FRIDAY
July 10, 2026
CHENNAI
CITY EDITION
28 Pages ₹ 5.00

THE HINDU

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INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

Vol. 149 • No. 163
Regd. TN/ARD/110/2024-2026
RNI No. 1001/1957

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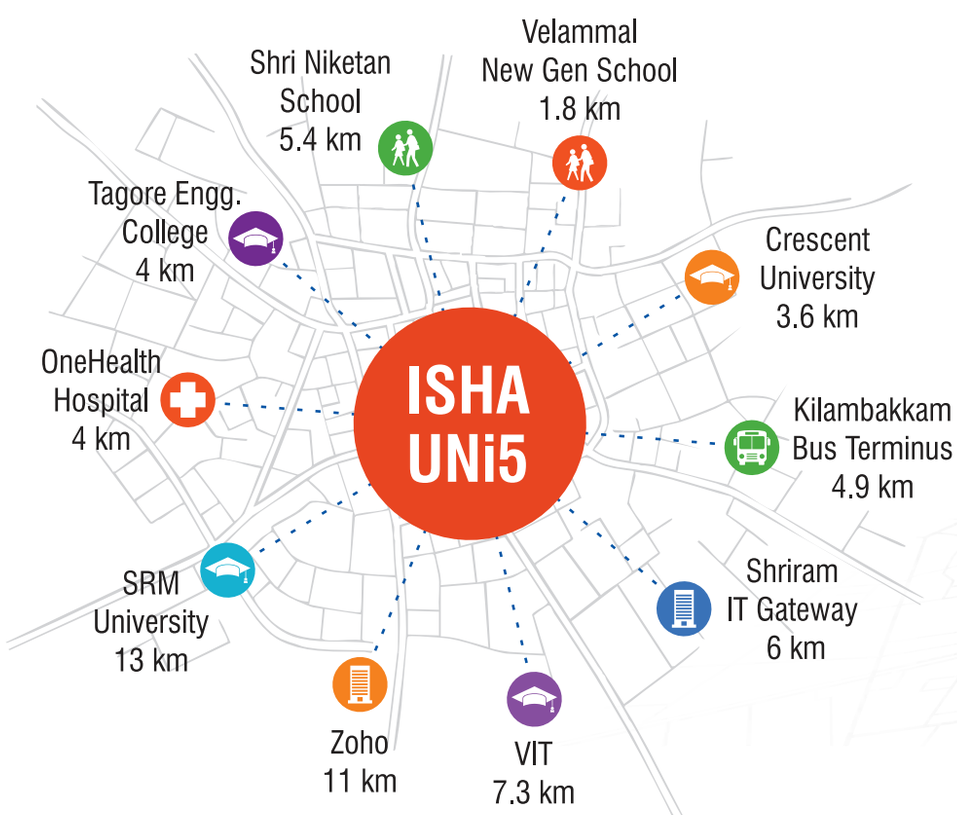

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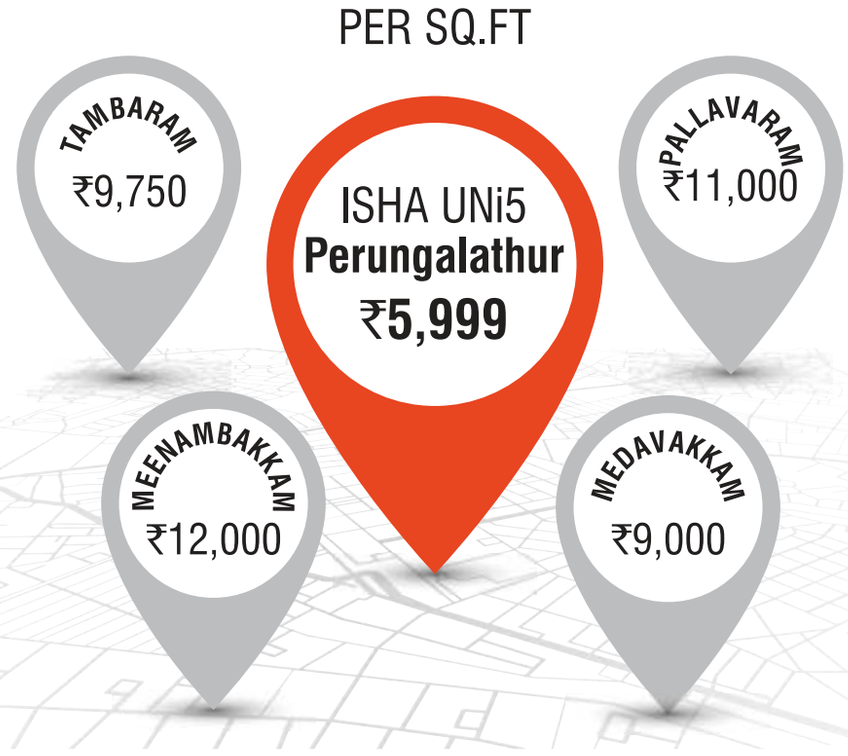

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Probe ordered into UAV crash in Gujarat
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Breaking down the neighbours' standpoints
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India meets England in a Test at Lord's
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NEARBY

CM to give job orders to kin of stampede victims

CHENNAI
Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay will on Friday hand over appointment orders for government jobs to the family members of 32 victims of the stampede that took place during a TVK rally in Karur last year. » PAGE 6

TVK govt. begins consultations for industrial policy

CHENNAI
The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam-led government has begun consultations to formulate its first industrial policy for Tamil Nadu, which is expected to be unveiled in January 2027. » PAGE 6

'No delay in textbooks supply to govt. schools'

CHENNAI
The Tamil Nadu School Education Department on Thursday said there had not been any delay in the printing or supply of textbooks to government schools across the State for the current academic year. » PAGE 6

FRIDAY REVIEW » 8 PAGES

India, Australia move to deepen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

Amid geostrategic uncertainties, Prime Minister Modi, his Australian counterpart, Albanese, adopt declaration to expand maritime security ties and defence collaboration; the countries also seal pacts on civil nuclear energy and critical minerals

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

India and Australia on Thursday adopted a Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation, committing to significantly deepen military engagement, strengthen defence industrial collaboration, and expand maritime security cooperation amid growing geostrategic uncertainty in the Indo-Pacific region. The two countries also sealed pacts on civil nuclear energy and critical minerals sectors.

The declaration, adopted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart, Anthony Albanese, outlines an ambitious road map to elevate defence ties through closer strategic consultations, enhanced interoperability between the armed forces, expanded military exercises, and greater collaboration in defence science, technology, and industrial supply chains. A statement released by the office of the Australian Prime Minister mentioned that, under the declaration, the two sides agreed to hold regular consultations on defence-related developments in the Indo-Pacific affecting their shared interests, increase the complexity of bilateral and multilateral military exercises, accelerate efforts to improve interoperability and information sharing between their armed forces, and expand aircraft deployments from each other's territories.

The agreement also envisages deeper personnel exchanges through education, training, and liaison appointments, while exploring opportunities to cooperate in recruiting skilled personnel for their respective defence workforces.

Tactical ties: PM Narendra Modi being greeted by his Australian counterpart, Anthony Albanese, in Melbourne on Thursday. AP

Mr. Modi emphasised the importance of a free and stable Indo-Pacific and highlighted the growing engagement between the two countries in the defence domain. "The Indo-Pacific is not just the confluence of two oceans. It also symbolises the shared aspirations of like-minded democracies like India and Australia," he said.

The agreement on civil nuclear energy to facilitate the commercial supply of uranium from Australia to India to fuel nuclear power projects came nearly 12 years after the two countries inked a historic civil nuclear cooperation pact.

"Today, we have signed an important agreement in the field of nuclear energy. This will open the way for uranium supplies from Australia and give new impetus to our clean energy objectives," Mr. Modi said.

He also announced the launch of the Australia-India Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies, and Supply Chains and said both sides will also work together on a critical minerals corridor.

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Modi hails Australia's social media ban on minors, signals curbs

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday praised Australia's ban on social media access for teenagers, in the clearest indication so far that the Union government is mulling similar curbs. "I have followed you closely, and the way you have legislated and worked to protect society in IT and social media is inspiring the world," Mr. Modi told Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in remarks open to the press.

Australia's Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act, 2024, requires social media platforms to detect and block access to children below the age of 16. Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw, had confirmed discussions for similar curbs in India during the AI Impact Summit earlier in February.

Digital control
Several countries are following Australia's footsteps to curb social media use by children

Malaysia: under-16s **barred from owning** social accounts

Indonesia: minors blocked from **'high-risk' platforms**

France: Bill passed to ban social media use by under-15s

'Right way to go'

"Certainly there is a need for protecting our children, protecting our society... we are in a conversation regarding age-based restrictions with the various social media platforms... the right way to go about this," he said.

CONTINUED ON
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Four Indian nationals pushed into Bangladesh return home

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Four people from Birbhum in West Bengal, detained by the Delhi Police last year and pushed into Bangladesh, were brought back to India on Wednesday after a year-long legal battle. The group of returnees included Sweety Bibi, her two minor sons, and Danish Sheikh, who were picked up by the police along with two others from the national capital in May last year over suspicion of being infiltrators and later pushed across the border into Bangladesh.

In December 2025, Sunali Khatun, wife of Mr. Sheikh, and her minor son had returned to India after the Supreme Court intervened. Ms. Khatun was pregnant at that time and her father had argued that if his daughter gave birth in Bangladesh, the child would have no claim to an Indian citizenship. After her return, Ms. Khatun gave birth to a child in a State-run hospital in West Bengal in January.

Sweety Bibi, one of the four returnees, in Malda, West Bengal, on Wednesday. PTI

Trinamool Congress leader Samirul Islam on Thursday applauded the Indian judiciary for its help in bringing back the remaining four, who returned through the border in Malda district. He said that while there is no problem with the deportation of illegal migrants, Indian nationals should not be subjected to injustice and harassment. "They stayed there [Bangladesh] for over a year. Even Bangladesh had written letters that Indians who were pushed back illegally must be taken back, but it took such a long time," Mr. Islam, Trinamool MP and former chairperson of the West Bengal Migrant Welfare Board, told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

Time's up

The iconic clock tower of Kozhikode railway station that collapsed amid heavy rain on Thursday. It was set for a controlled demolition later in the day after developing cracks recently. K. RAGESH (REPORT: PAGE 7)

SC considers reference of provision to furnish reason during arrests

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday indicated that the Meghalaya government's appeal against the grant of bail to Sonam Raghuvanshi, accused of murdering her newlywed husband Raja Raghuvanshi, may have to be referred to a larger Bench in view of conflicting decisions of coordinate Benches on whether the grounds of arrest must necessarily be furnished to an accused in writing.

The State was appealing against a June 29 order of the Meghalaya High Court, which had upheld a trial court's decision granting bail to Ms. Raghuvanshi saying that the police had failed to effectively communicate the grounds of her arrest. "Basically, the issue is whether written grounds of arrest are mandatory or not... We will decide whether the matter requires to be referred to a larger Bench. There is a conflict arising from different coordinate Bench judgments," the Bench comprising Justices Manoj Misra and Shree Chandrashekhar said.

The Bench directed Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the State, to file written submissions along with photocopies of the documents furnished to the accused so that it could examine the exact nature of the information communicated at the time of arrest. The matter has been posted for further hearing on July 14.

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Vikram Solar to set up battery storage plant in Tirunelveli

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Vikram Solar Limited to establish a Battery Energy Storage Systems manufacturing facility at the SIPCOT Industrial Park at Gangaikondan in Tirunelveli.

The plant, which will come up at an investment of ₹15,037 crore, is expected to create jobs for 2,670 people. The Industries, Investment Promotion and Commerce Department and the company signed the MoU in the presence of Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay at the Secretariat.

Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay at the signing of the MoU between the Tamil Nadu government and Vikram Solar. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

According to an official release, Vikram Solar operates solar photovoltaic (PV) module manufacturing units at Oragadam and Vallam. It has also established an integrated manufacturing facility for solar PV cells and modules at Gangaikondan.

Minister for Industries S. Keerthana; Chief Secretary M. Sai Kumar; Additional Chief Secretary, Industries, Investment Promotion and Commerce, S. Vijayakumar; Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Guidance Tamil Nadu Deepak Jacob; Vikram Solar chairman and managing director Gyanesh Chaudhary; and senior officials were among those present.

Monsoon has covered the entire country, a day later than normal, announces IMD

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The southwest monsoon covered the entire country on Thursday, a day later than its normal date, after advancing into the remaining parts of the north Arabian Sea, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Punjab, India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials said.

The nationwide coverage came 35 days after the monsoon reached Kerala on June 5. While the advance was slower than in recent years, the July 9 date is not unusual historically.

Since 1971, the monsoon has covered the country on dates ranging from June 16 in 2013 to August 15 in 2002, according to IMD data.

Water traffic: Children have fun in a waterlogged road after a heavy spell of rain in New Delhi on Thursday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The monsoon's progress has accelerated over the past week, accompanied by widespread heavy rain across several parts of the country. Delhi and the National Capital Region received significant rainfall overnight and on Thursday, causing waterlogging and traffic disruptions in several areas.

The recent wet spell, however, does not necessarily indicate how rainfall will evolve through the rest of the month.

The IMD has forecast below-normal rainfall for the country as a whole in July, defined as less than 94% of the long-period average, even as some parts of northwest and northeast India, east-central India, and the eastern peninsula may receive normal to above-normal rainfall. July receives the highest rainfall among the monsoon months and is critical for agriculture.

India's current monsoon rainfall deficit stands at 15%, a sharp improvement from 38% on June 30.

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INBRIEF

Round-the-clock cleaning taken up at city's beaches

A total of 152 sanitation workers and assistants, with nine beach-cleaning machines and other vehicles, were engaged in round-the-clock cleaning operations at the city's beaches, including Marina Beach. According to a press release, the work is being carried out in three shifts to maintain cleanliness. A third Blue Flag project on the Marina Beach is nearing completion, while work on the fourth and fifth projects is under way. The Corporation has also planted 650 native saplings in the Blue Flag beach area. The civic body appealed to visitors to dispose waste only in designated bins to help keep the beaches clean and hygienic.

Police remove over 2,200 abandoned vehicles in city

The Greater Chennai Police have removed 2,243 abandoned vehicles that had been parked along roadsides, causing traffic obstruction in Adyar, Kilpauk, St. Thomas Mount, Flower Bazaar, T. Nagar, and Anna Nagar police station limits. Details of the vehicles have been uploaded on the Greater Chennai Corporations's website. Owners have been asked to claim their vehicles from the respective police stations within 15 days. Unclaimed vehicles will be disposed of through e-auction.

Text & Context and Health

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (July 10, Friday), the following articles are available:

- Why is the Centre revising the NFSA? **newsth.live/foodsecuritylaw**
- Why more Indian couples are being diagnosed with secondary infertility **newsth.live/infertilitysecond**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Residential market in city remained stable during first half of 2026: report

Sales grew by 3% YoY to 9,198 units, while launches dipped by 0.3% YoY to 9,588 units; Perambur, Perumbakkam and Mogappair saw high demand for homes, but affordable housing saw sharp fall

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Growth hotspot: Office market continued to demonstrate resilience in the first half of 2026, recording 3.6 million sq.ft. of leasing activity. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Chennai's residential market remained stable during the first half of 2026, despite Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, with housing sales growing by 3% year on year (YoY) to 9,198 units, while launches dipped moderately by 0.3% YoY at 9,588 units. Average residential prices appreciated by 5% YoY to ₹7,555 per sq.ft, according to Knight Frank India's latest report, India Real Estate: Residential and Office H1 2026 (January-June 2026).

Homes priced between ₹50 lakh and ₹1 crore remained the largest contributor to residential sales, accounting for 47% of total transactions. The ₹1 crore to ₹2 crore segment increased its share to 27%, while homes priced between ₹2 crore and ₹5 crore accounted for 12% of overall sales, reflecting rising buyer preference for larger homes. The affordable housing segment priced below ₹50 lakh witnessed its share decline sharply from 22% in H1 2025 to 12% in H1 2026, highlighting the impact of affordability pressures, rising input costs and constrained supply.

According to the report, average residential prices in Chennai increased 5% YoY to ₹7,555 per sq.ft. Perambur registered the strongest appreciation with a 35% YoY increase, bringing the average prices in the range of ₹10,563-₹11,158 sq.ft per month, driven by infrastructure upgrades and enhanced metro connectivity. Perumbakkam recorded a 20% YoY rise owing to its proximity to the OMR employment corridor and upcoming Metro Phase II connectivity, while Mogappair witnessed 13% YoY appreciation, supported by strong end-user demand and established social infrastructure.

Joseph Thilak, National Director - Occupier Strategy and Solutions (Hyderabad & Chennai), Knight Frank India, said, "We are also witnessing a clear evolution in buyer preferences, with demand increasingly shifting towards mid and premium housing segments as consumers seek larger homes, better amenities and improved lifestyles. Looking ahead, continued investments in manufacturing, Global Capability Centres (GCC), Metro Rail connectivity and major infrastructure projects such as Chennai Metro Phase II are expected to further strengthen housing demand and reinforce Chennai's position as one of India's most stable residential markets."

Chennai's office market continued to demonstrate resilience in the first half of 2026, recording 3.6 million sq.ft. of leasing activity. While transaction volumes fell by 28% YoY compared with the exceptionally strong H1 2025, leasing activity remained among the highest ever recorded for a first-half period.

"Although leasing activity moderated compared with the record levels witnessed last year, transaction volumes remain among the strongest ever recorded, highlighting the city's enduring attractiveness to both domestic and global occupiers. We are seeing demand broaden beyond Global Capability Centres (GCCs) to include flexible office spaces and India-facing businesses, creating a more diversified and balanced occupier ecosystem," Mr. Thilak said.

CINEMA ❖ ARTS ❖ EVENTS

MUSIC DANCE DRAMA

The Music Academy Madras
Mid Year Dance Festival 2026 Today: At the Kasturi Srinivasan Hall, From 6.00 p.m. to 7.15 p.m. - Bharatanatyam recital by Manju V Nair - From 7.30 p.m. to 8.45 p.m. - Bharatanatyam recital by Mithun Shyam - Programme under the endowment by the family of late Shri M N Subramaniam.

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T.N. continues to record high GER in primary education

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu continues to record a high gross enrollment ratio (GER) at the primary level with 92%, according to the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) 2025-2026 which was released by the Ministry of Education recently.

While the GER for upper primary saw a small decrease from 98% to 95% compared to last year, the State saw a marginal increase in secondary enrollment at 97%. However, the GER for higher secondary section, while recording an improvement, still stood at 85%, a far cry from the enrollment of the secondary level.

The report also said that Tamil Nadu has maintained a zero-dropout rate at the primary and upper primary level, but saw a 6.2% dropout at the secondary level. The retention rate, which also follows the same pattern, was 94% at primary level and 96% till Class 8, but fell to 75.9% at higher secondary schooling.

In Tamil Nadu, private schools' enrollment is higher compared to the government schools with a difference of over 18 lakh students. According to the report, private schools have over 62 lakh students enrolled, while government schools see only over 43 lakh students. The trend has been observed nationally too. The government-aided schools in the State saw an enrollment of over 18 lakh students.

The School Education Department noted in a press release that the State has an overall Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) of 22, while the national average is 24. It also noted that during the academic year 2025-26, 83,600 students secured admission to polytechnic institutions and 60,355 students joined Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), taking the total number entering organised technical and vocational education to 1,43,955.

Police nab gangster at gunpoint from hotel

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A history-sheeter, along with five other associates, was arrested at gunpoint from a star hotel near Guindy on Thursday, police said.

The accused, Dhanasekar, a resident of Ennore, had been absconding in connection with several cases, including alleged extortion of industrialists.

Acting on the instructions of the Avadi city Police Commissioner, a special team of police personnel from the Ennore police station surrounded the hotel and apprehended him after a swift operation, sources said.

The police seized a firearm, a luxury car, and a mobile phone from his possession.

Further investigation is under way. Dhanasekar was also wanted in connection with an extortion case of ₹1 crore from a businessman in Kattur.

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ECR, MUTTUKADU: Luxury 3BHK, 1850 sft, UDS 1000 sft, FF, Premium Interiors, North & East Facing, Approved Gated Seaside Community, Lift, Car Park, Solar, Full Power Cackup, 90% Loan, 5 yrs old. 97895 22759

T.NAGAR, 3BHK 1160sqft UDS 617, 2nd flr, Lift, CP. 1.85Cr. 9884067525

RESIDENTIAL FLAT – RESALE

MRC NAGAR: Ceebros–One 74: Sea View 2200 Sqft, 3BHK Price: 9.25 Crs: Cosmic Properties : 90805 88930.

RESIDENTIAL HOUSE

ECR PANAYUR VGP 5 Gr with 5 BHK Ind B'lows 50 ft Rd. Sky–9840882335

NUNGAMBAKAM INDEPNDENT Bungalow 6Bedrooms 5510sf(L) 5162(B) 9884539008

PAMMAL 1880SFT Individual House with Borewell & Sump Contact: 9108781087 / 9941023393

RESIDENTIAL LAND

GEOCITY 10KM from Oragadam junction Varanavasi 2000sf DTCP 9444225923

CHENNAI MADURANTHAKAM Nr Global City DTCP/ TNRERA Appd Land 6374451680

CMDA/CHANDRA GARDEN Naduveerapat 14017sf 5.8 Ground 3000Psf 9884150702

MARAIMALAINAGAR NR 4 kms 3150 sft DTCP APPOVED PLOT Per sft @ rs 2500. Pushpa Real Estate 9444052777

SINGAPERUMAL KOIL DTCP Approved Plot per sqft 2500 /–. Ct: 9087737373

ECR MAHABALIPURAM Poonjeri, Rainbow 2 Grds DTCP Approved Plots. Gated Community East Facing Near Four Points Sheraton/Ziva Senior Citizen Living 9789522759

COONOOR, OLIVE Heights Near Sims Park Bedford Plot Sizes from 10 Cents to 23 Cents. Well Maintained Gated Community. 9789522759.

PONMAR MOOLACHERY Village Nr Main Rd, Apvd 1775sft (East) .9944238877

ECR MAHABALIPURAM Half Acre on Main Road,Frontage 100 Apprd. 9087200088

CHROMPET NR Super Saravana Stores, 1700sf &3740 sf available. CMDA Apd Rs.7500/sft 9840972961 / 9894715293

RENTAL

RENTAL

COMMERCIAL

1.23ACRES, 20000 Sft Covered Concrete Godown with loading & unloading Bays. 5000sf Office Space with 16 Metres Length Weighing Bridge 60 MT Capacity Near Alamathi–Redhills to Thiruvallur Road. Ct : 7338844775

PERUNGUDI (OMR) – Nehru Nagar, 7690sqft, Independent Building, G+2, Fully Furnished, 100 Work Stations, 7 Cabins, 2 Conference Hall, Centrally Air conditioned, Power Backup, CCTV, Servo Stabilizer, Server Room, Fire Exit, Car / 2 wheeler Parking. Contact : 9840028833

1500 SQFT commercial space in 1 st floor near Kodambakkam bridge available for rent contact 9940188166

VANDALUR NEAR @ VENGAMPAKKAM: Open Space for Rent. 40,000 Sq.ft x 2 plots. Suitable for Parking, Stock Yard, etc. Rent: Rs.8/– per Sq.ft. Also available as Built–to–Suit Warehouse @ Rs.30/– per Sq.ft. Contact: 8122910029, 7338714079

RAMAPURAM ROYALAN Nagar Independent Building around 5000 sqft (GF–2000sft, FF–2000sft, SF–1000sft) suitable for Residential/ Commercial. Ct: 98847 51228, 95512 81228

✔ **GREAMS ROAD,** 4,300 Sq.ft First Floor Bare Shell Office Space, Vaastu Complaint, Landscaped Garden, Assured 4 Car & 25 Two–Wheeler Parking, Bore & Metro Water, Individual Power Back–up, with all amenities. Contact: 9381066612 / 9344038807, E–mail: dpd@pathangi.in

SHOLINGNALAUR 12000& 6000sf Land Rent for Parking/Godwn etc 9884539008

JANAPANCHATRAM KOOT Road On Periyapalayam NH 36000sqft Comm Land Rent Nr Hiranandani Warehouse 9962510121

ASHOK NAGAR MainRd 4th Ave F. Furn,2000sft 2ndFlr 40Work Stn:9841483939

RENTAL

COMMERCIAL

PERAMBUR 11,000SQ.FT Fully Air–Conditioned, Fully Furn, Generator, Ample Carpark. Ideal for: Jewellery Showroom, Bank, Supermarket, Electronics, Furniture Showroom, Corporate Office, Hospital & Premium Retail Brands. Rent 7 Lakhs/Mth. 9840471054

PORUR KUNDRATHUR Main Road (Opposite EB) GF 5500, 1F 6000, 2F 6000 For Rent. Contact – 9444055881

AMBATTUR 1500SFT Fully Furnished suits Office, Clinic,any commercial Use.Ct 90032 29882/99418 67871

INDEP 1GRD 2BHK Commercial– EB Nr Vijayanagar Bus Sd 50k Ph:9381817212

WANTED 1000–10000SFT Comm. space in Around Adyar, Besant Ngr, Alwarpet. The Legend Estates 9500045155

FACTORIES & SITES

RENT – Factory / Warehouse – Area – 11000 sft – 160 kva Power – Maraimalai Nagar SIDCO Estate. Contact – 9150020205

RESIDENTIAL

ANNA NAGAR WEST

MODERN 3 BHK 1560 sqft fully furn, Lift, CP, Amenities. Ct 9884067525

EAST COAST ROAD

MUTTUKADU OCEANIQUE 3BHK Flat Fully Furnished 3400 sqft with Private Terrace, Pool, GYM. 9789522759

THIRUVANMIYUR

PREMIUM NF, 4BHK, 2nd Floor, "Beachside – Paradise by the Bay" – 2,900 Sft. Apartment with 2CCP, GYM, Swimming Pool, Solar Power. Rent Rs.2 Lacs. PM. Ct: Owner +91 80121 11111

THIRUVERKADU

AYANAMBAKKAM CHENNAI–95, S&P Living Spaces, 1560sqft 3BHK 1st Floor with Car Park Lift 30K. Ct 9840482120

VIRUGAMBAKKAM

NR CBSC Sch, 1400sqft,3BHK,SF,CCP, LIFT,Family Only Rent:40k 9444724950

Staff shortage, inadequate facilities, and bribery plague govt. hospitals, says CM office

An official communication also gave recommendations, including setting up of low-cost canteens in government hospitals, providing adequate funding for clean drinking water supply and toilets

Serena Josephine M.
CHENNAI

Infrastructural shortfalls, poor maintenance of medical equipment, inadequate basic amenities, and bribery in government hospitals in Chennai were among the key deficiencies highlighted in a 'note' from the Chief Minister's Office.

The health department, in an official communication based on the 'Note on the functioning of government hospitals', outlined staff position and specific deficiencies relating to sanitation, drinking water, toilets, patient and attendant amenities, upkeep of buildings and infrastructure, security and perimeter protection and equipment. It asked the three health directorates to appoint nodal officers to rectify the shortcomings.

It flagged staffing gaps at some of the major hospitals. The department of Cardiology of Tamil Nadu Government Multi Super Speciality Hospital had only four doctors, with vacancies remaining unfilled as the hospital lacked a post graduate cardiology programme. As a result, patients faced long waits or were forced to seek costly treatment at private hospitals. The hospital treated 500 to 600 cardiac patients daily and has 133 intensive care unit beds but only 150 nursing posts for the entire facility. At Government Royapettah Hospital (GRH), severe staff shortages forced employees to work up to 12 hours a day, leading to mental stress and poor behaviour towards patients, the department said.

Listing gaps in service: The note from the State government highlighted key deficiencies in government hospitals such as the Government Kilpauk Medical College Hospital. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

At Government Stanley Medical College Hospital (SMCH), shortage of doctors and nurses delayed treatment and compromised the quality of care.

Equipment shortage and poor maintenance were another major concern. At Government Kilpauk Medical College (KMC) Hospital, only three to four patients underwent an MRI scan daily due to lack of equipment. Emergency patients were regularly sent to other hospitals for scans, raising the need for more machines. At GRH, X-ray machines in emergency room 126 were under repair for eight months. All patients depended on a single machine in room 139, causing extreme delays. A shortage of X-ray film also forced technicians to print multiple images on a single small sheet, affecting image clarity.

At Government Raja Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar (RSRM) Lying-in Hospital in Royapuram, limited scanning facilities and beds forced pregnant women to travel to SMCH for scans.

The communication also highlighted widespread allegations of bribery. At the Institute of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Government Hospital for Women and Children, Egmore, outsourced women staff worked for prolonged periods in maternity wards, resulting in "widespread bribery and extortion from patients". At KMC, housekeeping and security staff demanded bribes ranging from ₹50 to ₹500 from patients, while maternity ward staff demanded money based on the newborn's gender and mortuary workers demanded up to ₹2,000 from grieving families to release bodies.

At GRH, the department said that ward staff demanded ₹300 to ₹500 to move patients or take them for scans, accepting payments through digital payment platforms when cash was unavailable. At RSRM, staff members routinely demanded bribes from parents of newborns. Similarly, at SMCH, staff demanded bribes from patients to move them to test centres or wards, and money was illegally collected at scan centres, laboratories, and the mortuary. At Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, private cleaning contractors falsified attendance records to mask staff shortages.

Poor upkeep of facilities was another recurring issue. At the Institute of Child Health and Hospital for Children, poorly maintained hospital refrigerators were causing electrical leaks and fire hazards.

Among the recommendations were setting up of low-cost canteens in government hospitals, allotting free space for women self-help groups and young entrepreneurs to run juice and millet-based food outlets on a rotation basis, and providing adequate funding for clean drinking water supply and clean toilets. It also recommended simplifying the medicine distribution by adding waiting areas.

Timings
CHENNAI

FRIDAY, JUL. 10		
RISE	05:49	SET 18:40
RISE	01:18	SET 14:29
SATURDAY, JUL. 11		
RISE	05:50	SET 18:40
RISE	02:11	SET 15:35
SUNDAY, JUL. 12		
RISE	05:50	SET 18:40
RISE	03:12	SET 16:42

Chennai Weather	max	min
Tiruvallur	36	25
Chennai Airport	31	27
Chennai City	31	28

Chennai Airport Today
39°C The weather will be hot and uneasy. The night will be uneasy. A spell of light rain and thundershowers likely.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
38°C The morning will be comfortable. The day will be slightly hot and uneasy. Light rain and thundershowers are possible.

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THE HINDU
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WRD to seek higher quantum of Krishna water release for city

K. Lakshmi
CHENNAI

With the storage levels in Chennai's major drinking water reservoirs declining, a team of Water Resources Department (WRD) and Chennai Metrowater officials is expected to visit Andhra Pradesh on Friday to seek additional release of Krishna water.

The five key reservoirs that supply a major share of drinking water to Chennai now have a combined storage of 5,630 million cubic feet (mcft), which is 48% of their total capacity. This is nearly 1,000 mcft lower than the storage registered on the same day last year.

Krishna water from Kandaleru reservoir in Andhra Pradesh has been flowing since May 27 to improve water level in reservoirs and meet drinking water needs of Chennai. Poondi reservoir has, so far, received nearly 1,000 mcft of Krishna water since then.

However, Krishna water inflow to Tamil Nadu border has dropped sharply to 188 cubic feet per second (cusecs) on Thursday. With storage dipping steadily and deficit rainfall in Tiruvallur and Chennai so far this season, it is imperative that Krishna water sustains storage till the onset of Northeast monsoon. The storage in the city reservoirs would last till the end of this year.

Sources said the team would meet Andhra Pradesh officials of Telugu Ganga Project at Kandaleru to request increase of Krishna water discharge from Kandaleru reservoir, which currently holds 22,000 mcft against its capacity of 68,000 mcft. They have a provision to transfer water from reservoirs upstream like Srisailam and Somasila to the one in Kandaleru to raise storage.

The team would request for discharge of 500 cusecs of water till October to maintain water storage and also continue uninterrupted daily drawing of water from reservoirs. If 500 cusecs of Krishna water are received daily, it would aid in increasing storage by about 1,200 mcft in a month, officials said. Andhra Pradesh authorities released water into Kandaleru Poondi canal for drinking water needs to places enroute like Tirupati, Kalahasti, and Rapur in Andhra Pradesh and to Chennai.

The city has received nearly 5,600 mcft of Krishna water since July 2025. According to the inter-State agreement, Chennai would have to be provided 12,000 mcft of Krishna water in two spells every year.

Look Out Circular issued against key suspect in TVK MLA poaching case

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Greater Chennai Police have issued a Look Out Circular (LOC) against Lakshmana Perumal, who is believed to be in Singapore, in connection with an alleged attempt to lure TVK MLAs to defect.

The action follows leads obtained during the interrogation of nine accused arrested in the case, including IPDS founder Thirunavukkarasu and Naresh, who were taken into two-day police custody for further questioning.

Alleged deal

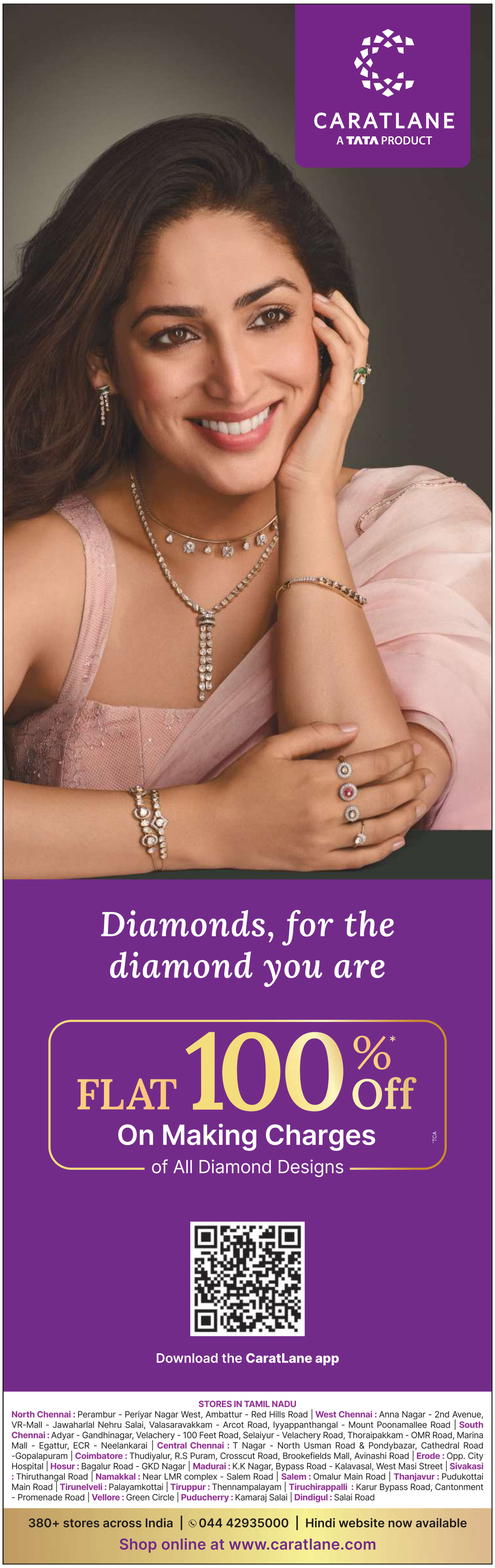
According to police sources, the arrested accused told investigators that negotiations over the alleged deal and the exchange of money took place at a star hotel in Guindy in the city..

The investigators further said that after details of the alleged operation surfaced, Lakshmana Perumal, who was in Singapore, deleted WhatsApp messages linked to the negotiations and also arranged for the deletion of CCTV camera footage from the hotel.

The police are verifying these claims as part of the ongoing investigation in the case.

The case was registered by the Triplicane police on a complaint filed by Uthangarai MLA N. Elaiyaraja, who alleged that TVK legislators were offered money to switch allegiance.

Based on the findings so far, the Chennai police issued the LOC to ensure that law enforcement agencies are alerted if Lakshmana Perumal attempts to enter or leave the country. Further investigation in the case is under way.



INBRIEF

DIG Varun Kumar shifted to Special Task Force

IPS officer V. Varun Kumar has been posted as Deputy Inspector General of Police, Special Task Force, Erode, after being transferred from the post of DIG, Crime Branch CID, Chennai. V. Vikraman who was on 'compulsory wait' has been posted as CB-CID DIG. B. Ragupathi, Superintendent of Police, who was also on 'compulsory wait' has been posted as Deputy Commissioner of Police, Pallikaranai, Tambaram City Police.

US Consul General meets Chennai Mayor Priya

Mariana L. Neisuler, Consul General of the United States met Chennai Mayor R. Priya on Thursday at the Greater Chennai Corporation headquarters. A press release from the Corporation termed the visit as a courtesy call.

Australia to return three antiquities stolen from temples in Tamil Nadu

The stolen artefacts include a Chola-era bronze trident, a granite Nandi idol, and a Karthikeya sculpture; all these items date back to the 11th and 12th Centuries and were originally sourced from temples in the State. The repatriation comes in the wake of Prime Minister Modi's visit to Australia

R. Sivaraman
CHENNAI

Australia will repatriate three ancient artefacts stolen from temples in Tamil Nadu, including a Chola-era bronze trident, a granite Nandi idol and a Karthikeya sculpture, in a move announced during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the country.

The Union Ministry of Culture said in a press statement, "In a profound testament to the civilisational resonance anchoring modern diplomacy, Australia is set to repatriate three culturally significant ancient antiquities to India. These artefacts include a ceremonial bronze trident of Goddess Bhadrakali, a majestic granite idol of Nandi, and a basalt sculpture depicting the six-headed Karthikeya." All these items date back to the 11th and 12th Centuries and were originally sourced from temples in Tamil Nadu. The official announcement of the repatriation coincides with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Australia, further emphasising the strong cultural alignment between the two nations, the Ministry said.

Nandi idol

Karthikeya (Shanmukha)

Bhadrakali Trident

The three antiquities, currently housed in the National Gallery of Australia, are being repatriated under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) after investigations by the Tamil Nadu Idol Wing CID established that they had been removed from temples in Tamil Nadu and trafficked overseas.

Commenting on the repatriation of the idols, S. Vijaya Kumar, cultural enthusiast and co-founder of India Pride, said the return of these three artefacts marks the conclusion of a process that should have happened many years ago.

More than a decade has passed since the National Gallery of Australia's independent provenance review by former High Court Justice Susan Crennan AC identified significant shortcomings in the provenance of these objects. The review concluded that the ownership histories of two idols did not establish lawful export from India.

The Bhadrakali Trident was acquired from Temple Gallery, New York, with a provenance tracing ownership only to Dr. P.S. Rao, Chennai, before entering the gallery in 1993. Justice Crennan concluded that this ownership history did not establish that the object had been legally exported. It has now been identified as originating from Sri Kasi Viswanatha Swamy Temple, Kollumangudi, Tiruvarur district.

The Stone Nandi was purchased from Carlton Rochell Asian Art based on an elaborate provenance claiming that Mexican diplomat Mario Calderon had assembled the sculpture in Goa before it passed through inheritance to Pedro Silva Villasenor in Mexico. The Crennan Review found that this ownership chain was not convincingly corroborated, and subsequent investigation identified the sculpture as originating from the temple in Tamil Nadu.

The Karthikeya (Shanmukha) followed a provenance similar to the Bhadrakali Trident, again relying upon ownership through Dr. P.S. Rao and Temple Gallery. Justice Crennan's review concluded that there was insufficient evidence to establish a lawful export from India. It has now been identified as originating from Naganathaswamy Temple, Manambadi, Thanjavur, built during the reign of Rajendra Chola I, said Mr. Vijayakumar.

CIC directs Southern Railway to disclose details of 83,000 trees planted in Madurai Division

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The Central Information Commission (CIC) has directed the Madurai Division of Southern Railway to disclose details of trees planted over a six-year period, including the species, locations, and expenditure incurred.

The direction follows a petition filed under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005, by Arun Pandi, who sought the details of about 83,000 trees planted across the Madurai Division between April 2019 and July 2024. He requested information on the exact locations where the saplings were planted, the species of trees, the expenditure incurred, and the source of procurement along with copies of purchase bills.

In response, the Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) said the information sought was not available at the divisional office. While some details were available at the field offices, compiling them would not only be time-consuming, but would also disproportionately divert the resources of the public authority, he said.

Dissatisfied with the response of the CPIO and the order of the First Appellate Authority, Mr. Pandi approached the CIC. During the hearing, the CPIO reiterated that the information sought was voluminous and not maintained in a compiled form. After hearing both sides, Information Commissioner Swagat Das observed that the CPIO's reply was vague and generic. The officer had merely stated that the information was unavailable at the divisional office and that compiling records from various field units would disproportionately divert the authority's resources, without providing any specific justification regarding the availability or non-availability of each item of information sought by the appellant.

The Commissioner said the information sought ought to exist in one form or another at the concerned offices maintaining plantation and expenditure records. "A blanket denial stating that the information is not available with the office, without examining the records held by the concerned field units, is not in consonance with the provisions of the RTI Act," he said. The Commission directed the CPIO to revisit the RTI application, conduct a diligent search of records available with the concerned offices and field units, and furnish all available information to the petitioner.

Wet spell

Rain lashed parts of the city on Thursday, providing residents a much-needed respite from heat. R. RAGU

TNCC chief criticises 'sudden alteration' of FMGE exam pattern

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) president Manickam Tagore has alleged that injustice has been meted out to students who took the Foreign Medical Graduate Examination (FMGE).

The FMGE examination is being conducted by the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS). Pointing out the drastic drop in the pass percentage in the exam results, Mr. Tagore said the sudden alteration in the exam pattern was the primary reason behind it.

"Without any prior notice, the NBEMS introduced massive changes to the examination pattern – such as lengthy questions, video-based questions, and clinical/practical-oriented questions. Due to this, the pass percentage has shockingly plummeted to 12.78. Out of the 36,280 candidates who appeared for the exam, only 4,635 have passed. Candidates should have been given adequate time to prepare for such major changes," he said in a statement.

Man held in ₹5.8-crore investment fraud case

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Cyber Crime Wing of the Greater Chennai Police arrested a 34-year-old man in connection with an alleged ₹5.8-crore investment fraud in which a businessman was lured into investing in fake forex and stock trading platforms with the promise of high returns.

The police said the case was registered based on a complaint by R.A. Khaleel Ahmed, 43, of Anna Nagar West Extension, who alleged that he was introduced to forex trading by Mahesh of Madurai and C. Saravanakumar of Madathukulam.

Investigation revealed that the accused had been operating the complainant's demat and trading accounts for several years and gradually diverted his investments to multiple fictitious trading platforms. The Cyber Crime Wing arrested C. Saravanakumar and remanded him to judicial custody.

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

CENTRAL RAILWAY
MODIFICATION WORK IN OHE
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE NO. KYN-LD-585-W-755-ContR3
S.N.:- 1, Name of work:- Modification to the existing OHE in connection with provision of subways for Pedestrians or cattle crossing for prevention of trespassing under South East Section between KYN-LNL of Mumbai Division in Central Railway., **Approx. Value:-** ₹ 13438762.49, **EMD:-** ₹ 268800.00, **Cost of Tender Form:-** ₹ 0.00, **Completion period:-** 12 months, The time and date for submission of tender will be up to 11:00 Hrs on 10.08.2026. Complete details of E-tender are available at official Railway website **http://www.ireps.gov.in** the complete documents can be downloaded from the website. The detail of tender is available in the "Notice Board" of the Sr.DEE(TD) KYN's office, Kalyan.
347
Traveling with dangerous and explosive goods is a punishable offense

COCHIN PORT कोचिन पत्तन प्राधिकरण Cochin Port Authority
Applications are invited from qualified candidates for appointment to the following class I& II posts on regular basis:-

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Accounts Officer Gr.1	Rs.50000-160000	2 Nos. UR
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Asst. Exe. Engineer (Ele/E&C)	Rs.50000-160000	2 Nos. (1 OBC, 1 UR)
Asst. Engineer (Electrical)	Rs.40000-140000	1 No. UR
Programmer	Rs.40000-140000	1 No. SC
Asst. Engineer (Civil)	Rs.40000-140000	3 (1 SC, 2 UR)

For more details visit: www.cochinport.gov.in/Careers
Sd/-, SECRETARY, 0484-258-2113

BANGALORE WEST CITY CORPORATION
Kengeri Division, RR Nagara Zone BBMP Office Building, CA No-3, 1st Main Road, Outer Ring Road Kommaghatta Road, Kengeri Upanagara, Bangalore-560060
No.EE/KEN/TEND/06/2026-27 Date: 09.07.2026
INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT) (Tender Notification)
Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal)
The Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division, ZONE-1 invites tenders on behalf of the Commissioner, BWCC, Bengaluru from eligible Tenderers for the construction of works detailed in the table below. The Tenderers may submit tenders for works given in the table through e-procurement portal of the Government of Karnataka **(viz http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in).** The Tenderers are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 3 of the Instructions to Tenderers to qualify for award of the contract. **2.**Tender documents may be downloaded from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal of the Government of Karnataka Date: **10.07.2026 . 3.**Tenders must be submitted online through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal on or before **16.00 hours on Date:22.07.2026 4.** Other details can be seen in the tender document.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work/Approximate value of work (Rs in Lakhs)/ EMD amount in Rs.
	TWO COVER SYSTEM, Call-1, Period of Completion : 6 Months
1	Improvements of Roads and Drains Shivanagara, Akkipikki colony and Surrounding areas in ward No.18, Kengal Hanumanthaiah West. Approximate Value of work : **Rs. 120.09 Lakhs,** EMD **: Rs. 2,00,000/-.**
2	Improvements of Roads and Drains Gandhinagara and Surrounding areas in ward No.18, Kengal Hanumanthaiah West. Approximate Value of work : **Rs. 119.02 Lakhs** , EMD : **Rs. 2,00,000/-.**
3	Comprehensive Development of Roads and Drains and other Improvement works at Pattanagere and Surrounding Area in Ward No-21, Kengeri. Approximate Value of work : **Rs. 120.09 Lakhs** , EMD **: Rs. 2,00,000/-.**

1) Tender Documents may be downloaded through e-portal from **: 10.07.2026 4.00PM. 2)** Pre bid meeting : **15.07.2026 @ 3.00PM** O/o Chief Engineer, Ideal Homes, Rajarajeswari Nagar Zone, Blore-98. **3)** Last date & Time for receipt of Tenders : **22.07.2026 Upto 4.00PM. 4)** Opening of Bids : **23.07.2026 Upto 4.30PM. 5)** Validity of Tenders : **6 Months after the dead line date for Tender submission. 6)** Bid Validity : **90days**
Sd/- Executive Engineer Kengeri division, BWCC, Zone-1

ODISHA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY
BHUBANESWAR - 751003, ODISHA, INDIA
Email: registrar@ouat.ac.in; Visit us at: www.ouat.ac.in
OUAT-CT-PURCH - No.10789 / OUAT, Date: 09th July, 2026
TENDER NOTICE
Sealed tenders are invited from reputed stockist/dealers in single bid system for empanelment of suppliers for supply of gases / gases with cylinder-regulator to different offices at Bhubaneswar and other locations of OUAT throughout Odisha. Firms having valid GST, PAN and supply network in India, preferably in Ódisha may download the tender document from our official website **www.ouat.ac.in** and submit their offer along with all required documents through speed post or courier so as to reach the **Registrar, Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneswar** by dt. **31.07.2026 (up to 5.00 PM)**. For details of important information, terms and conditions, requirements, opening of bids, etc. please refer to the tender document available at **www.ouat.ac.in**.
Registrar,
O.U.A.T., Bhubaneswar-751003
1001/93/2627
OIPR-1001/1533/1/26-27/0008

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

Sri.L.Subramanian (88), Father of Mrs. Rama Karthikeyan, Chennai-600042, expired on 09.07.2026, Eyes donated to Rotary Rajan Eye Bank (Project of Rotary Club of Madras T.Nagar), Chennai- 17 (Ph: 28340500).

OBITUARY

Mrs.UPPU SHANTHA KUMARI
89 YEARS
W/o Thiru.UPPU SHOBHAN BABU
(ACTOR)
Expired on 09.07.2026 at 5:30 pm
Funeral on 10.07.2026 4 pm at
No 23, Drift Wood Avenue
Akkarai, ECR, Sholinganallur
Chennai - 600119
Deeply mourned by
Son:- UPPU KARUNASESH
& FAMILY

IN MEMORY OF YOUR LOVED ONES
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HOMAGE

2nd ANNIVERSARY

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B.Com., FCA
Retd Regional Manager (F&A), LIC of India
"A beloved father and guiding light"
Fondly remembered by
Ramesh, Vasanthi, Revathi, Jayanthi & Family.... Ph : +91 95510 90014

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

3rd YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Mrs. K. UMADEVI
Post Master (Rtd)
DOB: 25.07.1960 DOD: 10.07.2023
Fondly Remembered by
Husband: T. Kulanthaivel
ESIC Inspector(Rtd)
Son: Dr. Karthik Kulanthaivel
MD., DM., FRCR (London)
Ph: 9444168501

ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

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

Panel to be formed to examine liquor retail models in other States, says Minister

Sangeetha Kandavel
CHENNAI

K. Vignesh

From shutting down liquor outlets near schools and places of worship to cracking down on overcharging at Tasmac counters and announcing a 25% salary increase for workers, the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) government has initiated a series of reforms in the State-run liquor retail system.

Its latest proposal is to constitute a high-level committee to study the functioning of excise and liquor retail departments in other States so as to introduce further reforms in Tamil Nadu.

Minister for Prohibition and Excise K. Vignesh told *The Hindu* that the committee would be formed soon.

"The committee will study the functioning of excise departments in Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha, among other States, including liquor procurement, retail operations, and employee service conditions," he said.

"Based on its findings, the government would take steps to address employees' demands," he said.

The order to constitute the committee would be issued under the directions of Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, he added.

Tasmac, a major revenue generator for the Tamil Nadu government, operates 4,048 retail liquor outlets across the State. It generates around ₹150 crore from liquor sales every day through its retail network.

Madras High Court stays Look Out Circular against former Minister E.V. Velu

Justice G.K. Ilanthiraiyan grants interim stay on the condition that Velu must appear for an inquiry before the DVAC investigating officer on July 15, after returning from Singapore on July 12

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

E.V. Velu

The Madras High Court on Thursday stayed the operation of a Look Out Circular (LoC) issued against former DMK Minister E.V. Velu in connection with a recent case registered against him by the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC).

Justice G.K. Ilanthiraiyan granted the interim stay on the condition that Mr. Velu appear before the investigating officer on July 15. The judge took note that the petitioner was currently in Singapore for medical treatment, and was scheduled to return to India only on July 12.

The judge also restrained the DVAC from taking coercive action against the petitioner till July 28, by when the investigating agency was expected to file its counter-affidavit in response to the former Minister's plea to quash the First Information Report (FIR) registered on June 26.

The court passed the interim orders after hearing senior counsel Siddharth Luthra and P. Wilson, appearing for Mr. Velu, and Government Counsel (criminal side) R. John Sathyan, appearing for the DVAC.

The petitioner's counsel contended that the FIR had been registered without obtaining the Governor's consent. Further, highlighting that the FIR had been registered in 2026 for an alleged offence of private contractors of the State Highways Department having been paid money even before the laying of roads in many districts in 2022, they said there was also an inordinate delay of four years in registering the case.

Mr. Wilson said the former Minister had cooperated with the DVAC when it conducted searches at his residence immediately after the registration of the FIR, and thereafter left for Singapore for medical treatment. However, the DVAC had served summons on him at his residence on June 30.

The first summons required him to appear before the investigating officer for an inquiry on July 3. The petitioner replied that he would return to India only on July 12. Yet, the DVAC issued another summons on July 4, and this time, he was asked to appear on July 9. "The second summons specifically stated that failure to attend the inquiry today (July 9) would render the petitioner liable for arrest. Therefore, there is an imminent necessity to protect the life and liberty of the petitioner. He is over 70 years old and a heart patient," the senior counsel told the court.

Governor's sanction

On the other hand, Mr. Sathyan contended that there was no necessity for the Governor to accord sanction for registering the FIR in the present case, and that it was sufficient if the Chief Minister accorded sanction.

He also said the complainant, Jayaram Venkatesan of Arappor Iyakkam, had not been included as a respondent in the present petitions filed for quashing the FIR and rescinding the LoC.

Two former Ministers skip review meetings chaired by Palaniswami

K. Muralitharan
CHENNAI

Two former Ministers of the AIADMK did not turn up for the party's district-wise consultations chaired by general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Thursday.

P. Balakrishna Reddy of Hosur and K.P. Anbalagan of Palacode were absent at the review sessions held for Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri, respectively.

"I joined the party in 2006. I worked for 20 years. Now, they are making all sorts of changes. Let them do it. I didn't attend because I was out of town. That's all," Mr. Reddy told *The Hindu*.

"I just stayed back in my hometown. There is no other reason," Mr. Anbalagan said.

In Krishnagiri, which has six seats, the Dravidian major won two seats – Bargur and Hosur.

Out of five seats in Dharmapuri, it bagged three – Palacode, Pappireddipatti and Harur. Its ally, the PMK, cornered Dharmapuri. In total, the AIADMK-led combine got four seats.

Mr. Reddy and Mr. Anbalagan were among the 25 dissidents who had supported the TVK at the time of the trust motion in the Assembly in May. For their defiance of the party's line of approach, the two were stripped of the post of district secretary for Krishnagiri (west) and Dharmapuri units. Though Mr. Palaniswami sought to accommodate them and many such dissidents by offering other positions, the two former Ministers, along with seven others, wrote to him that they would prefer to remain "ordinary workers".

T.N. govt. reconstitutes SC/ST Vigilance and Monitoring Committee

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has reconstituted the State Vigilance and Monitoring Committee for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

The Chief Minister will be the Chairman of the committee, while 59 individuals, including all elected representatives to Parliament and the Assembly from the State, who belong to the SCs and STs, have been inducted as members.

The Ministers in charge of Home, Finance and Social Justice Departments, the Chief Secretary, the Home Secretary, the DGP, and two representatives from the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes will automatically become members of the committee. Since Mr. Vijay holds the Home portfolio, Finance Minister N. Marie Wilson and Social Justice Minister Vanni Arasu have been included as members. Seven other Ministers, a Rajya Sabha member, and seven Lok Sabha MPs, all belonging to the SCs; and 37 MLAs belonging to the SCs/STs have also been included as members.

TVK government changes the name of free bus travel scheme for women

In Chennai alone, women have been availing themselves of free travel on 1,500 ordinary-fare buses, according to a senior official of the Metropolitan Transport Corporation. FILE PHOTO

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The TVK government has changed the name of the free bus travel scheme for women from 'Mahalir Vidiyal Payanam', as it was named by the DMK government, to 'Magalir Payanam'.

Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) buses sported 'Magalir Payanam' boards on Thursday. The word, 'Vidiyal', has been removed from the ordinary-fare buses meant for the scheme. A senior official of the Transport Department said the MTC branch managers had been instructed to implement the name change across all the ordinary-fare buses.

After assuming office on May 7, 2021, the M.K. Stalin-led DMK government implemented 'Vidiyal Payanam' for women to travel free on white-board buses. The scheme covered more than 7,300 ordinary-fare buses out of the 9,000 city buses operated by the State Transport Corporations. In Chennai alone, women have been availing themselves of free travel on 1,500 ordinary-fare buses, a senior official of the MTC said.

Meanwhile, DMK leader and former Minister Thangam Thennarasu wrote on X, "You can change the name; but history cannot be changed."

In his post, he said that renaming the 'Mahalir Vidiyal Payanam' scheme, which had brought about a significant change in the lives of women, was not an administrative measure meant for public welfare; it was merely an attempt to erase political identities. The success of a scheme would not be determined by its name; it would be determined by the progress it had brought about in the lives of the people. The time and energy spent on name changes should be invested in new schemes to improve people's livelihood and strengthen services, he added.

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Forms can be downloaded from the website which should be filled and submitted along with the applicable fees to the respective territory offices as per detail in website. Corrigendum, if any, will be published only in the website mentioned above.
Last date of submission of Application: 30/07/2026, 17:00 hrs
Contact Details:
Territory Manager (Lubes), Chennai Reseller - 7733094193
Territory Manager (Lubes), Chennai - Direct - 9483648568
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INBRIEF

Is CM ready to warn Congress over Cauvery issue, asks EPS

AIADMK leader Edappadi K. Palaniswami sought to know whether Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay was prepared to announce the removal of Congress Ministers from the State Cabinet if Karnataka failed to release Tamil Nadu's share of Cauvery water. He condemned Karnataka's Water Resources Minister Ramalinga Reddy's statement that the Cauvery Water Management Authority had not ordered the release of water, and that Tamil Nadu had not requested its rightful share.

Minister's claims on airport site 'false propaganda': BJP

BJP State president Nainar Nagenthran said on Thursday that Minister C.T.R. Nirmalkumar's contention that it would not be possible to lay a runway at the Parandur site for the new airport was part of a "false propaganda" and amounted to betrayal of Tamil Nadu. He said the TVK-led government had taken steps to stall the State's economic development and employment generation by creating hurdles to the project. Stating that any delay in the project would cost Tamil Nadu investment opportunities, he urged the State government to cooperate with the Centre to take the project forward.

TVK-led government begins consultations with experts for its first industrial policy

It holds the first meeting with representatives from the electronics and semiconductor ecosystem to gather industry perspectives on growth opportunities, key challenges, and policy interventions

Sangeetha Kandavel
CHENNAI

The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK)-led government in Tamil Nadu has begun the groundwork for its first industrial policy, which is slated to be rolled out in January 2027.

As part of the process, the government has started consultations with sector experts, with the first meeting bringing together representatives from the electronics and semiconductor ecosystem to gather industry perspectives on the growth opportunities, key challenges, and policy interventions required to strengthen the sector.

The meeting was chaired by S. Vijayakumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Industries, Investment Promotion and Commerce Department. Deepak Jacob, Managing Director and CEO of Guidance, the nodal agency instrumental in drawing investments to Tamil Nadu, was also present. Guidance Tamil Nadu, in collaboration with Electronic Industries Association of India and the India Cellular & Electronics Association, conducted the Tamil Nadu Industrial Policy Stakeholders' Connect.

Participants shared their feedback and highlighted measures to support emerging and future-ready sectors. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Participants shared feedback through a structured survey, highlighting priority areas for policy intervention, steps to support emerging and future-ready sectors, and recommendations to boost local demand and build a stronger industrial ecosystem.

"Tamil Nadu leads in electronics export with 41% (national share) and has launched its own Tamil Nadu Semiconductor Mission 2030. As a critical sector, the first level of industry stakeholder discussion was held this week. Further stakeholder discussion with other sectors will happen in the coming weeks," Mr. Jacob said.

Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, on June 18, had told the Assembly, "With an aim of promoting the State's economic stability and industrial growth, while maintaining continuity with the previous industrial policies, this government will notify a new industrial policy that considers the present and future requirements and offers special incentive schemes for domestic and global companies to make fresh investments in Tamil Nadu."

Review meeting

Meanwhile, Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay met officials of the Industries Department on Thursday for a review meeting. "We had discussions about the industrial policy and the vision document, among other issues," a senior official said.

No delay in supply of textbooks to govt. schools, says School Education Dept.

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The department cites new admissions for any temporary shortage reported in certain schools

The Tamil Nadu School Education Department said on Thursday that there had been no delay in the printing or initial supply of textbooks to government schools for the current academic year.

"Any temporary shortage reported in certain schools was only on account of fresh admissions after the academic year commenced and not due to any deficiency in the department's planning or printing process," the department said in a press release.

The clarification came after *The Hindu* reported that many government schools in the State were yet to receive the textbooks, particularly those for Classes IV and V. Many teachers, too, said they were yet to receive the handbooks meant for planning lessons in line with the new curriculum for Classes I-III, which was implemented this academic year.

The release said the textbooks were printed and supplied on the basis of the student strength furnished by the schools well before the academic year started, and an additional requirement of about 80,000 textbooks was identified owing to new admissions. "The department printed and distributed this additional quantity. The supply has been completed, and the distribution process to the schools is being finalised," it added.

This additional supply also includes the requisite workbooks, ensuring that newly admitted students received the complete set of learning materials, the release said. "The department has taken prompt action to meet the revised demand, and all eligible students will have access to the required textbooks and workbooks," it added.

Leopard trapped in snare rescued and released into Mudumalai Tiger Reserve

The Hindu Bureau
UDHAGAMANDALAM

A leopard trapped in a snare laid on agricultural land at Pattavayal in the Gudalur forest division in the Nilgiris was rescued by the Forest Department and released into the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) early on Thursday.

The Forest Department said they received information that a leopard was trapped in the fence on the land of N.C. Krishnan, a resident of Velleri in Pattavayal, around 8 p.m. on Wednesday. Once they reached the spot, they learnt that the animal had been caught in a snare placed around the farm.

Veterinary assistant surgeon from MTR K. Rajesh Kumar was involved in the rescue operation.

The Forest Department said the animal was rescued and treated for its injuries, and brought in a specially-designed cage to the tiger reserve.

Saving the big cat: The leopard being taken for release into the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Following the release, the Forest Department began an investigation to identify the individual responsible for laying the snare and arrested K. Balan, a 40-year-old daily wage worker.

He confessed to having laid the trap for small wild game, officials said.

In a separate incident, a tiger was found dead in the Sigur forest range in the buffer zone of the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve on Wednesday.

Officials said the carcass was discovered by field staff during a routine patrol. A post-mortem was conducted on the carcass, following which it was destroyed. Officials said preliminary investigations pointed to natural death.

CM to hand over govt. job appointment orders to kin of 32 stampede victims

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay will visit Karur on Friday and meet the family members of the victims who died in the stampede that occurred during a TVK rally on September 27 last year.

He will hand over appointment orders on compassionate grounds to the family members of 32 victims. They will be appointed to various government departments based on their educational qualifications, official sources said.

Mr. Vijay will also lay the foundation stone for Evervan Kothari Footwear Private Limited, which will come up at Manavasi near Krishnarayapuram with an investment of ₹1,700 crore.

The non-leather footwear manufacturing unit is expected to generate employment for about 13,500 people.

Mr. Vijay will travel to Tiruchi by flight on Friday morning and reach Karur by road around 11 a.m. This will be Mr. Vijay's first visit to Karur after assuming office as Chief Minister on May 10. Later, Mr. Vijay will address a public meeting planned by the party on the outskirts of the city.

The stampede occurred during a rally addressed by TVK president C. Joseph Vijay in Karur on September 27 last year. FILE PHOTO

Left parties' opposition

The CPI and the CPI(M), which are extending outside support to the TVK-led government, have strongly opposed the latter's decision to offer government jobs to the family members of those killed in the Karur stampede.

CPI(M) State secretary P. Shanmugam said that with an inquiry into the stampede under way and the matter pending before court, the decision to offer government jobs could weaken the legal process. "It will naturally raise the question as to whether the TVK government is using its authority to provide government employment to the families of those who died at a TVK rally. The government may facilitate employment in private organisations, but offering government jobs is an entirely different matter," he said in a social media post.

Comprehensive policy

Mr. Shanmugam and CPI State secretary M. Veerapandian said the State government must frame a comprehensive policy for employment of family members of those who died under various circumstances, and must not provide jobs to the kin of the stampede victims until the guidelines are formed.

"Providing government jobs to the families of those who died in a stampede at a political party meeting will set a bad precedent. History will record it as misuse of power, and it will pressure future governments to follow the same practice," senior CPI leader K. Subbarayan said.

'No one must be allowed to enter schools unnecessarily'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

School Education Minister Rajmohan on Thursday directed that no one be allowed to enter school premises unnecessarily.

He said in a statement: "Except for official events organised by the government, no birthday parties or non-government events should be held. No political parties or private organisations are allowed to meet students directly."

This follows a backlash over a video of an inspection carried out by Minister S. Keerthana at a school in Sivakasi, in which she was seen criticising students for their response.

Pointing out that every moment a student spends in the classroom is precious, he said the department would soon issue detailed protocols for conducting events in government schools.

Singer Mano launches platform for fans to showcase talent

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

When a couple, accompanied by their child, told playback singer Mano that his song *Nee Oru Kadhal Sangeetham* from the film *Nayakan* had played a pivotal role in their love story, it reaffirmed his belief that music has the power to create lifelong memories. This memorable interaction happened during an event he organised in the U.S., allowing fans to sing along with him.

"It is not a competition," Mr. Mano said during a freewheeling interaction with *The Hindu*. "The idea is to give ordinary music lovers, who may never otherwise get an opportunity to perform, a platform to sing."

The event "Sing with Mano" will take place in Chennai in October, he said. Participants are encouraged to choose a song of their choice. Mr. Mano will then assess whether it suits their voice, guide them through rehearsals, and mentor them until they are ready for a performance with him.

Recalling another memorable interaction with fans, he spoke of meeting a group of bus drivers and conductors who told him they regularly listened to his songs while driving. "It is touching to see how music becomes a companion in people's everyday lives," he said.

Born as Nagoor Babu, the singer adopted the screen name "Mano" at the suggestion of music director Ilaiyaraaja, who felt there could be confusion because of another well-known singer Nagoor E.M. Hanifa.

Mr. Mano also recalled his childhood immersion in music. "My father and grandfather were both musicians. We were a family that staged mythological dramas. From a very young age, we visited places of worship of all faiths.

BIJOY GHOSH

By the time I was six or seven, I knew all the characters and the songs we performed," he said.

To illustrate his grounding in classical music, he rendered a Telugu *virutham*. Mr. Mano trained under renowned Carnatic vocalist Nedunuri Krishnamurthy, whose tutelage laid the foundation for his musical journey.

In the film world, Mr. Mano credited his training in Carnatic music and his two-and-a-half year experience with Tamil composer M.S. Viswanathan for his early success. "Working with him (MSV), I learnt how to write notes. I learnt the different styles of *taalam*. All this was very useful as my musical career progressed," said Mr. Mano, who also had a long-standing relationship with Telugu composer K. Chakravarthy.

Mr. Mano said recording his debut track for Mr. Ilaiyaraaja, *Then Mozhi*, from *Solla Thudikuthu Manasu*, remains one of his most vivid memories. "Raja sir taught me the 'zha' letter, which didn't come to me naturally then," said Mr. Mano, who went on to have a long musical journey with the Isaignani, which includes *Enga Ooru Paatukaaran*, a film in which he sang all the songs. "It was unforgettable. I'm not sure how many singers would have such an experience."

During the conversation, Mr. Mano also addressed the comparisons that music lovers often drew between his voice and that of S.P. Balasubrahmanyam. "In a song in *Jallikattu*, both SPB and I sang together, and I remember Raja sir jokingly asking us who sang which line," recalled the singer, who is also widely celebrated for his versatility across songs such as Sirpy's *Azhagiya Laila* and A.R. Rahman's *Muqqabula*.

"Singing in commercial films makes you go to a different zone. I grew up as a singer alongside the likes of SPB, Yesudas, and Malaysia Vasudevan - who were giants in the industry - and am grateful to the many composers who gave me opportunities," he said.

Apart from his singing prowess, Mr. Mano also has a solid track record as a dubbing artiste - he has been the voice of several Rajinikanth films in Telugu. Currently, Mano is helming a mentorship programme to give aspiring singers stage opportunities, the Chennai leg of which is scheduled for September this year. "I have seen many ups and downs in life, and have realised that constant practice and passion are the route to success. The younger generation craves instant gratification and success, but I feel that the voice needs daily practice and rigour."

TNPDCL signs MoU with IIT-M to upgrade power infrastructure

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The MoU aims to introduce innovative technologies across power generation, transmission, and distribution sectors

The Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TNPDCL) on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IIT Madras to technically strengthen the State's power infrastructure, enhance renewable energy integration, and improve the reliability and quality of electricity services.

Minister for Energy Resources C.T.R. Nirmalkumar exchanged the MoU with Manu Santhanam, Dean of Industrial Consultancy and Sponsored Research, IIT Madras, in the presence of TNPDCL Chairman and Managing Director J. Radhakrishnan and IIT Madras Director V. Kamakoti, at a function held at the TNPDCL headquarters here on Thursday.

Mr. Nirmalkumar said it would help upgrade the State's power sector to global standards and pave the way for long-term collaboration with scientists of the premier institute. The MoU aims at introducing innovative technologies across power generation, transmission, distribution, and green energy sectors.

The programme will help set up a research and development centre and implement artificial intelligence, along with machine learning and data analytics, for data-driven decision-making processes.

Telangana HC grants bail to Minister's son in POCSO case

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Thursday granted conditional bail to Bandi Sai Bageerath, son of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, in connection with a case registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

He was granted bail after 51 days in judicial custody at Cherlapally Central Prison following his arrest by the Cyberabad police on May 16. The High Court directed him to execute a personal bond of ₹1 lakh with two sureties.

It also ordered him to cooperate with the ongoing investigation and not leave Telangana without the court's permission.

The case was registered on May 8 after the mother of a minor girl lodged a complaint alleging that her daughter had been sexually assaulted by the accused.

Three more dead in Wayanad debris slip; Pinarayi defends tunnel project

Two of the three victims identified, one from Himachal Pradesh and another from Bihar; search intensified for two people still missing, say authorities; Opposition leader claims clearance for tunnel project was secured through legitimate channels

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

The intensive search and rescue operations at Kalladi in Wayanad's Meppadi panchayat entered its final phase on Thursday evening, following the recovery of three more bodies. Despite torrential rain and a heavy influx of debris, rescue teams pushed through, on the third day of the challenging mission, bringing the confirmed death toll from Tuesday's disaster to six.

According to officials supervising the operations under the State government and the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority, the mission is nearing completion, with only two people still reported missing. Fire and Rescue Services personnel said they would intensify searches in the Meenakshi river to trace them.

Rescue operations under way at Kalladi in Wayanad, where a debris slip on July 7 claimed the lives of six persons. K. RAGESH

Two of the three victims recovered on Thursday have been identified as Rahul Sharma, an engineer from Himachal Pradesh, and Mohammad Imran, an excavator operator from Bihar.

Meanwhile, seven injured workers remain hospitalised, with several under observation in the intensive care unit.

The disaster unfolded near the Meenakshi Bridge at Kalladi on July 7, where continuous rainfall reportedly triggered a subterranean erosion creating hollow underground cavities.

After visiting the site to review rescue efforts, Minister for Public Works (PWD) P.K. Basheer said the rescue squads encountered a challenging situation as the continuous rains hindered the debris clearance. Experts had already warned of secondary landslips if large-scale removal was carried out fast, he said, adding that only the safest measures would be adopted.

Additionally, Mr. Basheer announced the Centre's assurance on possible financial assistance for the construction of the Bairakuppa bridge, with the foundation stone expected to be laid this November.

Pinarayi blames DDMA

Agriculture Minister T. Siddique who camped at the spot to coordinate the rescue efforts clarified that the residents of the nearby Chooralmala region would not face transit or connectivity issues. Wayanad District Collector has been directed to list local families to streamline the distribution of special food rations and uninterrupted medical care.

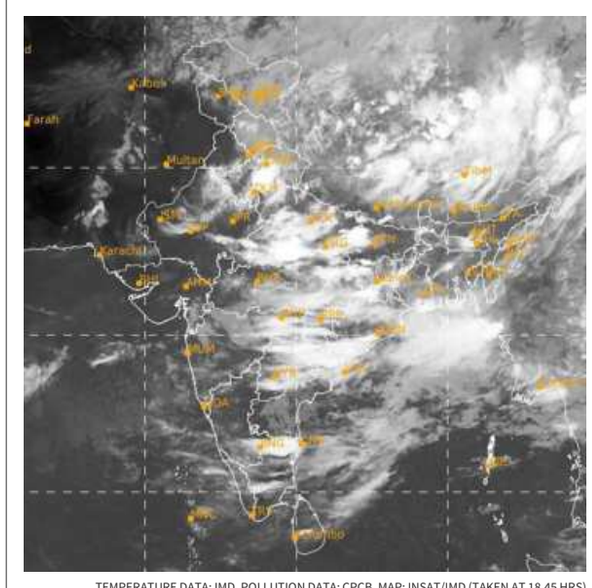
Meanwhile, Leader of the Opposition Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the State government, terming the disaster "a result of grave administrative negligence." He made strong remarks against Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan and the Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) after visiting the affected areas.

Accusing the disaster management authorities of failing to respond to extreme weather warnings, Mr. Vijayan defended the environmental clearances obtained for the proposed ₹2,243-crore twin-tube tunnel road project, asserting that they had been secured strictly through proper and legitimate institutional channels.

"The propagation that environmental clearance was secured through external pressure is an insult to the judiciary," he asserted.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday


TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.45 HRS)

Forecast for Friday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	58.1	29.6	25.2
Ahmedabad	—	36.2	27.2
Aizawl	18	26.8	22.9
Bengaluru	—	29.6	21.3
Bhopal	0.1	30.2	25.0
Bhubaneswar	—	31.0	27.2
Chandigarh	5.4	28.9	24.4
Chennai	—	38.5	29.8
Coimbatore	0.8	32.0	22.4
Dehradun	70.8	25.0	22.4
Gangtok	11.7	21.6	19.0
Goa	1.6	32.5	27.2
Guwahati	9.2	32.5	26.2
Hubballi	—	28.0	23.0
Hyderabad	0.5	33.5	23.6
Imphal	1.2	27.5	24.0
Jaipur	—	34.1	25.7
Kochi	14.6	31.4	25.6
Kohima	—	23.0	20.0
Kolkata	2.6	30.7	27.6
Kozhikode	44.4	28.4	24.8
Kurnool	—	35.8	25.1
Lucknow	18.4	33.0	27.2
Madurai	—	41.4	28.5
Mangaluru	7.6	30.5	25.6
Mumbai	32.4	31.4	27.2
Mysuru	—	28.6	21.2
New Delhi	72.6	29.2	24.3
Patna	—	35.6	28.4
Port Blair	—	31.4	26.8
Prayagraj	1	32.6	27.5
Puducherry	—	38.1	28.9
Pune	16.6	29.6	21.9
Raipur	2	33.0	25.8
Ranchi	—	26.5	23.0
Shillong	59	24.0	17.6
Shimla	6	20.2	17.6
Srinagar	—	32.6	18.6
Thiruvananthapuram	2.8	32.5	24.3
Tiruchirappalli	—	38.5	28.6
Vijayawada	0.2	36.2	27.9
Visakhapatnam	1	30.8	27.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.24	.34	64	78	84	Good
Bengaluru	.16	.26	51	106	75	Moderate
Chennai	5	5	22	56	119	Moderate
Delhi	6	.19	39	71	107	Moderate
Hyderabad	.10	.12	30	43	58	Good
Kolkata	.14	.23	24	82	97	Good
Lucknow	.14	.25	39	36	45	Good
Mumbai	2	6	70	31	106	Moderate
Pune	.—	.28	42	40	56	Good
Visakhapatnam	.15	.45	16	43	113	Moderate

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Arrah, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 251 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Naharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 15

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

Native village in the dark on Keralite's death in Sri Lanka

The Hindu Bureau
ALAPPUZHA

The news of Sarathchandran Unnithan's death in the prison riots in Sri Lanka has barely reached his native village of Keezhcherimel, near Chengannur, in Alappuzha of Kerala, where many remain unaware of the tragedy.

Even the local police and authorities have little information about the 73-year-old or the circumstances surrounding his death. According to local residents, it has been more than four decades since Unnithan and his family moved to Chennai and severed most of their ties with their ancestral village.

Unnithan arrived in Sri Lanka on March 2, 2025, and was arrested for allegedly possessing ganja

"We have had no connection with him or his family for decades. The only address we know is Fousiya Lodge, Stringer's Street, Broadway, Chennai," said one of his relatives in Chengannur.

Whereabouts unknown

The elderly relative, who declined to elaborate further, said she could barely remember details about the family or their present whereabouts.

According to available information, Unnithan arrived in Sri Lanka on March 2, 2025, and was arrested for allegedly possessing ganja. He was later lodged in the Negombo prison, where he died during the riots.

According to relatives, Unnithan moved permanently to Chennai after marrying a woman from Andhra Pradesh. He last visited his native village in 2018. One of his siblings continues to live in the village, though local residents said he rarely maintained contact with the family. They, however, said that Unnithan was believed to have some connections in Thiruvananthapuram.

INBRIEF

A.P. Minister Lokesh calls for deeper ties with South Korea

Andhra Pradesh's Minister for Human Resource Development, IT and Electronics Nara Lokesh on Thursday concluded the fifth day of his South Korea tour with meetings aimed at attracting investments in electric vehicles, semiconductors, electronics, renewable energy and digital infrastructure, while proposing measures to strengthen economic ties between Andhra Pradesh and South Korea. He projected Andhra Pradesh as a preferred destination for Korean investments.

TTD halts special darshan ahead of Brahmotsavams

With Tirumala set to host two Brahmotsavams this year owing to the occurrence of 'adhika masam', the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has unveiled an extensive crowd management plan, suspending almost all special darshan categories during the annual festival and directing all the departments to complete preparations well ahead of schedule. The decision was taken at a high-level review meeting chaired by TTD Additional Executive Officer Ch. Venkaiah Chowdary on Thursday.

HC tells TDB to aid appraisal of Sabarimala valuables

The Kerala High Court has directed the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) to extend all necessary assistance to former Judge of Kerala High Court K.T. Sankaran to carry out the appraisal of valuables, including gold offerings made at the Sabarimala temple that were kept in 80 sacks labelled "Kaniponnu" in the Aranmula strong room. The court also directed the board's standing counsel to apprise it of the procedure proposed for the safe custody of valuable offerings received from devotees so that they can be appraised periodically and a comprehensive inventory maintained in digital form.

Heavy rain brings down 150-year-old clock tower at Kozhikode railway station

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

Heavy rain triggered the partial collapse of the 150-year-old heritage clock tower onto Platform No. 2 at the Kozhikode railway station in Kerala on Thursday morning. No casualties or injuries were reported, as timely precautions taken by security personnel ensured the area had been cordoned off before the incident. However, train operations on the route remained disrupted.

The iconic clock tower, an architectural landmark of the old station building, gave way, sending debris and roofing sheets crashing onto Platform No. 2 and the overhead traction wires.

Heavy rain triggered the partial collapse of the 150-year-old heritage clock tower onto Platform No. 2 of the station. K. RAGESH

According to railway sources, minor cracks were detected on Wednesday itself on the vintage structure, which is now under an extensive redevelopment. Acting promptly, RPF personnel moved passengers away from the premises. RPF officers said the building section was scheduled for controlled demolition later on Thursday.

Suresh Gopi faces flak over not taking action against SRFTI official

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Suresh Gopi, BJP MP and Chairperson of the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI), is facing criticism from the survivor and the SRFTI Students' Union for delay in taking action against a top official of the institution who had been found guilty of sexual harassment and multiple serious misconducts under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH) by an internal committee back in May 2026.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, the survivor, who was linked to the institute, said the authorities had not taken any action or communicated with her after the internal committee's report found him guilty.

"I want the immediate termination of this person as per the rules. I have not yet talked openly about the serious findings in the report. Mr. Gopi or no one else from the institute has answered my questions on why no action has been taken even after two months...," she said.

She also expressed concern that the accused was appointed as a non-official member of the Organising Committee (South Zone) of the recently concluded Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF), 2026, with his name being published on the MIFF website.

'Will not allow acts that cause friction in Karnataka'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Expressing concern over the Maharashtra government's decision to support Marathi-speaking residents on the inter-State border dispute, Karnataka Home Minister Priyank Kharge on Thursday warned the neighbouring State against any actions that may trigger friction in Karnataka.

A Maharashtra government committee on Wednesday held a meeting to review issues related to the boundary dispute and declared support to the Marathi-speaking residents of border areas in Karnataka.

"...If their acts lead to frictions here, we will not allow it," Mr. Kharge said.

AIDS prevention society launches drive to improve HIV diagnosis in Karnataka

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

More than 56,000 people in Karnataka are estimated to be living with HIV without knowing their status, the highest such number among States in the country. This is posing a major challenge to the State's HIV control programme despite free testing and treatment services being widely available, with the changing nature of sexual networks adding to the complexity.

As per estimates from the Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society (KSAPS), 56,406 people are unaware of their HIV-positive status, making early diagnosis and linkage to treatment a key public health priority. While over two lakh people are already receiving treatment, officials said, the focus is now on identifying those who remain outside the healthcare system.

Over 56,000 in Karnataka are estimated to be unaware of their HIV status.

KSAPS Project Director Padma Basavanthappa told *The Hindu* that one of the biggest hurdles is the changing nature of sexual networks, with increasing numbers of people meeting partners through dating apps.

No voluntary testing

Ms. Basavanthappa said the problem was compounded by the reluctance of people to voluntarily undergo HIV testing. "People still do not walk into testing centres on their own. Many believe they are not at risk, while others avoid testing because they fear stigma and discrimination," she said, pointing out that awareness about HIV transmission also remained inadequate.

To address the gap, KSAPS has launched the Mobilisation for AIDS Suraksha campaign. As part of the campaign, initiated by the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), KSAPS has introduced a BreakFree QR code that links users to a confidential self-risk assessment, nearby HIV testing centres and counsellors.

The self-assessment tool asks users a series of questions to determine whether they may be at risk and guides them to appropriate services while protecting their identity.

Karnataka to revive digital initiative to combat fake news

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government is all set to revive the Information Disorder Tackling Unit (IDTU) to curb the spread of fake news.

The unit, championed by Minister Priyank Kharge, had a trial run in 2024 but was later put on the back burner. Now, with Mr. Kharge taking charge as Home Minister, the unit is all set to become a full-fledged wing under the State's Cyber Command Unit.

Speaking in Belagavi on Thursday, Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said fake news was causing several problems in society, including law and order disturbances.

The IDTU initiative had earlier raised concerns over whether the government should label news reports as 'fake' and conduct fact checks, prompting it to onboard independent fact-checking websites for the task. Despite this, the initiative was discontinued after the pilot phase.

These units will monitor social media and news articles daily, identify potential threats, and have them fact-checked before publication on IDTU's flagship portal.

A perfect storm

A combination of natural calamity and human failure laid Wayanad low

The fragile hills of Kerala's Wayanad district turned into the theatre of yet another weather-induced disaster when a heavy downpour, on July 7, triggered what looked like a debris slide at the entrance to the under-construction twin tunnel at Kalladi in Meppadi panchayat, in the vicinity of Chooralmala, which was wrecked by massive landslides two years ago. Six workers were confirmed dead. The Kerala government has suspended construction work until the completion of a comprehensive probe into the causes and whether the work complied with the conditions set by the Expert Appraisal Committee under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) while granting environmental clearance for the project. Ever since the great floods of 2018, Meppadi panchayat, which is over 7,000 ft above sea level, has witnessed severe climate-induced catastrophes. Landslides hit the Puthumala area in 2019, within hours of an equally lethal landslide across the hills in Kavalappara in Malappuram district. Environmentalists, therefore, made an impassioned plea against the ₹2,100 crore (approximately) 8.73-km-long twin-tube tunnel road, linking Anakkampoyil in Kozhikode to Meppadi, flagging it as a recipe for disaster. It was instead fast-tracked, citing the need for accelerated mobility for the people of Wayanad, which does not have tertiary care facilities. In April this year, the Supreme Court cited the project's 'national importance' and rejected the Wayanad Prakrithi Samrakshana Samithi's plea to halt it. The group is planning to seek a review of the order.

As with all major disasters, this, too, appears to have stemmed from a heady mix of failures. Kerala Public Works Minister hurriedly pointed to the company executing the construction on behalf of the contractor, Konkan Railways, alleging that it ignored the department's June 20 deadline to remove excavation debris from the area. The company fell back on the rainfall data and the region's landslide susceptibility. Security camera visuals suggest an avalanche-like flow of debris down the slope of the hill that was being bored. Whether a mudslip in the upper reaches caused the debris to cascade down will only be known after a geomorphological probe. On the face of it, the State's disaster management machinery was not up to the job. The synoptic conditions in the area on the eve of the present disaster were eerily similar to those on the eve of the 2024 calamity. Wayanad has a fragile ecology, and any infrastructure project must involve meticulous ecological and climate-resilience planning and uncompromising execution. As it investigates the lapses, the State should review the project's social and environmental costs and ensure that climate-induced catastrophe in Wayanad is prevented, not just responded to.

Far from over

Iran and the U.S. must address the trust deficit for their talks to progress

It took only 20 days for the U.S.-Iran memorandum of understanding (MoU), which promised to extend the ceasefire by 60 days and launch talks about outstanding issues, including Iran's nuclear programme, to start unravelling. On Tuesday night, the U.S. carried out sweeping air strikes in Iran after three tankers were attacked in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran struck American bases in Kuwait and Bahrain after which Mr. Trump declared that the ceasefire was over. While he is known for making exaggerated claims, the current crisis poses the biggest challenge to the peace process since the June 17 MoU. The crisis did not emerge overnight. From the outset, the agreement had three major sticking points – Israel's war in Lebanon; Iran's access to its frozen funds and the status of the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran sees Israel's refusal to withdraw from southern Lebanon, along with Washington's push for a parallel trilateral framework involving the U.S., Lebanon and Israel, as violations of the spirit of the MoU. And, despite talks, Iran has yet to get access to its frozen funds. Finally, Iran appears determined to assert control over the Strait. It has opened a "safe passage route" along its coast, while the U.S. is backing an alternative route along Oman's coast.

Iran fears that the U.S. is trying to strip away the leverage it established over the Strait during the war by promoting an alternative route. The U.S. does not want Iran to emerge as the sole custodian of a strategic waterway. These conflicting positions trigger skirmishes, further undermining the MoU. What Mr. Trump, who senses strategic defeat, is trying to do is to mount economic and military pressure on Tehran to change its position on the Strait. He can continue his air campaign, but his years-long maximum pressure and 40 days of bombing have done little to alter Iran's negotiating positions. If he returns to war over Hormuz, Iran's stance on its nuclear programme – still unaddressed – would only get hardened. If war resumes, it would be bad news for the whole West Asia region and the entire global economy. Mr. Trump is at a strategic dead end, and instead of digging deeper, should stick to his way-out road map – the MoU. An obstacle in the peace process is the complete absence of trust. Mr. Trump's public tirades and abuses against Iran's leadership and hyperbolic threats, which are detached from ground realities, are not helping his cause. Equally, if Iran continues targeting commercial vessels, it risks being seen as an aggressor rather than a victim. Both sides should address the trust deficit, resolve the sticking points in the MoU and begin serious talks about the outstanding issues for a final settlement.

SIR in Manipur is a pathway to exclusion

Gautam Mukhopadhaya

Former Ambassador of India to Myanmar, Afghanistan and Syria, and engaged in issues facing the northeast of India

Manipur is one of the States covered under Phase III of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls being implemented by the Election Commission of India (ECI) currently. The SIR has already drawn adverse criticism from civil society organisations and the Opposition, particularly after the recent Bihar and West Bengal elections, due to its hasty, disproportionate and summary deletion of voters from voters' lists, resulting in the disenfranchisement of large sections of politically "undesirable" communities and voters. Concerns have been expressed by informed citizens about the lack of transparency and often blatant bias of the State and the ruling party in relation to the SIR, and its relationship with the planned delimitation, the 2029 elections and perhaps even an oddly timed Census. These concerns apply to Manipur as well. In addition, there are features of the situation in Manipur that are little known outside – and even within – the State, making the implementation of the SIR in Manipur even more egregious.

Fractured social fabric

First, Manipur has been in the throes of an intense ethnic conflict involving the majority Meiteis (54% of the population, inhabiting the dense Imphal Valley), the Kuki-Zo peoples (15%, inhabiting the surrounding hills) and, more recently, the Manipuri Nagas (26%, mainly in the northern part of Manipur). It has resulted in over 260 deaths in pogroms, attacks, and retaliatory violence; displaced some 60,000 people within and outside Manipur; led to the burning of hundreds of villages and places of worship; and witnessed unimaginable atrocities, including beheadings, dismemberment, and rapes as forms of collective punishment, disproportionately inflicted on the Kuki-Zo.

It has led to a demand by the Kuki-Zo for a 'Separate Administration' for themselves – and an equally stout opposition by the Meiteis to it – while many Manipuri Nagas led by the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah), or NSCN-IM, remain committed to their decades old demand for integration of Naga-inhabited areas in a sovereign 'Nagalim'. Many are backed by political, militant and proscribed insurgent groups of diverse persuasions.

Three years after the start of the conflict, not a single case of violence has been brought to book through the courts. An Inquiry Commission formed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has yet to present its report. Thousands of internally displaced persons languish in camps with little relief.

> Manipur's Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls risks deepening exclusion amid ethnic conflict, displacement, and identity challenges

Ethnic divisions have worsened and spread. Long-standing Naga-Kuki hostilities have been added to the three-year-old Meitei-Kuki conflict marked by the burning of villages (mostly Kuki), ambushes, and recently in May, the killing of three Thadou-Kuki pastors, and, in retaliation, tit-for-tat hostage-taking and the horrific killing of six Nagas in Kuki custody that has in turn set off a full economic blockade of Kangpokpi district. In response, State and central security forces have appeared passive, paralysed and at times, biased.

The conduct of the State government has been widely viewed as partisan, but the role of the Centre and even courts cannot be said to be above board. Conducting the SIR under these conditions, under a pretence of normalcy, is inexplicable.

Narratives driving electoral exclusion

Second, unlike the rest of the country, where the SIR is being driven by the central government through the ECI with the partisan support of the ruling party, in Manipur the demand to "cleanse" the State of alleged "illegal migrants" – a code word for Kukis – is in line with perceptions of politically radicalised Meiteis and Manipuri Nagas, who together constitute about 80% of the population. These allegations have no basis in Census figures for over a century, and are based on recent distortions of history, fake narratives and loud propaganda that feed directly into the SIR exercise. They create a very negative environment for a fair SIR, particularly in mixed areas, that is itself, *ipso facto*, biased against certain communities.

Third, there are several features peculiar to the Kukis themselves that lend themselves to their victimisation by the SIR. The first reason is that close to 50,000 Kuki-Zo remain displaced and scattered in Manipur and outside. There does not seem to be any provision in place for their fair enumeration.

The second reason is that together with their displacement, many are known to have lost many of their identity, residence, election, education and other documents that could have helped establish their voter credentials. There are visual records of Kuki-Zo educational certificates, Aadhaar cards, and driving licences in Imphal being destroyed after the violence of May 2023.

The third reason is that customary naming systems – where names are derived from the last syllable of complex parental names, nicknames often substitute formal names, and names are converted from tribal names to English orthography – create vast scope "logical discrepancies", making people far more vulnerable to exclusion than in States such as West Bengal. Possibly, more than 90% of Kuki-Zo people are unlikely to be able to produce a single, consistent spelling of their own names, let alone maintain consistency across generations.

The fourth reason is that by some historical anomaly, Manipuri tribals, both Kuki-Zo and Naga, do not enjoy Sixth Schedule status, although they enjoy some measure of autonomy under Article 371C and very weak Autonomous Councils.

This served them well during periodic bouts of violence and displacement, most recently during the Naga-Kuki violence of the 1990s, which again disproportionately affected the Kukis. Village chiefs and local authorities were then able to certify the identities of villagers under their jurisdiction. Such arrangements are unlikely to be recognised in the present exercise and prevailing atmosphere.

Finally, the Kuki-Zo leadership appears, for some reason, unaware of the nature, motivations, and implications of the SIR exercise. They seem to believe, perhaps naively, that as Indian citizens who have lived here all their lives and in possession of necessary documents, including voter ID cards, they have nothing to fear, and that opposing the exercise would amount to an admission of guilt. The dangers of the SIR now appear to be dawning on them, with some Kuki-Zo civil society organisations issuing statements highlighting its shortcomings, although opposition has yet to take a political form.

Safeguarding belonging

A nationwide SIR is now a *fait accompli* following the ruling by the Supreme Court of India in its favour. However, the process can still be made fairer and more sensitive to the risks of exclusion. Unless measures are adopted to limit its potential harm, by 2029 we may see a pathway to statelessness not only for the Kuki-Zo but also for other tribal communities in the Northeast, with their plight obscured amid the broader exclusion and disenfranchisement of Muslims labelled as "illegal migrants".

Building a durable India-Australia partnership

Shruti Pandalai

Inaugural India Chair at The Lowy Institute, Sydney, Australia

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Australia this week has been big on substance and high on optics. The choreography is familiar now given the warmth in the relationship: a forward-leaning leadership interaction, a massive diaspora event and a joint statement packed with deliverables and road maps. The Australian government sees India as central to its economic diversification strategy. Its new economic road map and packed ministerial calendar for India underwrite this intent. The elite consensus seems bipartisan and the convergence only growing.

Turning convergence into alignment

Yet, the harder part for most strategic relationships is drawing the line between convergence and alignment. The two might sound like synonyms, but they are not. Convergence is two countries arriving at similar conclusions about the world for their own reasons. Alignment is what happens when those separate conclusions are built into matching capabilities, institutions and habits of engagement. India and Australia have achieved a great deal of the first. The real test of this visit, and of the years after it, is whether it endures by delivering the second.

The convergence is not in doubt, and it is easy to see why it has deepened. Both countries are hedging against overdependence in a global order in transition. Australia's dependence on China, and its alliance dependence on an unpredictable Washington, have come under visible strain. This year's Lowy Institute Poll found trust in the United States at a record low of 31%, with a narrow margin of Australians saying that Canberra should distance itself from Washington under U.S. President Donald Trump. India is running its parallel diversification across energy suppliers, defence platforms and critical minerals processing, driven by a similar instinct.

New Delhi wants to limit its exposure; the Iran and Ukraine conflicts have driven home that any single-point dependency, however longstanding, is now a liability. No country can single-handedly balance China or hedge against American unpredictability. Together, and alongside partners such as Japan, they improve their odds. That is genuine convergence.

This visit has produced tangible evidence of that strategic lock-in. A Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation delivers a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Australia's Maritime Border Command and the Indian Coast Guard and adopts an India-Australia Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap to address shared threat perceptions. These are practical mechanisms that deepen interoperability without altering the basic character of the relationship: India remains a trusted security partner, not an ally. On energy security, Australian uranium has been legally available to India since the bilateral 2014 civil nuclear agreement, but it never actually moved commercially, largely because India's own nuclear liability law made foreign suppliers nervous about exposure.

> Beyond warm optics and deepening convergence, India-Australia ties face the challenge of converting trust into alignment

That changed with the SHANTI Act last December, which reformed that liability regime. The agreement on uranium has operationalised a deal lying dormant for a decade. The summit also launched the Australia-India Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies and Supply Chains (PACTS), while reaffirming the complimentarity to the Australia-Canada-India Technology and Innovation Partnership as focusing on building resilient technology partnerships through flexible minilateral arrangements. These are examples of alignment beginning to take institutional form.

There are focus areas, there are problems

But for alignment to be durable, convergence must translate into operational overlap. This is most consequential in the Indian Ocean, a region where Australian and Indian interests overlap most naturally. Both are Indian Ocean states with real stakes in the region's sea lanes. India's Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region has emerged as a key hub for maritime domain awareness, even as Australia pays closer attention to its western seaboard and Indian Ocean approaches. The two navies have converged on similar risk assessments of shadow fleets, threats to undersea cables and coercive activity below the threshold of conflict.

The new Coast Guard MoU and Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap narrow the gap between strategic intent and operational cooperation. Yet, Australia's most consequential force-structure decisions, from AUKUS (trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the U.S.) to its broader defence posture, remain oriented towards the Western Pacific, while India's strategic planners continue to divide attention between continental threats and maritime challenges. The shared ground is real; it is simply narrower than the political convergence sometimes suggests.

Economically, the pattern is similar. Trade has grown sharply since the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement came into force, but industry voices behind closed doors argue that growth sits disproportionately with large firms. Smaller exporters on both sides remain unaware of how to use it. Track 1.5 dialogues have flagged this as an operationalisation gap.

The knowledge deficit is more obvious when one looks at Australian public consciousness on India. This year's Lowy Poll found only 5% of Australians expect India to be the world's most important power a decade from now, against 54% for China, even as trust in India remains comparatively high. Convergence at the top has not yet trickled down into wider awareness of India's strategic heft.

The diaspora opportunity

The diaspora remains the biggest opportunity to change this, but with a caveat. Indian-origin Australians are now the country's largest immigrant-born community, ahead of the U.K.-born population for the first time. Political leadership has celebrated the diaspora's contribution, and a Centre for Australia-India Relations study finds that Australians broadly recognise it as skilled migrants, students and workers. But recognising the diaspora as a cultural asset, or an electoral constituency, is not alignment. Alignment would require translating that diaspora leverage into a public case for why India matters economically to the average Australian. It would require institutionalising the diaspora's comparative advantage in helping Australian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises navigate Indian regulatory and business culture, and vice versa, rather than leaving that work to individual champions. It would also mean untangling the mobility of Indian professionals from Australia's increasingly fraught migration politics.

Mr. Modi's visit has provided fresh ballast for these conversations about the future of the India-Australia partnership. His message on Australian Pension funds investing in India particularly resonated in the room when he said India would not just treat them as capital but as a marker of strategic trust imposed by Australian families in India. These statements matter because they build the broader public consciousness of India as a trusted partner for the future. Convergence got India and Australia to the table; it is these steps that institutionalise engagement incrementally that build alignment that endures.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trump's truce flips

It is deplorable that the much-hyped ceasefire agreement between Iran and the U.S. is already fizzling out, signalling prolonged military hostilities in the war-ravaged region. It is equally baffling that the United Nations has remained a silent spectator to the cascading effects of the conflict in West Asia. This only goes to show that peace accords brokered by regional non-state actors are unlikely to foster a durable ceasefire.

G. Ramasubramanyam,
Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

Students' personal data

The reported sale of CUET and NEET candidates' databases by websites is a serious violation of students' privacy and a blatant breach of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act. Personal information collected for examinations must never be commercialised without explicit consent. This illegal trade exposes students to spam, fraud, identity theft, and exploitation by coaching institutes and admission agents. The authorities must investigate these websites and impose stringent penalties. The National Testing Agency and the Government must strengthen data security measures to restore confidence in the examination system.

Bhushan Manchanda,
New Delhi

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

Should India restart dialogue with Pakistan?

Mani Shankar Aiyar
Former Member of Parliament

Tara Kartha
Former Director at the National Security Council Secretariat

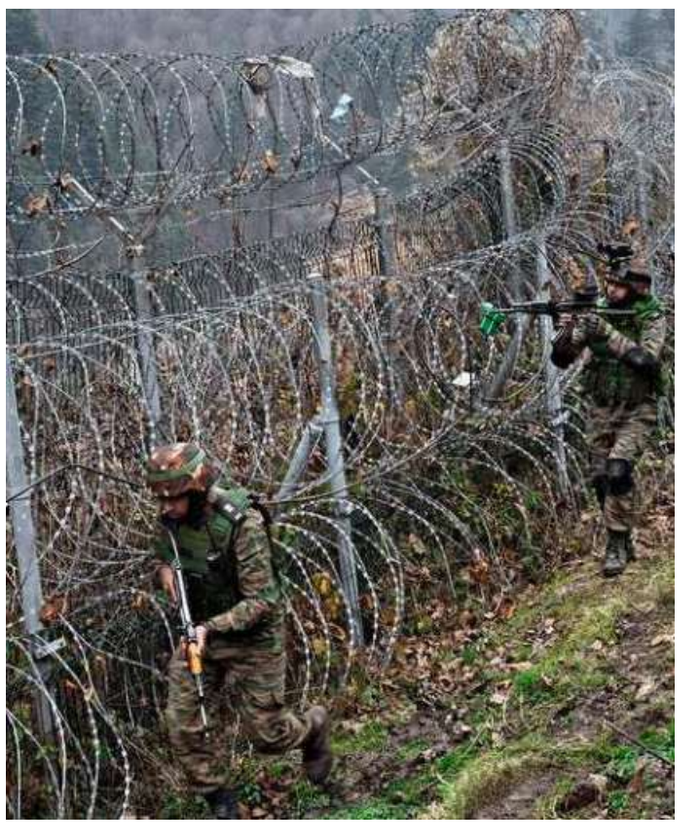
PARLEY

India and Pakistan have not engaged in dialogue since 2016 when talks broke down after the terror attacks at Pathankot and subsequently at Uri. The last 12 years have witnessed major attacks at Pahalgam (2025) and Pulwama (2019) and that apart, there were several smaller terror attacks. Earlier this month, a group of eminent citizens led by Gandhian O.P. Shah drafted a joint appeal to the leaders of India and Pakistan urging them to engage in dialogue. This has led to a public debate on whether India should restart dialogue with Pakistan. Mani Shankar Aiyar, who was a signatory to the letter, and Tara Kartha discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **Kallol Bhattacherjee**. Edited excerpts:

Should India and Pakistan restart dialogue at this moment, especially since they haven't spoken to each other at the government level for a decade now?

Mani Shankar Aiyar: It is precisely for that very reason, because we haven't spoken to each other for the best part of the last 12 years, that it is absolutely necessary that we resume the dialogue as soon as possible. And as regards the time, my own view is that any time is as good as any other time. And all times when we don't talk are bad for both of us. So I would urge the governments to talk to each other. And until they do, I think people of goodwill on either side of our border should be in touch with each other. I speak as somebody with nearly 40 years of experience of Pakistan and Pakistanis. I have been through several different Pakistani regimes, and it does not seem to me that it matters who is in power in Pakistan. When we engage with them, we engage with Pakistan, and not with a particular individual.

Tara Kartha: Ideally both countries should talk to each other because they are nuclear powers. These are dangerous times, especially since there was an active phase of hostility last year. But my problem is that the present leadership is basically Field Marshal Asim Munir. Let us forget about Shehbaz Sharif [the Prime Minister of Pakistan], for as much as I regard him, I'm sure he is a fine and good politician in his own right, Mr. Munir is in power and he's even more powerful than General Pervez Musharraf was before him. He holds absolute power; him and a couple of core commanders, such as his ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) chief. It is very important to understand that the rise of Field Marshal Munir began in a very systematic fashion once they carried out the terror strike in Pahalgam. I won't say after Operation Sindoor; I'll say after the Pahalgam attack.



Tense ties: Army soldiers patrol along the Line of Control between Pakistan and India in the Uri Sector, Jammu and Kashmir in January. IMRAN NISSAR

I agree with Mr. Aiyar that it doesn't matter who you talk to, provided that person is interested in peace. But the question is, what stake does Field Marshal Munir have in peace? In that case, he'll have to step down for a civilian prime minister. The moment things get peaceful, they'll tell the Pakistan military to go back to the barracks and that the civilians will take over. So why should he [be interested in peace]? It is a systemic issue. I'm not saying the army can never be talked to. This particular man will not. He is very dangerous.

Is it the correct time to go ahead with the dialogue with Pakistan?

MSA: If we don't go ahead, we'll be stuck in the rut in which we are today. There was a mention of one man, Asim Munir, who's been in power for approximately one year. But we haven't talked to Pakistan for 12 years. So I don't see how Asim Munir being there is the biggest obstacle. We could have talked to Nawaz Sharif. We could have talked to Imran Khan. We could have talked to several others.

And if you look at the past, we have had extremely fruitful talks with Pakistani generals but rarely with Pakistani civilians. Let me first run through the Pakistani army men with whom we have had successful interlocutions. Ayub Khan was the one who broke the deadlock on the Indus Waters Treaty. It was Zia-ul-Haq who broke the deadlock on Siachen. It was Musharraf, who broke the deadlock on what till then was being projected as the single biggest obstacle in India-Pakistan relations, namely the Kashmir question; they arrived at a four-point solution. However, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto signed on the dotted line in Simla and then turned his back on it.

> We are currently talking to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu who has been indicted by the ICC for war crimes. If we can talk to every dictator around the world, what's the problem in talking to the people next door who have the misfortune of being led by an army commander?
>
> MANI SHANKAR AIYAR

This is a false argument – that just because the Pakistani army is in power we can't talk to them. We are currently talking to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu who has been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes. If we can talk to every dictator around the world, including army dictators, what's the problem in talking to the people next door who have the misfortune of being led by an army commander?

So, the argument is that if the Government of India is in dialogue with several military dictators, then why should it not consider talking to Pakistan led by a military general?

TK: As someone who has been in the security establishment, my problem is how do I deal with terrorism? If a democratically elected government opens the door for dialogue and then gets hit by a terror attack – then the question is how to deal with terror attacks that disrupt dialogue? As a democratically elected government, can you justify dialogue? This is a point that was asked by even Nawaz Sharif who said that a terror attack takes place each time dialogue is attempted.

However, I will agree that a few military generals have shown remarkable good sense. In the recent past, when a BrahMos missile was accidentally fired at Pakistan, the Pakistan army handled it well. While the civilians protested, the Pakistan army took it in their stride and kept quiet. At the moment I am concerned with the timing of this proposal as Mr. Munir is in power.

The other issue is that Pakistan is in chaos as there are daily incidents that are being reported in various parts of the country. It's in chaos. So right now he wants to talk. He may have every incentive to talk. Why should I talk? If there is even one indication from Pakistan that they are going to close down terrorist camps, I'm sure tomorrow the government will be ready to talk.

But if at all we are to go forward, I would like to see, for example, a talk on climate change. We are both countries that are equally in bad shape when it comes to climate vulnerabilities. I would like a talk on air pollution, as during a particular season of the year, both sides start burning crop residues triggering an environmental crisis. That kind of a functional dialogue, which does not involve any territorial issue, no vested or political interests is purely functional and people-centric.

I find the kind of wishful thinking which one sees in the letter as a little idealistic. It's a bit over the top.

Does the current Indian government have the political bandwidth to talk to the Pakistani establishment?

MSA: Talking to them doesn't mean bending our knees before them. If you have the courage to undertake surgical strikes against them, why don't you have the courage to sit across a table and talk to them? That's my simple point. And if you won't do so, as I'm talking to the Government of India, then we will. We've got Zoom. But I am going to talk to my numerous friends in Pakistan. The number of my friends in Pakistan is larger than the number of enemies I have in India. And that's a rather large number.

TK: Before Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we had someone like Atal Bihari Vajpayee who put his career on the line and went to Lahore. Prime Minister Modi tried in 2015 and went to meet Nawaz Sharif and extended an olive branch. But all these have a political cost.

The question is what will we ask of them. If we have a dialogue tomorrow, we will ask them to stop exporting terrorism and they, in turn, will accuse us of doing things in Balochistan etc. whereas the Baloch people have been harassed since 1947. The question is what can India do in terms of the protests happening in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). We should talk to Pakistan if General Munir shows some evidence that he is cutting down on terrorism.

To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

NOTEBOOK

How a city's working class is driven to the margins and made invisible

The workers who collect garbage and keep our cities clean, and the workers who commute via cycles deserve recognition and respect

Suruchi Kumari

Before a story is to take shape through conversations with a part of the city's population, which the city itself only passively interacts with, it is discussed in a Monday pitch meeting where reporters and editors sit. Once approved, a familiar question follows – "Where will we find these people?"

I encountered this question before working on two separate stories on informal waste workers, and workers who commute by cycle. In both cases, the question did not hold for long. What first sounded like an inquiry about access, over the course of the reporting, began to feel like an assumption that these people are difficult to locate; almost external to the city.

For 'finding' people who cycle to work in Delhi, I reached out to Professor Rahul Goel from IIT Delhi, whose work over the years has focused on commuting patterns and mobility. When I asked him, "Where will I find them?", he directed me to the city's busiest intersections, where roads from the peripheries meet industrial areas and affluent localities, where many of them work as daily wage labourers, security guards, and helpers.

I met Sandeep at one of those busy intersections on a humid April evening, when he was returning home from his sales job. Aged 23, he had been working for eight years. The break from school to contribute to his household became permanent after COVID-19 hit. Before getting back on his bicycle to ride 8 kilometres more, he said, "*Humlog dikhte nahi hain* (We are invisible)." He said that a cycling network sounds like a fantasy in a city that still doesn't have footpaths everywhere. The draft Master Plan of Delhi 2041 notes that this "unequal distribution of roads" makes it non-conducive for cycling.

By the time I filed the story, curiosity had begun to feel like ignorance. I started seeing cyclists everywhere – at every intersection, at every signal. They kept to the kerb, and when traffic swelled, even that space was taken over as motorists pushed forward to gain ground. A car owner I spoke to said, "They slow the traffic down, such a nuisance." Cyclists are registered only when their presence creates friction.

Similarly, a waste picker becomes visible only when their access to gated colonies is debated. Most residents encounter them every day. They collect garbage from homes and do the work that reduces the burden on municipal systems without formal recognition or integration into the waste economy. They continue to speak of restricted access, allegations of theft, and the absence of dedicated workspaces.

To write about the workforce that sorts much of the city's waste in March, I first travelled to a *jhuggi* cluster in Bhalswa, in northwest Delhi, a few kilometres from the towering landfill. Days later, while walking to a Metro station in south Delhi, I noticed a large sack of waste stacked beside a road, similar to the one I had seen in Bhalswa. It led me to a corner of my own neighbourhood that I realised I had never seen before. There, too, people were sorting waste sharing similar stories of migration and precarious work. By the time I finished the story, I had met waste workers across the city. Sameer Ali, whom I had never seen before January, moved in the same lanes around 9 pm with his bicycle cart carrying a stack of cardboard. People that our stories set out to look for, unlike responses from government authorities, are not hard to find. They are everywhere, for all to see.

It is tempting to think invisibility is simply a failure to notice. But invisibility is rarely accidental. When a city invests heavily in roads for cars while cycling infrastructure remains largely absent, cyclists do not disappear. A worker rehabilitated to the margins of Delhi, 40-50 kilometres away from the place where she works, is moved away from the corridors of visibility so that her problems with transport or healthcare become easier to overlook.

These workers state that recognition in government policies would give them a life of dignity and respect.

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PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Pilgrims' progress

Stormy route: The first batch of pilgrims on the annual Amarnath Yatra cross mountain trails amid rainfall during their journey to the Amarnath cave on the Baltal route, northeast of Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir on July 3. The yatra was almost cancelled due to unpredictable mountain weather, but it resumed again. THE HINDU

FROM THE ARCHIVES — The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 10, 1976

Eminent scientists' club suggested

New Delhi, July 9: A proposal to establish a club of eminent scientists from the non-aligned developing countries for making futuristic studies of the development pattern of the Third World is being mooted by some top scientists here.

According to informed sources, the idea is to set up an institution like the "Club of Rome" where eminent scientists from the developing non-aligned countries could continuously study problems concerning the Third World and projections of growth in various fields such as economic development, population, agriculture and technology.

There is a feeling among scientists in developing countries that projections made by prestigious groups like the "Club of Rome" often tend to ignore realities in the developing countries as they, being supported by the developed countries, look at the problems of developing countries from the perspectives of the developed countries. Some of the projections made by the "Club of Rome" set up with financial support from the developed countries on the pattern of growth and development in the world, are being hotly contested by scientists of the Third World.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 10, 1926

The mission of poets

Calcutta, July 9: "The Mission of Poets" was the subject of an interesting lecture, delivered by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, to-day, at the instance of the Poetry Society. Mrs. Naidu delivered an inspiring address in the course of which she said she would like to destroy all printing presses that printed poetry and to leave it at the mercy of all learned professors to teach the young how to paraphrase, analyse, interpret, and scan poetry. A poet knows that he is not more than a mirror of these intimate secrets of the human heart of which the heart itself is so often unaware.

From Page One

India, Australia move to deepen cooperation

Under the provisions of the energy security framework, India and Australia vowed to strengthen energy security by maintaining a stable, secure and reliable supply of coal, diesel, other liquid fuels and natural gas.

The two countries will implement an India-Australia Maritime Security Collaboration Road Map to strengthen coordination across the Indian Ocean and the wider Indo-Pacific.

Both sides committed to encouraging greater integration between their defence industries, building resilient supply chains and expanding collaboration in defence innovation, advanced science and technology.

The leaders noted that the new declaration builds upon the India-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation signed in 2009 and complements existing institutional mechanisms, including the Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue, the 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue, and the Defence Ministers' Dialogue.

They also reiterated support for regional institutions, including the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), ASEAN-led regional architecture and the Pacific Islands Forum, describing them as key platforms for addressing regional challenges.
(With inputs from PTI)

Modi hails Australia's social media curbs

In conversations and public remarks, officials at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) have said that India is exploring a "graded" set of restrictions that would allow some social media access while blocking some categories of content depending on the age cohort of a minor.

It is not yet clear if the government is planning to bring this into action with a law in Parliament or with amendments to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, which have been the main legal way for the government to introduce rules for requirements like labelling AI-generated images.

In April, State governments moved to announce their own respective social media bans. Andhra Pradesh announced that it would pursue a law regulating children's social media use, as did Karnataka. "Officials have been tasked with studying best practices from countries such as Singapore, Australia, and Denmark to build a robust legal and technological framework [to enforce the law] tailored to India's needs," the A.P. government said in a statement.

Monsoon has covered the entire country: IMD

Historical data show no simple relationship between the date of nationwide monsoon coverage and the eventual June-September rainfall. However, some prominent El Niño years associated with deficient monsoons also saw delayed coverage. In 2002, one of India's most severe monsoon drought years, the monsoon covered the country only on August 15, the latest date in the 1971-2025 record. In 2009, another major drought year, coverage was completed on July 3, while in 2015 it occurred relatively early, on June 26.

The contrasting dates underline that the speed of the monsoon's geographical advance is not, by itself, a reliable indicator of seasonal rainfall. El Niño can weaken monsoon circulation and affect the amount and distribution of rainfall even after the monsoon has formally covered the entire country.

SC considers reference on grounds of arrest

Appearing for the Meghalaya government, the Solicitor-General submitted that the constitutional requirement had been complied with in the current case, as the written grounds of arrest had been furnished to Ms. Raghuvanshi. According to him, the only defect was a "typographical error" in the arrest memo, which mistakenly referred to Section 403 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) instead of Section 103, which deals with murder.

"This is a very serious offence... I will be able to satisfy Your Lordships that there is no question of any conflict because, in the present case, the written grounds of arrest were supplied. There was only one typographical error," Mr. Mehta submitted.

Counsel appearing for Ms. Raghuvanshi, however, argued that what had been furnished to the accused was merely a *pro forma* and did not amount to a meaningful fulfilment of the constitutional mandate. This prompted the Bench to enquire whether the arrest memo contained any factual particulars of the case apart from merely referring to the statutory provisions.

"We will consider the matter in detail...Just indicate what exactly was communicated to the accused so that we are in a position to understand what was supplied." Earlier, the Bench had declined to stay the High Court's order granting bail to Ms. Raghuvanshi after being informed that she had already been released from judicial custody.

Bishnoi ran decentralised syndicate, wanted 'S.K.' killed to instil fear: U.S.

The Department of Justice says Bishnoi's group 'enticed impoverished minors in India to join the enterprise' and members were sent abroad to work for the network; details submitted by the DoJ match threats to actor Salman Khan in Mumbai

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The United States Department of Justice (DoJ) said that between 2022 and 2026, jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi announced his intention "to murder S.K., a well-known Indian actor and television personality" to promote his "enterprise" and instil fear in the public.

Though the name is not expanded in the DoJ's court records, the initials and details match with the threats against actor Salman Khan in Mumbai during the period. Bishnoi is lodged in a high-security prison in Ahmedabad since 2023.

On Wednesday, the DoJ announced the indictment against three Punjab-linked transnational organised crime syndicates operating across India, Canada, the U.S., and Europe, including the Bishnoi syndicate. The DoJ said that 37 people have been charged so far. The indictment said that recruitment coordinators for the Bishnoi gang enticed impoverished minors in India to join the enterprise by promising, among other things, money, fame, and protection.

Behind bars: Lawrence Bishnoi has been lodged in a high-security prison in Ahmedabad since 2023. REUTERS

It said that upon being recruited into the Bishnoi gang in India, new members received minimal compensation for criminal acts committed on behalf of the enterprise. The gang sent loyal members abroad, including to the U.S. and Canada, on student visas and foreign worker visas to assist the enterprise's criminal operations in those countries, the DoJ said. It added that membership in the Bishnoi organised crime group (OCG) was decentralised. "With the exception of its leaders, Bishnoi OCG members and associates often had limited information on the identities or backgrounds of other Bishnoi OCG members and associates...," the DoJ said.

Senior gang member

According to the indictment, Sukhraj Singh Kang, a senior India-based member of the gang who coordinated acts of violence in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere, provided key evidence. On January 25, 2025, Mr. Kang spoke to a person he believed was an individual who was owed a debt of between $100,000 to $200,000. But the person was a confidential informant working with law enforcement (CI-1). Mr. Kang agreed to assist CI-1 with extorting the debtor in exchange for a fee of $16,000. Investigators then provided a staged video purporting to show a shooting at the debtor's residence. Members of the alleged conspiracy believed the video was real and used it to intimidate the intended victim.

In reality, the supposed debtor was an undercover law-enforcement agent (UC-1).

The indictment alleges that, over the following weeks, several accused communicated directly with UC-1, demanding money and issuing threats. Prosecutors say these conversations, in Punjabi and Hindi and sent via WhatsApp and Signal, allowed investigators to document alleged extortion demands, threats against family members and the mechanisms through which money would be collected.

Amit Shah

Report rapid population changes along border areas, Shah tells SPs

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said that information on demographic changes in border areas caused by abnormal factors such as illegal migration should be communicated from the grassroots to the highest levels at the earliest.

"We are creating a robust system to make the country completely infiltration-free and to ensure that infiltration does not happen at all," he said.

Mr. Shah made the remarks at the first-ever Land Border Districts' Superintendents of Police Conference-2026. The meeting was attended by SPs of 119 border districts. Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Director-Intelligence Bureau Mahesh Dixit, and Directors-General of Police of States were also present at the conference.

Mr. Shah said that the government was "moving from an isolated border outpost system towards the creation of an integrated security grid".

He said that the conference has given an institutional shape to the comprehensive approach towards border security, adding that in the coming days, government will move forward to ensure coastal border security.

He stated that the government is building a strong quadrangular security grid by bringing together concerned border-guarding forces, State and district administrations, relevant stakeholders of Government of India, and local citizens. He further said that India's border security system, based on the vision of a Smart Border, will become most modern in the world in the coming years.

CID takes over probe into death of rape-murder accused in Baruipur case

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

West Bengal administration performs last rites after family refuses to accept body

The last rites of Prabhas Mondal, one of the accused in the sexual assault and murder of a 12-year-old girl in West Bengal's Baruipur, was performed on Thursday by the local administration after his family refused to accept the body. Mondal was killed in a police encounter on Wednesday.

The investigation of the encounter was handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the West Bengal police. According to police, Mondal had allegedly snatched the service weapon of a police officer, fired one round at the team, and attempted to flee during reconstruction of the crime scene in the early hours of Wednesday.

Preliminary investigation suggested that Mondal had abducted the girl and sexually assaulted her before throwing her into a pond. CCTV footage showing him with the victim has also surfaced. Four persons had been arrested in connection with the crime. The others are Anand Sardar, Dibakar Sardar, and Kabir Mollah.

The girl had gone missing on July 4 following which the family filed a missing person complaint. After the body was recovered, violence erupted in the area. A mob attacked police personnel, vandalised police vehicles, and blocked roads and railway tracks.

Many Opposition leaders slammed the encounter saying the Bharatiya Janata Party government led by Suvendu Adhikari was trying to imitate the Yogi Adityanath model of governance in Uttar Pradesh.

BJP Minister Dilip Ghosh, while justifying the police action, criticised people who questioned the encounter. "People should throw eggs at the intellectuals who are trying to defend the criminals... Police will have the same freedom as in U.P., Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Assam. There will be zero tolerance for crime and criminals," he said.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharyya alleged it was a "planned encounter". "It was clearly designed to divert public attention from systemic governance failures and communal undertones of the grisly crime and its aftermath," he said.

Modi, Albanese call for dialogue to end West Asia conflict

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese on Thursday made a joint call for a de-escalation of tension and hostilities in West Asia.

"The Prime Ministers expressed concern over renewed escalation of tensions in the Middle East and called upon all parties to exercise restraint, de-escalate tensions, and ensure protection of civilians as well as the uninterrupted flow of energy supplies and commerce. They reiterated the importance of dialogue and diplomacy, and adherence to international law to achieve a peaceful and lasting solution," a joint statement said. The two leaders also emphasised the importance of the Quadrilateral grouping, comprising the U.S., India, Japan, and Australia, as a unit that will deliver "practical and concrete" outcomes in the Indo-Pacific region.

Cultural connect

Mr. Albanese welcomed the repatriation of artefacts of cultural significance to India. "Australia and India share a deep history, and we are building strong people to people links between our two countries," he said.

Attending an Indian diaspora event with Mr. Modi, the Australian PM said, "Our Indian community has contributed so much to the story of modern Australia. And it's made our country a better place... Together, we can be a force for peace and prosperity in our region."

The two leaders expressed concern about the conflict in Ukraine, and said that they "remained concerned" about the conflict in Myanmar as well.

CBI files first chargesheet against four in RHFL case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation has filed the first chargesheet against four accused in the Reliance Home Finance Limited (RHFL) case.

Among those named are, two former senior executives of RHFL, Ravindra Sudhalkar as the then executive director and chief executive officer ; and Krishanan Gopalakrishnan Iyer as the then chief risk officer; and former senior executive of Reliance Capital Limited, Dhananjay Bhagwanprasad Tiwari, the then chief credit and risk officer. The CBI alleged that funds borrowed by RHFL were diverted through intermediary and conduit entities to various Reliance ADA Group companies causing wrongful loss to the lending banks and corresponding wrongful gain to the accused persons and related entities.

SC asks civic bodies to act on unauthorised buildings

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said "slackness" by the civic authorities to take effective action against unauthorised constructions in the national capital and its neighbouring regions would not be tolerated.

The Bench linked the clusters of unauthorised buildings in cramped areas of Delhi, Gurugram and in Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh to the recent fatal fire incidents in Delhi's Malviya Nagar on June 3 and on June 22 at Lucknow.

Senior advocate Ajit Sinha, whom the court had appointed *amicus curiae*, said the fire had blazed through a narrow multi-storey building in the congested Hauz Rani urban village of south Delhi's Malviya Nagar which operated as a bed and breakfast with a restaurant on the ground floor.

Firefighters and rescue personnel carry out operations after a fire at a coaching centre in Aliganj, Lucknow. FILE PHOTO

"The final death toll reached 23 and more than 50 people were rescued," he pointed out.

Mr. Sinha said the fire in a multi-storeyed building in Lucknow's Aliganj resulted in the death of 15 persons, many of them students.

"We are particularly concerned with the conduct of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi [MCD] with regard to non-compliance of directions issued by the court in 2024 and specific directions of May 20," the Bench addressed Additional Solicitor General S.D. Sanjay, appearing for the MCD.

The law officer agreed to file a detailed report before August 4, the next date of hearing.

The court referred to media reports that 93% buildings in Gurugram failed in complying with fire safety norms and asked the executive head of the civic body of the city to be present on the next date of hearing with a report detailing the action taken.

Manipur CM invokes religious teachings in appeal for peace

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh invoked the Bible and the teachings of Gautama Buddha to appeal for peace during his visit to Kuki-dominated Kangpokpi and Naga-majority Senapati district on Wednesday.

He interacted with villagers, including those abducted after the killing of three church leaders on May 13 and released later, in Kangpokpi and Senapati district, which borders Nagaland.

"You are Christians; the Nagas are also Christians. When you open the Bible, it sends the message of forgive and forget. I am a Hindu and a believer in Gautama Buddha, who preached peace," the Chief Minister told church leaders said at Kangpokpi Bazaar.

"We should all work for the return of peace in Manipur," he added.

APPEAL

MASTER SYED HASNAIN, CHRISTIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL NO. 76123IP, 6 YEARS HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED TO HAVE THALASSEMIA MAJOR. THIS IS A TYPE OF LIFE-THREATENING BLOOD DISORDER. THE BEST OPTION FOR HIM WOULD BE TO UNDERGO ALLOGENEIC PERIPHERAL BLOOD STEM CELL TRANSPLANT (PBSCT). THE ESTIMATED COST OF PBSCT AT THIS HOSPITAL IS APPROXIMATELY **RS.16,00,000/-**

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NDA-ruled States, universities object to centralisation provisions in VBSA

Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya among States to raise concerns over the Centre's powers; universities seek safeguards, parliamentary monitoring; BHU warns that Bill could turn an independent regulator into arm of the Union govt.

Sobhana K. Nair
Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

NDA-ruled States, including Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Meghalaya, have raised concerns over provisions in the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, warning a parliamentary panel that the proposed legislation would centralise powers over higher education regulation.

The Bill proposes a structural overhaul of higher education in the country, by repealing the statutory Acts governing the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) and replacing them with a single apex body called the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA).

The Bill is currently under review by a joint parliamentary committee headed by BJP MP D. Purandeswari. *The Hindu* accessed submissions made to the parliamentary panel, which is in the final stages of preparing its report.

Apart from State governments, Central and State universities and institutes have also criticised the Bill, raising concerns over the Centre's expanded powers, the absence of State representation in the proposed regulatory structure, ambiguities in its scope, and the transition process following the winding up of the UGC, AICTE, and NCTE.

The Bill proposes an overhaul of higher education by repealing the statutory Acts governing the UGC, the AICTE, and the NCTE and replacing them with a single apex body. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Bypassing States

Some of the strongest objections came from Andhra Pradesh, which is ruled by the Telugu Desam Party, a BJP ally. The State argued that several provisions of the Bill could render its legislative authority over higher education "a dead letter" and sought mandatory consultation before decisions affecting State universities are taken. The State also cautioned against Clause 11 that allows the Regulatory Council to bypass State universities in granting degrees, saying it could lead to "constitutional friction".

The State government further suggested a clause explicitly preventing the Centre from taking action prejudicial to the autonomy, functioning, and governance of State institutes and universities.

BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh has also raised concerns over what it described as limited State representation in the proposed regulatory council.

The Meghalaya government – led by the National People's Party, which is a BJP ally – recommended an explicit provision defining the respective powers of the Centre and the States. It proposed that the Centre be responsible for coordination, standards, accreditation, and quality assurance, while States retain authority over the establishment, governance, administration, staffing, financing, and overall functioning of State universities.

Key vulnerability

Central universities and institutes such as the Banaras Hindu University (BHU), the Central University of Rajasthan and the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Chittoor, as well as State universities in Assam, Maharashtra, and Jammu and Kashmir, have objected to provisions that they say could increase centralisation.

Several institutions told the panel that clauses requiring the new regulatory structure to follow directions from the Centre represented the Bill's "most critical vulnerability".

While some universities cautioned that dismantling the UGC, AICTE, and NCTE simultaneously could cause "significant institutional disruption", others argued that the Bill concentrated regulatory powers and created the possibility of "arbitrary interventions". Institutions called for phased implementation, parliamentary oversight of powers exercised by the Centre under the Bill, and mandatory notice and consultation with States before such powers are invoked.

BHU noted that Clause 45 gives finality to the Centre's policy directions and binds the VBSA to them, "effectively subordinating the regulator to the executive", while Clause 47 empowers the Centre to supersede the VBSA and dissolve it. The university told the panel that these provisions risked turning an independent regulator into "an arm of the government of the day".

Clause 45 empowers the Centre to issue binding policy directions to the Commission, gives it the final say on what constitutes a policy matter, and allows it to assign additional functions. Clause 47 allows the Centre to suspend or supersede the Commission or its councils for up to a year. IIIT Chittoor said a possible implication of Clause 45 was the expansion of Centre's influence across the three councils proposed under the structure, which could end up shaping institutional academic operations. SNDT Women's University, Pune, said that without checks and balances, consultation and parliamentary oversight, the provisions could lead to "excessive centralisation".

Fee escalation

Congress-ruled Telangana said the Bill's structure does not adequately recognise the role of State governments. It sought the deletion of Clause 11, which empowers the Union government-backed Regulatory Council to authorise independent accredited colleges to grant degrees directly, bypassing the State governments. It also argued that the Bill neither empowers the Regulatory Council to regulate fees nor preserves the existing framework, potentially allowing fee escalation.

Telangana's Higher Education Department described Clause 45 as the "single most centralising clause" in the Bill, calling it a "self-judging clause" that gives the Centre the final authority in disputes with councils under the VBSA framework.

The department argued that the provision expanded Central authority over the structure without granting States corresponding powers over matters relating to their own universities.

Cong. alleges forged gram sabha consent for Singrauli mining

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Alleging that gram sabha consent for coal mining in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli district had been obtained through forged resolutions carrying the thumb impressions of deceased persons, the Congress on Thursday demanded a CBI inquiry into what it called *angootha chori* (stealing thumb impressions). The party said the alleged fraud in tribal areas was part of a wider pattern of subversion of environmental and forest safeguards.

At a press conference in New Delhi, All India Congress Committee national coordinator for SC, OBC, Minority and Adivasi Departments K. Raju and Adivasi Congress chief Vikrant Bhuria alleged that fake gram sabha approvals had been used to facilitate mining in the Dhirauli coal block in Singrauli, where, they claimed, an Adani group-linked company was operating. There was no immediate response from the company or the administration.

Vikrant Bhuria

Cites RTI documents

Mr. Bhuria cited RTI documents and death certificates to claim that the names and thumb impressions of persons who had died years earlier appeared in gram sabha resolutions shown as having been passed in 2021.

He referred to the cases of Brij Bhan Singh, who died in 2014 but was allegedly shown as having given consent in 2021; Phooleswari Singh, who died in 2018 but whose consent was allegedly recorded three years later; and Jag Bandhan Singh Gond, who died in 2015 but whose thumb impression was allegedly used in 2021.

Mr. Bhuria also alleged that some living residents who were literate and ordinarily sign documents had their thumb impressions affixed instead. Such practices violated the Forest Rights Act and the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, under which gram sabha consent was mandatory in Scheduled Areas before land could be acquired or forest land diverted, he said.

The Congress demanded a CBI probe into the alleged fraud, action against officials and companies involved, and a halt to mining activity in the area until the claims were independently verified.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh amplified the charge on social media, saying that after "*vote chori, seat chori* and *chanda chori*", the country was now witnessing "*angootha chori*". In a separate post, he widened the attack on the Narendra Modi government and targeted Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav over the abrupt removal of four of his close aides.

UGC-NET leak claims spark Congress call to scrap NTA

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday intensified its attack on the Union government over alleged irregularities in the UGC-NET, demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and the disbanding of the National Testing Agency (NTA).

The Opposition party's attack came after allegations surfaced that the Sociology paper in the UGC-NET held on June 30 had been leaked.

Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh, sharing a media report on social media platform X, said the alleged leak had exposed the hollowness of the government's claim that shifting examinations to a computer-based test (CBT) format would curb malpractice.

"Days after the NEET-UG exam was leaked in May 2026, 'Mantri Pradhan' announced that NEET would be conducted in CBT mode from next year, implicitly suggesting that a computer-based examination could not be leaked," Mr. Ramesh said."Now there are reports that the UGC-NET Sociology examination appears to have been leaked despite being a CBT," he added.

He also referred to earlier complaints regarding the UGC-NET English examination, in which questions were allegedly lifted from past papers without change, and charged that the problem lay not in the mode of examination but in a "compromised" Education Ministry and a "deliberately incompetent and incapacitated" NTA.

'Champat Rai not upset about his resignation'

Press Trust of India
AYODHYA

Ram temple trust treasurer Govind Dev Giri on Thursday said Champat Rai is not upset after resigning as its general secretary in the wake of the alleged donation theft and is fully supportive of the new temple management system being put in place.

"I met Champat Rai ji yesterday mainly to check on his health. He is healthy, solution-oriented and has no misgivings about his resignation," Mr. Giri said. "He (Champat) is an old veteran who has devoted his life to the country. He is fully supportive of the new (temple management) system being put in place and he isn't upset or angry," he said.

Examine call records of Ram Temple employees: Akhilesh

Press Trust of India
LUCKNOW

Upping the ante on the Ram Temple donations issue, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday demanded that the call detail records of all those employed in the temple be examined, claiming that 99.9% of them would have links with the BJP.

Talking to reporters here, Mr. Yadav also accused the BJP of placing electoral considerations above religious values.

"All the call detail records (CDR) of those who were working in the temple complex should be examined. The moment the CDRs are scrutinised, 99.9% of them will turn out to be BJP people. You cannot imagine the turmoil that will break out within the BJP then. The exodus has already begun and many people have already started contacting us," he claimed.

Akhilesh Yadav

Raising queries over the functioning of the SIT, the former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister said: "What SIT is this? It is merely an attempt to cover up the matter. Who constituted this SIT? We are also hearing that questions have been raised about the SIT itself. One of its members is facing a cheating case. Tell me, will such a person continue to be part of the SIT?"

The SIT comprising Divisional Commissioner of Lucknow Vijay Vishwas Pant, Inspector-General of Police S. Kiran and Special Secretary (Finance) Neel Ratan was constituted on June 13 to probe the donation theft allegations.

He also alleged that the BJP changes its ideology according to electoral convenience. Later in the day, he said in a post on X: "Only resignation will not do. The entire Trust should be dissolved." He also demanded a judicial probe into "all land deals and other works carried out under the signatures of those who have resigned", asserting that "resignation should not become a route to escape scrutiny".

BJP nominates 3 ex-Trinamool MPs to RS hours after joining the party

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Thursday nominated three former Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MPs Sushmita Dev, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray and Prakash Chik Baraik to the Upper House of Parliament.

The development came hours after the three leaders joined the BJP in Kolkata. BJP State president Samik Bhattacharya welcomed the three former MPs by handing over a BJP flag to them at the party office.

Incidentally, Ms. Dev, Mr. Ray and Mr. Baraik joined the party days ahead of the July 24 bypolls to three Rajya Sabha seats in the State.

After the defeat of the Trinamool Congress in the West Bengal Assembly polls, the three Rajya Sabha MPs who were nominated by party chairperson Mamata Banerjee had quit as members of the Upper House.

Former Trinamool Congress MPs Sushmita Dev, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray and Prakash Chik Baraik upon joining the BJP on Thursday. ANI

'Accept wholeheartedly'

"The three former MPs have taken a stand and resigned from Rajya Sabha. It is a moment of happiness for us. We accept the three of them wholeheartedly," Mr. Bhattacharya said in the presence of the three leaders joining the BJP.

As the BJP has 208 legislators in the 294-member West Bengal Assembly, and the Trinamool Congress legislators are divided into two camps, their election is just a matter of time.

Earlier in the day, Ms. Dev, a prominent leader from Assam, who left the Congress to join the Trinamool Congress in 2021, said that the BJP was a national party and the party's high command would take a call on her nomination to the Rajya Sabha.

Mr. Ray, a three-term Rajya Sabha member and former party chief whip who was one of Mamata Banerjee's key parliamentary faces, resigned from the Rajya Sabha and as a member of the party after Trinamool lost power in West Bengal.

Mr. Ray had met Home Minister Amit Shah during the latter's recent visit to Kolkata.

Mr. Baraik, who hails from Alipurduar, was nominated by Trinamool Congress to the Rajya Sabha in 2023.

Prashant Kishor has task cut out in Bankipur bypoll

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

Ahead of the byelection in the Bankipur Assembly constituency in Patna, residents say the contest this time will be between the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate and Jan Suraaj Party founder Prashant Kishor. Mr. Kishor has been busy in the constituency, addressing *nukkad* (corner) meetings and going door to door to meet people.

The byelection will be held on July 30 and the result will be out on August 3. The seat fell vacant after sitting BJP MLA Nitin Nabin was elected to the Rajya Sabha after being named as the party's national president. Mr. Nabin had won five consecutive times from Bankipur, which has been a BJP stronghold. The party has fielded a young leader, Abhishek Kumar Sinha 'Bunty', while the Opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal has repeated its candidate, Rekha Gupta. In the 2025 Assembly election, Mr. Nabin had received 98,299 votes (62.66%) to defeat Ms. Gupta, who got 46,363 votes (29.55%). The JSP's Vandana Kumari had secured 7,717 votes (4.92%).

Both Mr. Abhishek and Mr. Gupta filed their nomination papers on Thursday and Mr. Kishor is expected to file his nomination on July 11.

BJP chief Nabin has won five consecutive times from Bankipur, which has been a BJP stronghold

"For the past several Assembly elections, I've been voting for the BJP, but now it [the party] has become depressing. I will not vote for the BJP this time but the battle appears to be between Mr. Kishor and Mr. Abhishek," said Suman Dhari Sinha, a septuagenarian resident of Kidwaipuri locality in Bankipur. A few yards away from his home, provision store owner Jyoti Kumar Verma, 50, asserted: "Only the BJP candidate will win. For the past nine Assembly elections [five terms for Mr. Nabin and four terms for his father Nabin Kishore Prasad Sinha], people of the constituency have reposed faith in the party's candidate... this time too, the candidate is local and personally knows everyone in the constituency... there is no match for the BJP."

Batting for change

However, a young voter of the Dakshin Mandiri locality near Kathpul, Sumit Kumar, 29, asked, "We need change... for how long will we keep voting for a single party?" He is unequivocal about who he thinks are the main contestants.

"The battle will be between Mr. Kishor and the Mr. Abhishek," he said.

Bankipur is largely an urban constituency in central Patna with about 4 lakh voters and is dominated by Kayastha and Vaishya (trader) voters, besides a mixed population of other castes.

The BJP candidate is from the Kayastha community while the RJD candidate comes from the Vaishya community. Mr. Kishor belongs to the Brahmin community.

CJP urges students to join Parliament march on July 20

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Cockroach Janta Party announced a peaceful march to Parliament on July 20, the first day of the Monsoon Session, on Thursday. The CJP said the march would begin from Jantar Mantar. It called upon students, parents and citizens from across the country to join the march to seek justice for students and press for Mr. Pradhan's resignation.

TAMIL NADU AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY
COIMBATORE – 641 003
RATE CONTRACT NOTIFICATION – 2026-27

On behalf of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, sealed tenders are invited for the supply of Chemicals, Laboratory apparatus, Scientific Equipments, Consumables, Glasswares - Fragile and Non-Fragile items etc., for the constituent Colleges, Departments, Research Stations, KVK's and other Centres of the University during the financial year 2026-27. The firms should have three years of experience as on 01.01.2026 as "MANUFACTURER" of the said items, they intend to supply and hold a valid "Manufacturer's License" for such of those items which are marketed under their own approved or patented brand names or trademarks. The term "Manufacturer" also includes manufacturers or their sole agents or their dealer whom they authorize to participate in the tender. The Manufacturer should authorize only one dealer/distributor for participating in the tender. The tender documents can be obtained from the office of the Comptroller, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore – 641003 on payment of cost of Rs.1770/- (Rs.1500/- + GST @18%) through a demand draft drawn in favour of the COMPTROLLER, TAMIL NADU AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY, COIMBATORE payable at State Bank of India, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Branch, Coimbatore-3, subsequent to the date of publication of this notification. The last date for the issue of tender documents is 27.07.2026 upto 11.00 am. The last date for receipt of filled tenders is upto 4.00 pm on 27.07.2026.

The tenders will be opened **at 10.00 am on 28.07.2026.** If the tender opening date happens to be a holiday, the tenders will be opened on the next working day.

DIPR/2256/Tender/2026 **COMPTROLLER**

INBRIEF

3,000 gas cylinders swept away amid floods in Raigad

Continuous rainfall in Raigad, Maharashtra, over the past few days has caused rivers to swell, with floodwaters entering the HPCL LPG bottling plant in Panvel taluka. The strong current swept away both filled and empty LPG cylinders, with around 3,000 reportedly being carried into the Patalganga river. Raigad District Collector Kishan Jawale urged people not to retrieve or handle any LPG cylinders found in the river or along its banks. He said the amount of gas remaining in the cylinders and their internal condition were unknown, making them potentially hazardous.

NDRF recovers body from collapse site near Pune

An NDRF team on Thursday recovered a body from the debris of a building that collapsed at a waste management plant in Pimpri Chinchwad near Pune, officials said. Nine persons have been rescued so far in a multi-agency operation at the site, they said. A three-storey building located over a waste-to-energy plant at Moshi in the area collapsed after a huge mound of garbage crashed onto it on Wednesday afternoon, trapping around 18 individuals under the rubble. "We suspect that 7 to 8 people are still trapped under the debris," a senior NDRF official said. PTI

IPS trainee moves SC on postpartum hiatus rule

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court of India is scheduled to hear on July 10 the appeal of a woman Indian Police Service (IPS) probationer who has questioned a 36-year-old policy of the Home Ministry which requires new mothers like her to take a year's postpartum break from training.

On July 8, a Bench headed by Justice Manoj Misra had sought the government's response to a petition filed by Urvashi Sengar. The court's order, published on July 9, highlighted Ms. Sengar's query on whether the policy aims to disentitle new parents like her rather than protecting them.

Ms. Sengar, who gave birth on September 29 last year, submitted that she had volunteered for the requisite training, which was to commence on June 22 this year. However, the department concerned had refused her permission, citing the Ministry's Office Memorandum of August 23, 1993, which provided for "a year's hiatus in training post delivery".

CISF seizes over 428 tonnes of illegal coal in Jharkhand, Bengal

In intensified crackdown, authorities take control of vehicles, equipment being used for illegal mining; 4 FIRs registered, legal action to be initiated

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Intensifying its operations against illegal coal mining, the Central Industrial Security Force has in the past four days recovered over 428 metric tonne of coal being transported illegally in Jharkhand and West Bengal, a CISF official said on Thursday.

In line with the government's "zero coal leakage" initiative, the CISF has stepped up enforcement against illegal coal mining, theft, unauthorised storage and transportation under the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act), the official added.

District authorities, the police and Coal India subsidiaries will coordinate to safeguard mineral resources. REUTERS

Boosting transparency

The CISF has launched intelligence-driven operations in coordination with Coal India subsidiaries, local police and district administration to safeguard national mineral resources and strengthen transparency in the coal sector.

"Between July 4 and 8, 2026, CISF conducted coordinated operations across the coalfields of Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL), Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL) and Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) in Jharkhand and West Bengal. The operations resulted in the recovery of 428.34 metric tonne of illegally mined, stored or transported coal, registration of four First Information Reports (FIR), seizure of one Hyva truck and more than 13 motorcycles and other equipment used in illegal mining and transportation, besides apprehension of offenders and initiation of legal proceedings under the MMDR Act," the official added.

The enforcement drive covered several vulnerable mining belts and coal transportation corridors in both States.

No tax exemption for same-sex couple, says IT Department

Chinmay Gaikwad
MUMBAI

The department says petitioners are trying to use the Income Tax Act to alter the meaning of 'spouse'

The Income Tax Department has filed an affidavit before the Bombay High Court opposing a plea by a same-sex couple challenging Section 56(2)(x) of the Income Tax Act, which grants exemption from tax on gifts between spouses, and seeking to extend the benefit to their relationship.

The affidavit, dated October 14, 2025, was filed before a Division Bench of Justices Burgess Colabawalla and Firdosh Pooniwalla by Sandeep Dahiya, Principal Commissioner of Income Tax (Judicial). The department has urged the Bench to dismiss the petition as "misconceived". According to the department, the petitioners are attempting to use the Income Tax Act to alter the meaning of "spouse" under the Act, a term that is not recognised for same-sex relationships under any marriage law in India.

The department stated that the petitioners have not cited any law recognising their relationship as a marriage or recognising them as spouses and are instead asking the Income Tax Act to provide a definition of marriage or spouse that is contrary to the definitions under various marriage laws.

The department has contended that the writ petition constitutes an abuse of the legal process, as the relief sought does not pertain to the provisions of the Income Tax Act. The affidavit further stated that since marriage or spousal relationships between same-sex couples are not recognised under any marriage law in India, the exemption under Section 56 (2)(x) cannot be extended to them. The department has maintained that the Income Tax Act cannot define the term contrary to those laws.

The court is yet to pronounce its order on the matter.

Mahadev betting case kingpin traced to Oman, says ED

Shubhomoy Sikdar
RAIPUR

Amid reports that Saurabh Chandrakar - the kingpin in the alleged Mahadev online book betting app scam pegged at ₹6,000 crore – has been traced to Oman, investigating agencies have written to the authorities concerned for his extradition, Directorate of Enforcement (ED) counsel Saurabh Kumar Pande told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

Mr. Chandrakar, who hails from Bhilai, Chhattisgarh, had launched the betting platform in 2018 along with his aide Ravi Uppal, both of whom are absconding. Indian authorities had tried to get Mr. Chandrakar extradited in 2024 as well, when he was said to be in Dubai.

"It was in mid-June that we learnt Chandrakar had escaped to Oman from Dubai and we approached a court to get a warrant issued. Once the warrant was issued, we submitted all the extradition papers to the Indian Consul General to submit them to the Oman Embassy for further action," said Mr. Pande.

The Enforcement Directorate said that Saurabh Chandrakar had fled Dubai.

In a related development, the Central Bureau of Investigation that is probing the Mahadev app-related corruption case, said on Thursday that it has filed a chargesheet against six accused and also filed additional evidence against "the main kingpins Saurabh Chandrakar and Ravi Uppal and others ".

Navy orders probe into crash of unmanned aerial vehicle near Porbandar

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

A Board of Inquiry (BoI) has been ordered after an Indian Navy Drishti-10 Starliner unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) crashed near Dharampur village in Gujarat's Porbandar district during a routine training sortie on Wednesday.

In a statement posted on X, the Navy said the UAV crashed during a training flight near the Porbandar airfield and there were no reports of injuries or casualties on the ground.

Security agencies recovered the wreckage from the crash site and have begun a technical examination.

Defence sources indicated that the UAV may have suffered a technical malfunction, though the exact cause will be established only after the inquiry.

The Navy's unmanned aerial vehicle Drishti-10 after crashing into an open field near Porbandar, Gujarat, on Wednesday. PTI

The Drishti-10 is the Indianised version of Israel's battle-proven Hermes-900 Medium Altitude Long Endurance UAV. It is licence-manufactured by Adani Defence and Aerospace at its Hyderabad facility in partnership with Israel's Elbit Systems.

Second mishap

The mishap is the second involving the Hermes-900-based platform acquired under the emergency procurement route.

In January last year, a Drishti-10 being flown by the manufacturer during pre-acceptance trials ditched into the Arabian Sea after reportedly losing its communication link before formal induction into naval service. The aircraft was subsequently replaced by the manufacturer.

The Army and the Navy contracted two Drishti-10 drones each under the fourth tranche of emergency procurements in 2023 at a cost of around ₹140 crore per aircraft.

PIL plea in Delhi HC against functioning of Wildlife Board

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The petitioners claim it approved over 97% of proposals between 2014 and 2026

A group of retired forest and wildlife officials and conservationists on Wednesday moved the Delhi High Court with a public interest litigation (PIL) petition challenging the functioning of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) and its Standing Committee, alleging that the two bodies have become a "clearing house" that routinely diverts protected areas to roads, mining, industry and other non-conservation projects.

The 10 petitioners – led by retired Indian Forest Service officer Prakriti Srivastava, and including M.K. Ranjitsinh, the 88-year-old former civil servant widely regarded as the principal drafter of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, are seeking binding guidelines on how the two bodies take decisions.

They claim that the Standing Committee approved more than 97% of proposals for diverting, reducing or de-notifying protected land between 2014 and 2026, often considering over 100 proposals in a single day. The petition says the full NBWL, meant to meet annually, convened in 2025 after a 13-year gap, leaving the Standing Committee as its de facto operational arm.

The NBWL is the apex statutory authority on wildlife under the 1972 Act, chaired by the Prime Minister with the Environment Minister as vice-chairperson.

The government is expected to file its reply in court by August 18, with the next hearing scheduled on September 18.

Activist flags mislabelling of Sikkim's capital on X

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A Sikkim-based social activist has asked the State's Home Department to make X, a micro-blogging site, undo an anomaly that indicates Gangtok is in China.

In a statement on July 8, Muk Hang Limboo pointed out that the capital of Sikkim is displayed as "Gangtok, Xinjiang" instead of "Gangtok, Sikkim, India" on X due to an apparent geolocation anomaly. Xinjiang is an Uyghur-dominated province in China.

The anomaly appears while selecting a location for posts, he said.

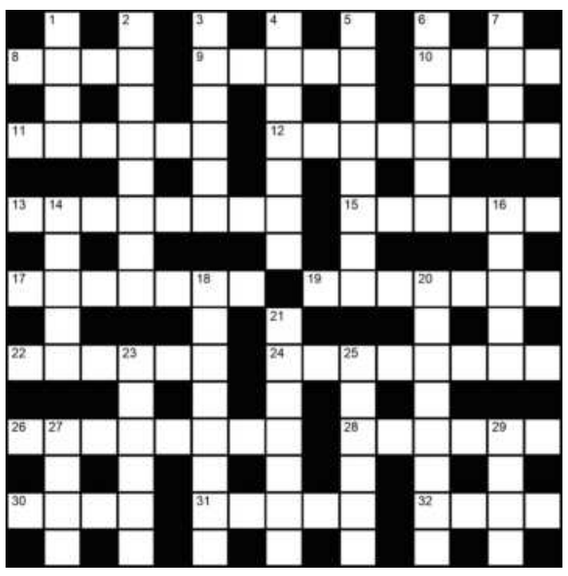
"As the most searched and internationally recognised location in the State, any incorrect digital representation on a globally used platform has the potential to mislead users, and create unnecessary confusion regarding India's territorial integrity," Mr. Limboo said.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD + 14842

(set by Incognito)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 Stake wanted to some extent (4)
9 Odds of 1 is to 1? Not odds... (5)
10 Temperature in the attic (4)
11 Now, after last month, starting to exercise in 10 years (6)
12 Burnt cream thrown by Edward (8)
13 When flying sea egret gets cheap passage (8)
15 Small rest for golfers at New Scotland Yard for starters (6)
17 Look, covering a short length... An antelope! (7)
19 Sumatra tour results in sufferings (7)
22 Questioning, like royalty (6)
24 One moving in tummy gets protection (8)
26 Drug made from carotin processed with carbon (8)
28 Male with pointer gets food item that may be vegetarian or non-vegetarian (6)
30 Fish only (4)
31 Capital city is average in the beginning (5)
32 Bird seen in fernery (4)

Down

1 Keen to fracture joint (4)
2 Idiotic pal seen with East Asian people (8)
3 Virginia follows dancer Kelly in city (6)
4 Drink with actor's trainer (7)
5 Person who agrees, as despatched by queen (8)
6 Silver contained in home construction results in conductor's resistance (6)
7 Animal from Vishakapatnam area (4)
14 Devices to catch animals and rats running around top of pit (5)
16 Clever sting (5)
18 Graphic symbol from herpetology transliterated in her absence (8)
20 Frightened alien leaves Inland Revenue confused (8)
21 Sid rejected means of payment for shed (7)
23 "It's with Chinese editor" needed to be scratched (6)
25 Cocktail samosa Sam left after meeting Indian man at first (6)
27 Outer covering removed from samosa for prophet (4)
29 Has title to a portion of town square (4)

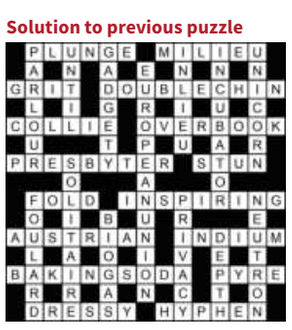
SUDOKU

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

No.SS6937 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Saranaagathi, easiest way

Bhakti Yoga is referred to as Ashtanga Yoga (eight parts), whereas *prapatti* (complete surrender) is known as Shadanga Yoga (six parts), described as *Saranaagathi*. This practice comprises six parts. Sri Srinivasa Desika Tathachariar in a discourse said Swami Vedanta Desika elaborates on the greatness of *Saranaagathi* and its inner divisions in the 26 and 27 verses of the Saranaagathi Deepika, explaining that *Saranaagathi* is the complete offering or surrender of oneself to the Supreme Lord.

Anyone, regardless of their capacity to follow other paths, is eligible to perform *Saranaagathi* to achieve desired results. He emphasises that this path is open to all, including animals, birds and humans, as demonstrated by the Lord granting salvation to figures such as Jatayu (bird), cows (animal), cowherds, Nambaduvan, Brahmarakshasa and dadhibandan (curd pot), among others. Unlike Bhakthi Yoga, which is complicated and demands strict adherence to other methods, *Saranaagathi* is described as an easily practised, glorious method that requires no such prerequisites, other than deep and unshaken faith (*Mahaa Viswaasam*). The six parts of this practice are explained as: *Aanukoolya Sankalpam* (the resolve to be favourable to the Lord); *Praathikoolya Varjanam* (the avoidance of actions displeasing to the Lord); *Rakshishyathi iti visvaasaha:* (absolute faith that the Lord will protect); *Gopthruthva Varanam* (appealing to the Lord as the sole protector); *Kaarpanyam* (the humility of admitting one's utter helplessness); and finally, the sixth, which is offering one's soul, the responsibility of its protection, and the resulting fruits to the divine feet of the Lord.

INBRIEF

Govt. waives levy on key inputs for electronics manufacturing

The Centre has waived basic customs duty on goods used in manufacture of display assemblies, lithium ion cell and inductor coil module as it looks to promote domestic production of electronic devices like smartphones, laptops, wearables and smart TVs. The finance ministry issued three separate notifications giving effect to the basic customs duty (BCD) waiver on the goods used in manufacture of the three key components used in electronic devices. PTI

Adani to file sworn affidavit in U.S. court this week

Gautam Adani will file this week a sworn affidavit in a U.S. federal court stating whether he is aware of any promise, agreement or benefit linked to the U.S. government's decision to dismiss a criminal indictment against him. District Judge Nicholas Garaufis directed Mr. Adani to file the affidavit by July 15 before ruling on the Justice Department's motion to dismiss the indictment with prejudice. The Adani group did not offer any comment on the issue. PTI

Google appeals Indian ruling over its ads platform

Google has challenged an Indian court ruling that it infringed on a company's trademark rights by allowing rivals to use its name as an advertising keyword, arguing the decision will hurt consumers, documents reviewed by Reuters show. The May decision could reshape the online ads market in a country where Google last year earned $4.1 billion in gross advertising revenue but where it is also facing a raft of antitrust cases and court battles. Google India's appeal will be heard in the coming days. REUTERS

AI poses a relatively lower risk to India's GCC jobs: CEA

Nageswaran says most of India's Global Capability Centres are engaged in cutting-edge work rather than providing low-cost support, which is what AI can easily and cheaply replace

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

India's Global Capability Centres (GCCs) are not just low-cost support in a new form, but are areas where cutting edge work is taking place, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran said on Thursday. As such, these GCC jobs are also at a relatively lower risk of being replaced by Artificial Intelligence (AI), he added.

However, the CEA did warn against the dangers of complacency, saying that other countries are already copying India's model.

"It is cutting edge and increasingly so," Mr. Nageswaran said while speaking at a session during the Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) GCC Business Summit. "Global banks run their risk systems and trading platforms in Mumbai and Bangalore and elsewhere as well, car makers design their vehicles' embedded systems from Chennai and Pune, semiconductor firms carry out chip design, pharmaceutical companies run clinical analytics here, and consumer firms build and own entire digital products here in India," he added.

Mr. Nageswaran said that the intellectual property created in these centers is real, with the patents being filed here, the products shipped from India and global roles increasingly held by people sitting in India.

CEA V. Anantha Nageswaran speaks at the inaugural session of the CII GCC Business Summit 2026 on Thursday. BY ARRANGEMENT

The CEA also sought to answer whether these GCCs would be under threat from the rise of AI and would these GCC jobs be automated soon.

"Part of the model is indeed exposed," Mr. Nageswaran conceded. "The work that was routine, repetitive and rule bound is exactly the work that AI does most easily and most cheaply as well. If a centre's value rests only on doing simple tasks at low cost, then the value is under real threat. We should not pretend otherwise."

However, he also said that this is not where most Indian centres are today, and that this was not the direction in which they are headed.

"Artificial intelligence does not build, deploy or govern itself," Mr. Nageswaran explained. "Someone has to design these systems, train them, test them, correct them and hold them to account. Someone has to decide where they should be used and where they must not be used."

"Someone has to carry the responsibility when they fail," he added. "And that work is expanding and not shrinking. And a large and growing share of this kind of work is being done in India."

Complacency matters

The CEA, however, cautioned against complacency, saying that standing still meant allowing others to catch up. "Other countries are watching us and copying us," he asserted. "Our costs are rising. In some skills, our talent is already scarce, so indispensability is not a title that India can hold on to forever."

He added that the move from cost centres to capability centres, and from execution to innovation has to be made by firms and by people, with the government acting as a support.

"Skilling is the clearest case," Mr. Nageswaran said. "We produce a very large number of graduates each year. We do not yet produce enough of those who are ready on day one. By some estimates, fewer than half of them are ready for the job on the day they arrive."

"Closing that gap means universities, industry and the government working together, not one after the other, but at the same time," he said.

He further said that the position India currently holds in the global capability centre market was one that it has to keep earning, over and over.

"The moment we believe we have arrived is the moment others begin to catch up," he said. "So let us not celebrate too early. Let us treat this success not as a finishing line, but as a foundation or a milestone."

'India aims to be strategic leader in hosting GCCs'

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said India aspires to become a "strategic leader" in hosting global capability centres (GCCs) of MNCs and become indispensable to the world's knowledge economy. India possesses "every ingredient" required to lead this transformation, she said. PTI

TCS Q1 net rises 4.6% to ₹14,349 crore, board okays interim dividend of ₹12 per share

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (TCS) reported a 4.6% growth in consolidated net profit for the first quarter ended June 30, 2026 to ₹13,349 crore as compared with ₹12,760 crore in the year-earlier period.

Consolidated revenue grew 14% YoY to ₹72,275 crore. Annualised AI revenue grew 13.6% quarter on quarter to $2.6 billion in Q1 FY27. Operating margin was at 24%, while net margin stood at 19.2%. During the first quarter, the company had a Total Contract Value (TCV) of $9.5 billion.

Workforce strength at the end of the quarter was 5,93,798 as compared with 6,13,069 in the same period last year.

Last Twelve Months (LTM) attrition (IT Services) was 13.6%, the company said in a filing. During the quarter, the company had added 9,279 employees. The board has approved an interim dividend of ₹12 per share. Record date is July 15, 2026 and the payment date is July 31, 2026.

"Q1 FY27 reflects continued growth momentum and the strength of our strategic positioning, despite geopolitical and macro-economic headwinds. We delivered a strong order book of $9.5 billion, including a marquee AI-led transformation deal with SKF, while continuing to add clients across key revenue bands and scaling our AI business to a $2.6 billion annualised revenue run rate," said Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director K. Krithivasan.

Workforce strength at the end of the quarter was 5,93,798

"Q1 was characterised by strong growth across several services. We won multiple AI-led transformation deals with our dual commitment to AI-led optimisation as well as innovation-led outcomes," said Aarthi Subramanian, Executive Director, President and COO.

Samir Seksaria, Chief Financial Officer, said, "In Q1, we rolled out annual wage hikes, strengthened our partnership ecosystem, and targeted investments to enhance long-term competitiveness."

Commenting on the results Shubham Rathore, Principal Analyst, Gartner said, "TCS's resilient first-quarter performance, featuring an 8.5% year-over-year growth in net income to ₹13,849 crore, showcases the firm's capacity to maintain profitability through disciplined execution."

Life insurers new business premium rises over 13% in June

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Life insurance companies in India reported new business premium rose 13% year-on-year in June to ₹46,490.53 crore.

Market leader, State-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) posted muted NBP growth at ₹27,724.62 crore (₹27,395 crore). Private life insurers clocked ₹18,765.90 crore (₹13,722.29 crore). The number of policies/schemes sold by all the life insurers for June stood at 21,51,880 (20,06,322).

For the quarter ended June, life insurers new business rose 16.60% to ₹1,09,071.75 crore. LIC logged new business of ₹65,548.88 crore, a 10.33% rise. Number of policies/schemes sold during Q1 was a tad over 2% more at 31,05,635. The private players, on a 12.68% rise in policies/schemes sold at 20,07,797, reported new business for Q1 climbed 27.51% to ₹43,522.87 crore.

On June numbers, Emkay Research said while the protection segment saw continued growth momentum aided by GST rate exemption, the savings business was hit by geopolitical tensions stemming from the West Asia conflict and the overall macroeconomic situation.

British insurer Aviva to get full ownership of Life JV in India

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Aviva is on course to becoming the first foreign insurer to hold 100% stake in an insurance joint venture in India with the British insurer announcing plans to acquire the remaining 26% stake in Aviva Life Insurance Company India from its joint venture partner.

It has signed an agreement to purchase the 26% in Aviva India from its local joint venture partner Dabur Invest Corp. This will take Aviva's ownership of Aviva India to 100% and will give Aviva full control over the strategic direction of the business, the insurer said on Thursday.

India now allows 100% FDI in insurance.

The decision comes in the backdrop of India notifying the government's decision to permit 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in insurance from the earlier limit of 74%.

Dr. Reddy's halts semaglutide supply on quality, shares slide, Torrent recalls product

N. Ravi Kumar
HYDERABAD

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories said it halted commercial supplies of generic semaglutide after an issue with the active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) used in the drug and fresh despatches were likely only towards late October or early November.

"Certain batches of semaglutide were found to be out of specification due to an issue associated with the API. Until the issue is resolved, commercial supplies of the product will be delayed for a certain period of time," DRL said.

There is no impact on patient safety or on the product's global regulatory filings, the company said.

Shares plunge

The decision saw the firm's shares plunge almost 6% on the BSE. Meanwhile Torrent Pharmaceuticals announced a voluntary recall of select batches of Semalix injection disposable pens made by Dr. Reddy's on instructions from the latter. Semaglutide is the active ingredient in Novo Nordisk's blockbuster diabetes and weight loss drugs Wegovy and Ozempic. Dr. Reddy's was among the clutch of drugmakers in India who rolled out generic versions almost immediately after the patent on Semaglutide expired in March.

On an analysts call, CEO Erez Israeli said the decision follows an unknown impurity noticed during a scale up of the production. A thorough probe to determine the root cause would be undertaken and necessary process improvement made. Only after a complete validation of the revised manufacturing process, commercial supplies will be resumed.

SBI AMC is as competitive as any private firm: Singh

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Asset manager SBI Funds Management wants to differentiate itself from other PSUs as it was as aggressive and competitive as private sector firms, said joint CEO D.P. Singh.

He was briefing the media on the ₹11,675 crore initial public offering (IPO) which is fully offer for sale. The price band is fixed at ₹545 to ₹547/share.

Promoters SBI and Amundi India Holding will sell 10% stake. The quarterly average mutual fund assets under management is about ₹ 1,251 lakh crore.

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS - TIRUPATI
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER — **TENDER NOTICE**
ADV No.17/D3/CE/TTD/2026-27 & NIT No.27/SE-III/TTD/ 2026 -27 Dt:07-07-2026
Name of work:1) Construction of S.V. Temple and Prakaram with 3 storied Rajagopuram at S.V Divyakshetram at Parvathipuram, Parvathipuram Manyam District, Andhra Pradesh. **Amount:640.00 Lakhs; Time for Completion:18months.**
NOTE: For full details, log on to the Website **https://www.tirumala.org.**
TTD-40021(31)/1/2026-PRO SEC(Adv.No.107) Date:09-07-2026 — **EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY
RE - E-TENDER NOTICE
Re-Tender No. 04/2026-27/SE/PPD/KCH
AMRUT-2.0-Kochi Corporation-Providing underground sewerage networks and allied works in the erstwhile Division 54 of Kochi Corporation for the newly proposed 5MLD STP at Elamkulam
Cost of Tender form : Rs. 21,052/- (inclusive of GST)
EMD : Rs. 500,000/-
Date and time of Opening Tender : 04/08/2026 3.30 pm
Last date of receipt of tender : 03/08/2026 3.00 pm
Phone : 8547638502 E-mail- seppdregionkochi@gmail.com

KMML Spreading Splendour
The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd
(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking),Sankaramangalam,Kollam 691583
Phone : 0476-2651215 to 217, E-Mail :md@kmml.com
TENDER NOTICE
For more details please visit E-Tendering Portal, https://etenders.kerala.gov.in or www.kmml.com

Sl No	Tender Id	Items
1	2026_KMML_859547_1	Fabrication & supply of Condensing Column cooler
2	2026_KMML_859525_1	Supply, Erection and Commissioning of Vertical Steam Turbine
3	2026_KMML_859767_1	Supply of Computer server
4	2026_KMML_859705_1	Global Tender for the Supply of High Purity Magnesium Metal

Chavara 09.07.2026 — Sd/- Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd

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NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Tender No.	Description	Due Date
262713 002358	Procurement of Segmented Bow Spreader Roll Assembly for Winder # 3 at TNPL Unit-I.	24.07.2026
262723 001443	Procurement of CATIONIC ROSIN for Board Machine (CCK) of TNPL Unit-II.	24.07.2026

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website and NIC Portal only.
Detailed Terms & Conditions are available in tender document at our websites:
www.tnpl.com / www.tenders.tn.gov.in, www.tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app
DIPR/ 2246 /TENDER/2026

भारतीय वानिकी अनुसंधान एवं शिक्षा परिषद
INDIAN COUNCIL OF FORESTRY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION
(पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार का एक स्वायत्त निकाय)
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P.O. New Forest, Dehra Dun – 248006 (Uttarakhand)
विज्ञप्ति संख्या 03/निदेशक, व0व0अनु0सं0, जोरहाट, असम/2026–भा0वा0अ0शि0प0
Advt. No. 03/Director, RFRI, Jorhat, Assam/2026-ICFRE
भारतीय वानिकी अनुसंधान एंव शिक्षा परिषद देहरादून के अन्तर्गत 7वें वेतन आयोग के वेतन स्तर 15 के वेतनमान में निदेशक, वर्षा वन अनुसंधान संस्थान, जोरहाट, असम का पद प्रतिनियुक्ति के आधार पर भरने हेतु आवेदन आमंत्रित किए जाते हैं।
Applications are invited for filling up the post of Director, Rain Forest Research Institute, Jorhat, Assam in the pay scale at Level-15 of 7th CPC Pay Matrix on deputation basis at Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Dehradun
उपरोक्त पद हेतु इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी भा0वा0अ0शि0प0 की वेबसाइट **http://www.icfre.org** में दिये गये विस्तृत विज्ञापन के अनुसार आवेदन कर सकते है। आवेदन प्राप्त करने की अन्तिम तिथि 24.08.2026 है।
The interested candidates may apply for the above said post as per detailed advertisement available at ICFRE website **http://www.icfre.org.** The last date of receipt of applications is 24.08.2026
सचिव, भा0वा0अ0शि0प0
Secretary, ICFRE

Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Ltd.
Gandhi Block, Swasthya Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur-302005 (Raj.)
Phone No: 0141-2228066, 2228064, Website: http://rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in
E-mail :edpssrmsc@rajasthan.gov.in
Ref. No. :- F.02 (445)/RMSCL/PROCUREMENT/DRUG/NIB-07/2026-27/4606 Dated :- 06/07/2026
Corrigendum - II in NIB - 07/2026-27
In Reference to NIB No. F.02 (445)/RMSCL/PROCUREMENT/DRUG/NIB-07/2026-27/4384 Dated :- 02.06.2026 UBN No. MSC2627GLRC00025 Corrigendum-II is issued for date extension in bid. All details may be seen on **https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in & https://www.rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in.**
Raj.Samwad/C/26/6457 — Director (Proc.) RMSCL

VISAKHAPATNAM PORT AUTHORITY
VISAKHAPATNAM
E-Tender Call Notice: 2026_VPT_281806_1, Dt. 23.06.2026.
On behalf of the Members of Board of VPA, E-Tender is invited in Single Stage two steps system from the experienced bidders meeting the pre-qualifying criteria for the work mentioned below through online bidding on the Website http://www.etenders.gov.in
SUB: UP GRADATION OF THE EXISTING 80 BEDDED GOLDEN JUBILEE HOSPITAL TO A 300 BEDDED MULTI-DISCIPLINARY SUPER SPECIALITY HOSPITAL AT VISAKHAPATNAM PORT ON DESIGN, BUILT, FINANCE, OPERATE AND TRANSFER (DBFOT) BASIS" – **Due Date of Opening :06.08.2026**
SECRETARY

RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD.
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Online tenders are invited for "Supply of spares for BOMAFA Make LPBP Stop and Control Valves". Tender details are available on websites **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** (for e-tender), **www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvunl & www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in.**
Raj.Samwad/C/26/6570 RVUN/PR-4424 Addl. Chief Engineer (O&M)

Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Ltd.
Gandhi Block, Swasthya Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur-302005 (Raj.)
Phone No: 0141-2228066, 2228064, Website: http://rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in
E-mail :edpssrmsc@rajasthan.gov.in
Ref. No. :- F.02 (441)/RMSCL/PROCUREMENT/DRUG/NIB-03/2026-27/23098829 Dated :- 30/06/2026
Corrigendum - I in NIB - 03/2026-27
In Reference to NIB No. F.02 (441)/RMSCL/PROCUREMENT/DRUG/NIB-03/2026-27/4494 Dated :- 24.06.2026 UBN No. MSC2627GLRC00028 Corrigendum-I is issued for date extension in bid. All details may be seen on **https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in & https://www.rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in.**
Raj.Samwad/C/26/6458 — Director (Proc.) RMSCL

JAIPUR VIDYUT VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED
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Office of the Superintending Engineer (PM Surya Ghar)
Old Power House Premises, Near Ram Mandir, Bani Park, Jaipur
Email: -sepmsuryaghar@jvvnl.org /sepmsgmby@gmail.com
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-bids in two parts (Techno-commercial bid and Price bid) are invited from eligible bidders for the work for Design, Engineering, Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning Of 1,00,000 Nos. Of Consumers Through Net Metering And O&M For 5 Years With Additional 5 Years By Competitive Bidding For Grid Connected Rooftop Solar Plants Through Utility Led Aggregation (Capex) Mode In Jaipur Discom Under Pm- Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana.Participating bidders can download complete set of bidding documents from e-procurement portal **http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** from 08.07.2026 onwards. Last Date/Time for receipt of online bids through e-procurement portal is 29.07.2026 upto 05.00 P.M.For further details regarding Works, Tender Notifications & Specifications please visit website **http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, http://www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in & www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/jvvnl. UBN:VVN2627WLOB00213**
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For Electricity Complaints Toll Free No. 1800 180 6507

WASHINGTON

Trump says 11 jets downed during India-Pakistan hostilities last year

U.S. President Donald Trump has repeated his claim of settling the conflict between India and Pakistan, adding that 11 jets were shot down during the four-day hostilities in May last year. India has consistently denied any third-party intervention. India launched Operation Sindoor in response to the Pahalgam terror attack. PTI

DHAKA

Landslide kills 7 children, teacher at Rohingya camp in Bangladesh

AFP

At least seven children and a teacher were killed in a landslide caused by monsoon rains at a Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh's southeastern Cox's Bazar. Four of the children were killed at the scene of the landslide, while others died at the local hospital after they were rescued, officials said. PTI

LONDON

Total Eclipse singer Bonnie Tyler, queen of the 80s power ballad, dies

REUTERS

Welsh singer Bonnie Tyler, best known for her powerful, haunting love song *Total Eclipse of the Heart*, has died aged 75 in hospital in Portugal, her family announced on Thursday. With her distinctive husky voice, tousled mane of blonde hair and black eyeliner, Tyler was instantly recognisable as the queen of 1980s power ballad. AFP

SAN FRANCISCO

OpenAI launches ChatGPT Work, delving into workplace automation

REUTERS

OpenAI on Thursday unveiled ChatGPT Work, an agent in its popular chatbot designed to execute tasks across different applications and files, marking the startup's latest push into workplace automation. The launch reflects intensifying competition to build and sell AI tools for professional use. REUTERS

U.S., Iran exchange more attacks across West Asia, threatening deal

Iran reports U.S. strikes around the perimeter of Bushehr nuclear plant as U.S. officials say they hit about 90 Iranian military targets; new fighting erupted hours before the burial of Khamenei; Tehran officials report that U.S. attacks killed 17 people

Agence France-Presse
MASHHAD

New fighting erupted between the United States and Iran hours ahead of the burial of long-time Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on Thursday, with Tehran targeting U.S. allies in the region and American strikes hitting the perimeter of an Iranian nuclear power plant.

The renewed hostilities, triggered by tensions over the Strait of Hormuz, sparked concerns of a return to full-scale war after an April ceasefire and a June U.S.-Iran accord ended five weeks of conflict.

Mourners carry a banner against Donald Trump as they gather on the day of Khamenei's burial in Mashhad on Thursday. REUTERS

This was the second day in a row that the decades-old foes exchanged attacks, with Iranian officials reporting the U.S. attacks had killed 17 people.

The Islamic republic said it had resumed its attacks targeting U.S. assets in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, while sirens blared in Jordan – another U.S. ally – where the military said it had intercepted eight missiles launched from Iran.

The fighting came with Iran preparing to bury Khamenei, who was killed alongside close family members on the first day of the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran on February 28, in his hometown of Mashhad.

'Effort to overshadow'

The United States targeted the perimeter of Iran's only civilian nuclear plant with a strike on Thursday, Iranian state media reported, citing the deputy governor of Bushehr province.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said the U.S. attacks targeted civilian infrastructure, including railway bridges, and described the strikes as a "gross war crime".

U.S. military officials said Thursday's strikes hit approximately 90 Iranian military targets, including air defence systems, missile and drone storage sites.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards accused the United States of an "effort to overshadow" Khamenei's funeral with its attacks.

In a sign of the security tensions, at least one fighter jet escorted the plane carrying Khamenei's coffin to its final burial in Mashhad.

Ukrainian drones strike Russian oil depots, tankers

Associated Press
KYIV

Ukrainian drones hit more Russian oil facilities and set two oil tankers ablaze in the Sea of Azov on Thursday, a day after U.S. President Donald Trump pledged to grant Kyiv a licence to manufacture the Patriot air defence systems to protect its cities.

A top Ukrainian official, meanwhile, cautioned that it could take a year or more for the country to produce Patriot interceptor missiles.

A Ukrainian drone strike triggered a fire at an oil depot in the western Russian city of Tver, according to acting Governor Vitaly Korolyov.

Oil reservoirs also were set ablaze by drones in Vyazniki, in the southern Stavropol region, said Governor Vladimir Vladimirov, forcing the evacuation of several apartment buildings near the facility.

People queue to refuel their cars at a petrol station in Moscow as Ukrainian strikes on its facilities crimp domestic supply. AFP

In the Sea of Azov, Ukrainian drones set two oil tankers on fire, according to Rostov Governor Yuri Slusar, who said one of the ships was still burning and its crew evacuated.

The attack was the latest in a series of strikes on oil tankers in the area in recent days, part of Ukraine efforts to cut fuel supplies to the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia illegally annexed in 2014.

Russia's Defence Ministry said its defences downed 73 Ukrainian drones during the past day.

Ebola death toll in Congo reaches 600, as new cases surge

Associated Press
KINSHASA

New suspected cases of Ebola have been reported in parts of Congo that were previously unaffected, the government said on Thursday, as the death toll in the country's latest Ebola outbreak reached 600.

According to the Congolese Health Ministry, suspected cases have now been recorded in the provinces of Tshopo and Haut-Uele, signalling the continued spread of the disease beyond the epicentre in Ituri.

A Congolese government report, published late Wednesday, said two new cases were suspected in Kisangani, in Tshopo province. The Minister did not say how many cases were suspected in Haut-Uele. The total number of confirmed cases across the country has now reached 1,759.

According to the report, one of the two suspected cases in Tshopo was linked to the Nia-Nia health zone in Ituri province, where the first cases were reported, while the other case "has no apparent geographical connection to known outbreaks."

Last week, clinical trials for treatment began after researchers launched a highly anticipated study in the hope of fighting the deadly virus.

Civic protest

Protesters chant slogans during a demonstration by the 'March and March' movement, calling upon the government to enforce tougher measures against illegal immigration and to deport undocumented foreign nationals, in Mtwalume, South Africa on Thursday. AFP

Syria welcomes U.S. announcement of removal from blacklist

Agence France-Presse
DAMASCUS

Damascus welcomed a U.S. announcement that it would remove Syria from its list of "state sponsors of terrorism", a move that one economist said opened the door to economic recovery and foreign investment.

"A dark page in Syria's history has been turned," Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani wrote on X.

The United States announced on Wednesday that it would remove Syria from its blacklist of countries it accuses of supporting terrorism, a designation it placed on Syria nearly five decades ago and which had curbed investment in the country.

Asaad al-Shaibani

The Syrian Foreign Ministry called the move "an important development in the course of Syrian-American relations".

The move will be effective in 45 days unless lawmakers take the unlikely step of blocking it.

Shoe factory fire kills at least 28 people in southeast China

Reuters
BEIJING

At least 28 people were killed in a fire at a shoe factory in southeastern China on Thursday, state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported, after flames engulfed the multi-storey building, trapping workers on the rooftop.

The fire broke out at around noon local time in the city of Jinjiang in Fujian province at footwear manufacturer Huiteng.

A total of 239 people were at the factory when the fire broke out, *Xinhua* said. It said 213 were evacuated, two of whom died after being taken to hospital for treatment. Another 26 people previously reported missing at the scene were confirmed dead.

Firefighters at the scene of a footwear factory fire in Jiangtou village in southeastern China's Fujian province on Thursday. AP

Jinjiang, in the coastal Fujian province, is a major footwear and clothing manufacturing hub and is often referred to as China's "shoe capital".

Preliminary findings indicate the fire started on the ground floor of the factory, a local official told *CCTV*. Shoe-making materials stored in the building were highly flammable and could cause a blaze to spread rapidly, the official said.

People in charge of the company and "other relevant personnel" have been taken into custody.

Sri Lankan universities close and shift to online classes as dengue cases top 65,000 in the island

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's University of Colombo has decided to move some lectures online amid the persisting dengue surge on the island, authorities said. The decision comes after the University of Moratuwa and the University of the Visual and Performing Arts temporarily closed their campuses, as the country confronts one of its worst outbreaks of the vector-borne disease.

The National Dengue Control Unit has reported a total of 65,034 dengue cases this year, with capital Colombo accounting for about a fifth of the cases. As many as 45 dengue-related deaths have been recorded as of Wednesday.

Prevention push: A municipal worker fumigates a residential area during a dengue prevention campaign in Colombo. AFP

Since May this year, the University of Colombo has recorded a total of 71 cases, cumulatively, among its students, according to Vice Chancellor Professor Indika Mahesh Karunathilake.

"The Faculty of Arts saw more cases of fever, some of which could even be viral or chikungunya. The students were concerned, so we decided to shift to online lessons. The decision is not entirely to do with the current spread, but it is to allow students to rest and recover. We are giving other faculties the option of hybrid lessons," he told *The Hindu*.

As many as 45 dengue-related deaths have been recorded in country

As the number of dengue cases across the island rose last month, authorities appointed a military-led team to monitor the outbreak, while hospitals reported overcrowding of patients. "The tri-forces and police have helped us intensify inspection, including through drone cameras, clean up campaigns, fogging operations and awareness," a senior official with the Unit told *The Hindu*. "We need to wait for about two weeks, considering the incubation period and life cycle of the vectors for a realistic assessment. While we are doing our best, the situation is still challenging," the official said, comparing the current outbreak to the one seen in 2017, Sri Lanka's largest. That year, a total of 1,86,101 cases were reported.

Public health officials have linked the current outbreak to the debris from Cyclone Ditwah, which hit Sri Lanka in December 2025, claiming over 600 lives and leaving behind a long path of destruction.

BACKING HIS MEN

We are not influenced by anyone, says FIFA refereeing chief Collina

REUTERS

The FIFA chief refereeing officer Pierluigi Collina has strongly dismissed allegations of external influence on officiating. “With a high number of matches played in a short period, it is normal that some things do not go as expected. Unfounded allegations have no place. Nobody can question the integrity of the match officials”.

NEW DAWN

Jorge Jesus to take over as the Portugal coach after its WC exit

REUTERS

Jorge Jesus is set to be appointed Portugal coach after Roberto Martinez stepped down in the wake of its World Cup exit, according to sources. The 71-year-old Portuguese will replace Spaniard Martinez, who left the job after Cristiano Ronaldo’s side slumped to a 0-1 last-16 defeat to Spain.

BANTER

I expect you to go out on a rowing trip: Haaland on Rooney’s promise

REUTERS

Norway striker Erling Haaland playfully reminded Wayne Rooney to honour his promise after the former England captain had joked that he would row down the River Mersey if Norway eliminated Brazil from the World Cup. “Rooney, I expect you to go out on a rowing trip,” Haaland said with a grin on his latest vlog on YouTube.

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Henderson undergoes surgery after suffering freak arm injury

AP

England midfielder Jordan Henderson has undergone surgery on his broken arm after a freak injury he suffered following the team’s World Cup last-16 win over Mexico. Henderson was taken to hospital after having left the field on a stretcher. “Surgery done. Let’s get ready for the big one on Saturday,” he wrote on social media.

No way past: Spain is yet to concede a goal. AFP

Will Belgium find chinks in Spain’s ironclad defence?

Agence France-Presse
LOS ANGELES

Belgium will meet Spain in the World Cup quarterfinals on Friday with the daunting task of breaching the European champion’s watertight defence for the first time at the tournament.

By beating Cristiano Ronaldo’s Portugal 1-0 on Monday, Luis de la Fuente’s side became the first team in history to record six consecutive World Cup clean sheets.

Spain has not shown the attacking flair of France but it is playing the careful, possession-based football that took it to glory in South Africa in 2010. The prodigiously gifted Lamine Yamal is the team’s most potent attacker on paper, but the teenager arrived while still recovering from a late-season injury and has netted just once in five games. But the brutal truth is that Spain does not need to score many goals to win – it has conceded just six shots on target in its five matches so far.

Belgium, captained by the impressive Youri Tielemans, has had a rollercoaster ride in the knockout phase thus far.

The ongoing World Cup is likely the last hurrah for the remainder of the nation’s so-called ‘Golden Generation’, including creative midfielder Kevin De Bruyne, striker Romelu Lukaku and goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

While they have not been at their best, they remain match-winners.

Saturday’s match

QUARTERFINAL

Spain vs. Belgium

00.30 A.M.

THE DAY AND TIME PERTAIN TO INDIA

Football’s old Gods are being claimed by time

Sport, with its occasional cruelty, has a way of reminding us that permanence was never part of the bargain; this World Cup has exposed the mortality of men who once seemed immune to it

FIFA WORLD CUP

Ayon Sengupta
BOSTON

There is a particular kind of grief in sport that has little to do with defeat. It arrives not when a team loses, but when time finally catches up with the players who once seemed beyond its reach.

This World Cup has felt full of those moments. Luka Modric leaving with Croatia gone. Cristiano Ronaldo, who for so long bent matches to his will, walking away from another one. Manuel Neuer, for years football’s last great illusionist in goal, no longer carrying the same aura of permanence.

These were not just elite footballers; they were part of the architecture of the sport.

Every major tournament had them somewhere in the frame. Modric gliding through the midfield with that strange combination of delicacy and defiance, Ronaldo summoning goals and drama with the force of habit, Neuer redrawing what a sweeper-goalkeeper could be.

Their brilliance stretched across so many summers that it began to feel normal. But sport, with its occasional cruelty, has a way of reminding us that permanence was never part of the bargain. This World Cup has exposed the mortality of men who once seemed immune to it.

The legs do not always obey. The recovery takes a little longer. The moments still come, but not always on command. The body, eventually, begins to negotiate with the mind. And so, one by one, the stars who seemed to live outside time have begun to look mere mortals.

Perhaps that is why Lionel Messi’s presence feels so affecting. He is still here, still resisting and still playing as if he has found a private loophole in the laws of ageing.

Around him, Argentina carries the urgency of men who know exactly what this moment means.

It recalls, in its own way, those late-career years of Sachin Tendulkar, when Indian cricket seemed to understand that every innings, every tour, every knock might be one of the last chances to honour a figure who had towered over its imagination for a generation.

Then came Roger Federer, making tennis look too graceful to be real; Rafael Nadal with his fury, faith and wounded endurance; Novak Djokovic, the last great disruptor who has also now reached the stage where each tournament is shadowed by the thought of how many more are left.

And now football’s old Gods, too, are being claimed by time.

Fading away: Veterans Modric, Ronaldo and Neuer did not have the happy ending they would have hoped for at the start of the tournament. AFP & GETTY IMAGES

Costly miss: Brazil paid dearly for Guimaraes’ stop-start spot-kick that was saved by Norway’s Nyland. AP

Stutter-step penalty style can make the best look cool or silly

Associated Press
NEW YORK

It is theatrical. It can be maddening. It makes the world’s top players look cool – or silly.

The stutter-step penalty has been a feature of this World Cup, with the leading adopters of the technique being superstars Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappe, Cristiano Ronaldo, Harry Kane and Neymar.

It has had varying levels of success. It has sent France through to the quarterfinals and contributed to Brazil’s exit. Messi did not even hit the target when he tried one.

The stutter-step penalty – where a player feints, sometimes repeatedly and almost to the point of stopping, keeping his eyes on the goalkeeper during the run-up to the ball – is believed to have been spawned in Brazil in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Nicknamed the ‘paradinha’, it was made famous by Pele. The main idea is to befuddle goalkeepers so that they commit early and offer an easy path for a shot into the net. Experts say that the technique is “sophisticated” but risky.

“It is hard to perform when the pressure is truly on,” feels Geir Jordet, professor at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences.

There will always be traditionalists in the head-down-and-hit-it-hard camp. There was also a hop-skip routine, used notably by Bruno Fernandes and Jorginho. Nowadays, most penalty-takers have the stutter-step technique in their armoury, even if they don’t use it.

But goalkeepers are getting wiser with time, not committing early and becoming “creative, deliberate and volatile”.

Muchova, Noskova set up all-Czechia finale

N. Sudarshan
LONDON

If you are an on-court artist in tennis, Wimbledon is your greatest canvas.

On Thursday, Karolina Muchova painted her best portrait yet by beating seventh seed Coco Gauff 6-2, 1-6, 7-6 [12-10] and entering her maiden singles final at the All England Club.

A first appearance in the summit clash is coming rather late for the 29-year-old from Czechia. A French Open finalist in 2023, a two-time US Open (2023 and 2024) and a one-time Australian Open (2021) semifinalist, Wimbledon was an anomaly.

In fact, she had exited in the first round in each of the last four editions. But that dismal record now stands emphatically corrected, as the tenth seed battled past a spirited Gauff, even saving a match-point in the nerve-wracking deciding set tie-break.

On Saturday, Muchova will take on compatriot Linda Noskova, who overcame Ukraine’s Marta Kostyuk 6-4, 6-4. It will be a first women’s singles final at SW19 between compatriots since Serena Williams met sister Venus in 2009.

Dream run: Muchova prevailed in a high-quality contest to reach her maiden Wimbledon final. AFP

Muchova played a relatively clean first set, with her stylish and soothing tennis the ideal balm to many a burning eye in the furnace-like Centre Court.

For the second stanza, Gauff brought her own exotic brush and started painting a picture which was aesthetically a notch lower but first-rate nonetheless.

Third set was where their top levels matched. The quality amplified, like it happens with two pairing frequencies at resonance. At 4-4, Muchova erased two break-point opportunities. At 5-5, she went 0-30 down, but wriggled out by executing an advancing forehand, an inside-out winner and another unreturnable from the backhand wing.

Gauff was largely clinical on her serve and exhibited incisive fore-court play as the contest slipped into an inevitable super tie-break.

Once there, Muchova went 6-3 up by combining a dipping pass, low volley, service-winner down the ‘T’, Boris Becker-style diving drop-volley and an ace.

Gauff clawed her way back to 6-6, with her response highlighted by two excellent forehand winners.

At 8-8, Muchova was put off by a time-violation warning for a late serve and ended up committing an unforced error.

On the ensuing match-point, Gauff drilled a powerful serve that Muchova could only block, but instead of slapping the ball away, the American attempted an indecisive drop and dumped it into the net.

A beautiful lob earned Muchova her first match-point but Gauff snatched it away with a looping cross-court pass. The Czech, who seemed slightly bothered by hip issue, regained her focus and unleashed a superb forehand winner. A contest-ending two-fisted backhand soon followed.

In boys’ singles, India’s Arnav Vijay Paparkar lost to United States’ Jordan Lee 2-6, 5-7 in the quarterfinals. But the 18-year-old, for whom this is the first year at Slams and also the last year in juniors, was overall satisfied.

“I am happy with the experience,” he told *The Hindu*. “I lost in the first round in Australia, then made the third round at French [Open] and now the quarters here.

“I will soon be full time on the professional circuit and I hope to get into the top-1000 in six months,” added the Pune lad, who is currently ranked No. 1645.

Other result:
Girls’ doubles (quarterfinal): Victoria Barros & Nauhany Leme Da Silva (Bra) bt Maaya Rajeshwaran & Thea Frodin (USA) 3-6, 6-4, [10-6].

Brook and Salt on song as England seals series win

Press Trust of India
BRISTOL

India’s winless run was extended to six matches on Thursday after England skipper Harry Brook and Phil Salt powered the host to a nine-wicket win in the fourth T20I here. The victory, which was achieved with 37 balls to spare, helped England take an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series.

Chasing a modest 159, England suffered an early jolt when left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh dismissed Jos Buttler in the third over. But, Brook (79 n.o., 35b, 8x4, 4x6) and Salt (59 n.o., 42b, 9x4, 1x6) sent the Indian bowlers on a leather hunt during their unbroken second-wicket partnership of 146 off 70 balls.

Earlier, Shreyas appeared to be batting on a different surface as he came up with a superb knock (80 not out, 49b, 4x4, 5x6) to steer his side to 158 for seven.

Shreyas, who struck five sixes and four boundaries, held the innings together even as wickets tumbled around him. The other Indian batters paid the price for being too aggressive on a bouncy wicket.

The captain added 53 with Shivam Dube (22), but with wickets falling regularly, Shreyas was forced to assume the role of sheet-anchor. He cut loose in the 18th over, smashing leg-spinner Adil Rashid for two sixes and a four as 20 came off it. That over, however, proved to be an exception as the England bowlers executed their plans superbly.

Sam Curran conceded just four in the penultimate over while Jofra Archer (two for 20) finished the innings with a tight final over in which two wickets fell, including the run out of Axar Patel.

The extra bounce again took a toll on the Indian top-order as Archer removed Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (15) for the second time in as many innings before new-ball partner Josh Tongue (two for 36) dismissed Ishan Kishan (4) within the PowerPlay.

All guns blazing: Salt and Brook sent the Indian bowlers on a leather hunt during their match-winning partnership. REUTERS

The scores: India 158/7 in 20 overs (Shreyas 80 n.o., Archer 2/20, Tongue 2/36) lost to England 159/1 in 13.5 overs (Salt 59 n.o., Brook 79 n.o.). **Toss:** India.

INBRIEF

Pogacar reclaims yellow jersey with stage six win

Reigning champion Tadej Pogacar stamped his authority on the Tour de France on Thursday, winning the mountainous sixth stage and reclaiming the race leader's yellow jersey. Pogacar now leads by more than two-and-a-half minutes from his main rival Jonas Vingegaard, who finished second on the 186km Pyrenean stage from Pau to Gavarnie-Gedre to move up to second overall.

Mexico appoints Marquez as new coach after WC exit

Former Mexico and Barcelona defender Rafael Marquez was named the country's new head coach on Wednesday after Javier Aguirre stepped down following the co-host's elimination from the World Cup. Marquez, who made 147 appearances for his country, will have the task of ensuring the "continuity of the project" started by 67-year-old Aguirre, the Mexican football federation said. The 47-year-old gained coaching experience by taking charge of Barcelona's reserve team.

LIVE TELECAST

England Women vs India Women: One-off Test, Day One, Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 3.30 p.m.

Wimbledon: Star Sports 1, 2, SS Select 1, 2 & JioHotstar, 5.30 p.m.

FIFA World Cup: Unite8 Sports 1, 2 & Z5 App, 12.30 a.m. (Saturday).

Battle-hardened Djokovic and Sinner all set for an intriguing showdown

A lot could depend on how well the Serb recovers after a marathon effort in the previous round; Zverev and Fery are in uncharted territory

WIMBLEDON

N. Sudarshan
LONDON

If a tournament's final four has the top two seeds, its greatest active champion and a local hero, it's like drawing a royal flush in poker. With the best cards in hand, the event is always going to be a winner.

Wimbledon 2026 will have a chance to experience this on Friday. Jannik Sinner, the top seed and defending champion, will take on Novak Djokovic, a 24-time Major winner and seven-time titlist at SW19. In the other encounter, second seed and reigning Roland-Garros trophy-holder Alexander Zverev will meet British wildcard Arthur Fery.

Match-ups: Sinner has a marginally better head-to-head record against Djokovic while Zverev and surprise semifinalist Fery will meet for the first time as the two strive to move a step closer to a maiden success at The Championships. AP & REUTERS

The contrast

There is both familiarity and novelty. Sinner and Djokovic have sparred 11 times overall, with the Italian ahead 6-5. Zverev and Fery are first-time Wimbledon semifinalists and have no history of facing each other.

The Sinner-Djokovic fixture will be more intriguing, primarily because the gap between them appears to have shrunk a little. Sinner, who thrashed Djokovic 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 here in 2025, is not the player who went on an awe-inspiring 29-match winning run earlier this year.

At the French Open, he was troubled by the heat and lost early; over the past 10 days here, he has not been at his clinical best.

Djokovic beat Sinner over five pulsating sets in the Australian Open semifinal in January, snapping a run of five defeats to the Italian. But much will depend on the 39-year-old's recovery after the five-hour, 15-minute marathon versus Felix Auger-Aliassime. Two days' rest would have helped, and so will the additional time on Friday, for Djokovic's will be the second match.

Back in Australia, the Serb was aided by Jakub Mensik's withdrawal (fourth round) and Lorenzo Musetti's mid-match retirement (quarters). Sinner, however, remains wary. "Even when I had the [winning] streak, every match with Novak had its own story," Sinner said.

"Especially on grass, if you have a bad serving day or if you are not feeling the ball well, it's going to be tough. He has won this tournament so many times and he knows exactly how to approach it."

Zverev and Fery will be short on that foreknowledge, but the German, by virtue of being more pedigreed, should fancy himself.

On a high

This will be his 12th Slam semifinal, and after succeeding in Paris, his confidence will be sky-high.

On the other hand, 23-year-old Fery was ranked No. 114 coming into Wimbledon and had only won two Major contests all career. He will be pumped up nonetheless, more so after the straight-sets demolition of Flavio Cobolli and the five-set victory over Grigor Dimitrov. Will there be another chapter in the fairytale?

'Made in Africa' can be the continent's success mantra

FIFA WORLD CUP

S. Shrivathsan

Spain, France and Belgium. To the wider football community, these are the three other active teams in the World Cup bracket that Morocco finds itself in (as on Thursday). But for those associated with the 'beautiful game' in the African nation, these are lands which produced and polished some of the gems who have sparkled at the global spectacle.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the 2022 WC semifinalist has hugely benefited from the strong presence of heritage players - as many as 19 members in the final 26-man squad were born outside the country.

Fascinatingly, there was a period against Brazil when the Atlas Lions fielded an XI with no Morocco-born footballers.

Exception: While Morocco has benefited from the presence of heritage players like Hakimi, other African nations have struggled at the global level despite their recruitment drive. GETTY IMAGES

Morocco is not the only African nation relying on origin players. Algeria, DR Congo, Senegal, Ivory Coast and Cape Verde - some of the other sides from that continent which made it to the knockouts - have had a lot of European flavour. In a few cases, the teams pull out all stops to bring someone 'home'.

For instance, centre-back Pico Lopes, one of Cape Verde's superheroes in its debut WC run, was roped in via a 'recruitment drive' on LinkedIn.

But in the grand scheme of things, the acquisition of heritage players has not led to spectacular success at the global level, with Morocco being an exception.

While the National federations have every right to coax players who satisfy the FIFA eligibility criteria, they must develop their respective football structures to expand the pool of home-grown talent. It should not be forgotten that the majority of the origin footballers learnt the tricks of their trade in European academies.

In areas where people's hearts beat for football, wisely investing more time, effort and money is not a strenuous task.

When a solid groundwork is laid, the African nations can call the shots in the following instances - when heritage players view them as an easier route to international football and when they choose them only after being overlooked by their country of birth.

Morocco is currently the standard-bearer for African football. For others to challenge it, 'Made in Africa' may not be a bad option.

Abhinandh and Szocs fire Dempo Goa to big win over U Mumba

UTT

K. Keerthivasan
PANAJI

Fired by 18-year-old P.B. Abhinandh's blazing start, Dempo Goa Challengers thumped defending champion U Mumba TT 10-5 on the opening day of the Ultimate Table Tennis at the Shyama Prasad Indoor Stadium here on Thursday.

Abhinandh, ranked 210 in the world, produced an outstanding display of aggressive table tennis, combining precision with some quick serves to dismantle Lilian Bardet 11-6, 11-2, 11-3 and hand the host a rousing start.

The teenager, ranked 11 in the junior-19 international circuit, was firing on all cylinders from the outset, attacking at every opportunity– on the receive, off his own serve and during rallies – to keep the World No.42 Frenchman under constant pressure.

Strong start: Abhinandh combined precision with some quick serves to dismantle Bardet. BUTTERFLY UTT

Bardet struggled to read Abhinandh's deceptively quick serves as the Indian raced to early leads in all three games.

Whenever Bardet threatened to take the offensive route, Abhinandh responded with rock-solid defence before seamlessly switching back to attack.

The costliest pick at the auction, Goa's Bernadette Szocs justified her price tag with a clinical 11-7, 11-9, 11-7 victory over Nithyashree Mani.

Dictating play

The World No. 25 produced a near error-free display, dictating play from the start and rarely allowing her opponent a foothold into the match.

The 23-year-old Indian appeared a touch stiff in the opening game. Her forehand lacked its usual penetration, while her backhand failed to add any sting to the rallies, allowing Szocs to seize the initiative and stay in complete control.

Having won the opening two matches to build a commanding 6-0 points lead, Goa entered the crucial mixed doubles tie brimming with confidence.

Abhinandh and Szocs went on to defeat Manush Shah and Anna Hursey 11-7, 7-11, 11-6 to virtually seal the contest in Goa's favour.

The results: Dempo Goa Challengers bt U Mumba TT 10-5 (P. B. Abhinandh bt Lilian Bardet 11-6, 11-2, 11-3; Bernadette Szocs bt Nithyashree Mani 11-7, 11-9; Abhinandh & Szocs bt Manush Shah & Anna Hursey 11-7, 7-11, 11-6; Alvaro Robles lost to Manush 10-11, 8-11, 4-11; Syndrela Das lost to Hursey 9-11, 11-9, 7-11).

India assured of eight medals

BOXING

Press Trust of India
JAKARTA

Indian women boxers continued their impressive run at the Asian U-19 and U-23 boxing championships with six pugilists advancing to the semifinals to assure themselves of medals on day 5 of the tournament here on Thursday.

India is now assured of eight medals in the U-19 women's competition.

Chandrika Bhoresh Pujari (51kg) delivered a dominant 5:0 victory over Kazakhstan's Zhadyra Kaltay, while Joyshree Devi (54kg) registered a convincing 5:0 win against Kazakhstan's Maral Tolepbergen.

Prachi (57kg) continued her fine form with a clinical 5:0 win over Uzbekistan's Robiya Ravshanova, while Chahat (60kg) secured a comprehensive 5:0 victory against Kazakhstan's Zhasmin Abramyan.

The results (quarterfinals): U-19: Women: 48kg: Gunjan bt Altanzul Altangadas (Mgl) 3:2. **51kg:** Chandrika Bhoresh Pujari bt Zhadyra Kaltay (Kaz) 5:0. **54kg:** Joyshree Devi bt Maral Tolepbergen (Kaz) 5:0. **57kg:** Prachi bt Robiya Ravshanova (Uzb) 5:0. **60kg:** Chahat bt Zhasmin Abramyan (Kaz) 5:0. **65kg:** Rushanabonu Isoeva (Uzb) bt Vanshika (RSC first round). **70kg:** Maftuna Yangieva (Uzb) bt Lakshu 5:0. **75kg:** Anshika bt Altyngul Aimukhan (Kaz) 4:1.

India clinches five medals at Asian U-23 athletics

Press Trust of India
ORDOS (CHINA)

India clinched five medals, including the mixed 4x400m relay gold, to begin its Asian U-23 athletics championships campaign on a strong note here on Thursday. The Indian quartet of Astik Pradhan, Sandra Mol Sabu, Sethu Mishra and Shravani Sachin Sangle clocked 3m18.64s to take the top spot in the last event of the day.

The Indians also added one silver and three bronze medals on the day.

Bhartpreet Singh opened India's account with the men's discus throw bronze with an effort of 52.91m. China's Li Zhixin (60.79m) and Jiang Zehao (59.60m) won the gold and silver.

Indians finished 2-3 in the men's 5000m race final with Shivaji Parashuram Madappagoudra taking silver in 14:08.19 and Vinod Singh claiming bronze with 14:23.67. Japan's Rui Suzuki won gold, clocking 14:01.24.

Prachi Devkar also won bronze, in the women's 3000m steeplechase, clocking 10:32.69s. China's Yang Yiting (10:14.68) and Liu Yuxin (10:25.51) topped the podium in that order.

Russia to take on World Athletics at CAS over ban

Agence France-Presse
LAUSANNE

The Russian Athletics Federation announced on Thursday that it will appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) challenging World Athletics (WA) extending the blanket ban on its track and field athletes.

"Russian Athletics notes that World Athletics' decision affects the fundamental interests of athletics in Russia and restricts Russian athletes' right to compete, on grounds that Russian Athletics considers discriminatory," read the federation's statement.

WA responded, saying: "We take note of the Russian athletics federation's appeal to CAS, and we will be strenuously defending our position."

Last Friday, WA announced that the ban on Russian and Belarusian athletes – imposed in March 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine – would remain in place.

Disappointing day for Indian recurve archers

Sports Bureau

Indian recurve archers had a disappointing day as the country's men and women teams lost their respective quarterfinal matches to the USA at the Archery World Cup Stage-4 in Madrid on Thursday. The men's team suffered a 0-6 defeat, while the women's side lost 2-6.

B. Dhiraj scored his season best performance (691) to finish second in the individual qualification round on Wednesday.

The results: Recurve: Qualification: Men: B. Dhiraj (2nd, 691), Neeraj Chauhan (8th, 677), Atanu Das (26th, 668), Yashdeep Bhoge (54th, 658). **Women:** Kirti (4th, 668), Kumkum Mohod (14th, 654), Ankita Bhakat (15th, 654), Deepika Kumari (16th, 654). **Team:** India Men (2nd, 2036), Women (3rd, 1976), Mixed (2nd, 1359).

Elimination: Individual: Men: Bhoge lost to Willem Bakker (Ned) 4-6 (1st round); Atanu bt Archie Bromley (Gbr) 6-0 (1st, round), bt Christian Stoddard (USA) 6-4 (2nd, round). **Women:** Deepika got a bye (1st round), lost to Karina Kozlowska (Pol) 5-6 (shoot-off: 9-10) (2nd round); Kumkum got a bye (1st, round), bt Kristine Andersen (Den) 6-2 (2nd, round); Ankita got a bye (1st, round), bt Huang Yuwei (Chn) 7-1 (2nd, round).

Team: Men: India (B. Dhiraj, Neeraj Chauhan, Yashdeep Bhoge) got a bye (1st, round), bt Slovenia 6-2 (2nd, round), lost to USA 0-6 (QF). **Women:** India (Kirti, Kumkum Mohod, Ankita Bhakat) got a bye (1st, round), bt Italy 6-2 (2nd, round), lost to USA 2-6 (QF).

Creative spark: Odegaard delivered an assist in each of his first three World Cup matches. GETTY IMAGES

O Captain! My Captain! — Odegaard steers the ship nobody saw coming

The midfielder has been as instrumental as Haaland in Norway's run to its maiden quarterfinal; next up for him is a tough test against England

FIFA WORLD CUP

R.K. Arjun

While Erling Haaland has rightfully dominated the headlines with seven goals, the man pulling the strings in Norway's fairytale World Cup run has operated largely in his teammate's shadow.

Captain Martin Odegaard has been just as instrumental to Norway's first-ever quarterfinal qualification. The midfielder provided an assist in each of his first three WC appearances – against Iraq, Senegal, and Ivory Coast. He became only the third player – after Igor Belanov (1986) and Michael Ballack (2002) – to have an assist under his name in his opening three matches.

The 27-year-old marshalled his troops in the last-16 clash, dictating terms against Brazil as his side dominated possession (66%). Against the *Selecao*, he completed 101 passes with an accuracy of 93%, created a chance, registered two shots, won two ground duels and had the joint-most touches in the opposition box as Norway produced one of the great World Cup upsets.

Operating as the playmaker in Stale Solbakken's 4-3-3 set-up, the Arsenal man has become the hub through which most of Norway's attacking play flows. He drops deep to collect the ball, drives the team forward, and consistently finds Haaland and Antonio Nusa in dangerous pockets.

It's a role that rarely produces the eye-catching numbers which strikers get credit for. Still, the underlying data tells its own story: only a few midfielders at this World Cup have combined creative output with defensive work rate as consistently as Norway's 'leader'. As Norway prepares to face England, Odegaard's ability to dictate the flow may decide how far Norway's 'golden generation' can go.

SNAPSHOTS

Adhavan excels with the ball

CHENNAI: R. Adhavan led from the front, scalping five for eight including a hat-trick, to set up a seven-wicket win for Heartfulness Intl. School-B against La Chatelaine Jr College in the TNCA City Schools under-16 match on Thursday.

The scores: Chennai Boys HSS Nungambakkam 64 in 22.2 overs (S. Abishek Ram 3/6) lost to St. Bedes 'A' 67/1 in 7.4 overs (V. Samjeevaa 31 n.o.).

APL Global School 152/9 in 30 overs (R. Shravan 53, N. Neil Nithwin 39, N. Sonitraj 5/15) lost to Olive Tree Global School 154/0 in 19 overs (B. Siddhartha 68 n.o., J. Ethan Paul 62 n.o.).

SBOA School & Jr College 93 in 28.1 overs (S. Rahul Bala 4/23, E.J. Kavin 3/7) lost to Ramachandra PS 94/2 in 13.1 overs (V. Rithaesh 58 n.o.).

Santhome-A 208/7 in 30 overs (M. Shyam 50, S. Rithvik 38, B. Kundan Kumar 36, Vyshnav 3/40) bt PSBB 'B' 82/4 in 20.2 overs (S. Arjun 30). **Note:** Target revised to 152 runs in 20.2 overs & Santhome won by 70 runs.

St. Bede's-B 236/3 in 30 overs (A. Desigan 87, M.K. Raghav 93 n.o.) bt The Schram Academy CBSE 60 in 26.1 overs (S. Prajan 3/5).

Nellai Nadar MHSS 98 in 29.3 overs (S. Sabareesh 3/14, S.S. Sarabesh Siva 4/27) lost to St. Michaels Academy 100/6 in 27.5 overs.

Saraswathi Vidyalaya 70 in 26.5 overs (R.S. Sujithan 3/6, P. Mithun Karthick 3/12) lost to Ebenezer MHSS-A 71/1 in 11 overs (P.B. Shourya Kumar 39 n.o.).

Don Bosco-B 193/7 in 30 overs (S. Mayank Dhruva 47, S. Saif Ali 40, S. Sanjay 34 n.o.) bt Maharishi Vidya Mandir 68 in 22.3 overs (N. Haethish 5/8).

The Hindu Senior-A 38 in 15.2 overs (S. Aniruth 5/18, N. Rahul 3/12) lost to Heartfulness Intl. School NIOS-A 40/0 in 4 overs.

Sishya OMR School 192/8 in 30 overs (S. Advaith 80, Joel Koshy Mathews 49, H. Gurusaran 3/28) bt Jawahar Vidyalaya-B 137 in 26.1 overs (M. Mohamed Farhan 38, S. Sachin 3/19).

Jawahar Vidyalaya-A 127 in 30 overs (K. Saagith Charan 60, E. Siddharth 5/29) bt St. Johns PS 125 in 29 overs (Siva Hari 32, R. Jai Saish 3/32, Padmeshwaran 3/16).

Chinmaya Vidyala Kilpauk 94 in 20.3 overs (Rohit Bhavesh 48, V. Abinav Santhosh 6/18) lost to Heartfulness Intl. School 96/1 in 13 overs (B. Yashveer 44 n.o.).

La Chatelaine Jr College 80 in 20.2 overs (R. Adhavan 5/8) lost to Heartfulness Intl. School-B 81/3 in 10.3 overs (Ayush Pratap 55 n.o.). Vidya Mandir 126 in 29.5 overs (Saai Dhakshin 3/16) bt PSBB-A K.K. Nagar 102 in 24.5 overs (Pradyun Badri 37).

Marg Vidhyalaya Madipakkam 71 in 29.4 overs (M. Ashwin 3/14, S. Anirudh 3/11) lost to The PSBB Millennium School A 73/4 in 13.1 overs (K. Sarveshwaran 31 n.o, M. Sanjeevi 3/17)

Sir Mutha School-A Chetpet 68 in 24.4 overs (M. Yohaan 4/17, Vanssh Kumar Jain 3/15) lost to PSBB Nungambakkam 69/4 in 20.1 overs (M. Hitesh Varshan 3/7).

Adhavan (Heartfulness Intl.-B, 5/8 incl. hat-trick); Haethish (Don Bosco-B, 5/8).

Abinav (Heartfulness Intl.-CBSE, 6/18); Sonitraj (Olive Tree Global, 5/15).

Aniruth (Heartfulness Intl.-A, 5/18); Siddharth (St. Johns, 5/29).

Kiran (Tiruvallur, 5/20); Akshadh (Chengalpattu, 115 batting).

PSA Challenger from tomorrow

The Indian Squash Academy will host 48 players from 14 countries at the HCL-SRFI PSA Challenger tournament from July 11 to 15.

The tournament will feature separate men's and women's events, each offering a prize purse of $9,000. Malaysia's Joachim Chuah (World No. 90) and Egypt's Rouqaia Othman (World No. 113) are the top seeds, while India's highest-seeded players are Suraj Kumar Chand (World No. 121) and Rathika Suthanthira Seelan (World No. 140).

Kiran's five-for helps Tiruvallur skittle out Coimbatore

TIRUVALLUR: S. Kiran Raj Yadav took five for 20 to help Tiruvallur bundle out Coimbatore for 80 on the first day of the TNCA inter-district under-16 tournament pre-quarterfinal here on Thursday.

The scores (pre-quarterfinals, day one): At Tiruvallur: Coimbatore 80 in 47.2 overs (S. Kiran Raj Yadav 5/20, Drupath S. Nambiyar 3/13) vs. Tiruvallur 144/4 in 51 overs (S. Gautam Anand 42, S.T. Amizhthan 33, A. Rithan 3/51).

At Kancheepuram: Tirupur 171 in 78.3 overs (R.S. Ashwin Kumar 34, B. Shivam Kushwaha 40, S. Sri Vishnu 4/39) vs. Kancheepuram 14/3 in 10.2 overs.

At Chengalpattu: Tirupattur 90 in 48.1 overs (A. Jayanth 3/29, J. Kabilan 3/9) vs. Chengalpattu 196/2 in 46 overs (B. Akshadh Rao 115 batting, J. Kabilan 57 batting).

TNPL 2026 schedule

DATE	TEAMS	TIME	VENUE
Aug. 4	IDTT vs DD	7.30 p.m.	DINDIGUL
Aug. 5	TGC vs MP	3.30 p.m.	
Aug. 5	CSG vs NRK	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 6	KK vs SSS	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 7	CSG vs IDTT	3.30 p.m.	
Aug. 7	NRK vs DD	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 8	KK vs MP	3.30 p.m.	
Aug. 8	SSS vs TGC	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 9	DD vs CSG	3.30 p.m.	
Aug. 9	IDTT vs NRK	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 10	SSS vs MP	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 11	NRK vs TGC	3.30 p.m.	
Aug. 11	KK vs IDTT	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 12	CSG vs SSS	3.30 p.m.	
Aug. 12	DD vs MP	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 13	NRK vs KK	3.30 p.m.	
Aug. 13	TGC vs IDTT	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 14	DD vs SSS	3.30 p.m.	
Aug. 14	MP vs CSG	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 15	KK vs TGC	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 18	CSG vs KK	7.30 p.m.	CHENNAI
Aug. 19	DD vs TGC	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 20	IDTT vs MP	3.30 p.m.	
Aug. 20	SSS vs NRK	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 21	KK vs DD	3.30 p.m.	
Aug. 21	CSG vs TGC	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 22	IDTT vs SSS	3.30 p.m.	
Aug. 22	NRK vs MP	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 23	QUALIFIER 1	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 24	ELIMINATOR	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 26	QUALIFIER 2	7.30 p.m.	
Aug. 28	FINAL	7.30 p.m.	

IDTT - IDream Tiruppur Tamizhans; DD - Dindigul Dragons; TGC - Trichy Grand Cholas; MP - Madurai Panthers; CSG - Chepauk Super Gillies; NRK - Nellai Royal Kings; KK - Kovai Kings; SSS - SKM Salem Spartans

HI secretary accused of threatening player

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

Former India captain Asunta Lakra has accused Hockey India secretary-general Bholanath Singh of threatening her for questioning wrongdoings in Jharkhand. Asunta claimed Bholanath had not only misbehaved with her but also warned her to not step out of line or face consequences. Alleging that the trigger was her complaint against coach Sudhir Golla for sexually exploiting female players, Asunta detailed her experience.

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CENTRAL RAILWAY
Refurbishment of LHB Coaches
Open E-tender Notice No. - PR-C-MLR-FSE-25-26-737B SN : 1, **Name of work :** Refurbishment of LHB Coaches on Turnkey Basis [Including Furnishing, Seats and Electrical Work]. **Approx. Cost ₹ :** ₹ 36,21,77,233.34/-, **Cost of Tender Form ₹ :** ₹ 0.00, **EMD ₹ :** ₹72,43,600.00, **Completion on period :** 18 Months, E-Tender is invited from those firms, which in their individual capacity satisfy the Minimum Eligibility Criteria. The time and date for submission of above E-tender will be up to 17:00 Hrs. on 10.08.2026. Complete details of E-tender is available at official Railway website **https://www.ireps.gov.in** 346
Traveling with dangerous and explosive goods is a punishable offense

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER
Tender Notice No. : SRC-C-OBHS-GR2-100726, dated 06.07.2026. Open tender is invited by Sr. CDO, Santragachi, S.E.Railway, Kharagpur Division acting through the President of India through e-tendering in **www.ireps. gov.in** website as per details mentioned below. Eligible tenderers are requested to apply for the same through online only in **www.ireps. gov.in** website as per details mentioned below. No offline tender will be accepted. Please read the tender document uploaded in the document section for details. **Name of the work :** On Board Housekeeping Service and Linen Distribution (Group 2) for trains of Santragachi for a period of 03 years. **Tender Value :** ₹ 80,14,83,583.13 only. (including GST). **EMD:** ₹ 41,57,400/- only. **Cost of Tender document:** ₹ 25,000/- only (Non-refundable). **Closing date of tender:** 03.08.2026 at 11.30 hrs. **(PR-445)**

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE FOR SIGNALLING WORKS
Tender No.: 771-BRND-UKR-NPRD-DTL, Date: 04.07.2026. Name of Work: Execution of all types of Indoor works for installation/ testing/commissioning of new Electronic Interlocking of BRND, UKR, NPRD, DTL & NGE station of SEC Railway in connection with BRND-BRH doubling work and S&T outdoor work in via duct locations (BRND-BRH section) and related S&T works for phase commissioning in BRND-BRH section. **Tender Value:** ₹ 32,37,46,500.30 (₹ Thirty Two Crore Thirty Seven Lakh Forty Six Thousand Five Hundred and Thirty Paise Only). **EMD:** ₹ 64,74,900/- (₹ Sixty Four Lakh Seventy Four Thousand Nine Hundred Only).
Closing of Tender: Upto 16.00 Hours on 27.07.2026.
For further details/eligibility criteria & the complete details for the above work, please contact office of the **Chief Signal & Telecom. Engineer (Con.), South East Central Railway, Bilaspur** or refer/ download tender document which is available on our website: **www.ireps. gov.in**
Dy.Chief Signal & Telecom. Eng.(Con)/SECR/ ABKP@BSP.
CPR/10/274
South East Central Railway @secrail

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
E-Tender Notice
No. EO_EC_26, Date 06.07.2026. E-Tenders are invited by DGM/CLW/CRJ for and on behalf of the President of India for the execution of the following work in CLW/Chittaranjan. **Name of work:** Contract for the operation and upkeep of the entire premises of last rites (Electric Crematorium, Shamshan Ghat (Conventional Burning Ghat), and Burial Ground) at Chittaranjan, for **Two (02)** years. **Period of Contract:** 02 years. **Earnest Money Deposit:** ₹ 3,900/- (Rupees Three thousand and nine hundred only). **Last date & Time for submission of tender: 28.07.2026 at 15.00 Hours. Website address:** The relevant details about this e-Tender & for online participation in e-tendering are available on the Railway website **www.ireps.gov.in & www.clw.indianrailways.gov.in. Contact no. :** 1. 9163340009 (ADGM), 2. 9609412293 (Ch. OS).
Dy. General Manager/ CLW/Chittaranjan
PR6/414
Visit us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailways

RESTORATION & CONSERVATION /PRESERVATION OF HERITAGE STATION BUILDINGS
Tender Notice No. GEM/2026/B/ 7751903 Dated: 07-07-2026. 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:** Detailed Project Report (DPR) of Restoration & Conservation / preservation of Kurseong Station Complex, Old Heritage Siliguri Town station building and its surrounding Area, Structural Audit of the building along with site supervision (PSS) during execution of the project. **Tender Value:** ₹1,71,10,000/-. **Earnest Money:** ₹2,35,550/-. **Date & time of closing of tender:** At **12.00** hrs. & opening at **12.30** hrs. on **28-07-2026.** The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available in the website **www.GeM.gov.in**
Director, Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, Kurseong
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BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD
(A Statutory Body under Ministry of Power, Government of India)
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
BBMB invites tender (Tender ID- 2026_BBMB_283426_1, dated 09.07.2026) for Selection of Firm for Issuance of NOC for Removal of Sediments of Seer Khad (H.P.) Site in Bhakra Dam Reservoir as maintenance activity.
For detailed terms & conditions, please visit CPP portal https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app and BBMB website www.bbmb.gov.in
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GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND GEOLOGY
Email: dmg-eauction-mines@telangana.gov.in
Ref: 3913716/MI/MMB/Phase-VII/2026 **Date: July 10, 2026**
Notice Inviting Tender
'Invitation of bids for grant of Quarry Lease for Minor Mineral blocks'
The Department of Mines and Geology, Government of Telangana, invites bids for the grant of quarry leases for 24 minor mineral blocks through electronic auction under Rule 12 of the Telangana Minor Mineral Concession Rules, 1966, as notified pursuant to Section 15 of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. Out of the 24 minor mineral blocks, 03 blocks are being auctioned with pre-embedded statutory clearances. The minerals proposed for grant include **Building Stone, Colour Granite, Black Granite, Laterite, Gravel, Rough Stone, Road Metal, Stone and Metal.**
Interested bidders may obtain the Tender Document containing eligibility criteria, auction schedule, reserve price, bidding parameters, terms and conditions, and other details from the e-auction portal of MSTC Limited at: (**https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mmb/tgmmb/index.jsp**).
Mineral Block Summaries and the model tender document are available free of cost on the portal. Block-specific Tender Documents are available for purchase on the portal. Interested bidders may register themselves on the website to obtain login credentials required for submission of bids and participation in the e-auction process.
The date for commencement of Sale of Tender Document is **Monday, 13 July, 2026.** The last date for purchase of the Tender Document is **Wednesday, 29 July, 2026, on or before 17:00 hours (IST)** and the last date for submission of bids is **Monday, 3 August, 2026, on or before 17:00 hours (IST).**
Sd/-
Director of Mines & Geology(FAC).
DIPR R.O.No.296-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/2026-27 Dt:09-07-2026

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.2, 2/1 & 2/3, Kalidasa Marg, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru - 560009. Phone No. 080-22265383 website:www.kiadb.in
No.:IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-22/2015/2026-27 **Date:09-07-2026**
SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK KPP Portal Only)
Item Rate Tenders under two cover bid system are invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Contractors (Civil) who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the following work as per the schedule given below:
Name of the work: Providing and laying of Effluent Network at Devanahalli General Industrial Area, Phase-2, Devanahalli Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District.
- Last Date & Time for Receipt of Tenders **27-07-2026** upto **4:00** pm.

Applicants May download bidding documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
Sd/-
Engineer-In-Chief
KIADB
DIPR/CP/1564/ /2026-27

England and India set for battle in historic Test

It will be a quick turnaround for the two outfits seeking to put the disappointment in the T20 WC behind; onus will be on the visiting team's batters to come good against a strong bowling unit

Ladies of Lord's: A montage of the India squad members ahead of the special occasion. @BCCIWOMEN

INDIA IN ENGLAND

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LONDON

Heather Knight, her hands folded, smiles from a billboard at a bus stop in St. John's Wood.

You have just seen the England batter strapping her pads on on another billboard during the ride on London's famously efficient underground train services, better known as the tube.

She is at Lord's, too. This billboard is much bigger.

There's nothing like this. All those advertisements say.

Grand stage

There certainly has been nothing like this at Lord's for 239 years. A Women's Test.

Women cricketers are indeed doing what they are good at. Breaking glass ceilings.

Only a couple of months ago, Sarah Taylor was appointed as the fielding coach of England's men's team.

> India's top seven loves to bat for a long time and the value of their wicket is very important for them
>
> **SCIVER-BRUNT**
> England skipper

One of cricket's greatest wicketkeepers, male or female, she played only 10 Tests though she figured in 126 ODIs and 90 T20Is. Women get to play so few Tests, yes.

So the players of both England and India will be excited about the historic Test starting at Lord's on Friday. It would also be an opportunity for both teams to push behind them the disappointments they had at the T20 World Cup, which had concluded last Sunday.

England had lost the final to the brilliant Australians, who, earlier, had knocked out India with their win in the last group game.

The last time the two teams met in a Test was in Navi Mumbai in 2023. India had won that game by 347 runs.

> It is a huge honour and privilege that we will be walking out at Lord's. I think we are pretty deserving of being here and will relish the opportunity

Deepti Sharma had match figures of nine for 39 and that was after making 67 in the first innings.

She could have a key role to play here, too.

She would be hoping batters like Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues and captain Harmanpreet Kaur put enough runs on the board.

It cannot be easy though, against the England bowlers, whom you could see, training, from the media centre.

At the media box, you are greeted on the glass door by several vintage photographs and drawings chronicling women's cricket.

On the top-left corner is a drawing of the first ever recorded women's match, played at Guildford, near Surrey, between the villages of Bramley and Hambledon, in 1745.

In the picture, women, in long, full-sleeved dresses, are in all their full finery, including decorated hats. One of them is in front of the two stumps, with bat in her hands, and is waiting for the ball. Her wait is finally over.

> The last time the two teams met in a Test was in Navi Mumbai in 2023. India had won that game by 347 runs
> Deepti Sharma had match figures of nine for 39 and that was after making 67 in the first innings

The teams (from):
England: Nat Sciver-Brunt (Capt.), Tammy Beaumont, Lauren Bell, Maia Bouchier, Alice Capsey, Tilly Corteen-Coleman, Sophie Ecclestone, Lauren Filer, Amy Jones, Heather Knight, Emma Lamb, Grace Potts, Ellie Threlkeld, Mady Villiers, and Issy Wong.
India: Harmanpreet Kaur (Capt.), Smriti Mandhana, Shafali Varma, Yastika Bhatia, Jemimah Rodrigues, Deepti Sharma, Richa Ghosh, Shree Charani, Nandni Sharma, Harleen Deol, Sneh Rana, Renuka Singh, Kranti Gaud, Sayali Satghare, and Priya Punia.
The one-off Test will be held from July 10 to 13. The day's play will start at 3.30 p.m. IST.

It is a big moment for all of us, says Harmanpreet

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LONDON

Harmanpreet Kaur has made it a habit of being part of historic moments. She led the Indian women to a first-ever ODI World Cup triumph in Navi Mumbai last year.

On Friday, she will lead her team on to the field for the maiden women's Test at Lord's. "It is a very big moment for all of us," the India skipper said on the eve of the Test against England. "As a captain and as a player, I'm really looking forward to this opportunity. As kids, we always dream about playing Test matches and playing at Lord's is one of those dreams. All the girls are very excited."

She is glad that a women's Test is finally being played at Lord's. "Maybe it is late, but not too late," she said. "I am still playing cricket and therefore getting this opportunity to be part of a historic match."

Harmanpreet is confident of a good show from her team. "Our last two Tests have been very good for us and we have always played good cricket against England," she said. "We may not be that used to playing Tests, but we enjoy them so much. Even during the photoshoot on Wednesday, everybody was so excited wearing the white kit."

Smriti... ready for the test. @BCCIWOMEN

She would love to have more Tests for women. Since the last time the Indian women toured England for a Test, in 2021, they have played only five more. And a country like New Zealand, one of the strongest in women's cricket, doesn't even play Tests any longer.

"As cricketers, we definitely want to be part of many Tests," Harmanpreet said. "But I think that is totally the authorities' call. I have seen women's cricket growing all these years. I think we are in the right hands, and they are the ones to take a call".

England skipper Nat Sciver-Brunt feels that the Test has come at the right time after the team's defeat to Australia in the T20 World Cup final, which was also played at Lord's, last Sunday. "The World Cup, and everything we managed to do, still has mixed emotions because the final result wasn't what we wanted... but I am proud of what we were able to do in the tournament".

As long as I like the grind, I will continue to compete: Duplantis

ATHLETICS

Agence France-Presse
MONACO

Serial World record setter Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis has spent countless hours batting away questions about how he stays motivated in the men's pole vault.

The US-born Swede set his 15th pole vault world record in March, clearing 6.31m in Sweden, and is one of the star attractions in whatever meeting he appears. The two-time Olympic champion and triple world gold medallist will compete in Monaco's Diamond League on Friday on the back of victory with 6.13m in Paris and a rare defeat on home cinder in Stockholm.

Since first breaking the world record in Torun six years ago, Duplantis has single-handedly raised the bar, a demonstration of a stunning consistency that has seen him clear the 6.00m barrier for nine straight seasons.

Motivated: The fire to excel still burns for the peerless vaulter. REUTERS

"Time has already gone really, really quickly," Duplantis, who made his Diamond League debut in 2017, said on Thursday. "I've actually been jumping for a long time especially at this level. It's pretty hard to comprehend."

While courtesy and politeness are often rolled by the 26-year-old out in answer to questions about whether he still had the desire to compete in one of the most technically demanding events of track and field, Duplantis did not mince his words in Monaco. The blip in Stockholm was his first defeat in three years.

ENGAGEMENTS

Cricket: TNCA Freyer Trophy women's T20 league, Pink Warriors vs. Silver Strikers (Gojan-A); Orange Dragons vs. Blue Avengers (Gojan-B), 8 a.m.; Green Invaders vs. Red Rangers (Gojan-A); Purple Blazers vs. Yellow Challengers (Gojan-B), 1 p.m.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to the public at large that my client M/s. G Square Realtors Private Limited, having its Registered Office at Flat No. 14, Third Floor, Harrington Apartment, Door No. 98, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai – 600 031, has instituted a suit in O.S.No.463 of 2026 on the file of the Hon'ble Principal District Judge at Chengalpet against **M/s.KPRN ESTATES** and 6 others, seeking for specific performance, declaration and permanent injunction in respect of the schedule mentioned property and the said suit is pending. The public is hereby cautioned (CAVEAT EMPTOR) not to purchase or otherwise deal with the schedule mentioned property or any part thereof, and not to enter into any agreement for sale, sale, mortgage, lease, exchange, gift, settlement or any other transaction or encumbrance whatsoever in respect of the same, during the pendency of the said suit. Any such transaction or dealing shall be subject to the result of the aforesaid suit and shall not be binding on my client. Any person dealing with the schedule mentioned property or any part thereof shall do so at their own risk, cost and consequences.

SCHEDULE MENTIONED PROPERTY

In the Registration District of Chengalpattu, In the Sub – Registration District of Thirukazhukundram, In the Revenue District of Chengalpattu, In the Revenue Taluk of Thirukazhukundram, In the Revenue Village of Pooncheri, all those pieces and parcels of land comprising 3,41,272 sq.ft (excluding road area) in respect of 107 plots comprised in Survey Nos.

199/1A, 199/1B, 199/2 to 199/17, 200/1 to 200/10 and 201/1 to 201/10 of Pooncheri Village, forming part of the Layout No.255/2023 (Previously Layout No.1 (R)/2020), issued by the Member Secretary, Mamallapuram New Town Development Authority, Mamallapuram and registered with TNRERA as No. TN/01/Regularisation-Layout/023/2023, situated at Pooncheri Village, Thirukazhukundram Taluk, Chengalpattu District, more particularly described as follows:

Sl.No.	Plot No.	Extent (sq.ft)	Sl.No.	Plot No.	Extent (sq.ft)	Sl.No.	Plot No.	Extent (sq.ft)
1	2 (Phase 1)	5000.0	40	53 (Phase 1)	2400.0	79	117 (Phase 1)	2400.0
2	3 (Phase 1)	5000.0	41	54 (Phase 1)	2400.0	80	122 (Phase 1)	2400.0
3	5 (Phase 1)	5000.0	42	54A (Phase 1)	2400.0	81	123 (Phase 1)	2400.0
4	7 (Phase 1)	5000.0	43	59 (Phase 1)	2400.0	82	129 (Phase 1)	2400.0
5	8 (Phase 1)	5000.0	44	60 (Phase 1)	2400.0	83	130 (Phase 1)	2400.0
6	9 (Phase 1)	5000.0	45	62 (Phase 1)	2783.0	84	131 (Phase 1)	2400.0
7	11 (Phase 1)	5000.0	46	63 (Phase 1)	2415.0	85	153 (Phase 1)	2400.0
8	12 (Phase 1)	5000.0	47	64 (Phase 1)	2400.0	86	154 (Phase 1)	2400.0
9	13 (Phase 1)	5000.0	48	65 (Phase 1)	2400.0	87	155 (Phase 1)	3285.0
10	14 (Phase 1)	5000.0	49	66 (Phase 1)	2400.0	88	156 (Phase 1)	2895.0
11	15 (Phase 1)	5000.0	50	67 (Phase 1)	2400.0	89	157 (Phase 1)	2400.0
12	16 (Phase 1)	5000.0	51	73A (Phase 1)	2400.0	90	158 (Phase 1)	2400.0
13	18 (Phase 1)	4225.0	52	76 (Phase 1)	2400.0	91	159 (Phase 1)	2400.0
14	19A (Phase 1)	5850.0	53	77 (Phase 1)	2400.0	92	160 (Phase 1)	2400.0
15	20 (Phase 1)	5000.0	54	78 (Phase 1)	2400.0	93	167A (Phase 1)	2400.0
16	21 (Phase 1)	5000.0	55	79A (Phase 1)	2400.0	94	170 (Phase 1)	2400.0
17	22 (Phase 1)	5000.0	56	80 (Phase 1)	2400.0	95	249 (Phase 1)	2400.0
18	23 (Phase 1)	5000.0	57	80A (Phase 1)	2400.0	96	250 (Phase 1)	2400.0
19	24 (Phase 1)	5000.0	58	81 (Phase 1)	2400.0	97	251 (Phase 1)	2400.0
20	25 (Phase 1)	5000.0	59	82 (Phase 1)	2400.0	98	271 (Phase 1)	2835.0
21	26 (Phase 1)	5000.0	60	83 (Phase 1)	2400.0	99	272 (Phase 1)	2460.0
22	27 (Phase 1)	5000.0	61	84 (Phase 1)	2400.0	100	273 (Phase 1)	2400.0
23	29 (Phase 1)	5000.0	62	85 (Phase 1)	2400.0	101	274 (Phase 1)	2400.0
24	31 (Phase 1)	5000.0	63	89 (Phase 1)	2400.0	102	275 (Phase 1)	2400.0
25	33 (Phase 1)	5000.0	64	94 (Phase 1)	2400.0	103	276 (Phase 1)	2400.0
26	34 (Phase 1)	5000.0	65	97 (Phase 1)	2400.0	104	277 (Phase 1)	2400.0
27	35 (Phase 1)	5000.0	66	104 (Phase 1)	2400.0	105	278 (Phase 1)	2400.0
28	36 (Phase 1)	5000.0	67	105 (Phase 1)	2400.0	106	279 (Phase 1)	3136.0
29	37 (Phase 2)	5000.0	68	106 (Phase 1)	2400.0	107	286 (Phase 1)	888.1
30	38 (Phase 1)	5000.0	69	107 (Phase 1)	2400.0		**TOTAL**	**3,41,272 sq.ft**
31	39 (Phase 1)	4000.0	70	108 (Phase 1)	2400.0			
32	40 (Phase 1)	2400.0	71	109 (Phase 1)	4245.0			
33	42 (Phase 1)	2400.0	72	110 (Phase 1)	3855.0			
34	43 (Phase 1)	2400.0	73	111 (Phase 1)	2400.0			
35	44 (Phase 1)	2400.0	74	112 (Phase 1)	2400.0			
36	45 (Phase 1)	2400.0	75	113 (Phase 1)	2400.0			
37	47A (Phase 1)	2400.0	76	114 (Phase 1)	2400.0			
38	48A (Phase 1)	2400.0	77	115 (Phase 1)	2400.0			
39	52 (Phase 1)	2400.0	78	116 (Phase 1)	2400.0			

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Of all the failures that have liberally dotted the coach's brief tenure, the most chastening will be the 2-0 rout in Ireland, followed closely by 76 all out against England in Nottingham; Several of India's methods in the last couple of years have been steeped in madness that is all too visible

PTI

R. Kaushik

It's been a while since India had a disastrous overseas cricketing sojourn. A long, long while, come to think of it.

There was a time even the most invested and committed supporter of the Indian team would take the worst for granted when their heroes embarked on an away Test tour, especially of Australia or England or New Zealand (from 2006, the voodoo of South Africa went away, though it is the only land where India haven't won a series yet). A draw was viewed as a moral victory, inasmuch as something like that exists, while a defeat of any kind was accepted philosophically and with equanimity.

All that has changed in the last decade or so. Adding belief and self-confidence to their kitbag to go with historically unquestioned immense skills, India have become a gathering force in overseas conditions too. They haven't lost a Test series in Sri Lanka since 2008, stacked up consecutive triumphs in Australia (2019 and 2021), held England to a creditable 2-2 draw last summer despite embracing the exciting and nervy phase of transition, and have tamed the West Indian lion in its own den every time since the three-match series in 2006 when they came away on the right side of a 1-0 score line.

Apart from establishing themselves as a formidable Test entity everywhere in the world, except perhaps in New Zealand where their only series victory in the last 55 or so years came in 2009, India are a gun white-ball force. They have been there and thereabouts in all significant competitions, are the simultaneous holders of the 50-over Champions Trophy and T29 World Cup crowns, and have lost a mere twice in the last four ICC limited-overs events between and including the 2023 50-over World Cup and the 2026 T20 World Cup.

The excellent run is testament to the strong systems in place in the country to identify and nurture talent. While India may not be as open as Pakistan in blooding delicately young talent or as Sri Lanka in placing faith in the unorthodox, they are slowly shaking off the conventional straitjacket to which they often restricted themselves. That's why they didn't think twice about unleashing Jasprit Bumrah, the extraordinary bowler with the extraordinary release -- among other things -- more than a decade back, or the supremely gifted and precocious 15-year-old from Bihar's Samastipur, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, less than a week back.

Sooryavanshi's international debut was eagerly awaited from the time he proved in the summer during IPL 2026 that his exploits to that point weren't just a flash in the pan. A tournament-high 776 runs that earned him the Orange Cap ahead of such established names as Virat Kohli and current Test and ODI skipper Shubman Gill, as well as last edition's leading run-getter B. Sai Sudharsan, meant his tender age could no longer work against him. Sooryavanshi didn't do a great deal in his first two T20Is in England, scoring 14 in his maiden appearance and backing it up with 13 in the second, but 24 of those runs have come through a brace of sixes in each of the two outings, most certainly the teasing appetiser before what ought to be a sumptuous main course.

The clamour for Sooryavanshi's inclusion had reached a crescendo immediately after Ajit Agarkar's selection panel picked him for the seven-match T20I odyssey in Ireland (two games) and England. Almost as if because they felt they had to keep the growing voices at bay, India delayed his introduction by three games. But once they were stunned by the Irish in both games and once Sanju Samson courted a third successive failure by following up scores of 5 and 0 against Ireland with 1 in the first T20I against the English in Chester-le-Street, the think-tank was almost compelled to unshackle the devastating left-handed opener.

That Sooryavanshi's induction came at the expense of Samson has divided opinion. The frustratingly inconsistent Samson - he averages 27.01 in 65 T20Is despite posting three centuries and six half-tons in 57 innings - appeared to have turned the corner with a hat-trick of match-winning knocks at the business-end of the home T20 World Cup in February-March. The Player of the Tournament at the World Cup is still very much in the scheme of things; he figures in the Asian Games squad even though he has been left out of the team to play three matches in Zimbabwe later this month. But as India scrambled to accommodate Sooryavanshi, Samson it was who had to be sacrificed.

Head coach Gautam Gambhir, in the crosshairs after this latest UK misadventure, said at a press conference on Monday that he had had a conversation with the Kerala wicketkeeper-opener, insisting that Samson knew the score but adding that whatever was spoken would remain between the coach and the dropped player. Gambhir is fiercely passionate and an extremely proud professional, wonderful but hardly unexpected qualities; he might not believe so, but he is under pressure to deliver results after a mixed bag.

Depending on which side of the fence one is on, Gambhir is slightly in the red or moderately in the blue in his two years in charge of a successful, settled squad he inherited from Rahul Dravid in July 2024. His very first tour at the helm was a precursor of things to come. India swept the T20I series 3-0 in Sri Lanka, fashioning victories from impossible situations including in the Super Over in the final game in Pallekele. But they were also humbled 2-0 in the ODIs - the first ended in a tie and the umpires seemed to forget that the ICC mandated a Super Over to break the deadlock - as the first indications that India's fallibility against spin would come back to haunt them lay exposed.

Subsequently, Gambhir has overseen stunning title runs in the Champions Trophy, the T20 Asia Cup and the T20 World Cup, but he has also presided over some of the darkest phases in Indian cricket. A singularly humiliating 46 all out against New Zealand in the Bengaluru Test in October 2024. A record 408-run hammering at the hands of South Africa in November last year. A 3-0 surrender to New Zealand in November 2024 followed by a 2-0 annihilation by South Africa 12 months later meant Gambhir's CV was already replete with diametrically opposite results. Now, India's longest winless streak in T20I history has added to the feisty former opener's discomfiture because while he might hold the view that results alone don't dictate progress, there is no other tangible, measurable yardstick, is there?

Will/should Gambhir count the Test retirements in that order, within five months of each other, of R. Ashwin, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli between December 2024 and May 2025, as a success of sorts? The loss of this bulk of experience and quality inevitably plunged India to the throes of transition - at one stage, he didn't like that word, choosing instead to go with inexperience before transition returned to his lexicon after the Protean rout. With challenging away tours of Sri Lanka and New Zealand in wait ahead of the five-Test home showdown against Australia early next year, Gambhir will know in his heart of hearts that anything less than a third entry into the final of the World Test Championship in four editions will be perceived as a huge comedown.

Of all the failures that have liberally dotted his brief tenure, the most chastening will be the 2-0 rout in Ireland, followed closely by 76 all out against England in Nottingham earlier this week, which consigned Shreyas Iyer's men to their heaviest defeat in 20-over internationals. Gambhir harped on the 'high risk, high reward' theme to almost wish away the disaster, falling back on the absence of key figures (Bumrah, Hardik Pandya) as an oblique excuse of sorts. Had he not been party to the dumping and omission from the squad of World Cup-winning skipper Suryakumar Yadav, he could have invoked that eventuality too, one suspects. The fact of the matter is that India have been slow to react and adapt, both against the spunky Irish and a fired-up England, themselves looking for minor crumbs of consolation after their outstanding chase of India's 253 in the semifinal of the World Cup ended just seven agonising runs short.

India have parted ways with coaches with much better results - Anil Kumble walked away in a huff in 2017, acknowledging that his partnership with skipper Kohli was no longer 'tenable' despite overseeing Test series wins in the Caribbean, and at home against England and Australia, as well as taking the team to the final of the Champions Trophy in England where we might have had a different tale to tell had Kohli adamantly not chosen to chase on a superb batting surface. If Gambhir seems immune to the slew of defeats that would almost certainly have consumed anyone else, it is because he knows that he continues to enjoy the confidence and the backing of those who make the influential calls in Indian cricket, whether they are a part of the Indian board or not.

Several of India's methods in the last couple of years have been steeped in madness that is all too visible, not least the ill-advised recall to the T20 setup as vice-captain, no less, of Gill and his subsequent omission with the World Cup imminent, all in the space of five months. Gambhir is open to accountability just as much as the next individual is, and it's time he helps the side turn the corner and stack up the consistency that has made India so feared across formats for so many years.

The predicament of the coach and their support group of any team at any level anywhere in the world is unenviable. For all the strategising and analysing and the backroom work that goes in before a match or a tournament, there is nothing they can do in realistic terms once the action begins beyond hoping that their charges remember the plans and are up to scratch when it comes to execution on a given day. But the buck will stop with the coach, of that there can be no arguments. Gambhir often speaks of wanting to fulfil the aspirations of India's 140 crore people. This would be as good a time as any to translate words into deeds.

R.V. MOORTHY

THE GIST

- Apart from establishing themselves as a formidable Test entity everywhere in the world, except perhaps in New Zealand where their only series victory in the last 55 or so years came in 2009, India are a gun white-ball force
- The clamour for Sooryavanshi's inclusion had reached a crescendo immediately after Ajit Agarkar's selection panel picked him for the seven-match T20I odyssey in Ireland (two games) and England. Almost as if because they felt they had to keep the growing voices at bay, India delayed his introduction by three games
- Gambhir is fiercely passionate and an extremely proud professional, wonderful but hardly unexpected qualities; he might not believe so, but he is under pressure to deliver results after a mixed bag

Why more Indian couples are being diagnosed with secondary infertility

Analyses of India's National Family Health Survey data show secondary infertility rose from roughly 19.5% in the early 1990s to about 28.6% by 2015–2016 — close to a doubling in a single generation; there are multiple factors that are contributing to this including age-related issues and changes in the body between the first and the second child

Richika Sahay Shukla

A few weeks ago, a couple sat in my consulting room looking almost apologetic. They already had a bright six-year-old waiting at home. "We feel silly taking your time, doctor," the mother said. "We have one child. Everyone keeps telling us to just be grateful." And then, quietly, she started to cry.

I have heard that phrase – "at least you have one" – more times than I can count. It is almost always meant kindly. It almost always lands like a door being shut. And it is one of the reasons the couples I see struggling to conceive a second time carry their grief so silently.

Understanding the condition

The condition has a name: secondary infertility – the difficulty conceiving or carrying a pregnancy after you have already had a baby. For years it was brushed aside as a non-problem. The numbers say otherwise.

Analyses of India's National Family Health Survey data show secondary infertility rose from roughly 19.5% in the early 1990s to about 28.6% by 2015 -2016 – close to a doubling in a single generation. It is now one of the most common reasons a "previously fertile" couple walks in, bewildered. "We didn't even try the first time," they say. "Why is it so hard now?"

Part of the answer is the calendar. A generation ago, most couples finished their families in their twenties. Today a first baby often arrives at the age of 31 or 32 – after the degree, the job, the EMI, the move to a rented flat in a city.

By the time life finally feels "ready" for a second child, the mother may be aged 36 or 38, and fertility, unfairly, does not wait for our life plans. Egg numbers and quality fall with every passing year; clinics in cities including Delhi/NCR, Bengaluru, Mumbai and others, have reported a sharp rise in women seeking help only after the age of 35.

But age is just one thread. In the years between the first and second child, bodies change. Weight creeps up. The thyroid quietly slips. As many as one in five Indian women now lives with Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS), which tends to worsen with time. A Caesarean section may have left adhesions; an old, untreated infection may have scarred a fallopian tube. And – this matters – the problem is very often on the man's side. Sperm counts fall with weight, stress, smoking and even the polluted air so many of us breathe. Yet in my experience, Indian men will wait years longer than their wives before agreeing to a simple semen test, convinced that "we already have a child, so it can't be me."

Layered over all of this is something newer: our phones. Social media has, in many ways, been a gift for fertility awareness. Couples now arrive far better informed than a decade ago; the taboo is finally cracking; brave women share IVF journeys that once would have been whispered about. But scroll through any feed and you also meet the other side – an unending stream of "Baby No. 2!" announcements, and picture-perfect siblings.

For a woman in her fourth month of trying, or recovering from a second miscarriage, that scroll is a slow bruise. The comparison is relentless – and so is the family WhatsApp group where an aunt asks, yet again, when the "good news" is coming. I have also watched social media do harm the other way: glossy reels promising IVF "success in one cycle," or home remedies that persuade a couple to delay proper testing by a year they cannot afford to lose.

Growing concern: Secondary infertility is the difficulty conceiving or carrying a pregnancy after you have already had a baby. GETTY IMAGES

Telling the truth

So what do I tell the couple crying in my room? First, that their pain is real and they are allowed to feel it.

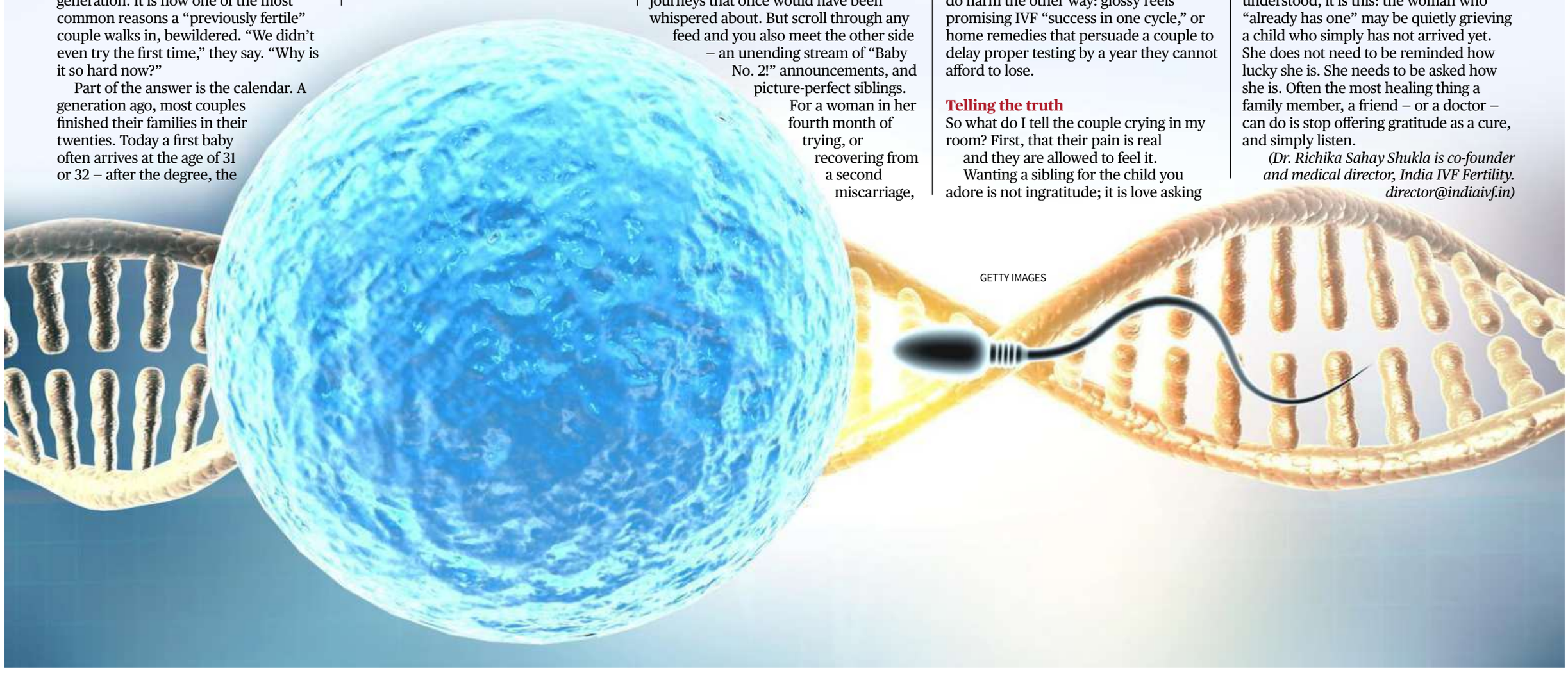
Wanting a sibling for the child you adore is not ingratitude; it is love asking for a little more room. Second, that this is a medical condition, not a moral verdict – not a punishment, not *nazar*, not something they did wrong. Third, that timing matters. If a woman is under the age of 35 and has tried for a year, or over the age of 35 and has tried for six months, both partners – together – should be evaluated. Do not let the calendar run, out of politeness.

Egg numbers and quality fall with every passing year; clinics in cities including Delhi/National Capital Region, Bengaluru, Mumbai and others, have reported a sharp rise in women seeking help only after the age of 35

And I tell them the truth about hope, honestly. Modern fertility care helps a great many couples in exactly this situation, and IVF succeeds for many even in their late thirties and forties. But I will never promise a guaranteed outcome, and I would gently warn anyone against a clinic that does. What I can promise is a clear answer and a plan.

If there is one thing I wish more of us understood, it is this: the woman who "already has one" may be quietly grieving a child who simply has not arrived yet. She does not need to be reminded how lucky she is. She needs to be asked how she is. Often the most healing thing a family member, a friend – or a doctor – can do is stop offering gratitude as a cure, and simply listen.

(Dr. Richika Sahay Shukla is co-founder and medical director, India IVF Fertility. director@indiaivf.in)



GETTY IMAGES

Study to contain antimicrobial resistant neonatal sepsis begins in India

Ramya Kannan
CHENNAI

Striking at the heart of antimicrobial resistance, the international NeoSep 1 trial to evaluate life-saving antibiotic combinations for newborns with sepsis has expanded to India, with the first baby being recruited at the Jawaharlal Postgraduate Education Institute of Medical and Research (JIPMER) in Puducherry.

This was followed by recruiting an infant for the study in Pt. B.D. Sharma PGIMS in Rohtak. The next on the list is Lokmanya Tilak Municipal College and General Hospital, Mumbai. Globally, the study, sponsored by the GARDP Foundation in collaboration with the UCL Innovative Clinical Trials Unit; City St George's, University of London (SGUL), and Penta Foundation, is also underway in Vietnam and Pakistan, and will soon start in Malaysia, Bangladesh and Uganda.

According to a GARDP statement, NeoSep1 aims to enrol 3,000 newborns across Asia and Africa by the end of 2028. Earlier, newborns were enrolled in Ghana, Kenya and South Africa.

Life-threatening infection

Neonatal sepsis is a life-threatening bloodstream infection that occurs in babies under 90 days old, often affecting premature or low-birth-weight infants. It is categorised into early-onset (occurring within the first 72 hours of life) and late-onset (occurring up to 28-90 days), according to a book on neonatal sepsis, authored by Meenakshi Singh.

"With underdeveloped immune systems, newborns are especially prone to life-threatening sepsis," Sally Ellis, Children's Antibiotics Project Leader for GARDP, told *The Hindu*, explaining the significance the NeoSep1 has in the context of growing antimicrobial resistance.

"Today, we stand at a tipping point. The antibiotics for newborns that we have relied on for decades are failing against resistant infections, in many hospital settings. This trial, led by GARDP and partners, is about giving neonatologists new tools, and giving babies with sepsis a fighting chance at life," she adds.

Sepsis is the second most common cause of neonatal mortality, globally responsible for over one million deaths annually. In India, neonatal sepsis remains a leading cause of neonatal mortality, contributing to approximately 30%-40% of all neonatal deaths despite advances in neonatal care, argues a recent paper 'Neonatal Sepsis in India: Epidemiology, Risk Factors and Preventive Strategies from a Public Health Perspective' in the *Journal of Clinical Neonatology*.

The author Ahmed Abdulaziz Almohammadi, writes "In India, neonatal sepsis accounts for an estimated 30%-40% of all neonatal deaths, translating to approximately 2,00,000-2,50,000 preventable deaths annually. Despite substantial reductions in under-five mortality over the past two decades, progress in reducing neonatal mortality has lagged, with sepsis representing a persistent and largely preventable cause of death."

Addressing a big issue: Neonatal sepsis is a life-threatening bloodstream infection that occurs in babies under 90 days old, often affecting premature or low-birth-weight infants. AP

> Today, we stand at a tipping point. The antibiotics for newborns that we have relied on for decades are failing against resistant infections, in many hospital settings. This trial, led by the GARDP and partners, is about giving neonatologists new tools, and giving babies with sepsis a fighting chance at life
>
> **SALLY ELLIS**
> Children's Antibiotics Project Leader for GARDP

Divergence from global trends

It turns out that causative agents in India show a divergence from global trends. Dr. Almohammadi notes that the microbiological profile of neonatal sepsis in India differs substantially from that of high-income countries, with gram-negative organisms predominating in most Indian studies. *Klebsiella pneumoniae, Escherichia coli,* Acinetobacter species and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* constitute the majority of bacterial isolates, often demonstrating multidrug resistance. Group B Streptococcus (GBS), which is the leading cause of neonatal sepsis in developed countries, accounts for only 2%-5% of cases in India.

This makes the NeoSep 1 critical – to evaluate and produce a profile that is India specific, addressing the circumstances that can contribute to, or ameliorate the condition in India. It is pioneering the use of a Personalised Randomised Controlled Trial (PRACTical) design, which will evaluate and rank multiple antibiotic regimens for newborns with sepsis. This approach will help clinicians choose effective treatments best suited to their local context, GARDP spokespersons say.

The goal of the trial is to identify one or more safe, effective, and affordable treatments that can reduce the high number of newborn deaths caused by drug-resistant sepsis, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Part 1 of the NeoSep1 trial, conducted in South Africa and Kenya in 2023, assessed and validated the appropriate dose for fosfomycin and flomoxef for use in newborns, in combination with other antibiotics.

Nishad Plakkal, Principal Investigator of the NeoSep1 trial in India and Head of the Department of Neonatology at JIPMER, explains:"the study is a pragmatic trial and allows clinicians to make the diagnosis of sepsis as they normally would. However, to ensure the inclusion of infants with a high probability of infection, we use a sepsis severity score that we derived from an earlier global observational study (NeoOBS). Our microbiology team cultures the baby's blood (and sometimes spinal fluid) to help identify the organism causing sepsis, typically within a day or two. They also identify antibiotic-resistant infections."

Dr. Plakkal explains that the primary outcome, or the main question the study is designed to answer, is death within 28 days; while secondary outcomes will include death within 90 days, need for additional antibiotics, length of hospital stay, and re-admission.

(ramya.kannan@thehindu.co.in)

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Share of universities that participated in NIRF

55 in per cent. Only 55% universities participated in the government's NIRF rankings, while 56% of them have introduced the four-year undergraduate courses so far, according to the Centre's All India Survey on Higher Education report for 2023-24. The Ministry of Education on Wednesday released the reports of the AISHE for the years 2022-23 and 2023-24. PTI

Number of voters deleted in SIR draft electoral rolls

22 in lakh. Around 22 lakh voters have been left out of the draft electoral rolls in four States, where Phase 3 of the special intensive revision (SIR) of voter lists is under way. According to data made available in the public domain in the last few days by chief electoral officers of Mizoram, Odisha, Manipur and Sikkim, their combined voter base has shrunk by nearly 22 lakh. PTI

Number of ration card issuances to be expedited by Bihar CM

1 in crore. Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Thursday directed officials to expedite the issuance of one crore new ration cards to eligible beneficiaries across the State. Union Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution Minister Pralhad Joshi and the CM chaired a comprehensive review meeting here to assess various departmental schemes and the functioning of PDS in the State. PTI

Routes disrupted by heavy rain in Uttarakhand

107 Continuous rainfall over the past 24 hours across Uttarakhand has raised river water levels and triggered landslides in hilly areas, disrupting traffic on 107 routes across the State. The Meteorological Department has issued a 'Red Alert' for very heavy rainfall in seven districts, including Dehradun, and an 'Orange Alert' for the remaining districts for Thursday. PTI

Illegal coal recovered by CISF in West Bengal, Jharkhand

428 in metric tonnes. The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel recovered more than 428 metric tonnes of coal during a five-day special operation to check the pilferage and theft of the fossil fuel from mines in Jharkhand and West Bengal, officials said on Thursday. PTI

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Why is the Centre revising the NFSA?

Why has the Centre proposed changing AAY foodgrain entitlements? How will the proposed amendment affect households? Why are Tamil Nadu and Kerala opposing? Could the amendment widen regional disparities in foodgrain allocation?

EXPLAINER

T. Ramakrishnan

The story so far:

On July 6, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay urged the Centre to retain the present provision of 35 kg of foodgrains per household per month under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) meant for the poorest of the poor, and not to make it a per capita system. The next day, the CPI(M) Polit Bureau voiced its concern and demanded that the proposed amendment to the entitlement criteria be dropped. About 10 days ago, immediately after the Union government made public its plan to amend the National Food Security Act (NFSA), Kerala's Food Minister Anoop Jacob expressed reservations over the move.

What is the amendment mooted?

On June 24, the Union Food and Public Distribution (F&PD) Department, while publishing a draft amendment Bill to the NFSA, said every person belonging to AAY households would be entitled to seven kg of foodgrains per month, subject to a maximum of 35 kg per household per month. At present, the entitlement is for the entire household with a ceiling of 35 kg per month. The proposed amendment covers the first proviso to sub-section (1) of Section 3 (Right to receive foodgrains at subsidised prices by persons belonging to eligible households) of the Act. The public can comment on the amendments till July 13 and send their views by email to suneel.sachdeva@nic.in and saurabhomar.edu@gov.in.

Why is the change being proposed?

The existing household-based entitlement, though intended as a protective measure for the most vulnerable families, results in significant inequities depending upon the size of the household, according to the F&PD Department. Smaller households receive a higher per-capita entitlement, whereas larger households receive a lower per-capita entitlement, which may fall below the entitlement available to priority households.

The aim and purpose are to remove intra-category inequities, provide for more rational foodgrain allocation, and better align entitlements with nutritional requirements, a note prepared by the department said.

However, the proposed amendment does not seek to address the inclusion of ineligible persons as beneficiaries, a problem that persists at the State level.

What is the story behind the two southern States' opposition?

It is not for the first time that the two States are articulating their opposition to matters concerning the food policy, as their contemporary political history has an important ingredient – the politics of food. Kerala, which has a long history of the public distribution system (PDS) dating back to the now-abolished princely State of Travancore, introduced informal food distribution mechanisms to mitigate the food shortage of the poor and vulnerable, and was perhaps the first to launch a formal PDS in 1962, three years before the establishment of the Food Corporation of India (FCI). At least on two occasions – 1952 and 1967 – Tamil Nadu saw political upsets, the incumbent regime getting reduced to a minority in 1952 and being shown the door (in 1967). The reason was that the governments of the periods in question were not being swift in handling the rice shortage. Since 1967, successive Chief Ministers of the State have been cautious in taking decisions with regard to the subject of rice.

It was no wonder that the two States were vociferous in their stand in the run-up to the formulation of the NFSA. Though the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) took charge in 2011 in Kerala, the government did not agree to the implementation of the 2013 law – an Act of Parliament – despite the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance regime at the Centre pushing the legislation. The main reservation it had was that the NFSA would lead to the removal of a "large number of poor families" from the list of beneficiaries and put an "enormous financial burden" on the State. However, the then Chief Minister, Oommen Chandy, at one point in time, committed himself to the enforcement of the law in his State, though it was left to his successor, Pinarayi Vijayan, to take the formal decision.

In Tamil Nadu, Jayalalithaa, as Chief Minister, virulently opposed the law because immediately after she came to power in May 2011, her government started the distribution of rice, free to all the ration cardholders, regardless of their economic status. She had criticised the government for stating that those who would be left out of the NFSA would not be eligible to receive free rice. Eventually, she extracted a major concession from the Union government that the existing allocations, as they stood in 2013, for all the States would be legally safeguarded.

'The existing household-based entitlement, though intended as a protective measure for the most vulnerable families, results in significant inequities depending upon the size of the household'

Hence, it was no surprise that the two southern neighbours joined the rest of the country in November 2016 in implementing the law.

Why are Tamil Nadu and Kerala opposing the amendment to NFSA?

Explaining how Kerala would be affected by the latest move, Mr. Jacob has pointed out that States such as his, characterised by nuclear families, will be at a disadvantage as there will be a reduction in the quantity of free foodgrains for families with fewer than five members. He has recalled that even in 2013, when the law took effect, his State took the stand that the AAY cardholders deserved "special consideration," a position that it continues. "As a consumption State, any cut in Kerala's allocation is a matter of concern," Mr. Jacob stated.

Mr. Vijay, who referred in his letter to Mr. Modi about how the amendment would cause a fall in the monthly allocation of foodgrains from 65,261 tonnes to 42,040 tonnes, stated that the number of AAY cardholders below the family size of five members is 15.75 lakh (out of a total of 18.64 lakhs), covering 58.51 lakh beneficiaries (total: 69.27 lakhs). "Rice provided to the AAY cardholders is a staple ingredient of all three meals of the day and cannot be substituted with any other commodity from the open market, resulting in substantial out of pocket expenses," he said.

Besides, Anuradha Talwar, a functionary of the Right to Food Campaign, said that the amendment would bring a "North-South divide" in foodgrain allocation, as families in northern States would get higher allocations as their average family size was bigger than that of the southern States.

What is the way forward?

Ideally, such a change should have been subjected to greater public scrutiny to arrive at a consensus. However, T. Sadagopan, president, Tamil Nadu Progressive Consumer Centre and veteran activist who served on the State government's panels on food, suggests that the Centre chalk out a middle path by making the allocation of 30 kg per family, irrespective of family members. This would help the Union government to cut down its subsidy bill.

Grains of debate

The Centre's proposed amendment to the National Food Security Act has triggered concerns that foodgrain allocations under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana could fall for many households in the southern States

Fine balance: The aim and purpose of the amendment are to remove intra-category inequities, provide for more rational foodgrain allocation, and better align entitlements with nutritional requirements. M. SRINATH

Table 1: AAY coverage, beneficiaries and foodgrain allocation

State	Ceiling of AAY households (lakhs)	AAY coverage		Allocation of foodgrains** for 2026-27 (in tonnes)
		No. of AAY households (in lakh)	No. of persons (in lakh)	
Andhra Pradesh	9.09	8.48	22.48	3,81,557
Karnataka	12	10.3	42.72	4,60,740
Kerala	5.96	5.93	18.53	2,50,236
Tamil Nadu	18.65	18.57	62.21	7,82,771
Telangana	6.49	5.64	15.66	2,38,074
Puducherry* (U.T.)	0.32	0.24	0.77	0*
Share of the South	52.51	49.16	162.37	21,13,378
All India	250	217.01	777.41	99,33,042

Source: Foodgrain bulletin for May 2026, Department of Food and Public Distribution, Government of India

*As Puducherry follows the concept of direct benefit transfer, no allocation has been made.

** foodgrains - rice, wheat and coarse grains

Table 2: Off-take and distribution in the Southern States

How the South fared during the current financial year up to the month of May 2026 (tonnes)

State	Allocation	Off take (drawal)	Distributed
Andhra Pradesh	63,593	63,593	57,837
Karnataka	76,790	57,316	35,003
Kerala	41,706	39,812	20,458
Tamil Nadu	1,30,462	1,90,135	1,21,709
Telangana	39,679	59,519	38,893
Share of the South	3,52,230	4,10,375	2,73,900
All India	16,55,505	17,24,185	13,75,621

THE GIST

- The Centre has proposed amending the NFSA to change AAY foodgrain entitlements from a household-based system to a per capita allocation of 7 kg per person, subject to a maximum of 35 kg per household, to address inequities in the existing system.
- Tamil Nadu and Kerala have opposed the proposal, arguing that it will reduce foodgrain allocations for households with fewer than five members and increase the burden on poor families, particularly in States with predominantly nuclear families.
- While the Centre says the amendment will make foodgrain distribution more equitable, critics warn it could widen regional disparities, and some have suggested a middle path of a fixed 30 kg allocation per household.

FULL CONTEXT

Marathi and the long politics behind the language question

The Hindi language controversy in Maharashtra is rooted in a long history of Marathi linguistic assertion, from Shivaji's reforms to the Samyukta Maharashtra movement; it revives debates on mother-tongue education, linguistic identity and federalism

Prathmesh Kher

In April and June of 2025, the government of Maharashtra, led by the Mahayuti coalition, issued two resolutions mandating Hindi as the compulsory third language for students from Class 1 onwards in Marathi- and English-medium State board schools, citing alignment with the National Education Policy of 2020. The announcement was, by any administrative measure, modest in scope, though its political consequences were anything but.

Within weeks, the streets of Mumbai and Pune were filled with protesters. Two figures who had not shared a platform in years, Uddhav Thackeray of Shiv Sena (UBT) and Raj Thackeray of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, found themselves, improbably, on the same side. By the end of June, the government had withdrawn the orders. The grammar of this linguistic confrontation is centuries old.

In one voice: Shiv Sena (UBT) workers protesting over the inclusion of Hindi in the school curriculum on June 29, 2025; by the end of June, the government had withdrawn the orders. PTI

I. The first language war

By the early 17th century, Persian was the language of power across the Deccan. The Mughal court, the Adil Shahi sultans of Bijapur, and the Nizam Shahi of Ahmednagar all conducted their affairs in Persian. Marathi-speaking people were governed, taxed, and adjudicated in a language foreign to them.

Shivaji did not accept this. In 1630, approximately 86 per cent of the vocabulary in Maratha administrative documents was Persian. By 1677, it had fallen to 37 per cent. The instrument of this transformation was the *Rājyavyavahārakośa*, the Thesaurus of State Usage, commissioned and completed in that same year. Every Persian and Arabic administrative term was given a Marathi or Sanskrit equivalent. Forts received Sanskrit names: Sindhudurg, Suvarndurg, Prachandgarh, Pratapgarh, etc. The royal seal was inscribed in Sanskrit.

Every subsequent episode of Marathi linguistic resistance is a repetition of this founding act.

II. The colonial period

Jyotirao Phule's deposition to the Hunter Commission on Education in 1882 is among the most important documents in the history of Indian educational policy. Phule argues that colonial educational expenditure overwhelmingly benefits the upper-caste elite, using revenue extracted from Shudra labour to subsidise the very class that oppresses them. He demands compulsory primary education for all, teachers drawn from the cultivating classes, and instruction in Modi and Balbodh, the two Marathi scripts. His writing in the spoken tongue of working people was itself the argument made visible: this language is adequate for the highest moral and political purposes.

The founding of *Kesari* (Marathi) and *Mahratta* (English) in January 1881 by Chiplunkar, Agarkar, and Tilak transformed Marathi into an instrument of mass political mobilisation: Marathi for the people, English for the world.

Tilak's Home Rule speech at Ahmednagar on June 1, 1916, put the question of vernacular education in his characteristic direct manner.

"Is the question whether education should be given through vernaculars such a big one? Our voice is nowhere. Do the English educate their people through the French language? Do Germans do it through the English language? Because we have no authority. You have not got the authority."

Yet, Tilak was also the first Congress leader to advocate Hindi in Devanagari as India's national language at the Nagari Pracharini Sabha in Banaras in December 1905.

III. The paradox of purity and pluralism

Vinayak Savarkar's *Bhāshā Shuddhikaran*, first published in 1926, was political surgery: a comprehensive project to replace Arabic and Persian borrowings in Marathi with Sanskrit-rooted coinages. The results are now embedded in daily speech across India. Savarkar coined or revived: *doordarshan* (television), *akashwani* (radio), *sansad* (parliament), and *hutatma* (martyr, one who has sacrificed their soul). *Doordarshan* became India's national television network. *Sansad* is in the Constitution. *Hutatma* names the traffic circle in central Mumbai where the martyrs of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement are commemorated. Savarkar's linguistic project is present in the names of the country's own institutions.

And yet it was also Savarkar who telegrammed the Constituent Assembly in August 1949 with the request: "I beseech the Constituent Assembly to adopt Bharat as the name of our nation, Hindi as the national language, and Nagari as the national script." He saw a purified, Sanskrit-rooted Hindi as the proper national language of a Hindu civilisation in the throes of revival. He was a fierce champion of Marathi within Maharashtra but an advocate for Hindi outside it. Savarkar never resolved this contradiction; perhaps he did not see it as such.

On the day Hindi was formally adopted as the official language of the Union, the Maharashtrian Congress leader Shankarrao Deo spoke not against Hindi but for a different conception of India entirely:

"It is not uniformity but unity in diversity. It is *Vividhata* (diversity) that India stands for. That is our richness; that is the contribution that India can make to the world-culture and world progress... I admit India is a nation and I am an Indian, but if you will ask me what is your language, Sir, you will excuse me if I say 'My language is Marathi'... If you mean by national language one language for the whole country, then I am against it."

And on Marathi's sufficiency: "I do not want to belittle the culture or the richness of Hindi, but as far as culture goes, I can receive it from my own language, Marathi and Sanskrit, the grandmother of all languages. They are rich enough to do that."

B.R. Ambedkar's position in the same debate was, characteristically, more layered. As Chairman of the Drafting Committee, he ultimately presided over the adoption of Hindi as the official language, a constitutional outcome he accepted as the will of the majority. But he warned, on September 14, 1949, that Hindi speakers, while a significant group, remained "a minority of the population," and that privileging one language risked fracturing the federal spirit. His earlier pamphlet *Maharashtra as a Linguistic Province (1948)*, submitted to the Dar Commission, had already argued formally for a unified Marathi-speaking State - the position eventually vindicated by the creation of Maharashtra in 1960. And his *Thoughts on Linguistic States (1955)*, written in the last year of his life, articulates with characteristic rigour his conviction that the stability of Indian democracy depends on the recognition of linguistic identity at the level of the state: "One State, one language" is a universal democratic principle, not a nativist claim.

Ambedkar's great argument in the Assembly, for mother-tongue primary education as a precondition of democratic participation, is perhaps his most durable contribution to the language question. Speaking on September 2, 1949, he argued that a child educated in a language foreign to their home is disadvantaged from the start in the race for knowledge and civic life. For communities already disadvantaged by centuries of caste exclusion, that additional burden is not merely unfair. It is politically disabling.

IV. Blood at flora fountain

The constitutional settlement did not resolve Maharashtra's boundaries. On January 15, 1956, Nehru declared Bombay a Union Territory. The streets filled immediately.

The Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti, formed on 6 February 1956 with Prabodhankar Thackeray, poet and father of Bal Thackeray, among its key members, organised a sustained campaign of strikes and mass demonstrations. Morarji Desai, Chief Minister of Bombay State, ordered police to fire. On November 21, 1955, police opened fire on demonstrators at Flora Fountain, killing fifteen. In the months that followed, as Morarji Desai continued ordering police action, the death toll climbed. It reached 106 before the movement was over. The square was later renamed Hutatma Chowk, using a word coined by Savarkar.

Maharashtra was formed on May 1, 1960. The memory of those 106 is not ceremonial. It connects every subsequent confrontation over the language to the knowledge that recognition required blood, and that the State did not hesitate.

Bal Thackeray, son of Prabodhankar, launched *Marmik* in 1960 and the Shiv Sena on June 19, 1966, to protect the cultural and economic standing of Marathi workers in a city filled with migrants. The Sena began by targeting South Indians, then pivoted as the demographics of migration shifted northward.

By the 1990s, the name of Bombay itself became a political question. The city's name derived from the Portuguese *Bom Bahia* (Good Bay), overlaid on the older name Mumbai, which itself derived from *Mumba Aai*, the name of the tutelary goddess Mumbadevi whose temple has stood on the site since before the Portuguese arrived. The Shiv Sena campaign to restore the name Mumbai, the name by which the city's original Koli fishing community and most Marathi speakers had always known it, succeeded in 1995 when the Sena-BJP government made the change official. The renaming was simultaneously a de-anglicisation and a re-Marathicisation: the city was being given back, in name, to the community that believed it most deeply belonged to them.

V. Indians first, Indians last

The 2025 government orders were resisted not out of hostility to Hindi but because state power was being used to privilege one language with material consequences for children. Children are required from age six to study a language their family does not speak, at additional expense, conferring benefit primarily on those seeking employment in the Hindi belt. Ambedkar said it in 1949: Education in a foreign language is not a gift. It is a burden. The coalition that formed, Uddhav and Raj Thackeray on the same platform, joined by literary organisations and citizens across party lines, reflects not party politics but civilisational memory.

Marathi is not threatened by other languages in the abstract. It is threatened by specific institutional arrangements that advantage one language over another in daily life. And Marathi itself has never been pure: its vocabulary retains Persian-derived words that centuries of use have made its own; its great literary tradition was radically inclusive. What it asks, what every living language asks, is not immunity from change but reciprocity: time to absorb change on its own terms rather than by institutional imposition.

B.R. Ambedkar, who had the foresight to see where competitive loyalties would lead, expressed his view of these fissiparous tendencies that would likely plague the future of India's body politic in his 1949 Constituent Assembly speech.

"We are all Indians. I do not like what some people say, that we are Indians first and Hindus afterwards or Muslim afterwards. I am not satisfied with that. I frankly say that I am not satisfied with that. I do not want our loyalty as Indians should in the slightest way affected by any competitive loyalty whether that loyalty arises out of our religion, out of our culture or out of our language. I want all people to be Indian first, Indians last and nothing else but Indians."

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

"What's the matter with you today? You look worried."

"Everyone in the company is worried. Atul is coming tomorrow. And everyone knows that he is the boss' hatchet man."

"Hatchet man?"

"Do you know what a hatchet is?"

"Of course I do. It's an axe. So is a 'hatchet man' someone who goes around killing people with an axe?"

"That was the original meaning, I believe. A 'hatchet man' was a hired assassin."

"What does the word mean now?"

"Nowadays the term is usually used to refer to someone who does all the dirty work for his boss. One of the meanings of 'hatchet man' is someone who is hired by a company to bring about changes which the employees may not like."

"Like getting rid of people?"

"Yes, downsizing is one of the things that a hatchet man does."

"Do you mean to say that all big companies have a hatchet man on their payroll?"

"That's right. Let me tell you, being a hatchet man is not an easy job."

"I don't want to be a hatchet man. Tell me, why do you bring back those silly paintings from the office every weekend? Why don't you just leave them there?"

"....we have been told never to leave anything in our office over the weekend. I understand there are several people who have sticky fingers."

"Sticky fingers? Then why don't you get them to wash their hands?"

"Ha! Ha! That's a good one. When you say that someone has sticky fingers, it implies he/she steals things. It's an expression used in informal contexts."

"I see. There is a rumour going around that Govinda has sticky fingers."

"Whenever Sunder visits our place several things go missing. There is no doubt about it. He has sticky fingers."

"My mother got rid of our maid because she had sticky fingers."

"Oh, by the way, there is an article about your favourite actor in today's newspaper. Have you read it?"

"No, what does it say?"

"According to the writer, your hero doesn't have horse sense."

"Do you mean to say that he doesn't know anything about horse racing?"

"No, no! When you say that someone has no horse sense, it implies that he has no common sense."

"Horse sense means common sense, eh? Our school Principal is not a great scholar, but he has enough horse sense to tackle everyday problems."

"Ramesh is of the opinion that women in general don't have horse sense."

"If Sujatha comes to know about this she will tear him to pieces. Do you know that Sujatha's father has bought Mr. Sinha's old car?"

"Good grief! Why has he bought that dreadful thing! He's really scraped the bottom of the barrel to get that old car."

"...scraped the bottom of the barrel? I can probably guess the meaning of the expression. Usually when you scrape the bottom of the barrel, you get a lot of things that you don't need."

"....excellent. It means that he/she is choosing from the worst."

"He is choosing from what is left over."

"Exactly! When Sujatha asked Rakesh whether he would be interested in going to the concert with her, she knew she was scraping the bottom of the barrel."

"When the company hired you, I knew they were scraping the bottom of the barrel. Ha! Ha!"

Published in The Hindu on March 27, 2001

Word of the day

Divagate:
lose clarity or turn aside, especially from the main subject of attention or course of argument in writing, thinking, or speaking

Synonyms: deviate, diverge, differ, drift

Usage: *She began to divagate during the meeting.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/divagate

International Phonetic Alphabet: /daɪvəɡeɪt/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey* officially made its premiere this week, with critics giving it rave reviews. A quiz on ancient Greek literature

Joan Sony Cherian

QUESTION 1
An easy one. A translation of the *Odyssey* by this scholar has been subject to controversy ever since Mr. Nolan mentioned it in an interview. Name the scholar.

QUESTION 2
Ancient Greek plays were categorised into two forms: comedies and tragedies. Aristotle considered this the important element of a play. Name it.

QUESTION 3
This Greek tragic character gouges his eyes out after learning a terrible truth. Name the character, the play, and the tragedian who wrote the play. The name of the character is also associated with a famous psychoanalytical theory.

QUESTION 4
The Odyssey is an epic poem written by Homer, considered to be a foundational work of classical literature. However, this ancient Greek philosopher was of the opinion that poetry and theatre were morally corrupt, and that poets should be banished. Name him.

QUESTION 5
The Iliad is also an epic poem by Homer. What is its famous opening line?

Visual Question:
This rap artist stars in Nolan's *Odyssey*. Name him and the role he plays in the film. AP

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. Name the four distinct guarantees contained in Section 1 of the Fourteenth Amendment. **Ans: Citizenship Clause, Privileges or Immunities Clause, Due Process Clause, and Equal Protection Clause**
2. The Citizenship Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment overturned which infamous 1857 U.S. Supreme Court judgment? **Ans: The Dred Scott v. Sandford decision**
3. Which phrase in the opening sentence of Section 1 begins the Citizenship Clause? **Ans: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof..."**
4. Under Section 3, what vote of Congress is required to remove the disqualification from office? **Ans: A two-thirds vote of each House of Congress**
5. Section 3 of the Fourteenth Amendment originally targeted former officeholders who had supported which conflict? **Ans: The American Civil War, specifically those who joined the Confederacy after swearing to support the U.S. Constitution**
Visual: Identify this U.S. Supreme Court Justice who, as a lawyer, served as chief counsel for the plaintiffs in the landmark Brown v. Board of Education (1954) case. **Ans: U.S. Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall**
Early Birds: Tamal Biswas | Sunil Madhavan | Suchit Narottam | Sitaram Saharay | Pankaj Gharde