about ₹30,000 per kW after subsidies. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

As a member of the research team mentioned, thermal energy from the sun can now be bottled for later use. Silicon-based panels use red and near-infrared regions of the light spectrum (400-1,100 nm). Solar thermal molecules use wavelengths below 500 nm, in the ultraviolet region.

Apart from the pyrimidones, there must be other compounds that too can act as photo-switches and heat storage units. As the solar panels across India capture sunlight during the day, scientists should be able to synthesise more MOST molecules and distribute them to the people who put up solar panels on their roofs. That would make India greener.

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SNAPSHOTS

New technique tests TB drugs' effectiveness in just 50 hours

Scientists have developed a faster way to test for drug resistance in the bacteria that cause tuberculosis. Traditional phenotypic tests have to wait for the bacteria to multiply over four to eight weeks. The new way, called Raman-DIP, uses single-cell imaging to track how cells process heavy water, thus revealing if an antibiotic is inhibiting the bacteria in just 50 hours. The team reported this method was 100% accurate vis-à-vis four major drugs against various strains.

Hominin body sizes did not steadily increase over time

Upon analysing nearly 400 fossils across 21 species, researchers have found moderate evidence of a slow, general increase in body size across hominins over time. However, the evidence was much stronger for a sudden, significant jump in size among later members of the genus Homo (excluding *Homo habilis*), likely when species like *H. erectus* appeared. Overall, the research suggested the human body size did not steadily increase over time but transitioned distinctly among our more recent ancestors.

Turtles use internal compass, and some fixes, on journeys

Using satellite tags to track compass headings, researchers found that green sea turtles do not constantly adjust their course but instead swim in one direction for long periods, even if they drift off-track. Then, the study found, they make occasional mid-ocean changes over several hours to fix their bearings. Since the turtles had the same heading day and night, the researchers figured they likely use the earth's magnetic field to navigate and do not sleep when they migrate.

Question Corner

Watered-down bonds

Why does wet paper tear so easily?

As the southwest monsoon sweeps over India, people brace for storms, floods, and the occasional sight of a damaged bookstore or library. What makes the last a particularly sad sight is that paper tears easily when it's wet.

Paper is made primarily from wood pulp, which contains a dense network of cellulose fibers.

Cellulose consists of the compound $C_6H_{10}O_5$ attached to each other in long chains. Many of these chains clump together to form fibres, and the fibres are attached to each other using hydrogen bonds, i.e. a bond involving a hydrogen atom on one end. While hydrogen bonds are weaker than covalent, ionic or metallic bonds, millions of them act to keep paper together, along with the fibres also being entangled.

When paper is wet, water molecules penetrate between the cellulose fibres. Because water can also form hydrogen bonds, it competes with and disrupts some of the hydrogen bonds that normally hold neighbouring fibres together.

Water also causes the cellulose fibres to absorb moisture and swell, loosening the network and reducing friction. As a result, the fibres can slide past one another more easily, so less force is needed to tear wet paper.

Readers may send their questions / answers to science@thehindu.co.in

Why is Delhi's EV policy 2.0 facing opposition?

Who is concerned and on what grounds? What do proponents say? Is the power grid ready for the impact?

Kunal Shankar

The story so far:

Building on the momentum gained from its 2020 Electric Vehicles (EV) policy, which led to Delhi achieving almost 14% EV penetration by 2025, compared to the national average of 8%, the Delhi government issued the revised draft EV Policy in early April. Currently under stakeholder consultation, the policy envisages a complete ban on the registration of new internal combustion engine (ICE) three-wheelers from January 1, 2027. It also proposes a ban on new ICE two-wheeler registrations from April 1, 2028. The rationale behind the latter is straightforward: 67% of Delhi's registered vehicle stock comprises two-wheelers, and if the national capital is to achieve cleaner air in the foreseeable future, this segment requires targeted attention to enable the transition. The revised draft policy also proposes electrification mandates for school buses – with a target of 30% electrification by 2030 – fleet aggregators such as cab-hailing platforms and delivery services, as well as government transport fleets. While the number of vehicles in these segments is considerably lower than private two-wheelers, their pollution burden is disproportionately higher because of their daily utilisation.

Who is objecting to the policy and why?

Industry executives and people familiar with the stakeholder consultations say manufacturers represented by bodies such as the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers have expressed reservations about their ability to scale up production of electric variants within the proposed timelines. They worry about the possibility of losing market share and argue that the market is not yet ready to pivot to an all-electric paradigm, as economies of scale have not yet reduced EV prices sufficiently to compete with comparable ICE two-wheelers.

> Industry bodies argue that the market is not yet ready to pivot to an all-electric paradigm, as economies of scale have not yet reduced EV prices sufficiently

They also point to gaps in both public and private charging infrastructure. While there has been considerable progress in the former through charger deployment mandates, service delivery and reliability remain a concern, with breakdowns, theft of charging equipment, and power outages reported at several locations. As for private charging, there has been persistent hesitation among Resident Welfare Associations and apartment complexes in permitting community charging stations.

Stakeholders also point to the lack of competitive financing, particularly for electric light commercial vehicles, quality after-sales service, and the decline in resale values of used EVs. Battery replacement costs and India's continued dependence on imported battery technologies are also being flagged, particularly as much of the global EV battery supply chain remains concentrated in China.

Automobile manufacturers have therefore argued for a more market-led transition, driven primarily by demand-side incentives.

What are supporters of the revised EV policy saying?

Proponents argue that regulation – much like the Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency norms that pushed manufacturers to improve fuel efficiency in conventional vehicles – must sometimes push the envelope in pursuit of a larger public good. In this case, they argue, the public good is Delhi's clean air. Indeed, the aim of both the 2020 policy and the revised draft policy is to address the contribution of road transport to Delhi's winter air pollution.

Think tanks and critics have also applied a social justice and labour lens, arguing that the policy must address the underbelly of the sector – the vast network of after-sales service providers built around ICE vehicles which will now have to pivot to a new technology. Many of these small businesses may be ill-equipped to make that transition within two years unless the State government also mandates large-scale reskilling programmes, ensures easier financing for small workshops, and provides incentives to upgrade their equipment as part of the broader EV transition.

Is India's power grid ready for the impact?

Another urgent issue must be addressed if such a rapid scale-up is to succeed – the ability of Delhi's electricity grid to handle peak-time charging loads and the substantial increase in power demand that widespread transport electrification will bring. Here, however, there is some reassurance. Studies by WRI India, CSTEP, and other energy think tanks suggest that if charging is managed through smart charging, time-of-day tariffs, and staggered charging patterns, the additional electricity demand from EVs is unlikely to overwhelm Delhi's grid in the near term. They argue that the larger challenge lies in strengthening local distribution infrastructure, particularly transformers and distribution feeders, rather than overall generation capacity.

Which document proves Indian citizenship?

Why is the Indian passport not considered a conclusive proof of Indian citizenship? What purpose does Aadhaar serve? Does presence on the electoral rolls or possession of an Electoral Photo Identity Card determine citizenship? What happens in case of a dispute?

Rizmi Lia M.
Priscilla Jebaraj

The story so far:

The Indian passport is not a "document of citizenship," a senior official of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in response to a query from *The Hindu* this week. So, if a passport is not proof of citizenship, what is?

Is it a new development that a passport cannot be used as a document to prove Indian citizenship?

A passport by itself is not conclusive proof of Indian citizenship, and this is not a new development or announcement. Last week, the senior MEA official was responding to a question from *The Hindu* on whether the Indian passport can be used to challenge exclusion from the voters' list through the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls that is currently underway in 16 States. The official said: "The passport is a travel document, not a document of citizenship, and theoretically speaking, that distinguishes the passport from other documents. Even though while travelling abroad, the passport attests to your nationality, it is not a document of citizenship."

This stance is based on existing law. The government's Passport Manual says that "a passport provides evidence of the holder's nationality, but this is placed in the same category as any other evidence of the citizenship status of an individual". In other words, a passport is strong evidence that its holder is an Indian citizen. However, in law, it is not treated as conclusive proof of citizenship. If a person's citizenship is disputed, courts may examine it alongside other relevant evidence.

According to *Maneka Gandhi v Union Of India* (1978), issuance of passport is based on conclusive proof that the holder is an Indian national, and is "entitled by virtue of their Indian nationality and passports to the protection of the Indian Republic and assistance of its Diplomatic Missions abroad."

> India does not prescribe one universal citizenship document. An effort to create such a document through the National Register of Citizens became politically contentious

An Indian passport. GETTY IMAGES

Under Section 6(2)(a) of the Passports Act, 1967, the authorities can refuse a passport if the applicant is not a citizen of India. But under Section 20 of the Act, the Union government may issue a passport or travel document to a person who is not a citizen of India if it thinks that it is necessary to do so in public interest.

The MEA's response distinguishes between evidence of citizenship and conclusive proof of citizenship. While citizenship is determined under the Citizenship Act, 1955, and passports are issued under the Passports Act, 1967, the existence of a passport cannot by itself be called a conclusive or definitive proof of citizenship in a dispute.

Can the Aadhaar card be used to prove Indian citizenship?

When the Aadhaar was introduced one and a half decades ago, it was promoted as a one-stop digital identification document which could replace the many documents that Indians had to furnish to avail themselves of benefits from multiple government schemes. However, from the beginning, the Unique Identification Authority of India has emphasised that Aadhaar can only be treated as proof of identity and address, not of citizenship. In fact, non-Indian citizens who are legally resident in India are eligible to get an Aadhaar, and often require the identity card to avail themselves of many basic services, from banking to cooking gas.

In its judgment of May 27 this year, when the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of the SIR, it held that an Aadhaar card does not constitute proof of citizenship and, therefore, cannot be relied upon for that purpose. However, it is among the documents which may be produced for the limited purpose of establishing the identity of a person, it said.

Does a voter ID prove Indian citizenship?

Only Indian citizens are eligible to vote in Indian elections, but one's presence on the electoral rolls or possession of an Electoral Photo Identity Card does not determine citizenship or conclusively prove it.

In the case of *Lal Babu Hussein v. Electoral Registration Officer* (1995), the Supreme Court unequivocally held that electors whose names appear on electoral roll are entitled to a presumption of citizenship, and that this presumption cannot be displaced except by following the procedure prescribed by law.

However, in this year's SIR judgment, the Court emphasised that the Election Commission's role is confined to determining eligibility for electoral rolls. It cannot adjudicate citizenship, and the citizenship of an individual under the Citizenship Act will not cease on account of their ineligibility to register in the electoral rolls, pursuant to the SIR.

In fact, the passport was one of the 11 'indicative' documents listed by the Election Commission as proof of citizenship. Some voters purged from the draft SIR in Uttar Pradesh, for instance, used their passports to prove that they are citizens of India and should be included in the final electoral roll. However, there have been reported cases of people in West Bengal who hold Indian passports, but who were still deleted from the draft electoral lists during the SIR.

So what document proves citizenship?

While responding to a question in the Lok Sabha on August 12, 2025, the Home Ministry did not specify the "categories of valid documents" required for people to prove citizenship in India. "The citizenship of India is governed under the provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955, and rules made thereunder," the Minister of State for Home, Nityanand Rai, said in a written reply.

Under the Citizenship Act, citizenship can be acquired by birth, by descent, by registration, by naturalisation and by incorporation of territory.

Citizenship certificates are generally issued to people who acquired citizenship by registration or naturalisation, and can act as a conclusive proof document. The majority of Indians, however, are citizens by birth or descent, and do not have a citizenship certificate. Instead, they rely on different evidence that prove their date of birth, place of birth, or their parentage, depending on the context of the dispute.

Anyone born in India between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987 is a citizen by birth, irrespective of their parents' nationality. Such people would have to produce documents proving their place and date of birth to establish their citizenship. Given that mandatory birth certificates were not issued in this period, many people use a combination of other documents, including educational certificates and Aadhaar.

For those born between July 1, 1987 and December 3, 2004, proof of their own place and date of birth is insufficient as they must also prove that at least one parent was an Indian citizen. For those born on or after December 3, 2004, one parent must be an Indian citizen while the other should not be an illegal migrant, complicating the documentary proof required.

India does not prescribe one universal citizenship document. An effort to create such a document through the National Register of Citizens became politically contentious amid fears of a nationwide verification exercise that could exclude many due to incomplete documents. As former Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao said in a post last week, the lesson is that "India needs stronger and more comprehensive civil registration, universal birth registration and reliable archival records so that citizenship can never become hostage to missing or inconsistent paperwork."

What do the amended FCRA Rules say?

How does the Ministry of Home Affairs regulate foreign donations? What are the key changes in the FCRA Amendment Rules, 2026? How do the new Rules affect the purposes for which NGOs can receive foreign funds? What penalties apply for violations?

Vijaita Singh

The story so far:

On June 22, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notified the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Rules, 2026, to amend the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Rules, 2011.This is the tenth amendment to the Rules under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 (FCRA).

How does the MHA regulate foreign donations?

The MHA regulates foreign donations in India through the FCRA to ensure that such funds do not adversely affect the country's internal security. The legislation was first enacted in 1976. In 2010, it was repealed and replaced with a new legislation. The 2010 Act came into force on May 1, 2011 and has been amended in 2016, 2018, and 2020. The FCRA registration is valid for five years, after which the NGO has to apply for a renewal. Since 2015, the FCRA registrations of more than 18,000 NGOs have been cancelled. As on June 22, there are 14,456 FCRA-registered NGOs active in the country.

What are the broad amendments proposed to the FCRA Rules?

All NGOs and associations registered under the FCRA, 2010, are required to disclose their specific activities and the geographical scope of their programmes. The Rules no longer allow general permission under the FCRA and indicate tighter scrutiny on how NGOs utilise foreign funds.

> The Rules impose a fee for registration for each specified purpose and for each State or U.T. in which an NGO operates

File photo of Opposition MPs demanding the withdrawal of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026. ANI

Any new registration will have to follow the said norms. The Rules further broaden the definition of 'key functionary' of an NGO beyond office bearers and directors to include trustees, partners, the Karta of a Hindu undivided family, governing body members, or anyone controlling or managing the organisation.

They also require NGOs to mandatorily disclose social media accounts, websites, and declare whether the association or its key functionaries has brought out any publication during the year, which includes books, magazines or newspaper articles.

The Rules also impose a fee for registration for each specified purpose and for each State or Union Territory (U.T.) in which an NGO operates. So, NGOs operating across multiple sectors or regions now face higher registration costs.

What amendments apply to the programmes or purposes for which an NGO intends to receive foreign donations?

NGOs can receive foreign contributions for social, educational, religious, economic, and cultural programmes. The amended Rules state that the certificate of registration or the application form for new registrations shall specify the purpose or purposes for which registration is granted, chosen only from the list of purposes as specified in the Schedule appended to the rules; and the States or U.T.s in which the NGO proposes to undertake activities.

Those with existing FCRA registrations are expected to update the purpose and intimate the Central government within a year. Some categories specifically exclude political activities.

The educational purpose lists 22 activities, but adds the qualifier "strictly non-political in nature" to the category covering awareness programmes on constitutional rights, fundamental duties, and civic responsibilities.

Under cultural purpose, there are 18 categories, including "promotion of contemporary arts inspired by Indian traditions." The Rules specify that these must exclude political or ideological content.

As many as 16 categories of religious activities have been permitted which includes "conduct of religious education, moral instruction, satsangs, discourses, and meditation retreats (excluding proselytisation)" and "burial/ cremation ground development and maintenance."

There are 19 categories under the economic purpose and 30 items under the social category.

What are the penalties for violations?

The MHA has also notified an order specifying penalties for FCRA violations, including excess administrative spending, speculative investments, misuse of funds, unauthorised receipt or utilisation of foreign contributions, and the use of funds for unapproved purposes or in States/U.T.s not covered by an NGO's registration or prior permission.

Any utilisation of funds for purposes other than those for which they were received can attract a penalty of up to 30% of the amount misused or ₹₹1 lakh, whichever is higher. Likewise, using foreign contributions for purposes or in areas not covered by an NGO's registration or prior permission invites a penalty of 30% of the amount involved or ₹1 lakh, whichever is higher.

In addition, spending beyond the permitted administrative expense limit or engaging in speculative use of funds will be penalised with fines calculated as a percentage of the amount involved, subject to a minimum of ₹1 lakh.

What is the Opposition saying?

Opposition members have said that the new Rules will adversely affect the functioning of civil society organisations. Congress General Secretary (Organisation) K.C. Venugopal said that forcing NGOs to choose from a "rigid, government-mandated list" of activities and restricting their operational geography would undermine their ability to respond to emergencies. John Brittas, Communist Party of India (Marxist) Rajya Sabha member, wrote to Home Minister Amit Shah raising constitutional concerns. "Collectively, these changes signify a decisive shift from regulating foreign contribution to regulating voluntary organisations themselves," he wrote.

The story of a shipwrecked hegemon

War on Iran

The war the U.S. and Israel launched has come to a fragile pause with a preliminary agreement between Washington and Tehran, but it has already diminished America's presence in the region, prompting Gulf countries to seek a new *modus vivendi* with Tehran, while Israel, isolated and angry, is clinging on to its Lebanon card

Stanly Johny

"When we are finished, take over your government. It will be yours to take. This will be probably your only chance for generations," President Donald Trump told Iranians on February 28, after the U.S. and Israel launched an all-out war on their country. He asked the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), armed forces and police to "lay down" weapons. "You will be treated fairly with total immunity, or you will face certain death," warned Mr. Trump.

The initial blow was devastating for Iran. More than 40 senior officials were killed, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, IRGC commander Mohammad Pakpour and Defence Council chief Ali Shamkhani. Senior Israeli officials had likened the June 12, 2025 strike on Iran, which killed a host of military officers, to the 'Red Wedding', the infamous massacre of House Stark members in *Game of Thrones*. But that attack paled in comparison with the February 28 strikes. This was Iran's true 'Red Wedding' moment.

The U.S. and Israel expected the decapitation strike to trigger the collapse of the Iranian state or plunge the country, already rocked by January's violent protests, into chaos, paving the way for a more amenable leadership to emerge. Mr. Trump wanted a quick, Venezuela-like solution. This confidence was reflected in his conversation with allies during the early hours of the war. According to Israel's *Ynet News*, Mr. Trump told British Prime Minister Keir Starmer that the war would be over "in three days". When he urged Mr. Starmer to deploy aircraft carriers to West Asia, the British PM said he would first consult his team the following week. "But the war has already started. Next week, the war is going to be over... in three days," said Mr. Trump.

But he was wrong.

Iran's response rested on three pillars. One, preserving the state and preventing regime collapse; two, retaliating by regionalising the war; three, enhancing the global economic cost by wielding its most potent strategic lever – the Strait of Hormuz. The state recovered quickly from the initial shock. Ali Larijani, secretary of the National Security Council, was already in charge of critical decision-making. President Masoud Pezeshkian focused on managing the war-time economy and civil administration. Within days of the U.S. attack, Ahmad Vahidi, the 'ghost general' of the IRGC, took command of the war effort. (Larijani was later killed in an Israeli strike and was swiftly replaced by Mohammed Bagher Zolqadr, another IRGC commander).

Iran also started striking U.S. bases in Persian Gulf countries and Jordan, besides directly attacking Israel. Among the six Gulf kingdoms, all but Oman have permanent U.S. military bases. Bases, missile defence batteries and sites of American economic presence were all targeted. Russia reportedly shared intelligence with Iran. On March 1, the second day of the war, the IRGC Navy announced that the Strait of Hormuz, through which one fifth of the world's seaborne oil passed before the war, was closed to all traffic. Shipping companies halted transits, commercial traffic collapsed, insurance costs rocketed and the price of crude oil soared, pushing the global economy to a cliff.

Mr. Trump, having failed to meet his objectives quickly, doubled down on his rhetoric. On March 6, he demanded Iran's "unconditional surrender" and ruled out any deal with Tehran. Two days later, Iran's Assembly of Experts chose Mojtaba Khamenei, son of the former leader Ali Khamenei, as the new 'Leader of the Revolution'. In his first message as the leader, Mojtaba termed the war an "existential struggle", and said the fighting would continue and that the Strait of Hormuz would remain shut. He delivered a clear message: Iran, despite the punishing American, Israeli attacks, preferred war over surrender.

"Iran was trying to avoid this war from the very beginning. A political solution was available [before the war started]. But Trump and [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu were not interested in an agreement. They wanted to change Iran's government and take over Iran's oil, creating Israel's hegemony in this part of the world," Foad Izadi, professor of world studies at the University of Tehran, told *The Hindu*. "Of course, they have inflicted huge damage on Iran's infrastructure and killed a lot of people. But they have failed [to meet their objectives]. And when they realised that they have failed, they entered negotiations," he added.

Troubled waters: Vessels at the Strait of Hormuz, as seen from Musandam, Oman, on June 16. REUTERS

Stubborn realities

In Mr. Trump's view, the U.S. secured a decisive victory over Iran. He said Iran's navy, air force, air defences and much of its attack capability had been destroyed, and that Tehran was begging for a deal. Yet, he faced a series of stubborn realities. The swift victory he had anticipated remained elusive; Iran's state survived the bombing; there was no viable military option to reopen the Strait of Hormuz; and Iran's nuclear programme remained unaddressed and unresolved. "The war has deeply scarred the entire region. Iran suffered heavy blows. Its Supreme Leader was killed, key military and nuclear sites were destroyed, yet it survived and proved it could strike back asymmetrically," Mohammed Soliman, author of *West Asia: A New American Grand Strategy in the Middle East*, and a senior fellow at The Middle East Institute, told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Trump had two options: press ahead with the air campaign, further depleting America's offensive and defensive stockpiles; or engage Iran diplomatically. If continuing the strikes did not produce a desirable outcome, prolonging the campaign would become futile. He chose the diplomatic alternative. It was at this point Pakistan, a nuclear power with good ties to both Washington and Tehran, stepped in to offer mediation. On April 8, just hours after threatening to erase Iran's civilisation, Mr. Trump announced a "double-sided ceasefire".

But the ceasefire did not mean an end to the conflict. Mr. Trump declared that the Strait of Hormuz would be open. Both Iran and Pakistan said the ceasefire covered Lebanon as well. Israel had seized parts of southern Lebanon after the war broke out. Israel continued its strikes, which strained the U.S.-Iran ceasefire. Tehran did not reopen the strait. After direct talks between the U.S. and Iran in Islamabad on April 11-12 failed to make any breakthrough, Mr. Trump announced a blockade of Iranian ports aimed at choking the country's already broken economy further. He did not want to return to active war, but he wanted to make Iran concede on his critical demands. Iran's closure of the strait and the American blockade led to repeated skirmishes between the two sides. But despite the tensions, they stayed engaged in talks, exchanging drafts through Pakistan. Iran took a phased approach towards the conflict. It wanted to negotiate a preliminary deal first to bring the war to an end and remove the bottlenecks for shipping in and out of the Persian Gulf, and then, in phase two, hold discussions on the nuclear question. The Trump administration, despite its public protests, accepted this line.

On June 15, U.S. and Iran announced the memorandum of understanding, extending the ceasefire by 60 more days and paving the way for more substantive talks on critical issues such as Iran's nuclear programme and western sanctions. The memorandum also said the ceasefire should come into force on all fronts, including Lebanon; the U.S. blockade would be lifted; Tehran would get access to its frozen funds and the U.S. would help create a development plan for Iran, involving $300 billion. On the other side, Iran promised never to make a nuclear bomb (Iran's official position has always been that it is not seeking to build a bomb, a position which it put on record in the 2015 deal signed with the Obama administration). Iran also promised to ensure safe passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz without any charge for 60 days.

Mr. Trump's claims of victory do not align with the text of the MoU. The U.S., which started the war seeking regime change, ultimately offered substantial concessions to the same government, in exchange for commitments not to pursue a nuclear bomb, and to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which had been open before the war. "It is both a strategic and a military defeat. No strategic or military goals were attained. The region will now have to recalibrate its relation to the U.S. and abandon unrealistic expectations about American power," Bruno Macaes, a Portuguese political scientist and author, told *The Hindu*.

A new security order

Before the war began, West Asia looked like a different region. Israel, after regionalising its post-October 7 wars, looked confident of meeting its final objective – bring down the Islamic Republic and build a unipolar West Asia where it would act as the principal security player. The Abraham Accords, which saw the UAE, Bahrain and Morocco sign normalisation agreements with Israel, built the foundation for this 'new Middle East'. Gulf countries were worried about Iran but felt protected by American military presence. America's promise for security had been the bedrock of the U.S.-Gulf partnership for decades. As Jimmy Carter said in January 1980, "Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States..." Iran upended not just the Carter doctrine but also the Trumpian effort to reshape West Asia around Israel as its core and Arab states as its pillars.

The U.S. could do little as Iran unleashed its drones and missiles at American bases across the region. Rather than providing security, the bases became magnets for Iranian projectiles. "The idea before the war was that the U.S. would provide security to the Gulf countries. But what happened was that the Gulf countries were burning through their defensive weapons to protect U.S. bases on their soil," said an Emirati official, requesting anonymity.

At least 13 American bases in the Gulf, including the Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, the Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia, the Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait, the U.S. Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain and the Al Sader and Al Ruwais facilities in the UAE, were damaged. According to a *Wall Street Journal* visual investigation based on satellite imagery, Iranian attacks devastated the U.S. Navy's base in Bahrain. The U.S. could do little when Qatar's Ras Laffan Industrial City, the world's largest LNG export complex, was hit on March 18. Gulf countries watched with pain and shock as Iran drilled holes into the U.S.-led security architecture.

"Stability will have to come from within since the U.S. proved incapable of providing it. As for U.S. policy, it will become almost entirely mercantile: focus on deals in energy, AI and, of course, weapons," said Mr. Macaes. Mr. Soliman of the Middle East Institute agreed: "Gulf Arab states will now accelerate their security self-reliance, diversify their defence relationships in addition to the U.S., and seek more pragmatic ways to manage relations with Tehran."

Gulf states have already begun moving in this direction. They seem to have recognised that the Islamic Republic is not going anywhere, and for their own security and for the safe passage of shipping through Hormuz, they will need to work with Tehran on the basis of peaceful co-existence. What they require is regional stability, and for that stability, as Mr. Macaes put it, they would have to bring "Iran back from the cold".

"Part of what we are doing now, as regional countries, is to create this regional security framework between us and Iran," Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Al Thani said recently in an interview. "That will hopefully have economic cooperation in the future between all of us," he added. Saudi Arabia reportedly reached out to Iran to reach an understanding so that the kingdom would be spared if war resumed. U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance recently said the UAE, which has very close ties with Israel, "is having conversations with Iran that have never happened before, including with the IRGC, about economic incentives." Oman has always kept the diplomatic channels open with Tehran despite the war.

The pre-October 7 push by the U.S. to bring Gulf monarchies and Israel, the two pillars of America's West Asia policy, closer to build a joint front against Iran appears to have been shattered by this war. "The Abraham Accords and the effort to create a Sunni-Zionist alliance against Iran are dead," Trita Parsi, executive vice president of Quincy Institute, told *The Hindu*. "The war proved that the containment of Iran only leads to war, instability, and the defeat of such an alliance. The Arab side sees Israel as a greater threat than needs to be contained, and Iran as a state that they – from a security standpoint – need to integrate with economically, because containment and war failed."

Israel, left alone

One country that had long sought this war, and was among the most affected by it, was Israel. It was the principal architect of the campaign. Yet, as the conflict went against the initial expectations, Mr. Trump sidelined Israel and chose talks with Iran, ultimately reaching the MoU. With Iran now rewriting the regional security order and engaging in direct talks with the U.S., Mr. Netanyahu's big push to remap West Asia appears to have backfired. "The end result (of the war) may be the decontainment of Iran and the recontainment of Israel – perhaps going back to the pre-1991 era in which Israel was the regional and international outcast," said Mr. Parsi.

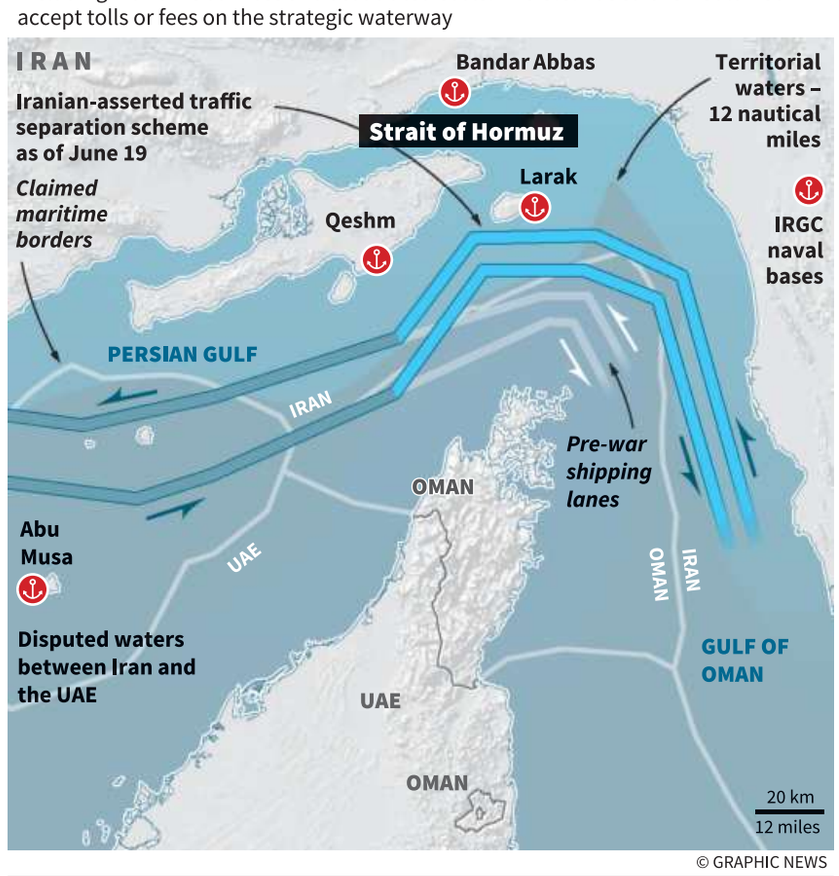
Israel stands increasingly isolated on the world stage. Without the U.S., its ability to shape security and geopolitical outcomes is limited. Many in Israel see the U.S.-Iran deal as a major strategic setback. "Israel is going to regret this war because nothing was achieved and Israel lost Trump," Gideon Levy, Israeli journalist and author, told *The Hindu*. "Israel should learn now that not everything can be achieved by force, but unfortunately Israel will not draw this lesson."

At this point, Mr. Netanyahu's focus is on the trump card he possesses – Lebanon. On June 26, Israel and Lebanon, under U.S. mediation, agreed to a deal under which Israeli troops would stay in southern Lebanon. Iran and Hezbollah have demanded a complete Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. The first article of the MoU calls for respecting Lebanon's "territorial integrity and sovereignty" – an indirect call for Israeli troop withdrawal. If Israel doesn't withdraw, clashes with Hezbollah will persist, meaning a ceasefire in Lebanon would remain out of reach. Tensions have already spilled over into the Strait of Hormuz, where Iran insists that ships should follow its designated route. It attacked a vessel transiting an "unauthorised" route last week, and the U.S. struck Iran on Saturday and Tehran retaliated by attacking U.S. bases in the region. But the U.S. strikes are unlikely to force Iran to give up its newly asserted control over the strait.

"We have to wait and see whether the U.S. and Israel are done with the war or this is just a pause," said Mr. Izadi, the Iranian professor. "Iran wants these attacks to stop; to get its money back; sanctions to be lifted and its authority over Hormuz recognised. The strait is in Iran's territory, in its contiguous waters. These are our red lines," he said. "The U.S. can accept these reasonable demands or they can start the war again. It's a decision they have to make."

Iran reasserts control over Hormuz

Iran and Oman are to discuss a future joint administration for the Strait of Hormuz, including maritime services and associated costs. The U.S. has said it would not accept tolls or fees on the strategic waterway



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THE GIST

- The U.S.-Iran MoU says the ceasefire should come into force on all fronts, including Lebanon, and that Lebanon's sovereignty should be respected
- Tehran would get access to its frozen funds and the U.S. would help create a development plan for Iran, involving $300 billion
- Iran has promised never to make a nuclear bomb and to ensure safe passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz without any charge for 60 days

WASHINGTON

Trump unveils rendering of new passport with picture of himself

TRUTH SOCIAL/@REALDONALDTRUMP

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday unveiled a rendering of a new limited-edition U.S. passport to mark the country's 250th anniversary of independence — featuring his stern-faced likeness. "The U.S.A.'s New Passport, which says, 'Welcome, but be good!'" Mr. Trump posted on Truth Social with the passport mock-up. AFP

NAIROBI

Six Kenyan protesters found dumped, tortured after arrest

AFP

Six Kenyan protesters arrested during the second anniversary of the landmark "Gen Z" uprising were found "dumped and tortured" on Saturday, rights group said. Families of those killed by security forces in June 2024 held a memorial march through Nairobi on Thursday to protest police killings. AFP

SURABAYA

Indonesian police arrest dozens following anti-government protest

AFP

Indonesian police have arrested dozens of protesters following a rally against President Prabowo Subianto's policies in the country's second-largest city, a rights group said on Saturday. While around 100 people gathered to protest, 24 were arrested, a coordinator at rights group KontraS Surabaya said. AFP

SAN FRANCISCO

U.S. authorises limited access to Anthropic's Mythos AI model

AFP

Anthropic announced on Friday that it had received authorisation from the U.S. government to allow a small group of U.S. cybersecurity firms to access its powerful AI model Mythos 5. Access to Mythos 5 had been blocked by U.S. authorities due to concerns about national security. AFP

Hezbollah calls U.S.-Israel-Lebanon deal 'grave blunder', deems it void

Naim Qassem condemns the trilateral framework agreement as 'humiliating' and a 'surrender of sovereignty'; the deal includes a pilot plan where Lebanese soldiers take control of two Israel-occupied areas, and a process to disarm Hezbollah

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem condemned the U.S.-Israel-Lebanon framework agreement on Saturday, saying it is a major mistake by the government and that his group deems it null and void.

The agreement – which includes a pilot effort in which Lebanese soldiers take control of two areas currently occupied by Israel, as well as a process aimed at disarming Hezbollah – was signed in Washington on Friday after five rounds of talks.

"The framework agreement in Washington is humiliating, shameful, and a surrender of sovereignty. This agreement is null and void, and the provisions of the Iranian-American memorandum of understanding must be implemented," Mr. Qassem said in a statement, referring to the deal to end the broader West Asia war, which includes a ceasefire in Lebanon.

Hezbollah supporters block the old airport road during a protest against the trilateral agreement, in Beirut on Saturday. AFP

Mr. Qassem called on the government to withdraw from "its sins that are ruining Lebanon".

He accused Lebanese authorities of committing a "grave blunder" and "legitimising the continuation of the [Israeli] occupation for many years," which "may even lead to the annexation of these lands".

Hezbollah strongly rejects direct negotiations between Lebanon and Israel, which have been ongoing since April.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah supporters took to the streets of Beirut late Friday to protest the agreement between Israel and Lebanon, as a lawmaker from the Iran-backed group warned enforcing the deal risked sparking civil war.

The state-run *National News Agency* reported that "Hezbollah supporters rode motorbikes through the streets of Beirut" including central areas and along a road leading to the airport "in protest at the framework agreement announced between Lebanon and Israel".

Lebanese "authorities will be unable to impose the implementation of the agreement signed in Washington unless they go, with American support, to civil war," Hezbollah lawmaker Hassan Fadlallah said.

Later, the Lebanese military vowed to maintain public order, urging citizens "to act responsibly".

Explosion, gunfire rock Karachi; 3 soldiers killed

Press Trust of India
KARACHI

At least three paramilitary soldiers were killed on Saturday night after militants rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the provincial headquarters of the paramilitary Pakistan Rangers in Karachi's heavily populated Gulistan-e-Jauhar area, triggering an intense exchange of gunfire with security forces, police said.

A little-known militant group, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, claimed responsibility.

Initial investigations suggest the militants entered the compound by ramming the main gate, said Sindh Inspector General of Police Javed Alam Odho, adding that more information is being collected. Rangers personnel responded rapidly but three of them were killed in the attack, he said. Local media reported that at least three militants were also killed. Mr. Odho said an explosion was heard when the attack began; however, its cause has not been determined yet.

Pakistan paramilitary soldiers arrive near the site of an explosion in Karachi, Pakistan, on Saturday night. AP

"What is confirmed is that as soon as the attack took place, the Rangers personnel immediately engaged these attackers in a gun battle," he added.

The area was cordoned off and surrounding roads were closed.

Sindh Home Minister Zia ul Hasan Lanjhar said Special Security Unit commandos and the Anti-Terrorist Force were assisting Rangers personnel in the clean-up operation.

(With inputs from AFP, AP)

Ukrainian, Russian air strikes kill at least five, injure dozens

Agence France-Presse
KYIV

Russian strikes killed two persons and wounded more than 20 in Ukraine, Kyiv said on Saturday, while Ukrainian retaliatory strikes on Russian-held territory and inside Russia killed three and wounded dozens, local officials said.

One person was killed and two injured in the central eastern Dnipropetrovsk region, regional military administration head Oleksandr Ganzha said on Telegram. "The enemy attacked two districts of the region more than 30 times with drones and aerial bombs," said Mr. Ganzha.

In Sumy district in the north, a 66-year-old man was killed in a Russian drone attack on a house, regional military governor Oleg Grygorov said.

"Last night, FP-5 Flamingo missiles successfully struck the Titan-Barrikady facility in Volgograd," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy posted on social media.

Desperation mounts in Venezuela as toll in twin earthquakes rises to 1,430

Associated Press
LA GUAIRA

Tensions flared on Saturday as desperation grew among anguished residents of the Venezuelan state of La Guaira, where rescuers and civilians searched for earthquake survivors amid a sharply rising death toll.

Venezuela's government said the number of people killed rose to 1,430 on Saturday morning and families reported at least 68,900 people missing, three days after the one-two punch of 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude earthquakes that devastated the South American nation.

Collapsed buildings in Catia La Mar, in La Guaira state, Venezuela, on Saturday, following earthquakes that struck the region. AFP

Most of those digging were civilians who took search efforts into their own hands, and tensions peaked over inadequate response from the Venezuelan government, whose soldiers, firefighters, police and military cadets were evidently underprepared to respond to the tragedy.

Acting President Delcy Rodríguez said on state television on Saturday that more than 14,000 members of the military and police are patrolling the area, where access is now blocked and special permits are required to enter.

Meanwhile, the United Nations estimated that close to seven million people in the country may have been affected by the twin earthquakes that struck the nation.

Seoul says Chinese military planes enter its air defence zone

Agence France-Presse
SEOUL

South Korea said it had sent up fighter jets as a precaution after more than 10 Chinese and Russian military aircraft entered its air defence zone on Saturday.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff in Seoul said the Chinese and Russian aircraft had entered and then left the Korea Air Defence Identification Zone (KADIZ) over the East Sea and the South Sea.

"South Korea's military detected the Chinese and Russian aircraft before they entered the zone and deployed Air Force fighter jets to prepare for any contingency," it said in a statement, without giving more details.

The Chinese and Russian aircraft did not violate South Korean airspace, it said.

An air defence identification zone is not sovereign airspace but a buffer area where countries identify approaching aircraft for security purposes.

Sport

Soaring high: Ancy showed commendable consistency before producing a jump of 6.88m in her fifth attempt. BISWARANJAN ROUT

Ancy shatters Anju's 22-year-old National record

ATHLETICS

Y.B. Sarangi
BHUBANESWAR

Ancy Sojan spectacularly erased Anju Bobby George's 22-year-old long jump National record – achieved at the Athens Olympics – by registering 6.88m while high jumper Sarvesh Kushare improved upon Tejaswin Shankar's eight-year-old National mark by logging 2.31m at the National inter-State athletics meet here on Saturday.

A persistent Ancy, who began with the biggest first jump of her career by recording 6.73m and qualifying for the Asian Games, showed commendable consistency before bringing out her best in her fifth attempt at the Kalinga Stadium and going past Anju's 6.83m.

Following some anxious moments, she erupted in joy when the new record was announced.

"I hope Anju ma'am will be proud of me. I want to repeat my performance to win the Asian Games gold and qualify for the World championships," said Asian Games silver medallist Ancy, who had achieved 6.75m at the Federation meet in Ranchi last month.

Sarvesh's doggedness also paid dividends as he surpassed Tejaswin's record of 2.29m. First, he achieved the Asian Games qualification mark before going for the big one. He failed in his first two attempts, but succeeded in his third to become the first Indian to go past 2.30m. His two efforts to clear 2.35m went in vain.

"Today, my body moved well and everything was in sync. Since I could not reach 2.30 in Ranchi, I tried 2.31 this time," said Sarvesh.

Yoonus Shah clocked 3:37.55 to break Bahadur Prasad's 31-year-old record in men's 1500m.

In men's 400m hurdles, Yashas (49.14) pipped Santhosh Kumar in a photo-finish.

The results (finals): Men: 100m (Asiad Q mark 10.16s): 1. Animesh Kujur (Odi) 10.28, 2. Pranav Gurav (Mah) 10.39, 3. Laukik Melge (Mah) 10.43; **1500m (Asiad Q mark 3:42.00):** 1. Yoonus Shah (UP) 3:37.55 (NMR, Old 3:40.10, Bahadur Prasad, 1995), 2. Gulveer Singh (UP) 3:38.31, 3. Rahul Baloda (Raj) 3:40.07; **400m hurdles (Asiad Q mark 49.41s):** 1. Yashas P. (Kar) 49.14 (49.131) (NMR, Old 49.37, Yashas, 2023), 2. Santhosh Kumar T. (TN) 49.14 (49.138), 3. Aryan Prajwal Kashyap (Kar) 50.95; **High jump (Asiad Q mark 2.19m):** 1. Sarvesh Kushare (Mah) 2.31 (NR, Old 2.29, Tejaswin Shankar, 2018), 2. Aadarsh Ram (TN) 2.25m, 3. Jesse Sandesh (Kar) 2.19m; **Shot put (Asiad Q mark 19.41m):** 1. Karanveer Singh (Pun) 20.49, 2. Samardeep Gill (MP) 20.40, 3. Tajinderpal Toor (Pun) 20.27.

Women: 100m (Asiad Q mark 11.54s): 1. Sudeshna Shivankar (Mah) 11.54, 2. Sneha S.S. (Kar) 11.65, 3. Amasha De Silva (SL) 11.70; **1500m (Asiad Q 4: 19.45):** 1. Parul Chaudhary (UP) 4:20.45, 2. Ankita Dhyani (Utk) 4:20.78, 3. Pooja Ola (Har) 4:21.48; **400m hurdles (Asiad Q mark 57.21s):** 1. R. Vithya Ramraj (TN) 56.07, 2. Anu R. (Ker) 56.54, 3. Sinchal (Kar) 58.90; **Long jump (Asiad Q mark 6.48m):** 1. Ancy Sojan (Ker) 6.88 (NR, Old 6.83, Anju Bobby George, 2004), 2. Shaili Singh (UP) 6.67m, 3. Mubassina Mohammed (Lak) 6.53; **Javelin (Asiad Q mark 57.62m):** 1. Annu Rani (UP) 56.74, 2. Karishma Sanil (Kar) 53.06, 3. Uma Choudhary (Raj) 53.06; **Heptathlon (Asiad Q mark 5605 points):** 1. Anamika K.A. (Ker) 3273, 2. Khushi (Har) 3248, 3. Purnima Hembram (Odi) 3238.

Technical goof-up forces hurdler to do solo re-run

Y.B. Sarangi
BHUBANESWAR

In a bizarre development, R. Harshitha, a 400m hurdler from Tamil Nadu, had to run alone during her heats on Saturday following an overnight technical goof-up in the National inter-State athletics meet.

Despite her determined solo re-run on her debut at the meet, the 21-year-old Harshitha clocked 1:02.54 on Saturday morning to narrowly miss out a berth in the final by 0.05 seconds.

A day before, Harshitha, running in lane No. 8, was surprised not to find the fifth of the 10 hurdles.

She switched to lane No. 7 to jump over the hurdle there and went on to finish the race. When she saw the video, she noticed that the technical officials had not placed the hurdle at the designated spot.

Harshitha raised a complaint, following which the AFI, as per rules, allowed her to do a re-run at 9.30 a.m. on Saturday.

"They said, 'you should have run in your own lane'. If I (had) run, I would have missed my rhythm without a hurdle," said Harshitha.

"I was totally confused. I thought I went onto the outer lane. So I came into the seventh lane. After finishing, I understood what I did. When I saw (the live telecast), there was no fifth hurdle and I reported that. They asked me to re-run."

It is reliably learnt that the AFI has issued a 24-hour show-cause notice to the two technical officials.

UNPERTURBED

It was a no-brainer: Norway coach on leaving out Haaland, Odegaard

GETTY IMAGES

Norway coach Stale Solbakken defended his decision to leave out star duo Erling Haaland and Martin Odegaard in Friday's 1-4 World Cup defeat to France. "It was a no-brainer, for me, for the physio and for the medical staff," said Solbakken after he made 10 changes to his starting line-up following the 3-2 win over Senegal.

TRIUMPHANT

Nagal wins in Targu Mures for his first title in two years

FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

India's No.1 Sumit Nagal beat Felix Balshaw of France 6-3, 7-5 to win the Targu Mures Challenger (Romania) on Saturday. It was his seventh Challenger title and fifth on clay. It was the first win for the 28-year-old since winning the Heilbronn Challenger in June 2024. He had beaten Cezar Cretu 6-3, 4-6, 6-1 in the semifinal.

EBB AND FLOW

Smith shines as New Zealand takes the lead against England

AP

Nathan Smith shone with four wickets as New Zealand ended day three with a 204-run lead over England in the third Test at Trent Bridge on Saturday. **The scores:** NZ 438 & 120/3 in 35 overs (Rachin 60 batting) vs. England 354 in 88.2 overs (Duckett 113, Bethell 74, Brook 58, Smith 4/91, O'Rourke 3/53, Foulkes 3/35).

THE WAIT ENDS

Ireland stuns West Indies, halts 21-game losing streak

GETTY IMAGES

Ireland ended a 21-match losing streak against West Indies when it won by six wickets in a T20 World Cup Group B clash in Bristol on Saturday. Windies would have qualified for the semis if it had won. **The scores:** WI 128/7 in 20 overs (Maguire 2/22, Murray 2/13) lost to Ireland 129/4 in 18.1 overs (Prendergast 63, Munisar 2/28).

Spain sends Bielsa's Uruguay packing after goalkeeper gaffe

The Iberian giant tops Group H and avoids a potential round-of-32 clash with Argentina; instead minnow Cape Verde will take on the title holder after securing second spot with a goalless stalemate against Saudi Arabia

FIFA WORLD CUP

Agence France-Presse
GUADALAJARA

Uruguay bowed out of the World Cup as goalkeeper Fernando Muslera's howler gifted Spain a 1-0 win to secure top spot in Group H.

Alex Baena's weak shot slipped through Muslera's grasp for the only goal as Spain avoided a last 32 showdown against Argentina.

The European champion will instead face Austria or Algeria next in Los Angeles on Thursday.

Uruguay's defeat allowed debutant Cape Verde secure second place and a meeting with the defending champion, thanks to a 0-0 draw against Saudi Arabia. Two-time winner Uruguay becomes the highest-ranked side to crash out in the group stages as the defeat rounded off a miserable tournament for Marcelo Bielsa and his squad.

Blunder: Muslera had Baena's weak shot covered but inexplicably allowed it to slip through. AP

The standings

GROUP H	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Points
Spain (Q)	3	2	1	0	5	0	5	7
Cape Verde (Q)	3	0	3	0	2	2	0	3
Uruguay (E)	3	0	2	1	3	4	-1	2
Saudi Arabia (E)	3	0	2	1	1	5	-4	2

Q: Qualified | E: Eliminated

Source: FIFA

After draws against Cape Verde and Saudi Arabia, reports of a revolt in the Uruguay camp emerged, with leading players, including Federico Valverde, clashing with Bielsa over his tactics.

To rub salt into Uruguayan wounds, midfielder Manuel Ugarte was injured in the build-up to Baena's goal and stretchered off with what appeared a serious knee injury.

Uruguay's miserable tournament was summed up when Agustín Canobbio was shown a straight red card in stoppage time for a wild lunge on Pau Cubarsi.

THE RESULTS

Group I: Senegal 5 (Diarra 4, I Sarr 56, P Gueye 59, 71, I Ndiaye 82) bt Iraq 0.
Norway 1 (Aasgaard 21) lost to France 4 (Dembele 7, 20, 32, Doue 90+4).
Group H: Uruguay 0 lost to Spain 1 (Baena 42).
Cape Verde 0 drew with Saudi Arabia 0.
Group G: New Zealand 1 (Just 84) lost to Belgium 5 (Trossard 28, 50, De Bruyne 66, Lukaku 86, Saelemaekers 90+4).
Egypt 1 (Saber 5) drew with Iran 1 (Rezaeian 14).

Confirmed round-of-32 games
South Africa vs. Canada; Brazil vs. Japan; Germany vs. Paraguay; Netherlands vs. Morocco; Ivory Coast vs. Norway; France vs. Sweden; USA vs. Bosnia and Herzegovina; Australia vs. Egypt; Argentina vs. Cape Verde

Monday's matches

ROUND OF 32

South Africa vs. **Canada,** 00.30 a.m.

Brazil vs. **Japan,** 10.30 p.m.

The day and time(s) pertain to India

India has its task cut out against high-flying Australia

T20 WORLD CUP

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LONDON

Moment of reckoning: A lot will depend on how Jemimah and Harmanpreet perform in the big game. GETTY IMAGES

These Aussies come hard at you. They come harder when you hurt them.

After getting knocked out by India in the ODI World Cup semifinal at Navi Mumbai last October, the Australian women whitewashed India in a three-match series Down Under. Before that, after being blown away by Harmanpreet Kaur in the semifinal of the 2017 World Cup at Derby, they did the same: they crushed India 3-0 at Vadodara.

When the sides clash in the last league match of the T20 World Cup at Lord's here on Sunday, the Aussies would want to avenge India for inflicting their first bilateral series loss at home in nine years (a 1-2 defeat in a three-match T20I series in February). But, the Women in Blue will be ready for the challenge as they are in a must-win situation.

Since the in-form South Africans are expected to win against Bangladesh, in the first match of the double-header at Lord's, the fight for the semifinal spot is hard for India. The Australians, thanks to their much superior Net Run Rate, are almost certain to reach the last four.

They have looked the most complete side. But, they must also be very conscious of the fact that India is one team that has given them tough competition of late. If it is a problem of plenty when it comes to the selection for the Australian team, India has not exactly been able to get the combinations perfect. If Australia is brimming with quality all-rounders, India hasn't really got one apart from that trusted servant of the team, Deepti Sharma.

There isn't much batting after her, but Radha Yadav, who took three wickets against Bangladesh in her first match of the tournament, makes the tail look less long. Sadly, it has been her dropped catches that have become a hot topic of discussion, but she remains the best fielder in the team.

India's catching overall has been disappointing, but this team is strong and experienced enough not to be affected too much by it. And India has the firepower in batting to cause headaches for even a bowling attack as strong as Australia's.

If Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Harmanpreet Kaur or Jemimah Rodrigues, who regained her touch and helped India tide over a mini-crisis against Bangladesh, get going, it may not be easy for Australia.

The six-time champion is further strengthened by the recovery of Phoebe Litchfield, who hasn't played a game after getting injured in the first match against South Africa, in which she made a 24-ball 50.

Senegal's rout of Iraq does the trick; Dembele wreaks havoc

Agence France-Presse
LOS ANGELES

Ousmane Dembele scored a first-half hat-trick as France powered past Norway 4-1 to clinch top spot in World Cup Group I on Friday as Senegal thumped Iraq 5-0. Paris Saint-Germain's reigning Ballon D'Or winner Dembele scored in the seventh, 20th and 32nd minutes.

The Kylian Mbappe-Erling Haaland showdown never materialised after Norway opted to leave Haaland – and nine of the team's other regular starters – on the bench.

France will face one of the eight best third-placed teams in the last 32, while Norway will take on Ivory Coast. Senegal, which has three points with a plus-two goal difference, sealed its knockout spot Group G and Group H results went in its favour.

Hat-trick hero: Dembele put the game beyond Norway. AFP

The standings

GROUP I	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Points
France (Q)	3	3	0	0	10	2	8	9
Norway (Q)	3	2	0	1	8	7	1	6
Senegal (Q)	3	1	0	2	8	6	2	3
Iraq (E)	3	0	0	3	1	12	-11	0

Q: Qualified | E: Eliminated

Source: FIFA

The standings

GROUP G	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Points
Belgium (Q)	3	1	2	0	6	2	4	5
Eygpt (Q)	3	1	2	0	5	3	2	5
Iran	3	0	3	0	3	3	0	3
New Zealand (E)	3	0	1	2	4	10	-6	1

Q: Qualified | E: Eliminated

Source: FIFA

Flawless Belgium and nervy Egypt advance

Agencies
VANCOUVER

Belgium defeated New Zealand 5-1 to book its place in the knockout rounds of the World Cup on Friday, securing its first win of the tournament to finish on top of Group G in Vancouver.

A double strike from Leandro Trossard and goals from Kevin De Bruyne, Romelu Lukaku and Alexis Saelemaekers carried the Red Devils into the last 32 in first place ahead of Egypt on goal difference.

Egypt claimed the runner-up spot after a 1-1 draw with Iran in Seattle. The Iranians finished third.

Iran had a potential winning goal called back due to an offside, and will have to wait one day to find out its fate after the two teams played to a 1-1 draw.

We want to play aggressively against the Aussies: Smriti

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LONDON

When Smriti Mandhana has a bad day, which isn't that often fortunately for Indian women's cricket, she goes back to videos of Matthew Hayden and Kumar Sangakkara. So when she got an opportunity the other day to talk to the former Australian opener, she took advantage of that.

"When I saw him doing the commentary, I got excited," Smriti said ahead of India's T20 World Cup match against Australia.

"We had a good chat and I wanted to know about things like the grip. I wasn't sure about talking with him before a game against Australia, but he was really kind and sweet. He shared a lot of things, which I hope I can apply to my batting."

Smriti and Hayden. ICC

Smriti said it was indeed a big match for India against Australia. "We have all spoken a lot about how we really want to be playing the aggressive brand of cricket and that is something which we will all look to do on Sunday," she said. "Everyone is itching to go."

Smriti is glad that her opening partnership with Shafali Verma is rocking again, after a bit of wobble.

"We had a very quiet series in England (before the World Cup) but we both were really pumped up to get back to giving the good starts for India because whenever we lay the foundation, we are in a good place. I am really happy with the way Shafali is striking the ball."

Smriti was also glad to see the way her opening partner was contributing with the ball of late.

"She has been amazing," Smriti said. "She did that in the World Cup final, then a little bit in the WPL as well. I remember her getting the Player-of-the-Match award for her bowling in the WPL. It is quite handy to have her as a bowler".

Today's matches

Lord's, 3 p.m. IST
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 15
South Africa 12
Bangladesh 2 | NR 1

Lord's, 7 p.m. IST
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 38
Australia 27 | India 10
NR 1

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIOHOTSTAR

Football's future steps into the present

Ayon Sengupta
DALLAS

Nine years ago, the first FIFA tournament hosted in India offered a glimpse into football's future.

Packed stadiums in New Delhi, Kolkata, Kochi, Navi Mumbai, Goa and Guwahati watched teenagers chasing their dreams. But many have disappeared into the game's unforgiving talent vortex. But 18 of those youngsters are now back on football's biggest stage, representing their countries at the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

No nation has produced more graduates than Japan. Five members of Hajime Moriyasu's squad – Keito Nakamura, Takefusa Kubo, Zion Suzuki, Yukinari Sugawara and Ayumu Seko – first experienced FIFA competition in India. And among the 18 players to have made that remarkable leap, none has left a greater mark on this World Cup than Nakamura (two goal contributions).

Nakamura's partnership with Kubo has evolved over almost a decade. During Japan's opening match of the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup, Nakamura scored a first-half hat-trick in a 6-1 victory over Honduras. His first goal came from a Kubo corner before Kubo added one of his own before half-time.

Nine years later, the script remains familiar.

Against the Netherlands, Kubo burst into the left side of the penalty area before cutting the ball back into what Japanese media call the "Keito Zone" – an area where Nakamura has proved to be lethal since his days at the Mitsubishi Yowa youth academy.

The 2017 u-17 WC introduced Indian fans to a generation that is now reaching its peak. Nine years later, many of those teenagers – like Nakamura, Kubo, Aurelien Tchouameni, Eric Garcia and Ferran Torres – have become the faces of their national teams, proving that football's youth tournaments are remembered for the careers they set in motion.

Nakamura and Kubo. AFP

2017 U-17 WC, 2026 FIFA WC: the common thread

Japan: Keito Nakamura, Takefusa Kubo, Zion Suzuki, Yukinari Sugawara, Ayumu Seko; **France:** Aurelien Tchouameni, Maxence Lacroix; **Spain:** Eric García, Ferran Torres; **USA:** Sergino Dest, Tim Weah; **NZ:** Bill Tuiloma Just, Liberato Cacace; **Turkiye:** Yunus Akgun; **Haiti:** Wilson Isidor; **Algeria:** Amine Gouiri; **England:** Marc Guehi; **Ivory Coast:** Seko Fofana.

INBRIEF

Mercedes driver Russell grabs pole for the Austrian GP

George Russell produced a dramatic late and contentious fastest lap in his Mercedes on Saturday to claim pole position ahead of the two Ferraris for Sunday's Austrian GP in Spielberg.

The starting grid: First row: George Russell (Mercedes), Charles Leclerc (Ferrari); **Second:** Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari), Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes); **Third:** Max Verstappen (Red Bull), Lando Norris (McLaren); **Fourth:** Oscar Piastri (McLaren), Isack Hadjar (Red Bull); **Fifth:** Liam Lawson (Racing Bulls), Arvid Lindblad (Racing Bulls); **Sixth:** Pierre Gasly (Alpine), Gabriel Bortoleto (Audi), **Seventh:** Oliver Bearman (Haas), Nico Hulkenberg (Audi); **Eighth:** Estaben Ocon (Haas), Franco Colapinto (Alpine); **Ninth:** Carlos Sainz (Williams), Alexander Albon (Williams); **10th:** Sergio Perez (Cadillac), Valtteri Bottas (Cadillac), **11th:** Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin), Lance Stroll (Aston Martin).

Nabi's four-wicket burst puts India-A in the driver's seat

Pacer Auqib Nabi's four-wicket burst put India-A in the driver's seat with an overall lead of 170 runs against Sri Lanka-A on the third day of the first 'Test' in Galle on Saturday. Starting the day at 113 for two, SL-A was in control at 300 for five until Nabi bowled a fiery spell to bundle out the host for 330. In India-A's second innings, Ayush Pandey and Devdutt Padikkal were unbeaten at close after Sai Sudharsan had to retire hurt.

The scores: India-A 452/6 decl & 48/0 in 17 overs vs. Sri Lanka-A 330 in 101.4 overs (Fernando 84, Bandara 70, Arachchige 72, Nabi 4/58).

Indonesia pips India, makes AVC Cup title decider

Indonesia halted India's five-match winning streak in the AVC Men's Volleyball Cup as it emerged victorious 15-25, 26-24, 25-20, 19-25, 15-13 in the semifinal in Ahmedabad on Saturday.

Devika, Rounak and Srikanth enter U.S. Open semifinals

Devika Sihag upset third seed Riko Gunji of Japan, while Rounak Chouhan reached the semifinals of U.S. Open badminton tournament at Fullerton. K. Srikanth packed off Liao Jhuo-Fu of Taiwan 21-9, 12-21, 21-8 in the other quarterfinal.

The results (quarterfinals):
Women: Devika Sihag bt Riko Gunji 22-20, 21-19; Line Christophersen bt Tanvi Sharma 21-16, 11-21, 21-11; Rachel Chan bt Rakshitha Sree 15-21, 21-16, 21-12. **Men:** Rounak Chouhan bt Misha Zilberman 23-21, 21-11; K. Srikanth bt Liao Jhuo-Fu 21-9, 12-21, 21-8.

Jr Indian shuttlers enter the Asian mixed team quarters

India sealed a spot in the quarterfinals of the Badminton Asia junior mixed team championships with a 2-0 (55-31, 55-21) victory over Kazakhstan in its Group-C opener in Yatsushiro, Japan, on Saturday.

Jangoo and Chase keep WI in the hunt for lead

Amir Jangoo (78 batting) and captain Roston Chase (42 batting) took the West Indies within reach of Sri Lanka's first innings total as the home side closed day two of the first Test in North Sound at 271 for five.

The scores: Sri Lanka 308 in 71.5 overs vs West Indies 271/5 in 84 overs (Jangoo 78 batting, Chase 42 batting).

INTER-DIST. CRICKET

Vaishnavi fires Salem to big win

SALEM: S. Vaishnavi top-scored with an unbeaten 119 (131b, 14x4) as Salem beat Krishnagiri by eight wickets in the TNCA inter-district women's tournament semifinals on Saturday.

Salem will take on Tiruvallur in the final.

The scores (semifinals): Krishnagiri 250/4 in 50 overs (K. Hashini 48, M. Sudheshna 49, U. Chathurya 63, M. Thejes Sree 59 n.o.) lost to Salem 253/2 in 47.4 overs (R. Abarna 32, S. Vaishnavi 119 n.o., K. Akshayamathi 52 n.o.).

At Coimbatore: Coimbatore 133 in 46.5 overs (S. Sweata 37, D. Swagata 3/21) lost to Tiruvallur 105/7 in 30.2 overs (B. Shree Swagatha 3/34) (Tiruvallur won by three wickets by VJD Method after rain interruption; revised target 105 in 31 overs).

Vaishnavi (Salem, 119 n.o.).

India eyes improved batting show in its bid to level series

After coming a cropper in the opening match, Shreyas' men will hope to sign off the short tour on a winning note; the host is a step away from scripting another piece of history

INDIA IN IRELAND

Press Trust of India
BELFAST

India's star-studded batting line-up will be under pressure to make amends when it takes on a buoyant Ireland in the second and final T20I here on Sunday.

After a shock defeat in the opener, Shreyas Iyer's men need a win to level the series. Playing its first match since the T20 World Cup triumph in March, India was handed one of its biggest upsets as Ireland registered its maiden victory over the Men in Blue in any format.

With the five-game series against England beginning on Wednesday at Chester-le-Street, Shreyas will be eager to sign off the short Ireland tour on a winning note.

The biggest concern from the opening game was India's batting collapse. Sanju Samson lasted just four balls before becoming debutant Jai Moondra's maiden international wicket while Ishan Kishan and Shreyas, too, fell for single-digit scores inside the PowerPlay.

Abhishek Sharma carried on in his explosive manner but lacked support from the other end.

The team management, however, is unlikely to press the panic button after one just defeat.

Even as the batting unit disappointed in the first match, the bowling pack offered positives.

Harshit Rana made an impressive comeback after a four-month layoff due to a knee injury, using his variations smartly to return figures of three for 24.

Left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh and left-arm spinner Axar Patel also bowled well. As for the Lorcan Tucker-led Ireland, it will be brimming with confidence after having scripted history on Friday.

Match starts at 6 p.m. IST.

Pace threat: Hollard, who had posed a tough challenge to the Indian batters on Friday, will look to impress again. GETTY IMAGES

Class apart: India u-19 women proved too good for Sri Lanka.

Coach Nooshin aims to build bench strength

U-19 CRICKET

Rajdeep Saha
CHENNAI

The India under-19 women's team sealed a 3-0 whitewash over Sri Lanka u-19 with a lap of honour around the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium as a mark of gratitude to the 500-odd spectators who egged them on. Watching on from a distance was head coach Nooshin Al Khadeer, who has made successes something of a habit.

Nooshin, who took over the u-19 set-up in 2022, will eye a hat-trick of T20 World Cup crowns when the third edition starts early next year. "We have zonal camps in April and May. Usually, they're at different venues, but we were lucky to have this year's camp at the Bengaluru Centre of Excellence," Nooshin told *The Hindu*.

Nooshin and the selectors will keep close tabs on the domestic season, which starts with the u-19 T20 Trophy Elite on Oct. 9, and assignments like the tour of England and the proposed Asia Cup to firm up the World Cup squad.

"The ultimate goal is to reach a point where we can push in two Indian teams coming in, and that's going to happen... I'm not too crazy about the limelight. These players are the ones who are going to steal the show".

The scores: Sri Lanka u-19 116/7 in 20 overs (Nethmi Upeksha 51 n.o.) lost to India u-19 120/3 in 18.4 overs (Bhavika Ahire 50); **Toss:** Sri Lanka.
PoM: Upeksha; **PoS:** Bhavika.

AFI confirms Neeraj's participation in Asian Games

Press Trust of India
BHUBANESWAR

Indian javelin throw superstar Neeraj Chopra will compete in the Asian Games in Japan in September-October in his bid to defend the title, Athletics Federation of India's (AFI) selection committee chairman Adille Sumariwalla confirmed on Saturday.

Recovering from a lower-back injury he had sustained before the Tokyo World Championships in September 2025, Neeraj made a late start to the season at the Doha Diamond League where he finished fourth with a throw of 85.69m.

The 28-year-old two-time Olympic medallist has already confirmed participation in the Commonwealth Games but has not unequivocally said he will compete in the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya from September 19 to October 4.

"Yes. He (Neeraj) will participate both in the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games. He has qualified already and he is recovering.

"He has done 86m (85.69m) in his very first event, which is fantastic," Sumariwalla said.

Neeraj. FILE PHOTO

"He won a gold with 88m (in 2022 Asian Games in China), so he is already close to 86m, then we see no reason why he will not do well in both the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games."

The AFI's selection committee is expected to name the team for the Asian Games on Sunday, the last day of the ongoing National Inter-State Senior Athletics Championships here.

Neeraj had won gold in the last Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, in 2023, with a throw of 88.88m.

In Aichi-Nagoya, Neeraj is expected to face rising Sri Lankan star Rumesh Tharanga Pathirage, who breached the 90m mark earlier this year and won two Diamond League titles, including in Doha where Neeraj finished fourth.

With packed grids and clear-eyed kids, India's karting scene revs up

Plenty of interest: Seventy-five drivers competed across four categories in the opening round.

S. Dipak Ragav
COIMBATORE

India's motorsport culture is still in its nascent stage, despite having hosted World championship events such as F1, MotoGP and Formula E. The country has had only two drivers in F1, the last of whom raced back in 2012. The key to keeping that supply line going is a proper grassroots-level programme, starting with karting. It is where things have been slow to grow, but the sport has steadily progressed over the last few years.

The sight of tiny tots, all of eight or nine years old, decked in racing suits and helmets, with their parents cheering them on at the opening round of the 2026 edition of the Meco FMSCI National Karting Championship here at the CoASTT circuit, is proof of that rising interest. There was a grid of 75 drivers across four categories: Micro Max (8-12), Mini Max (10-14), Junior (12-15) and Senior (above 14) on Saturday, with a few more drivers set to join from subsequent rounds. The increasing number of entries, with nine teams fielding drivers across classes, has also transformed the way the series is run.

Former National champion Armaan Ebrahim, who runs the M-Sport team, says: "The current championship has the biggest karting grid in Asia. Equipment-wise, we're on par with the rest of Asia. The chassis used here is the same as in the World championships. There may be slightly different specifications, but fundamentally it's the same equipment."

The increasing professionalism has also translated into rising on-track standards. "I'm extremely impressed by the level of understanding shown by the youngsters. They are remarkably disciplined and focused. Even eight-year-olds display incredible concentration during races. They understand exactly what they're doing, and that reflects the quality of coaching they receive," says former racing driver Mira Erda, who is Chief of Race Control here.

More importantly, as drivers look to pursue the sport seriously, the teams have had to adapt as well. "Every team is highly professional and employs international engine tuners, coaches and mechanics. It shows how seriously they take performance development, and all of this is excellent for the sport's growth," Armaan adds.

(*The writer was in Coimbatore at the invitation of MECO Motosports*)

GCL Season 4 draft tomorrow

Sports Bureau

The draft for the fourth edition of the Global Chess League (GCL) will be held in Mumbai on Monday.

The league will see the return of Magnus Carlsen while Divya Deshmukh is set to make her debut. The GCL, a joint venture between Tech Mahindra and FIDE, will be held in Bengaluru from September 3 to 13.

The player pool features 36 GMs, including World champions and leading names from the global circuit. The list includes Viswanathan Anand, Javokhir Sindarov, and K. Humpy among others.

LIVE TELECAST

FIFA World Cup: Unite8 Sports 1, 2 & Z5 App, 7.30 a.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Monday)

Women's T20 World Cup: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar. 3 p.m.; **Australia vs India,** 7 p.m.

England vs New Zealand: Third Test, Day 4, Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 3.30 p.m.

Ireland vs India: Second T20I, Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 6 p.m.

Formula One: Austrian GP, F1 TV, F1 TV Pro App & FanCode, 6.30 p.m.

WI vs SL: First Test, Day 4, FanCode, 7.30 p.m.

Iron Mirage claims feature event

RACING

BENGALURU: Prasanna Kumar trained Iron Mirage (Akshay K up) won the S.M. Cama Music and Production Pvt Ltd Juvenile Sprinters' Million (1,200m), the feature event of the races held here on Saturday (June 27).
The winner is owned by Mr. Meka Yugandhar, Capt Jamshed J. Appoo, Mr. K. Manoj Kumar, Mr. Ashok Ranpise & M/s. DT Racing & Breeding LLP.

1. SMART CHIEFTAN PLATE (1,400M): RAMPAGE (Yash) 1, Ashwa New York (Suraj) 2, Shining Path (Akshay K) 3 and Taaqath (S. Saqlain) 4. 2-1/2, 2-3/4 and 1. 1m 25.10s. Rs. 15 (w), 11, 10 and 12 (p), SHP: 20, THP: 28, FP: 24, Q: 15, Trinella: 37/42, Exacta: 162/182. Favourite: Rampage.
Owner: J.M. Livestock Pvt Ltd rep. by Mr. Jaydev M. Mody. Trainer: Shazaan Shah.

2. POONAWALLA STUD PLATE (DIV. II), 1,200M: DEFENCE COUNSEL (G. Vivek) 1, Bestidentification (A. Asbar) 2, La Mcqueen (Aleemuddin) 2 and Aherne (Antony) 4. 4, Hd and 1-1/2. 1m 12.49s. Rs. 40 (w), 13, 12 and 13 (p), SHP: 30, THP: 34, FP: 103, Q: 30, Trinella: 206/136, Exacta: 1,332/666. Favourite: Bestidentification.
Owner: Mr. M. Venkatesh. Trainer: S. Dominic.

3. ASTRONOMIC PLATE (2,000M): YOUREMANORBORNE (Sandesh) 1, Winfield (Antony) 2, Storm Shadow (G. Vivek) 3 and Badshaah (Abdul Fazal) 4. Not run: Maana. 3/4, 1 and 2. 2m 08.67s. Rs. 14 (w), 10, 11 and 11 (p), SHP: 23, THP: 32, FP: 23, Q: 24, Trinella: 40/26, Exacta: 168/109. Favourite: Youremanorborne.
Owner: Mr. B. Vijeth Bhandari. Trainer: P.S. Chouhan.

4. MANAGING COMMITTEE GOLD CUP (1,600M): PROMISEOFTHEFUTURE (Neeraj) 1, Xanthe (Hindu S) 2, Touch Of Grey (Saurav Rawat) 3 and Victor Hugo (A. Hangal) 4. Not run: Emphatic. 4-1/4, 3 and 2-1/2. 1m 36.94s. Rs. 19 (w), 11 and 13 (p), SHP: 21, THP: 38, FP: 31, Q: 22, Trinella: 214/159, Exacta: 699/202. Favourite: Promiseofthefuture.
Owner: Ms. Ameeta Mehra. Trainer: Irfan Ghatala.

5. S.M. CAMA MUSIC AND PRODUCTION PVT LTD JUVENILE SPINTERS' MILLION (1,200M): IRON MIRAGE (Dreamfield - Setareh) Akshay K 1, Shrishti (Win Legend - Bright Future) Yash 2, A Great Buzz (Leitir Mor - Flaming Martini) Pavan 3 and Burevestnik (Air Support - Defiance) Sandesh 4. 9-1/2, 3/4 and 9-1/4. 1m 11.39s. Rs. 11 (w), 10 and 31 (p), SHP: 46, THP: 23, FP: 61, Q: 40, Trinella: 204/37, Exacta: 128/56. Favorite: Iron Mirage.
Owners: Mr. Meka Yugandhar, Capt Jamshed J. Appoo, Mr. K. Manoj Kumar, Mr. Ashok Ranpise & M/s. DT Racing & Breeding LLP. Trainer: Prasanna Kumar.

6. MALAKPET PLATE (1,300M): SHINING WAYS (Suraj) 1, Power Of The Sea (S. Shareef) 2, Lasya (Vishal Bunde) 3 and Rocking Star (R. Pradeep) 4. Not run: Big B. 3, 1 and 3/4. 1m 19.26s. Rs. 14 (w), 13, 22 and 31 (p), SHP: 69, THP: 53, FP: 196, Q: 102, Trinella: 991/328, Exacta: 3,866/1,656. Favourite: Shining Ways.
Owners: Mr. Daulat Chhabria, Mr. Teja Gollapudi, Dr. Prabhakar Chowdary Tripuraneni & Mr. Ashok Ranpise. Trainer: S. Narredu.

7. POONAWALLA STUD PLATE (DIV. I), 1,200M: KABALI (R. Pradeep) 1, Felisa (Arvind K) 2, Aquastic (S. Sachin) 3 and Senor Cherie (Akshay K) 4. 2-3/4, 1/2 and 1/2. 1m 11.48s. Rs. 67 (w), 19, 17 and 12 (p), SHP: 49, THP: 40, FP: 1,483, Q: 631, Trinella: 1,376/944, Exacta: 7,508/3,217. Favourite: Aquastic.
Owner: Mr. Santhosh. P. Trainer: G. Sandhu.
Jackpot: Rs. 1,908; Runner up: 27; Mini Jackpot: 1,139; Treble (i): 171; (ii): 505.

Knotty Charmer and Rieko may fight out the finish of Chief Minister's Cup

BENGALURU: Knotty Charmer and Rieko may fight out the finish of the Chief Minister's Cup (1,200m), the chief event of the races to be held here on Sunday (June 28).

False rails (width about 5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

1 LITTLEOVER PLATE (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 2.00 p.m.: 1. Auspicious King (6) Kiran Rai 56, 2. Calix (7) Akshay K 56, 3. Panache (9) G. Vivek 56, 4. Abbakka (2) Arvind K 54.5, 5. Charming Prospect (8) A. Asbar 54.5, 6. Haniel (1) Arul 54.5, 7. Preview (5) Suraj 54.5, 8. Sai Princess (4) Jagadeesh 54.5 and 9. Time Tester (3) Darshan 54.5.
1. CALIX, 2. HANIEL, 3. PREVIEW

2 MAHALAKSHMI PLATE (1,600m), rated 00 to 25, 2.30: 1. Detective Conan (9) Arul 61.5, 2. Sea Diamond (8) Vishal S 61.5, 3. Big Sauce (7) Pavan 61, 4. Magna Carta (3) S. Sachin 61, 5. Superhero (2) Bhawani S 60.5, 6. Michiko (4) Kiran Rai 59.5, 7. Bruce Almighty (6) Neeraj 59, 8. Rising Form (5) Faizan Khan 58 and 9. Princess Jasmine (1) Suhas K 56.
1. MICHIKO, 2. MAGNA CARTA, 3. SEA DIAMOND

3 RICHELIEU STAKES (1,400m), rated 20 to 45, 3.00: 1. Queendom (7) Akshay K 60, 2. Dream Walkin' (2) G. Vivek 59, 3. Super Charm (1) Saurav Rawat 59, 4. Mericle Beauty (6) Ankush 58.5, 5. Steely Challenge (4) Antony 58, 6. Lightning Blitz (8) Suraj 57, 7. Lots Of Luck (-) (-) 56.5 and 8. Tiger Bay (3) Kiran Rai 56.5.
1. STEELY CHALLENGE, 2. LIGHTNING BLITZ, 3. DREAM WALKIN'

4 CHIEF MINISTER'S CUP (1,200m), 4-y-o over, (Terms), 3.30: 1. Knotty Charmer (3) Antony 60, 2. Crown Drive (5) Hindu S 57, 3. Dream Seller (4) Sandesh 57, 4. Kalamitsi (2) Akshay K 57 and 5. Rieko (1) Neeraj 57.
1. KNOTTY CHARMER, 2. RIEKO

5 KARNATAKA SUB-AREA CUP (1,400m), rated 60 to 85, 4.00: 1. Sekhmet (5) Rayan 60, 2. Mahler (7) G. Vivek 57.5, 3. Vegatha (2) Antony 57, 4. Irish Coffee (1) Arul 56, 5. Gachchhatu (8) Neeraj 54, 6. Jersey King (6) Lave Kumar 53, 7. Lux Aeterna (4) Akshay K 53 and 8. Victoria Doresaani (3) L.A. Rozario 51.
1. MAHLER, 2. VEGATHA, 3. GACHCHATU

6 TUDOR JET PLATE (1,200m), rated 20 to 45, 5-y-o & over, 4.30: 1. El Alamein (5) Vishwa V 60.5, 2. Agera (8) L.A. Rozario 59, 3. Noble Cause (6) S. Sachin 58.5, 4. IL Volo (1) Kiran Rai 58, 5. Carat Love (3) Akshay K 57, 6. River Deep (2) A. Asbar 56.5, 7. Super Kind (4) Vishal S 56, 8. Chotipari (9) Abhishek Mhatre 55 and 9. Glorious Spectre (7) Arul 55.
1. RIVER DEEP, 2. CARAT LOVE, 3. IL VOLO

7 DESERT GOD PLATE (1,600m), rated 20 to 45, 5.00: 1. Pledge (4) Akshay K 62.5, 2. Luca (6) S. Sachin 60, 3. Imperador (8) Vishal Bunde 57.5, 4. Shahenshaah (3) Abdul Fazal 57.5, 5. Regal Aristocracy (1) Antony 57, 6. Razzmatazz (5) Aditya W 56, 7. Absolute Thunder (7) Sai Kiran 52.5 and 8. Art Of Romance (2) Kiran Rai 52.
1. PLEDGE, 2. IMPERADOR, 3. REGAL ARISTOCRACY

Day's best: **STEELY CHALLENGE**
Double: **CALIX - MAHLER**
Jkt: 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; Mini Jkt: 4, 5, 6 and 7; Tr (i): 2, 3 and 4; (ii): 5, 6 and 7.

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Creative Visualisation

Generational craft: A craftsman heating a *khukuri* knife in a furnace before shaping it by hand in Patan, Nepal. The skills have been passed down through generations.

Precise detailing: A blacksmith shapes a red-hot *khukuri* blade with a hammer during the traditional forging process at a workshop.

Final touches: The knife is sharpened on a machine during the finishing process in a traditional workshop.

Mark of pride: Nepali Army personnel place their *khukuris* against their chests as a mark of respect before beginning a drill. The *khukuri* continues to play an important part in military training.

Khukuri: a symbol of courage and loyalty

Once used by the Gorkha soldiers to fight the British Army, the *khukuri* knife's uses have transformed over time according to the needs of the Nepali people, who continue to use it extensively in combat as well as in their homes

Prabhat Khanal

The *khukuri* knife is an iconic symbol of the Gorkha military, originally from Nepal, and is closely associated with the Gorkha soldier, symbolising strength, courage, bravery and loyalty.

A typical *khukuri* blade has a distinctive curved shape, and a hard blade, measuring 16 to 18 inches, can be used as both a weapon during combat and a tool in Nepal. *Khukuris* are forged from spring steel with a notch at the end of the blade, designed so that blood and sap drip off the knife instead of seeping onto the hardwood handle.

According to the Nepal Army, after 1744, the *khukuri* worn by the Gorkha soldiers who fought under the leadership of Prithvi Narayan Shah, who was the king of the Gorkha kingdom, in the Nepal Unification Campaign, made a significant contribution to the creation of modern Nepal.

When Britain initially encountered Gorkhas in the mountains of Nepal in 1814, the Gorkhas fought so fiercely and admirably with their *khukuris*. After that, the *khukuri* became the symbol of courage, bravery, and warfare skills of the Gorkha soldier, and they were recruited into the British Army. Now, the Indian Army currently fields seven active Gorkha Rifles regiments and the British Army has one primary Gorkha infantry regiment, The Royal Gorkha Rifles (RGR).

The Nepal Army uses the *khukuri* as a combat weapon, a survival tool in field operations, and an important part of military training. It is also carried during parades and ceremonial events, cultural events, symbolising the courage, tradition, and identity of Nepali soldiers.

Though the *khukuri* is best known as a ruthless combat weapon, the knife has several other uses. Gorkhas can use their *khukuris* to chop or carve wood, cut meat and vegetables, dig, and hunt wild animals.

The act of sharpening a *khukuri* is a ritualistic process, symbolising the soldier's commitment to duty and honour. People of Nepal worship the *khukuri* during various festivals.

Although the *khukuri* has undergone some changes in its appearance from ancient times to the modern era, its importance, respect, and identity have not diminished.

Firm grip: A man demonstrating the proper handling of a handcrafted *khukuri* knife in a factory, showcasing its precision, balance, and readiness for action.

Fierce loyalty: Personnel of the Nepal Army performing a synchronised *khukuri* drill during a military display in Kathmandu, Nepal. The blade is showcased by soldiers during parades, ceremonial events and cultural events as symbol of loyalty and courage of the soldiers.

Warriors in rhythm: A drill that forms part of a military display, showcasing precision, discipline, and the traditional combat weapon.

Secure build: A worker at a workshop in Patan handcrafting a *khukuri* sheath. This sheath is worn around the waist by soldiers, to carry the blade securely and draw it with ease.

Razor sharp: A worker shapes and sharpens the *khukuri* on a machine during the finishing process.

Combat ready: Personnel of the Nepal Army seen with bayonets on their rifles which are not the same as the *khukuri*.