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India, China hold military talks in Arunachal Pradesh

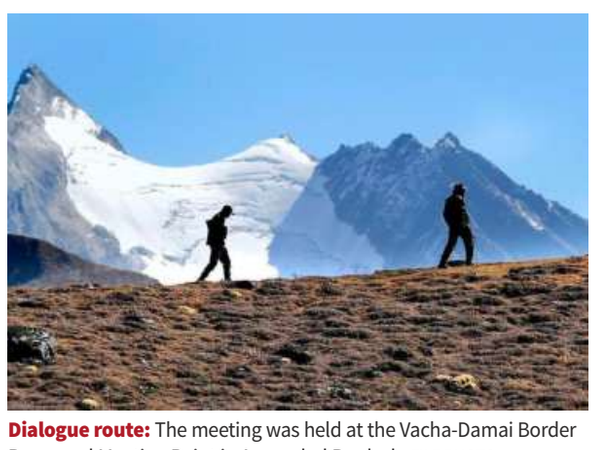
Corps Commander-level meeting comes ahead of BRICS Summit, which the Chinese President is expected to attend; the talks were held amid concerns over military build-up along the LAC

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

Amid concerns over conflicting territorial claims and military build-up along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Indian and Chinese Armies held their first Corps Commander-level meeting in the Eastern Sector on Sunday, marking a significant expansion of the military dialogue mechanism beyond the Ladakh sector.

The meeting was held at the Vacha-Damai Border Personnel Meeting Point in Arunachal Pradesh amid reports of tension in the Taksing area of Upper Subansiri district.

According to Defence Ministry sources, Lieutenant-General Girish Kalia, Commander of the 3 Corps (Spear Corps), led a 12-member delegation that included an Inspector-General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police.



Dialogue route: The meeting was held at the Vacha-Damai Border Personnel Meeting Point in Arunachal Pradesh. FILE PHOTO

The 3 Corps, headquartered at Rangapahar in Nagaland, is responsible for operational areas along the LAC in Arunachal Pradesh. The Indian Army has two Corps formations responsible for the frontier in the State – the Tezpur-based 4 Corps and the Rangapahar-based 3 Corps.

The talks are significant as Corps Commander-level meetings between the two Armies have largely been held at the Chushul-Moldo Border Meeting Point in eastern Ladakh, particularly after the June 2020 Galwan Valley clashes. The meeting comes days before India hosts the BRICS Summit in New Delhi from September 11 to 13, which Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to attend.

The latest meeting comes amid reports of continued Chinese activity and alleged incursions in the Taksing area, despite two high-level engagements since July.

Until now, the Corps Commander-level mechanism had primarily been used to address military issues and tensions along the western sector of the border in Ladakh.

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Spurious liquor kills 11 in M.P.; CM orders probe

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

At least 11 people died after consuming spurious liquor in Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday.

Narendra Solanki, Additional Superintendent of Police of Sagar, told *The Hindu* that those who fell ill were hospitalised. "But all are out of danger now," he said.

Officials said that early on Sunday, people fell ill in four villages – Nauraj, Gogra Khurd, Bamura, and Patan.

Sagar Collector Pratibha Pal said the post-mortem examinations were still under way and the administration was on the lookout for people who had fallen ill. Ms. Pal said a few post-mortem examinations indicated that consumption of methyl alcohol may have caused the deaths. "Interactions with local people indicated that the deaths occurred after they (victims) consumed illegal, spurious liquor," she said.

Tragic incident: A person being airlifted to AIIMS, Bhopal for advanced treatment on Sunday. He died in the hospital. A.M. FARUQUI

Following directions from Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, the State government launched a police investigation, suspended three excise officials and two police officers, and relieved one excise official from duty and transferred her.

Speaking in New Delhi, Mr. Yadav termed the deaths "extremely distressing and unfortunate" and said "no guilty party will be spared".

Deepak Saxena, the State Excise Commissioner, told *The Hindu* that action had been taken against four officials for serious negligence and for failing to act on recent complaints about the sale of spurious liquor in some villages of the district.

Sagar Superintendent of Police Anurag Sujania said 12 suspects had been detained and were being questioned.

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Five killed as building housing students collapses in Delhi

Shrimansi Kaushik
NEW DELHI

Five persons were killed when a five-storey building housing college students collapsed on Sunday in Satya Niketan, a densely populated hub for paying guest accommodation near the South Campus of Delhi University.

Of the 11 people pulled out of the debris, four were declared brought dead at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. One was in critical condition and died later.

A first information report under Sections 105, 290 and 125 (a) of the BNS has been filed against the building owner, Hariram Bansal, and others.

The building housed a PG accommodation named Hostel Daze. Local people said the structure, comprising a basement and five floors, was at least 50 years old. They added that nearly 30 students were staying in the building. Repair work was under way in the basement, the police said.

Rescue workers at the site on Sunday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

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Unfair to blame me for Rahman's visit being put off: Hasina

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

After a controversy over her August 5 press conference here, Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina defended her right to hold media conferences and meet Awami League party colleagues.

"How can a press conference damage India-Bangladesh relations? I did not know that I was so powerful," Ms. Hasina said speaking to *The Hindu* over the telephone from an undisclosed location. "My intention was never to damage anything," she said. Ms. Hasina fled to India after protests erupted in Bangladesh in 2024. She said it was unfair of the Bangladesh government to suggest that her public interactions were the reason for a visit by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to Delhi to be put off.

Ms. Hasina, who faces a death sentence for ordering a police crackdown on student protesters in 2024 in which hundreds were killed, refused to apologise for the killings, citing the deaths of policemen and her party members during that time.

She called on the international community to press for a revocation of the ban on the Awami League.

INTERVIEW ON
» PAGE 9

1,749 villages lack State-run bus connectivity

Darshan Devaiah B.P.
BENGALURU

As many as 1,749 villages in Karnataka remain without bus services operated by the State-run transport corporations, according to Transport Department data. Of these, 325 villages do not have roads suitable for bus services, or the movement of heavy vehicles, posing a major challenge to extending public transport connectivity.

The four State-run transport corporations – Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), North Western Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC), and Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (KKRTC) – are expected to collectively cover 32,977 villages across Karnataka.

The four State-run transport corporations are expected to collectively cover 32,977 villages. K. MURALI KUMAR

Transport facilities are currently available in 31,228 villages, while 1,749 villages remain without State-run bus connectivity.

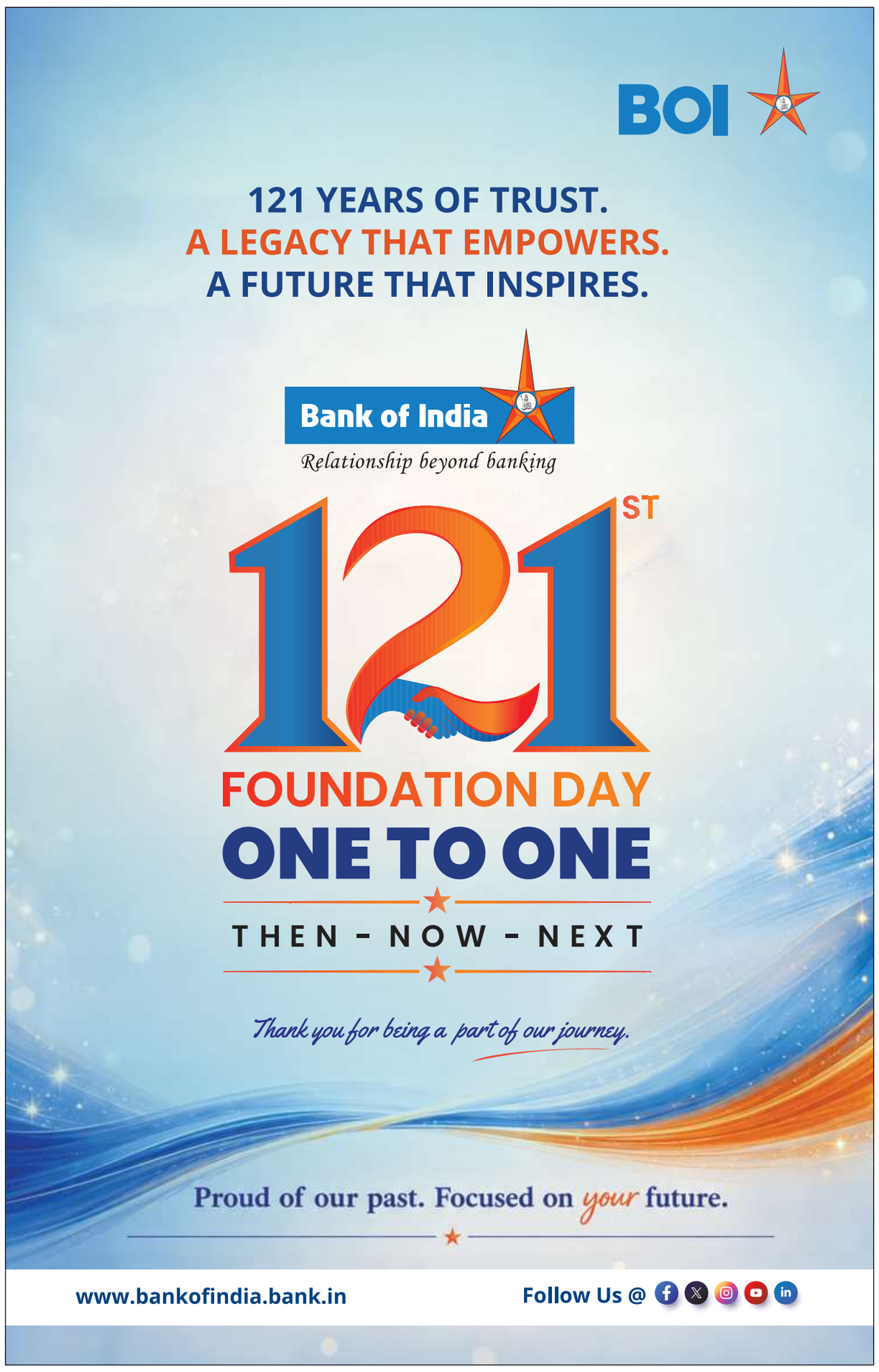
"The current action plan for the 2026-27 financial year proposes measures to arrange new schedules and provide the required bus facilities," an official said.

The RTCs are facing a shortage of new vehicles, drivers, and other operational staff. According to officials, steps are being taken to procure additional vehicles and recruit the required personnel so that bus services can be extended in a phased manner to villages that lack connectivity.

An official said, "The RTCs are assessing demands from villages that currently lack public transport. We are working to provide the necessary basic infrastructure and facilities. Requirements are being reviewed continuously to identify villages where services can be introduced, with the aim of expanding connectivity."

Obstacle

Transport expert M.N. Srihari said that the lack of reliable public transport in remote villages remains a major obstacle to socio-economic development, particularly at a time when welfare initiatives, such as the Shakti scheme, have increased the importance of affordable mobility.



CEO makes SIR notice list public after outcry

A total of 43.81 lakh people across Karnataka have been marked to receive notices

Rishita Khanna
BENGALURU

After sustained public pressure, with several people reporting that they had received notices at the last minute, leaving them with a narrow window to respond, the Karnataka Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) has made the notice list public.

A total of 43.81 lakh people across the State have been marked to receive notices.

The public can now access the list, with district-wise files uploaded on the website, similar to the ASDDO list. The list can be accessed at https://ceo.karnataka.gov.in/notices_issued.html.

With hearings having begun on Thursday across Karnataka, the situation has left many people with no option but to miss their hearings because of the short notice and lack of prior information.

While the list has been made public, it only indicates that a person has been marked for a notice. It does not specify the hearing venue, date or time. This leaves voters in the dark about when and where they are expected to appear, adding to the confusion and burden surrounding an already opaque process.

Short notice: Several people have reported that they have received notices at the last minute, leaving them with a narrow window to respond. ALLEN EGENUSE J.

The major hurdle flagged by electors is that only the person issued the notice can appear for the hearing, and no one else can represent the voter at the hearing venue.

Moreover, a hearing can be rescheduled only once, at the discretion of the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO).

Electors have also flagged that Booth Level Officers (BLOs) are not visiting voters' homes to serve notices, but are instead asking them to collect the notices from the polling station, citing their duties at hearing venues. However, the hearings are to be conducted by the Assistant Electoral Registration Officer (AERO) or Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), not the BLOs.

Notices have been issued for two broad reasons: non-mapping, where a voter could not map their own or their parent's details to the 2002 electoral rolls, and anomalies or "logical discrepancies", such as an implausible age gap between an elector and their parents or grandparents, differences in the spelling of the father's name, or a mismatch in the voter's own name in cases of self-mapping.

However, while these are the stated reasons for generating notices, several people in Bengaluru have reported receiving notices despite having filled in all their details correctly.

Even where a voter has correctly provided all the required details and there is no actual logical discrepancy or mapping gap, being wrongly issued a notice does not spare them from the inquiry. Recently, in Byatarayanapura, the Bengaluru DEO found that three people had been issued notices despite them providing the correct mapping details. Yet, the order still required them to appear for an inquiry. The entire burden continues to fall on the voter, even when the error is not theirs.

'We are not friends of the people responsible for killing Gauri Lankesh'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Rejecting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's attempt to address young people as friends, All India Students' Association (AISA) joint secretary Danish Ali said, "We (the youth) are not friends of the people who are responsible for killing people like Gauri Lankesh."

Speaking at a Gauri Memorial Trust event to mark Gauri Day as Gen Z Day, Ms. Ali said the younger generation was in a continuing political struggle with the present BJP government and would remain so until it could reclaim democratic India. "We (Gen Z) are in the middle of a struggle with you, and we will continue this struggle until we reclaim our victory. Until we make this country actually democratic in reality," she said.

Ms. Ali recalled that she was a school student when Gauri Lankesh was murdered in 2017, and how the killing made her understand the cost of speaking against the growing Hindutva extremism in the country.

Gauri, she said, was among those targeted because she opposed "fascist" forces and the forces of "extremism and terrorism".

Ms. Ali said Gauri's killing should also be remembered alongside other instances of violence and repression involving people who challenged the same ideological forces. Referring to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, she said he too was killed by people belonging to the same ideological stream. "It is the ideology that we need to fight right now," she said.

Director Kavita Lankesh, CJP national spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka, SFI national joint secretary Aishe Ghosh and AISA joint secretary Danish Ali at the event on Sunday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

> Gauri was among those targeted because she opposed fascist forces and the forces of extremism and terrorism
>
> **DANISH ALI**
> Joint secretary, AISA

She also referred to the deaths of Govind Pansare, M.M. Kalburgi, G.N. Saibaba and Father Stan Swamy, while pointing to the continued incarceration of student activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam as examples of the wider struggle over dissent and democratic rights.

Student Federation of India (SFI) national joint secretary Aishe Ghosh, who also spoke at the event, described Gauri's life as a testament to the importance of speaking up against injustice. Gauri, she said, was someone who did not merely write about her political convictions but lived them. For young people, Gauri's example had become a source of strength in asserting their right to hold opinions, exchange ideas and dissent, she said.

Ms. Ghosh said young people entering educational institutions after 2014 had increasingly found it difficult to speak up, particularly on issues involving marginalised and minority communities.

She argued that those who raised their voices for socio-economically marginalised sections were increasingly targeted, while young people were being made to believe that the politics they chose had to conform to what those in power considered acceptable. This, she said, had pushed many towards "neutrality", with people believing that staying away from political positions would keep them safe.

The speakers also raised concerns over extreme communalism and the growing commercialisation and privatisation of education.

CJP national spokesperson and co-convener Ashutosh Ranka said if Gauri was alive, she would have been a "proud cockroach". He then turned to the state of government schools, arguing that their condition could not be explained just by a "lack of funds but purely reflected a lack of political will". He questioned why politicians would be concerned about the public education system when many of them themselves own private schools.

FSDA raids e-commerce storage facilities, seizes medicines

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Drugs Enforcement Wing of the Karnataka Food Safety and Drug Administration (FSDA) raided unlicenced e-commerce storage facilities and seized large stocks of unauthorised medicines on Sunday.

The crackdown on the illegal storage and distribution of pharmaceuticals happened following precise intelligence information regarding major compliance breaches.

While one team led by Manohar, Assistant Drugs Controller (ADC) from the State Intelligence Branch, raided a unit in Anekal, another team led by Vibha, Drugs Inspector, Bangalore Rural, raided another unit in Devanahalli. Mr. Manohar, along with other drugs inspectors, raided the unlicenced premises of Amazon Seller Services Private Limited located in Thattanahalli, and seized medicines worth ₹2,45,352.

The medicines were stored without a valid drug licence. IMAGE FOR REPRESENTATION

At the same time, the team in Devanahalli seized illegally stored medicines worth ₹1,57,000 from another unlicenced facility of Amazon at Aerospace Park.

Students should become employers, not just employees: Shivakumar

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar emphasised that students should not just become employees, but also become employers. "Our State has a good talent pool compared to any other State in the country and we want students to make the most of this expo to reach at a global level," he said, speaking at the second edition of Study Abroad Expo organised by the Government of Karnataka here on Sunday.

"Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar, and Raja Ram Mohan Roy have studied abroad and led our country. The Karnataka government has provided this opportunity for students to choose and study in various foreign universities," he said.

More than 80 universities participated in the Study Abroad-2026 programme, in Bengaluru on Sunday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

"More than 80 universities have participated in this expo, providing opportunities for study in more than 300 subjects. In addition, special scholarships are being provided by various government departments. Various banks are providing assistance and loan facilities of up to ₹2 crore. Students of the State should make good use of this opportunity," he said.

"There are around 140 international schools in India of which 38 schools are in Bengaluru. Such diversity of schools and students studying there is the strength of the State," he added.

Meanwhile, Sharan Prakash Patil, Minister for Skill development, Entrepreneurship, Livelihood and Medical Education, said, "The intention behind this programme is to connect aspiring students with international universities on a common platform and make their journey hassle free."

"A lot of students had also complained to us how they were cheated of money by private organisations by promising them to send to foreign universities for higher studies. Hence, we decided to launch this programme from last year," the Minister added.

London-bound plane makes 'emergency landing' at KIA

Press Trust of India
BENGALURU

A London-bound Virgin Atlantic flight carrying 270 passengers was forced to make an "emergency landing" at the Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru on Sunday after developing a technical glitch shortly after take-off, sources at Bangalore International Airport Limited, which operates KIA, said.

The flight took off from KIA at around 8.20 a.m. but reportedly developed a technical issue soon after departure, prompting the crew to circle the aircraft near Tumakuru for more than half an hour before returning to Bengaluru. "All passengers on board are safe," sources at BIAL said, adding that the aircraft was brought back to KIA as a safety precaution and made an emergency landing.

The flight was carrying approximately 270 passengers. IMAGE FOR REPRESENTATION

The exact nature of the technical problem was not immediately known. Authorities are looking into the cause of the incident. There was no immediate reaction from the airlines. The flight was carrying approximately 270 passengers bound for London.

Clay or PoP? Bengaluru's Ganesha idol makers, sellers face uneasy choice

Rashmi Patil
BENGALURU

While the State government, NGOs, and environmental activists are encouraging people to purchase eco-friendly Ganeshas for the upcoming Ganesh Chaturthi festival, idol makers and sellers say that people still prefer buying coloured Ganeshas for celebrations at home and Plaster of Paris (PoP) Ganeshas for pandal celebrations.

The Hindu visited some of the places in the city, including Pottery Town, Mavalli, and Seshadripuram, where Ganesha idols have been prepared, displayed, and sold in large numbers for more than five decades.

Shashikumar, a fourth-generation member of the Kumbara community involved in selling Ganesha idols at Pottery Town, said, "Earlier, our family used to prepare Ganesha idols, but due to space constraints as well as a lack of availability of clay and skilled labour, I now buy idols from makers in Hosur. While I understand that PoP idols are harmful to the environment, many customers prefer buying them, and at the same time, idol makers invest crores in making them."

A brush with faith: Artisans in Pottery Town putting finishing touches to Ganesha idols ahead of Ganesha Chaturthi. ALLEN EGENUSE J.

He added, "If the government has to create awareness and stop PoP idols from coming into the market, then they must start creating awareness as early as November, almost immediately after the festival. It is at this time that makers invest money in materials and labour to make idols. Creating awareness at the last minute doesn't help, as these idols would have already entered the market."

Mr. Shashikumar also said that one cannot make idols as huge as six to 12 feet using clay. "They turn out to be heavy, making them difficult to lift, and structuring them is a challenge. Hence, all large idols are made of PoP and paper."

Mr. Shashikumar further said that making PoP idols is easier than making idols from clay.

He explained, "The materials used in PoP help the idols mould easily with designs and shapes, and they dry within six hours. The colours can also be sprayed immediately. Meanwhile, clay idols have to be prepared three months in advance so that they dry well to be painted later."

Meanwhile, Govardhan, another member of the Kumbara community, said, "There are fewer families who prefer to buy handmade, eco-friendly idols from our shops compared to those who order the moulded and coloured ones. There are only 200 such families traditionally buying clay idols from my shop. If I make a larger number of eco-friendly idols, I will suffer a loss. Hence, there are more coloured idols than handmade and plain ones."

Mr. Govardhan added, "Sourcing clay is another challenge for idol makers. Earlier, it was available to us in and around the city lakes. With the number of lakes reduced, there is no soil, and we are forced to buy it from Bagalur Road, Hoskote, etc. A small load of clay costs ₹12,000."

When asked about the type of colours used in painting Ganesha idols, he said, "These are not harmful ones. Earlier, we used oil paint, but that was poisonous to water bodies. Now, we use water paint, which is chemical-free."

However, Nandeesh from Bettahalsuru, who is exclusively into making eco-friendly idols, said, "Idol makers claim that these water paints are not harmful. But they do contain chemicals and leave residue in water. In order to protect water bodies from pollution, I do my bit by making plain clay idols. The prices for plain ones are supposed to be higher in comparison to the coloured ones; however, the prices for our idols range from ₹50 to ₹500. I limit myself to making only 1.5-foot idols."

SOT to prevent sale of PoP idols

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Minister for Forest, Ecology, and Environment Ramalinga Reddy has announced a Special Operation Team to prevent the manufacturing and sale of PoP Ganesha idols that harm the environment. They will be assisted by the local police and other departments, he noted.

He also said that the team inspected 214 shops and warehouses in Shivamogga, Tumakuru, Bagalkot, Haveri, Gadag, Dharwad, Kalaburagi, Bidar, Yadgir, Ballari, Koppal, Raichur, and Vijayanagara districts, where they were being manufactured without following the guidelines, and 1,283 such idols were confiscated. He urged the general public to purchase eco-friendly idols for the festival and save lakes.

Tigress dies

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Dashami, a 17-year-old tigress, died at the Tyavarekoppa Tiger and Lion Safari in Shivamogga on Sunday.

According to a communique, the tigress died of geriatric complications, particularly paraplegia, which had set in suddenly; she had been undergoing treatment for the last 10 days.

Dashami was one of two tigers born at the zoo on October 19, 2009, during the Vijaya Dashami festival.

Timings
BENGALURU

MONDAY, SEP. 07			
RISE	06:09	SET	18:26
RISE	02:11	SET	15:31
TUESDAY, SEP. 08			
RISE	06:09	SET	18:26
RISE	03:14	SET	16:22
WEDNESDAY, SEP. 09			
RISE	06:09	SET	18:25
RISE	04:14	SET	17:09

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	34	15
Mysuru	34	19
Bengaluru	32	21

Bengaluru Today
29°C The weather will be slight warm. Night will be pleasant. Spell of light rain and thundershower may occur.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
31°C Morning will be pleasant. Day will be slight warm. Night also will be pleasant. Mosty dry weather to occur.

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THE HINDU
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GBA plantation drive: Only 67 of 394 RWA sites qualify

A source in the GBA says RWAs are very enthusiastic, but most of the locations they identified had narrow lanes, concreted surroundings, drain-line hindrances and other issues

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Greater Bengaluru Authority's (GBA) plan to plant 64,000 saplings in collaboration with Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) has hit a roadblock, with field verification by the corporations finding only 67 of the 394 applications feasible.

According to data available with *The Hindu*, the GBA saw a massive response to the community plantation drive, with corporations receiving 394 applications seeking 54,623 saplings. However, not all applications met the criteria set by the GBA. Of the total number of saplings sought, 14,846 were for areas falling outside the GBA's jurisdiction.

When field verification was carried out for the remaining applications, only 67 applications seeking 5,530 saplings fulfilled all the criteria, including minimum area requirements, minimum sapling requirements and sapling specifications.

A source in the GBA said RWAs were excited, but most places they identified had narrow lanes, concreted surroundings, drain-line hindrances and other issues. "We are already witnessing hundreds of tree falls, and this year in particular, we have had over 1,000 trees uprooted despite a weak monsoon. We are being specific about locations and dimensions to ensure these trees do not make streets unsafe," the officer said. However, individuals seeking saplings have shown significant interest, with 3,265 saplings sought, underscoring the growing interest among citizens in increasing the city's green cover.

Rooted in intent: Individuals seeking saplings have shown significant interest, with 3,265 saplings sought. SUDHAKARA JAIN

The drive, launched under the banner 'Bengaluru Hasiruru', aims to plant 64,000 saplings across the city

Identification of spots

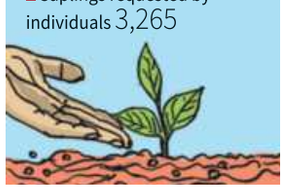
As a mandatory exercise, Bengaluru's civic bodies have to plant one lakh saplings every year. However, Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda recently criticised officials for the exercise remaining on paper and not translating into action on the ground. This led to the launch of the citizen-participation plantation drive. Under the 'Bengaluru Hasiruru' banner, Mr. Gowda announced the drive, which aimed to plant 64,000 saplings across the city. As the applications fell short, a GBA official said the corporations have now been tasked with identifying locations for planting the saplings as part of this year's quota.

"The civic bodies have been identifying places near lakes and along wider roads. Plantation will now be taken up at the corporation level, and the responsibility for maintenance will also rest with them," the official said.

Another official pointed out that citizen participation is crucial to preserving the city's green cover. The collaboration with citizens was a good model for ensuring maintenance of trees. However, there is currently no plan to reopen registrations for citizens, the official said. "It will be better if the maintenance of saplings is given to citizens because accountability will be higher. There will be collective opposition even if someone wants to axe a tree. Such a model will curb the illegal felling of trees in the future to a great extent," he said.

Growing demand

- Applications received from RWAs 394
- Saplings requested 54,623
- Saplings requested outside GBA limits 14,846
- Sites identified as suitable for plantation 67
- Planting capacity at identified sites 5,530 saplings
- Saplings requested by individuals 3,265



Hebbal Lake 'awareness' walk on short tunnel project called off after police issue notices

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Controversy has erupted over an alleged police restriction on an awareness walk titled "Protect our lakes and green spaces", organised by a civic group and scheduled to be held at Hebbal Lake on Sunday morning. A portion of the lake land is expected to be acquired for the proposed short tunnel project between Hebbal and the Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University.

While the group publicised the exercise as an awareness walk, the police allegedly sent notices stating that the civic forum was holding a protest walk from Dairy Science College to Hebbal Lake via Bhoopasandra Main Road. The notices said that, according to High Court directions, protests can be held only at Freedom Park and that any form of protest outside the said venue would attract action.

Activists from across the city were among those who allegedly received the notices

Interestingly, activists from across the city were among those who allegedly received the notices. The move came after a large gathering at Lalbagh last week for a walk protesting the proposed amendments to the Karnataka Parks (Preservation) (Amendment) Act, 1975, which drew thousands of participants.

Following the notices, the organisers called off the walk, citing the risk of violating High Court directions. However, a few people turned up at the venue on Sunday morning.

In a statement, the civic group said regular walkers and others who intended to join the walk found all entry gates to the Veterinary Sciences campus locked.

"Though the event was not a protest but a small walk by concerned citizens, the police insisted that a large protest against the short tunnel project was being organised," the group claimed.

However, a few people walked from the Veterinary Sciences campus to Hebbal Lake.

"Citizens should not be discouraged or intimidated when they are merely engaging with civic issues and seeking to stay informed about the city," the group said.

Soppu Mela concludes

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The two-day Desi Soppu Mela concluded in Mysuru on Sunday.

Farmers brought a wide range of medicinal and wild leafy greens for the fair, organised jointly by Sahaja Samrudha, Using Diversity, Hulikadu Farmers Producer Company and ICAR-JSS Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Suttur.

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Presided over by

Shri D. K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Government of Karnataka

Guests of Honour

Shri Basavaraj Raya Reddy
Hon'ble Minister of Higher Education, Government of Karnataka

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Make 'caste census' findings public, hike quota to 75%: Siddaramaiah

Former Chief Minister urges State govt. to act on the report, which was submitted to him shortly before he stepped down

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday demanded that the findings of the Socio-Educational Survey conducted by the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes, popularly referred to as the caste census, be made public.

Mr. Siddaramaiah also urged the State government to act on the report, which was submitted to him shortly before he stepped down as Chief Minister. The report has not yet been placed before the Cabinet.

The Karnataka State Backward Castes Federation has been demanding the implementation of the report in its original form, he said while speaking at the Federation's silver jubilee celebrations here, where he was felicitated.

Speaking at the convention organised by the federation, Mr. Siddaramaiah said the High Court had directed that the contents of the report not be made public. He appealed to federation president K.M. Ramachandrappa to take steps to get the stay vacated.

"I believe that everyone here, including the Chief Minister, will listen to me. The report must be implemented. You should get social justice. Dalits, backward classes and minorities should get up to 75% reservation. Everyone should get a reservation according to their population. Only then can an equal society be built," he said.

Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah during the Karnataka State Backward Castes Federation's silver jubilee programme at Palace Grounds in Bengaluru on Sunday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Quota

Mr. Siddaramaiah said quotas should reflect the population of different communities. He demanded political reservation based on population in the Lok Sabha and State legislatures to ensure equitable representation.

Mr. Siddaramaiah said there was "no shame" in identifying oneself as belonging to a backward caste and described the caste system as a historical source of inequality and denial of opportunities.

"I am a Shudra. We are all Shudras, including Lingayats and Vokkaligas," he said, arguing that communities classified as Shudras had historically been denied access to education and other opportunities. The federation's felicitation of Mr. Siddaramaiah provided him a platform to reiterate his social justice agenda.

Recalling his decision to withdraw from electoral politics, Mr. Siddaramaiah said elections had become prohibitively expensive. The former Chief Minister said he was withdrawing from electoral politics and not from public life.

Deputy Chief Minister G. Parameshwara hailed Mr. Siddaramaiah for mobilising the AHINDA (minorities, backward classes and SC/STs) bloc.

"He created the AHINDA movement to socially, politically, and economically strengthen communities that had been neglected. It was not just for his politics; AHINDA has been potent for our politics too," Mr. Parameshwara said.

'AHINDA is Congress ideology'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Sunday said the AHINDA (Kannada acronym for Minorities, Backward Classes and Dalits) bloc was central to the ideology of the Congress.

Speaking to reporters here, Mr. Shivakumar said, "AHINDA is ours. Congress ideology is AHINDA ideology. The Congress will continue to uphold its ideology towards the backward classes."

Prominent personality of AHINDA and Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi, who was not invited to the convention organised by the Karnataka State Backward Castes Federation, said AHINDA was not the personal property of anyone.

Apparently expressing displeasure over not being invited, Mr. Jarkiholi said, "I was not invited, so I did not go. This is not a serious issue. AHINDA is not the property of anyone. Anyone can claim the AHINDA identity."

KPSC scams: Two unrelated cases enmeshed in political rhetoric

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

The last fortnight has seen Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy making a slew of allegations against Home Minister Priyank Kharge in connection with an alleged scam in recruitment at the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC). Interestingly, the case he is referring to is unrelated to the ongoing probe by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in connection with another alleged scam in KPSC.

The CID is presently investigating three FIRs pertaining to alleged irregularities in recruitment handled by the KPSC. Two FIRs pertain to the recruitment of 400 veterinary officers, in which the CID has arrested IAS officer Gyanendra Kumar Gangwar, former Controller of Exams, KPSC, and a middleman. It is also probing another case against suspended KPSC Chairman Shivashankarappa S. Sahukar over alleged irregularities in the recruitment of his two daughters.

Meanwhile, digging up an older case, Mr. Kumaraswamy alleged that Mr. Kharge ignored alleged irregularities in the recruitment of 24 Assistant Executive Engineers (AEE) in the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) Department, when Mr. Kharge was heading it, and issued appointment orders in 2024, despite a letter from the KPSC to the contrary. The Home Minister has denied any role in the alleged scam.

Mr. Kumaraswamy has also alleged that the Home Minister was protecting Mr. Gangwar, though his primary allegations do not relate to the case currently being probed. Mr. Gangwar was not the Controller of Examinations, KPSC, when the RDPR recruitment exams were held in July 2023.

No criminal probe

Significantly, while the KPSC probed the alleged irregularities in the RDPR recruitment exam, there has been no complaint or FIR over this, and no criminal investigation is under way. Neither have the aspirants, who initially raised objections leading to a KPSC inquiry, nor the KPSC, which conducted the exam and later concluded that there are irregularities, nor the State government, in receipt of the inquiry report, thought it fit to initiate a criminal probe.

The provisional selection list for these RDPR exams was issued on September 22, 2023, following which an aspirant raised suspicions of irregularities. The KPSC set up a three-member committee, then disbanded it and formed a five-member committee. The committee found that the OMR answer sheets were tampered with using a carbon sheet, and an FSL probe proved it. However, before the final report was submitted, RDPR issued "conditional" appointment orders to the 24 in the selection list published by KPSC.

Mr. Kumaraswamy raised this issue nearly two years later, while a CID investigation into another case is ongoing. Mr. Kharge has questioned the timing of these allegations and asked Mr. Kumaraswamy if he had "taken a contract from the RSS" to target him, considering his sharp criticism of the RSS.

In his defence, Mr. Kharge has pointed out that the appointment orders issued were "conditional", subject to the outcome of the case. This was done before the KPSC Committee submitted its findings in February, 2026.

However, there is now a KPSC inquiry report alleging irregularities in the RDPR AEE recruitment exam, and the alleged beneficiaries are in service based on "conditional" appointment orders.

Those who have been fighting for reforms in KPSC demand that the case also be probed, like the alleged scam in veterinary officers' recruitment.

CORRIDORS OF POWER

A generational shift

Minister for Food and Civil Supplies Rizwan Arshad's visit to Mysuru last week turned into something of a grand homecoming, with several roads across the city lined with his posters, cut-outs, and flex boards.

Born and brought up in Mysuru, where he completed his schooling and college education and began his political journey through student union politics, Mr. Arshad, now the Shivajinagar MLA, combined official engagements with a touch of nostalgia.

Besides participating in a progress review meeting of his department, he met the heads of different religious communities and visited his alma mater.

However, a courtesy call on former Minister and current Narasimharaja MLA, Tanveer Sait, brought back memories of the political rivalry between their fathers – R.Q. Arshad and Azeez Sait. The elder Sait largely had the upper hand in those political battles. Decades later, however, the equation appears to have been reversed, with the younger Arshad emerging ahead of the younger Sait in the recent contest for a ministerial berth in the D.K. Shivakumar Cabinet. Politics, as they say, has a long memory – and an even longer way of evening the score.

PoP idols banned

With Ganesha Chaturthi approaching, Forest and Environment Minister Ramalinga Reddy has directed officials to intensify action against the manufacture and sale of Plaster of Paris (PoP) idols across Karnataka, citing concerns over environmental pollution and damage to aquatic ecosystems.

The Forest Department has constituted special task forces in Bengaluru, Bengaluru South, Mysuru, Mangaluru, Belagavi, Davangere, Dharwad, Kalaburagi, and Vijayanagara to identify and prevent the manufacture and sale of PoP idols and seize those found in violation of government guidelines.

In less than two weeks, the teams inspected 153 shops and warehouses and seized 872 PoP Ganesha idols that were allegedly being manufactured or sold in violation of the regulations. The State government has banned the manufacture, transportation, sale, and disposal of PoP Ganesha idols. Mr. Reddy has appealed to the public to support the move.

Govt. blamed for poor infrastructure

The poor condition of roads in the Peenya industrial area in Bengaluru has come under sharp scrutiny, with industrialists and citizens taking to social media to criticise the government over the state of the city's basic infrastructure.

Several posted on X, expressing concern over the neglect of roads and other civic infrastructure in the city. Some questioned whether the government and its Ministers were paying sufficient attention to basic urban issues, while others targeted Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, asking why more attention had not been given to road repairs in his constituency.

Some questioned whether taxpayers should be given relief on property tax if basic civic infrastructure, particularly roads, remained in poor condition. Many pointed to the poor condition of several major entry corridors into Bengaluru, including Mysore Road.

Laiqh A. Khan
Nagesh Prabhu

CM visiting North Karnataka after BJP announced Ballari padayatra, claims Vijayendra

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI

The BJP's 10-day Ballari Chalo padayatra, led by party State president B.Y. Vijayendra, entered its sixth day on Sunday, with party leaders interacting with farmers and shepherding communities along the route to highlight their issues.

Addressing a press conference at Jangamar Kalgudi, near Gangavathi, in Koppal district, Mr. Vijayendra stepped up his criticism of Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, asserting that the latter's visit to North Karnataka had gained momentum only after the BJP began the padayatra.

"Drought relief has not reached farmers. The schools and hospitals in the State are functioning without adequate staff. The government is reducing the number of BPL cards, thereby depriving poor families of welfare benefits," Mr. Vijayendra said.

BJP State president B.Y. Vijayendra interacting with a shepherd community during the Ballari Chalo padayatra on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

He criticised the government over the problems faced by shepherd communities, including inadequate facilities and difficulties in providing education and healthcare to their children. "The Chief Minister claims that he is a 'public servant'. Wearing a suit and travelling in a helicopter does not make anyone a public servant. A public servant is one who responds to people's problems and brings a change in their lives," he said.

Responding to a statement by Minister U.T. Khader that former Minister B. Nagendra would return to the Cabinet after receiving a clean chit in the alleged irregularities involving the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation, Mr. Vijayendra demanded that the ₹187 crore allegedly involved in the case be recovered first before making any claims.

Mr. Vijayendra visited a shepherd camp in Marali village before embarking on Sunday's march. He spoke to the community about their difficulties and spent some time with them. He also interacted with farmers regarding crop losses caused by the drought and discussed the need for the proposed Navali balancing reservoir.

State files plea before CWMA seeking cut in water release

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Ahead of the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee's (CWRC) meeting scheduled this week, Karnataka has filed an appeal before the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) seeking a reduction in water releases to Tamil Nadu from 9,000 cusecs a day, as ordered by it, to 2,000 cusecs.

It may be noted that the CWMA had upheld the CWRC's August 25 direction to Karnataka, asking it to ensure flows of 9,000 cusecs a day for 15 days from August 25 to be realised at the Biligundlu water gauge at the inter-State border.

According to the CWMA's order, the releases by Karnataka would total up to 11.66 tmcft.

The CWRC is meeting again on September 8 to review the ground-level situation.

On the same day, the CWMA is also meeting to review the situation.

Meanwhile, Karnataka has filed an appeal before the CWMA seeking a reduction in water releases on the grounds that the inflows into its Cauvery reservoirs are very low. It has also pointed out that the southwest monsoon is set to end soon, indicating that there is no hope for the State that there will be further inflows into its Cauvery reservoirs in the future.

Cautious approach

It may be noted that Karnataka, on August 25, had appealed to the CWMA to adopt a cautious approach while asking for any further releases, and requested the authority to reassess the situation after observing the forthcoming northeast monsoon.

The State had told the CWMA that its Cauvery basin area was facing severe hydrological distress, due to which cumulative inflows into its four reservoirs in the Cauvery basin were about 49.18% below the 30-year average.

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Minister-led delegation leaves for Europe to attract investments

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A high-level delegation led by Large and Medium Industries Minister M.B. Patil will visit France and the Netherlands from September 7 to 11 to hold roadshows and discussions with companies as part of efforts to attract investments to Karnataka.

The delegation left for France in the early hours of Sunday. Industries Department Principal Secretary S. Selvakumar, Commissioner Khushboo Goel, KIADB CEO Govind Reddy, Chief Minister's Deputy Secretary R. Yathish and other officials are part of the delegation.

In France, the delegation would be there from Monday to Wednesday.

On September 10 and 11, the delegation would be in the Netherlands.

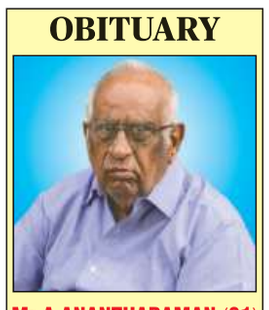
'Intense competition'

"If we want to attract more investment to the State and create jobs, we have to go to the place of investors. Otherwise, companies may choose to invest in other States. Given the intense competition from neighbouring States, we have been conducting roadshows and holding discussions in different countries and States over the past three years. The visit to France and the Netherlands is a continuation of this effort. It is an ongoing initiative," he said.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

OBITUARY



Mr A ANANTHARAMAN (91)
Retd. Chief Personnel Manager, The Hindu, Chennai
passed away on 6th Sept. 2026.
Address: A. Jayam
54/48, 28th Cross Street,
Indiranagar, Chennai-600020.
Contact:
9840380388 / 9840493030

DEATH

A. ANANTHARAMAN (91), Retired Chief Personnel Manager, The Hindu, Chennai passed away on 06-September-2026. Address: 54/48, 28th Cross Street, Indira Nagar, Chennai - 600020. Contact: 9840380388

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CORRIGENDUM OF NOTICE INVITING PROPOSALS

In partial modification of Notice Inviting Proposals (NIP) for implementation of 27 Hydro Electric Projects (HEPs) upto 25 MW having total capacity 300.9 MW with free power royalty rate uniformly @12% + 1% for entire period i.e. 40 years published on11.07.2026,which is also uploaded in the Directorate of Energy website i.e. https://doehimachal.nic.in, it is to inform that the last date of sale of Bid Documents, last date of submission of Bids and the date of opening of Bids are hereby extended as under :-

Last date for sale of Bid Documents : 07.10.2026 upto 1700 Hours
Tentative date of Pre-Bid Conference : 15.10.2026
Last date of submission of Bids : 30.10.2026 upto 1300 Hours (IST)
Date of opening of Bids : 30.10.2026 at 1500 Hours (IST) onwards

Note:-If the Last date for submission of Bids or the date of opening of bids happens to be a holiday declared by the Government of Himachal Pradesh in Shimla, the Bids will be submitted and opened on the next working day in the same order and at the same time.
The other terms & conditions of earlier published Notice Inviting Proposals on 11.07.2026 shall remain the same.

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SANGAM Vijaykumar s/o Vijayakumar Channappa born on 24/06/1993 residing at 83 Hanumakka Layout BLR 560 056, have changed my name to Ksangam Mahaapini Vijayakumar vide affidavit dated 02/09/2026 at Bengaluru.

I, NELUBALLI SUNNISUKANTH S/o N Umakantha Rao R/o–36A Basavaiah Palem Thottambedu Chittoor Andhra Pradesh –517642 I have changed my name to NELUBALLI SUNNY SUKANTH.

I, ASMA Madiha Iyaz Pasha W/o Iyaz Pasha residing at No.38 E No.4th Street, HKP Road Cross, Shivajinagar, Bengaluru-560051 have changed my name to Asma Madiha vide Affidavit dated 04.09.2026 before Meer Hassan, Notary, Bengaluru.

I, VAJEEHA Banu Kalkoni Mandya w/o Zia Ul Haque residing at Flat No. 02, 1st Cross, Haines Road, Bamboo Bazaar, Bengaluru-560001 have changed my name to Vajeeha Banu vide Affidavit dated 03.09.2026 before Meer Hassan, Notary, Bengaluru.

T.N. launches third phase of underwater archaeological survey off Poompuhar

N. Sai Charan
CHENNAI

In another step forward in tracing the maritime trade links of the ancient Tamils, the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology (TNSDA) commenced the third phase of underwater archaeological exploration off the coast of Poompuhar, the ancient port city once known as Kaveripoompattinam, in Mayiladuthurai district on Sunday.

Minister for School Education Rajmohan, who also holds the Archaeology portfolio, launched the underwater archaeological exploration at Poompuhar along with Director of Archaeology V.P. Jayaseelan, renowned archaeologist and scholar K. Rajan, former Joint Director of the TNSDA R. Sivanantham, and Joint Director (in-charge) V.P. Yathees Kumar.

Mr. Rajmohan and Mr. Jayaseelan also dived into the sea along with a team of trained divers and archaeologists. Mr. Jayaseelan told *The Hindu* the team set out to sea on a mechanised boat from a village between Thirumullaivasal and Poompuhar, went nearly two kilometres into the sea and dived to a depth of 10 metres to look for structures. He also said the visibility was relatively limited underwater.

Considering the pattern of ocean currents and the upcoming northeast monsoon season, the experts have planned to conduct the underwater exploration off the Poompuhar coast for nearly 20 days. This was the first time an underwater archaeological exploration had been carried out off the Poompuhar coast after the new government led by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay assumed office.

> The team set out to sea on a mechanised boat from a village between Thirumullaivasal and Poompuhar, went nearly two kilometres into the sea, and dived to a depth of 10 metres to look for structures
>
> **V.P. JAYASEELAN**
> Director of Archaeology

During the previous DMK regime, the underwater archaeological exploration off the Poompuhar coast was carried out by the TNSDA in collaboration with Indian Maritime University in September 2025.

Several literary works from the Sangam period, including Pattinappaalai, Silappadikaram and Manimekalai, as well as post-Sangam literature, contain references to the ancient port city of Poompuhar, its settlements and the maritime trade that flourished with Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia and the West.

Tamil Nadu looking to abolish State Planning Commission

The TVK-led government has not filled the posts of Vice-Chairperson and full-time members of the SPC after the resignation of the team appointed by the previous DMK government

T. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

It is likely to be curtains for the Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission (SPC), a body created 55 years ago.

The TVK-led government has not filled the posts of Vice-Chairperson and full-time members of the SPC after the resignation of the team appointed by the previous DMK government.

By convention, the incumbent Chief Minister, C. Joseph Vijay, is the ex-officio Chairperson of the SPC. The Chief Secretary (M. Sai Kumar) and the Finance Secretary (M.A. Siddique) are among the ex-officio members.

C. Joseph Vijay

At present, the body has only an IAS officer as the Member-Secretary.

The idea is "to abolish" the concept of the planning commission, says a senior official.

As the Commission's "only contribution" is to provide policy inputs, the government is considering subject-specific committees of various experts, he says.

For example, the State government has constituted a committee, chaired by former Deputy Chairman of the now-abolished Union Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia, to recommend measures to strengthen own-tax and non-tax revenues; improve buoyancy; plug leakages; and increase fiscal self-reliance.

Instead of having a standing body of experts, the TVK-led government hopes to derive more benefits by tapping into the services of various experts through different committees, according to sources.

After the country went in for economic liberalisation in the early 1990s, the relevance of the Planning Commissions, both at the Centre and in the States, got diminished, and this newspaper, even in the late 1980s, in a critique of the State Planning Commission, said the body rendered itself to be a "fifth wheel in the chariot".

Candidates stage protest on railway track

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

Candidates travelling from Vijayapura to Tumakuru and Bengaluru staged a protest on the railway track as the Vijayapura-Yeshwantpur train suffered technical glitches at Vijayapura on Saturday. They were to write the police constable recruitment examination.

Sources in South Western Railway (SWR) said that the train was supposed to depart from Vijayapura at 1.50 p.m. but began its journey by 2.35 p.m. The locomotive engine developed faults at Ibrahimpur. An estimated 1,000 candidates were travelling on the train. Angered by the delay, they blocked the Basava Express train coming from the opposite side and raised slogans against SWR.

Candidates staging a protest on the railway track at Vijayapura on Saturday.

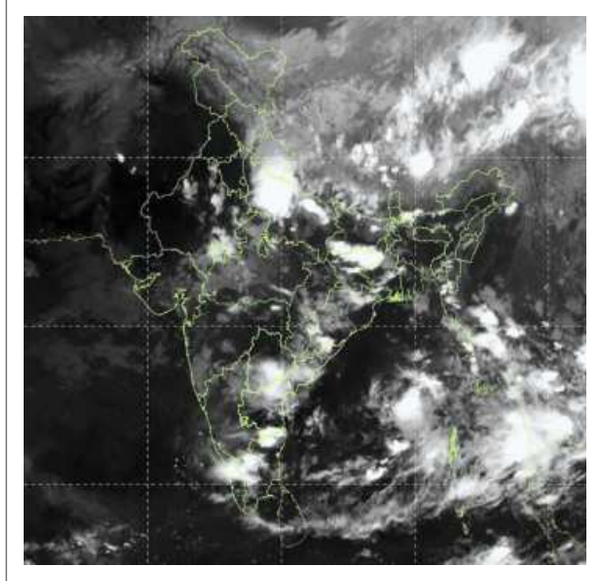
The SWR officials arranged for an alternative locomotive and the train started after a delay of four hours.

Candidates warned that if they lost the chance to appear for the examination, the SWR should bear the responsibility. The SWR then managed to run the train on priority basis and dropped candidates at Yeshwantpur on Sunday by 7.10 a.m. against its scheduled time of 5 a.m. The candidates were allowed to attend the examination.

Meanwhile, officers of the Government Railway Police detained the Sampark Kranti train heading to Chandigarh, on the suspicion of some Bangladeshis travelling on it. The action followed a complaint filed by members of a Hindutva organisation on Saturday. "As the train arrived by 7.30 p.m., the local police, along with the railway police, inspected the train. We did not find any Bangladeshi on the train," the police sources said.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday


TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Bihar, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and Sikkim. Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning and gusty winds very likely at isolated places over Andhra Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	10.0	31.0	26.5
Ahmedabad	—	32.5	26.0
Aizawl	3.0	31.8	24.5
Bengaluru	—	32.2	22.2
Bhopal	19.8	27.4	22.6
Bhubaneswar	44.4	34.6	22.4
Chandigarh	15.6	35.4	23.0
Chennai	0.1	36.5	27.3
Coimbatore	—	34.8	23.6
Dehradun	5.2	28.6	23.2
Gangtok	3.9	21.8	18.0
Goa	1.0	32.2	25.4
Guwahati	—	34.0	26.2
Hubballi	—	31.0	21.0
Hyderabad	—	33.1	24.6
Imphal	—	32.3	22.2
Jaipur	24.0	33.0	24.8
Kochi	—	31.0	26.8
Kohima	23.5	23.0	20.4
Kolkata	47.0	32.4	25.4
Kozhikode	—	33.4	26.5
Kurnool	—	37.4	26.3
Lucknow	—	32.5	25.5
Madurai	56.4	37.0	22.6
Mangaluru	—	31.6	25.0
Mumbai	4.7	30.5	26.0
Mysuru	—	34.2	19.8
New Delhi	19.0	28.5	24.4
Patna	68.1	33.0	26.2
Port Blair	0.4	29.6	25.8
Prayagraj	—	31.6	26.4
Puducherry	1.8	34.7	25.8
Pune	—	28.3	20.6
Raipur	1.0	31.7	24.4
Ranchi	—	31.5	21.0
Shillong	—	—	—
Shimla	2.0	25.0	15.0
Srinagar	0.4	30.2	14.1
Thiruvananthapuram	—	33.3	25.4
Tiruchirappalli	10.1	37.7	24.4
Vijayawada	—	36.0	26.0
Visakhapatnam	—	35.0	27.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	5	17	166	24	49	
Bengaluru	5	10	241	15	25	
Chennai	9	9	282	26	32	
Delhi	41	69	819	51	52	
Hyderabad	6	14	291	15	18	
Kolkata	13	13	796	38	42	
Lucknow	7	14	383	14	14	
Mumbai	8	10	240	12	21	
Pune	7	10	138	6	7	
Visakhapatnam	40	22	319	28	30	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 186 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 19

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

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Don't teach, steer

With Teachers' Day just past, an educator reflects on how restlessness among students is not a barrier to learning but an invitation to rethink how learning happens

Aruna Parandhama

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

As an educator who teaches the first class of the day, I am often entrusted with a daunting task: keeping a 7:00 am classroom awake and engaged. My students are largely pursuing professional qualifications in Commerce and Business Management, and many view subjects outside their immediate career goals as peripheral, resulting in a display of restlessness in class. Over the years, I have come to see restlessness among students not as a barrier to learning but as an invitation to rethink how learning happens. Students who appear distracted, impatient, or unwilling to sit through a lecture are often capable of remarkable intellectual engagement when given the opportunity to participate, rather than merely listen.

Willing to question

One particular episode unfolded in a General English course titled Contemporary Debates I: Negotiating Identities, offered to second-year undergraduate students. It introduces learners to questions surrounding nationhood, caste, gender, multiculturalism, and other forces that shape contemporary society through literary texts and emerging forms of expression. I chose to discuss the idea of borders through the poem Nation of Birds by K. Satchidanandan, which imagines a world in which birds move freely across territories, unconstrained by the borders that humans create and defend. The students understood the poem's central argument almost immediately. While my intention was to ensure that they agreed with the poet, I invited them to challenge him.

If there is one thing that adolescents are rarely short of, it is the willingness to question received wisdom. Educational psychologists like Eric Erikson and Jean Piaget have long noted that adolescence is a period marked by identity formation, scepticism, and the testing of boundaries. Rather than viewing these tendencies as disruptions to classroom order, I wanted to harness them.

I divided the class into two teams. One would defend the idea that national borders remain necessary; the other would argue against it. The only rule was that every claim had to be challenged. Students were encouraged to use their phones to access information, verify facts, and strengthen their arguments. To make the exercise more engaging, I gave it a dramatic title: Sink or Float. The objective was to keep your team's argument afloat while sinking the opposing side's position. What followed was one of the most animated discussions of the semester.

Wide-ranging discussion

Arguments emerged from all corners of the classroom. Some students insisted that borders are essential for security, governance, and national identity. Others questioned whether borders continue to serve their intended purpose in an increasingly interconnected world. One student remarked, "We are not birds; we cannot simply live without systems and structures." Another student challenged the assumption that existing political arrangements are immutable merely because they have existed for a long time.

The discussion moved swiftly from literature to history, politics, migration, and economics. Examples ranged from contemporary debates surrounding migration across the United States-Mexico border to questions of indigeneity, ancestry, and belonging. At that point, my role had ceased as a lecturer delivering content. I became a facilitator. I steered the discussion, introduced alternative perspectives, corrected facts, and encouraged students to support their claims with evidence. Whenever an argument became overtly rhetorical or speculative, I pushed the students to substantiate it. The learning emerged not only from my explanations but also from their engagement with one another. They were learning to construct tightly structured arguments, evaluate evidence, identify assumptions, and respectfully challenge opposing viewpoints. These are skills that extend far beyond the study of literature.

The students of today inhabit a world vastly different from the one in which we were raised. They are accustomed to interaction, immediacy, and participation. This does not mean that educators must constantly entertain students or transform every lesson into a spectacle. It means, however, that we must recognise the potential embedded within their energy.

That morning, I was reminded that meaningful learning often occurs when teachers relinquish a measure of control and allow students to take ownership of inquiry. Perhaps, then, the task of the contemporary educator is not simply to teach a restless class. It is to steer one. For within that restlessness lies the possibility of curiosity, critical thinking, and the kind of democratic dialogue that education, at its best, seeks to nurture.

The writer is an Assistant Professor, Department of English, St Joseph's College of Commerce, Bengaluru.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Buddy4Study Gati Shakti Scholarship
An initiative by Buddy4Study.
Eligibility: Indian students from Classes 9-12 or pursuing vocational, ITI, Polytechnic, UG or PG courses who are children/wards of heavy/light commercial vehicle drivers and have got minimum 60% in the previous class/semester and have an annual family income not exceeding ₹800,000.
Rewards: Up to ₹30,000.
Application: Online
Deadline: September 30
www.b4s.in/edge/B4SGS1

Reliance Foundation Postgraduate Scholarships
Offered by the Reliance Foundation.
Eligibility: Resident Indian citizens enrolled in the first-year of full-time PG programmes in Engineering, Technology, Energy and Life Sciences and have secured 550 to 1,000 in the GATE exam, or have a CGPA of 7.5 or above in their UG studies.
Rewards: Up to ₹600,000 for the duration of the course of study
Application: Online
Deadline: October 5
www.b4s.in/edge/RFS15

Swami Dayanand India Scholarship
Offered by the Swami Dayanand Education Foundation.
Eligibility: First-year students in full-time UG professional degree programmes (Engineering, Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy, Architecture, and Veterinary Science) in India with 80% in Class 12 and an annual family income of ₹1,200,000 lakh or less.
Rewards: Up to ₹50,000 per year.
Application: Online
Deadline: October 31
www.b4s.in/edge/SDIS2

Courtesy: Buddy4study.com

Steady gaze

ISRO's EOS-05 satellite has uses in varied areas from security to weather

The successful launch of the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) EOS-05 satellite is India's first earth-imaging satellite bound for a geosynchronous orbit, meaning that it is locked-in to the earth's rotation and can be tuned to continuously observe the same location. The rocket placed it in a transfer orbit early on Friday; onboard thrusters are expected to raise it to its final perch at some 36,000 kilometres above the earth's surface over the coming weeks. From there it can track fast-changing events such as floods, cyclones and forest fires, and monitor crops, forests, water bodies and land use. Unlike a conventional camera, its sensors examine how the earth's surface reflects different wavelengths of light, helping distinguish vegetation, water and other land cover. Because it is perched farther away than conventional low-orbit imaging satellites, its strength is not ultra-fine detail but the ability to return to the same broad areas very frequently. India has long had eyes in geostationary orbit, but they have been weather satellites, namely the INSAT-3D series. Its dedicated earth-imaging satellites have operated in low, polar or sun-synchronous orbits. Flying a few hundred kilometres up, they capture much finer detail, but move constantly around the planet, imaging a different strip of territory on successive passes and taking days to return.

EOS-05's timing could hardly be better. Given the devastation by the Bhote Koshi deluge in Nepal, which has claimed 1,344 lives, such satellites can play some role in understanding changes in landforms and how they may act as precursors to glacier-breaks and avalanches. Or, as winter approaches in north India, in establishing whether stubble fires over Punjab have genuinely declined or burning has simply shifted in time to slip past the polar satellites. ISRO has described the EOS-05 as a "strategic" satellite, a term that stretches from security to weather. All of this is premised on the data reaching a wide enough set of analysts who can turn the images into forecasts and actionable insight. There is cheer, too, that ISRO's first successful launch of 2026 – and another vote of confidence in the cryogenic stage that failed the agency in 2021 – comes after setbacks. But that does not soften the temperamental nature of launches. Two consecutive failures of the PSLV, the agency's workhorse since the 1990s, in May last year and again this January, both traced to the third stage, suggest that dependability is not infallibility. The usefulness of its payloads, and the cadence of its launches, should be ISRO's calling card, rather than any single launch as the hallmark of institutional credibility.

Bogged down

The U.S. should revive the MoU with Iran to cut its losses

Iran's attacks on American warships outside the Strait of Hormuz and U.S. retaliatory strikes on three Iranian oil tankers in the Gulf waters mark another phase of escalation in the six-month-long war between the two countries. After the collapse of the June 17 Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which sought to resolve the conflict through talks, both sides have carried out tit-for-tat attacks. Last month, U.S. President Donald Trump appeared to shift the focus of his Iran policy from military strikes to economic warfare, announcing new sanctions and tightening the U.S. Navy's blockade of Iran's ports. The U.S. also managed to get some oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz through a southern route along the Omani coast. But Iran, which still maintains its chokehold over the waterway, continued to target vessels taking the southern route. Unable to find a way out, the U.S. returned to strikes, triggering Iranian attacks on American bases in Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan. The latest escalation is significant because it is the first time in months that Iran has attacked U.S. military vessels, apparently seeking to break the blockade. By targeting Iranian tankers in retaliation, the U.S. has also crossed a red line. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps announced that it had struck six vessels in the Gulf – three tankers and three U.S.-linked ships – in retaliation for the American attacks on oil tankers, and vowed to expand their strikes against U.S. ships.

The central focus of the war today, which the U.S. and Israel launched on February 28 in the name of destroying Iran's nuclear programme and bringing about regime change in Tehran, is the Strait of Hormuz. That Tehran forced the U.S. to fight over a problem it created rather than pursue Washington's original objective is, in itself, a strategic victory for Iran. The frequent clashes and counter-clashes underscore two points. First, the U.S. does not have a clear theory of victory. Neither its military effort nor its economic warfare has forced Iran to change its position. The Strait remains unsafe, while the toll on the global economy is mounting. What the Trump administration appears to be doing is 'mowing the lawn', taken straight out of the Israeli playbook, with the aim of blunting Iran's attack capabilities. But each time, Iran retaliates, pursuing its own 'debasification' strategy, pushing U.S. military presence away from its immediate periphery. Second, Iran, despite its economic woes, has emerged more assertive. The more the U.S. seeks to trap Iran in an economic gridlock, the less risk-averse Tehran appears to be. As both sides seek escalation dominance, the war risks spiralling out of control. America is visibly under pressure. Mr. Trump has to accept the cold fact that he has lost this war and return to reviving the MoU before it is too late.

Judicial integrity — a case the Court cannot ignore

Kaleeswaram Raj

Lawyer at the Supreme Court of India

Serious allegations against the Acting Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court, Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma, have come to light following reports of letters written by Supreme Court of India judge Justice Sandeep Mehta to the Chief Justice of India (CJI), in which he has sought Justice Sharma's immediate transfer. Justice Mehta, who previously served as a judge of the Rajasthan High Court and is regarded for his uprightness, discipline, and integrity, wrote three such letters on August 2, 10, and 17. The contents of these letters are now partly in the public domain.

Letters that raise serious questions

The letters reportedly refer to complaints about the manner in which Justice Sharma has been functioning. They also highlight alleged instances of victimisation of judges, maladministration, improper "shifting of cases" to his Bench, and nepotism in appointments to the Permanent Lok Adalat. Justice Sharma has allegedly been intimidating some of his colleagues with the threat of retributive measures, including transfers, based on his claimed proximity to the CJI. It is reported that Justice Mehta's letters refer to specific instances of alleged favouritism towards a chosen few among the lawyers and the misuse of power in his capacity as the "master of the roster". Justice Mehta's last letter reportedly expresses concern over the CJI's alleged inaction, particularly as Justice Sharma is due to retire on September 26. So far, there has been no official denial of the reports concerning the contents of the letters. Justice Sharma, of course, has publicly denied the accusations as baseless.

A High Court functioning without a regular Chief Justice and functioning under an Acting Chief Justice for a considerably long period – in the instant case, for about 11 months – is not a good institutional gesture. The fact that Justice Sharma was earlier transferred to the Patna High Court in 2022, and that his request for repatriation to the Rajasthan High Court was rejected by the Collegium in 2023, which instead proposed his transfer to the Punjab and Haryana High Court, is also not a commendable antecedent. Justice Mehta, according to reports, is said to have wondered how such a judge came to be retransferred to the Rajasthan High Court in 2025 and subsequently allowed to function as the Acting Chief Justice, with wide-ranging administrative and judicial powers.

Of late, there have been two crucial developments. First, lawyers at the Rajasthan High Court staged a sit-in protest on the High Court premises, following which Justice Sharma had to opt out from hearing cases. Second, on August 31, the Supreme Court Collegium recommended the appointment of Justice Sanjay Agrawal as the new Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court. Accordingly Justice Agrawal is now appointed.

> Allegations against a High Court judge raise serious questions about judicial accountability in India

Allegations of corruption against sitting judges in India are neither uncommon nor unprecedented. Yet, certain unique features of the present reports are worth noting. A sitting judge of the Supreme Court reportedly alerted the CJI to the conduct of an Acting Chief Justice of a High Court, supported by verifiable material.

Yet, for several weeks, no cogent steps were reportedly initiated by the CJI in this regard. The CJI reportedly said that the allegations could not be treated as findings and that they "must be dealt with strictly through the established institutional mechanism". In view of Justice Sharma's impending retirement, early action by the CJI to Justice Mehta's letter could perhaps have averted some of the disturbing events that subsequently followed.

Transparency International, in its reports, has underlined the growing trust deficit in the Indian judiciary. According to its 2002 report, based on a household survey, the judiciary was identified as the second-most corrupt institution in certain South Asian countries, including India. The report is indeed shocking. Yet, the present situation in India is far more complex and multi-dimensional. There are many fine judges in India's judiciary whose integrity and public image should not be tarnished because of aberrations elsewhere, whether on or off the Bench.

Institutional responsibility, structural issues

The repeated episodes of judicial corruption in India reflect certain fundamental issues concerning the functioning of its higher judiciary.

First, the total lack of criteria, coupled with the unavoidable collaboration between the Collegium and the Executive at the Centre under the present system, makes judicial appointments highly partisan, opaque, and often arbitrary. This mechanism and its processes are incapable of identifying the cleanest and most meritorious candidates. The issue of corruption in the judiciary, like many other institutional concerns, is inseparable from the existing method of selecting candidates for judicial office. A system of inviting applications, as is prevalent in Canada, or an independent body for judicial selection, as in the United Kingdom, remains unthinkable in India.

Second, the lack of an effective mechanism to deal with corruption in the higher judiciary in India has had the effect of perpetuating the menace. The Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, is inadequate to tackle the issue and has, for all practical purposes, become defunct. The Supreme Court, in *K. Veeraswami vs Union of India* (1991), held that, for registering a First Information Report against a judge of the higher judiciary, the permission of the CJI is a necessary precondition. As lawyer Prashant Bhushan rightly observed, "the police does not dare approach the Chief Justice for permission to investigate, unless they already have clinching evidence, which they cannot get, unless they investigate" ("Judicial Accountability or Illusion?", *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 25, 2006). Although the United Progressive Alliance government facilitated the passage of the Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill in the Lok Sabha in 2012, the Bill lapsed with the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha in 2014. The subsequent legislative effort to revive the Bill, with some changes, also remained a non-starter. The impeachment of erring judges, as suggested by Articles 124(4) and 217(1)(b) of the Constitution, has proved to be a failure. Likewise, the in-house mechanism adopted by the Supreme Court in 1999 has not proved to be fault-free or even effective.

Earlier crises, different responses

But these considerations could not have been reasons for the CJI not to act promptly upon the concerns allegedly expressed by Justice Mehta. On the contrary, the lack of a permanent systemic solution to the issues raised should have been an additional reason for the CJI to take remedial measures expeditiously and diligently, and to do whatever was possible within his authority. The situation called for judicial statesmanship. In 1990, when an inquiry was underway against Justice V. Ramaswami for alleged misconduct, he was advised by then CJI Sabyasachi Mukharji, to take leave and keep away from judicial work.

Thereafter, when the impeachment motion against Justice Ramaswami failed in Parliament due to the Congress party's strategic abstention, the judge attempted to resume judicial work, with about nine months of his tenure remaining.

However, then CJI Venkatachaliah refused to allocate any cases to him for hearing, notes Justice K. Chandru in his book, *Who Will Judge the Judges?* (2026). Even last year, when partly burnt currency notes were reportedly found in the outhouse of Justice Yashwant Varma at his Delhi residence, then CJI Sanjiv Khanna, quickly transferred him to the Allahabad High Court, where he was not allocated any judicial work, practically. In the reported decision in *XXX vs Union of India* (2025), the Supreme Court emphasised the responsibility of the CJI in matters relating to judicial integrity and allegations of corrupt practices.

Justice Sharma allegedly claimed that the CJI is proximate to him. This was a factor that led to undesirable and avoidable speculations. Given the nature of the allegations and their immediate verifiability, it was imperative that the CJI acted promptly and convincingly, so that further damage to the system and the institution could have been reduced, if not prevented altogether.

Harnessing BRICS 'POWER' to empower the world

Xu Feihong

The Chinese Ambassador to India

The 18th BRICS Summit is about to be held in New Delhi on September 12-13, 2026. China extends full support to India for its BRICS presidency, stands ready to work with all BRICS members and partners to jointly draw a blueprint for the high-quality development of a greater BRICS, and leverage BRICS POWER to empower the world. I would like to share my personal views on the greater BRICS cooperation, with the help of the five letters of the word Power.

The first is P for Principle. The world is now undergoing accelerated transformation unseen in a century, and witnessing a trend toward deepening multipolarity, economic globalisation, and the collective rise of the Global South. In the meantime, hegemonism and power politics are becoming increasingly rampant. Lingering geopolitical conflicts trigger a succession of crises and challenges.

As an important force for world peace and development, BRICS must resolutely uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and safeguard the basic norms of international relations, including sovereign equality, non-interference in internal affairs and peaceful settlement of disputes, and prevent the world from sliding back into the law of the jungle where the strong prey on the weak.

Upholding international principles

Chinese President Xi Jinping put forward the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity and four global initiatives, including the Global Security Initiative and the Global Governance Initiative, which provided China's solutions on addressing common human challenges and building a better world together.

The second is O for Openness. The world economy is currently facing a sluggish recovery, coupled with the spread of protectionism. Certain countries have undermined the international economic and trade order by erecting tariff barriers, seeking decoupling and disrupting supply chains.

It should be recognised that economic globalisation is an inevitable trend of history. BRICS should uphold the multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, safeguard the basic principles of the WTO such as the most-favoured-nation treatment, and resist all forms of protectionism. We should join hands to deepen cooperation in energy and mineral resources, infrastructure, and industrial and supply chains to maintain an open global economic landscape.

> The five commitments for strengthening BRICS cooperation and empowering the Global South to build a more peaceful, open, and prosperous world

China stays committed to building an open global economy, so as to share opportunities in openness, and achieve common development.

The third is W for Win-Win. BRICS should adhere to the Spirit of Openness, Inclusiveness and Win-Win cooperation. We should continue putting development at the centre of the BRICS agenda, accelerate the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, strengthen dialogue and build consensus on launching the formulation of the post-2030 global development agenda, and ensure that Global South countries participate in international cooperation as equals and share the fruits of development.

Economic and financial cooperation

We should pursue mutual benefit and win-win results to further consolidate economic cooperation. It is necessary to strengthen greater BRICS coordination on macroeconomic policies and adopt more trade and investment facilitation measures. We should push forward local currency and cross-border payment cooperation and improve the financial safety net, so as to enhance the ability to ward off external risks. In the face of global energy and food security challenges, we should build a more resilient and sustainable agriculture and food system.

The fourth is E for Engine. BRICS countries account for nearly half of the world's population, around 30% of global economic output, and one-fifth of global trade. We are also home to major natural resources, key manufacturers and vast markets. According to international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund, greater BRICS growth will be nearly three times faster than the G-7 by 2028, further highlighting its role as an engine of world economic growth.

We should leverage our respective advantages, deepen practical cooperation in fields such as business, finance, science and technology, forging more cooperation in the digital economy, smart manufacturing, and new industrialisation. We should actively promote the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) with sectors including science and technology, health, agriculture and education, thereby injecting fresh impetus into world economic growth. China has established the China-BRICS AI Development and Cooperation Center and the China-BRICS New Quality Productive Forces Research Center, and welcomes active participation of all parties.

The fifth is R for Responsibility. BRICS countries are the main force in safeguarding fairness and justice and the backbone of promoting unity and cooperation. We must shoulder the responsibility of maintaining world peace and development. Over this year and the next, India and China will take on the BRICS rotating presidency in succession. Maintaining sound coordination between our two countries is conducive to the steady and sustained progress of greater BRICS' cooperation, and will better safeguard the common interests of developing countries.

China-India ties

Since the beginning of this year, under the strategic guidance of the two leaders, President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, China-India relations have maintained a momentum of improvement and development. The two sides strengthened dialogues at all levels and promoted exchanges and cooperation in various fields to achieve positive results. Five direct flight routes between the Chinese mainland and India have been resumed. After a six-year suspension, border trade has been reopened.

China looks forward to working with India to translate the important consensus reached by the two leaders into concrete actions, being good-neighbourly friends and partners that help each other, and pushing China-India relations to move forward in a sustained, healthy, and stable manner. May the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi be a great success. We welcome you all to China next year to continue empowering the world with BRICS POWER.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dangers on highways

A series of accidents on national highways has drawn attention to the serious problem of illegal parking along highways. Even a seemingly minor instance can lead to devastating accidents. The recent accidents seem to have drawn the government's attention to the issue and highlighted the urgent need to take effective measures to reduce the number of accidents and casualties. Strict action against illegal parking, along with improved road safety measures, can play a significant role in preventing such tragic incidents (Front page, September 6).

Salman,
Kozhikode, Keralam

Spurious rabies vaccines

The seizure of spurious rabies vaccines and the failure of such vaccines at a private laboratory recently expose a critical breach in medical safety. Rabies has a near-100% case fatality rate once clinical symptoms manifest, making timely, potent post-exposure prophylaxis the only defence against an otherwise almost invariably fatal disease. A fake vaccine creates a lethal illusion of security. Regulatory authorities must enforce strict track-and-trace systems and batch verification across the supply chain.

Dr. Vijaykumar H.K.,
Raichur, Karnataka

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

The political cost of UCT schemes

K. R. Shanmugam
Former Director, Madras School of Economics and Economic Consultant to GoTN

Sankarganesh Karuppiah
Indian Revenue Services Officer

Since 2020, Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) schemes have become an important electoral strategy in India, particularly to attract women voters. Some examples of such schemes include the Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thittam in Tamil Nadu, the Lakhsmir Bhandar in West Bengal, and Gruha Lakshmi Yojana in Karnataka. Yet, despite increasing the amount of cash before the 2026 elections, some governments which implemented these schemes were defeated. One possible explanation for the loss could be the political cost associated with UCTs.

UCT schemes are well-intentioned as they provide financial support to women. They partially advance SDG (Sustainable Development Goal) 5.4, which calls for a recognition of women's unpaid domestic and care work. According to the Ministry of Finance's latest Economic Survey, States are expected to spend about $18 billion on UCTs in 2025-26, much of it targeted towards women.

Critics, however, argue that these schemes function as electoral "freebies." Their financing often requires expenditure switching or larger fiscal deficits, and reduces resources available for productive investments, including employment generation and self-employment programmes. Moreover, once households become dependent on UCTs, withdrawing them is difficult as political parties encourage competitive welfarism.

Targeting challenges

A fundamental challenge in targeted UCT programmes is beneficiary identification. Since governments cannot directly observe incomes for most workers in the informal sector, they rely on proxy indicators such as land ownership, electricity consumption, or household assets. This inevitably produces both inclusion errors (benefits reaching ineligible households) and exclusion errors (eligible households being left out). These targeting errors, whether real or perceived, can impose significant political costs.

The Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thittam scheme illustrates this challenge. Although the ruling party at the time promised ₹1,000 per month to all women-headed households before the 2021 election, fiscal constraints led the government to restrict eligibility based on income, land ownership, and other criteria when the scheme was launched in September 2023. Initially, about 1.13 crore women were covered. Following widespread complaints from women who believed they met the eligibility criteria, another 16.94 lakh beneficiaries were added in December 2025. The scheme cost ₹13,807 crore in 2025-26.

Despite the expansion, dissatisfaction persisted. Many women who considered themselves unfairly excluded reportedly became even more aggrieved when eligible beneficiaries received an advance payment of three months' entitlement along with a special summer relief payment. Although the precise electoral impact cannot be measured, even modest shifts in voter preferences can influence outcomes in closely contested constituencies.

These experiences highlight an important feature of targeted welfare programmes. Political costs arise not only from actual errors but also from perceived ones. Individuals who fail to satisfy official eligibility criteria may nevertheless believe that they have been treated unfairly. Likewise, households that legally qualify may be perceived as undeserving because they appear relatively affluent. Such perceived targeting errors can be as politically consequential as actual administrative mistakes.

This reveals an inherent tension between economics and politics. Economics favours targeted programmes so that scarce public resources reach those most in need. Politics, however, rewards broader inclusion because voters evaluate governments not only by the benefits they receive but also by those they believe were unfairly denied. Consequently, targeted UCT programmes carry an unavoidable political cost.

Conditional cash transfers and other incentive-based welfare programmes offer a more sustainable alternative. Linking benefits to socially desirable outcomes produces broader developmental gains. Tamil Nadu's Midday Meal Scheme illustrates this principle. Since participation depends on school enrolment, self-selection reduces grievances.

The broader lesson is that welfare programmes tied to education or other desirable behaviours can achieve developmental objectives with lower political costs. In contrast, UCTs remain inherently vulnerable to inclusion, exclusion, and perceived targeting errors.

> Linking benefits to socially desirable outcomes produces broader developmental gains

India's unemployment data dilemma

Santosh V. Perumal

The government has finally found a way to measure the statistical elephant of unemployment; however, it may be incomplete – much like the blind men who touched different parts of a pachyderm and mistook it for the whole truth.

The challenge in measuring the unemployment rate using the Current Weekly Status (CWS) approach – where a person's activity status is determined based on the preceding seven days – is to assess not only whether people are employed, but also the nature of their jobs, the frequency and regularity of their payments, and the overall quality of employment. In an economy where a vast majority of the population are involved in informal work, employment cannot be analysed through a headline rate of high frequency indicator, if it can be called so.

India's decision to transform the quarterly/yearly unemployment data into a monthly indicator is economically desirable, even if its credibility is questionable given the nature of its database, which seldom takes into account circular migration.

Efforts have been made to strengthen India's database comprising EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) and ESIC (Employees' State Insurance Corporation) payroll data, GST-based enterprise information, income tax records, corporate payroll data, gig economy employment data, and rural wage indicators but at present, even these sources remain fragmented. Unlike a mature labour market – comprising payroll surveys, unemployment insurance records, formal contracts, and extensive administrative databases – India's large informal employment market is difficult to track.

Most advanced nations count unemployment using a Labour Force Survey based on the definition of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The U.S., Japan, EU and the U.K. have decades of household survey data with detailed information on full-time versus part-time jobs, hourly wages, job duration, labour mobility, and unemployment spells.

A leading indicator

The latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) says that India's unemployment rate for those aged 15 years and above marked a four-month low of 5.1% in July. The review period coincided with the peak of kharif season, when demand for agricultural labour rose for land preparation, transplanting, and allied activities. Since construction, agriculture, small trade, logistics, and local services see seasonal fluctuations, it is likely that July's decline reflects increased hiring in these segments rather than a broad-based expansion in formal sector jobs.

Monthly unemployment should at the best be a leading indicator, not a comprehensive measure of labour market health.

India has a labour market where various reports suggest that 90% of the population are involved in the informal sector; agricultural employment remains seasonal, with wage payments negotiated informally and where underemployment/disguised employment is widespread. Indicating limited granularity, data is rather sketchy on wage growth, hours worked, job quality, occupational shifts, and sector-wise employment trends. Therefore, monthly unemployment data reflects seasonal movements rather than structural improvement. A fall in unemployment may indicate distress-driven entry into low-productivity jobs rather than genuine employment creation.

The overall decline in unemployment was owing to rural areas, where unemployment declined to 4.5% from 5%; but it should not be read as a major improvement in the job market. Independent labour studies estimate that there are between 30 to 35 million seasonal labourers moving across India annually, forming the invisible backbone of urban construction and infrastructure.

The July data saw an increase in the labour force participation rate, a positive supply-side signal, but stronger investment and job creation prefix sustainable employment recovery. The challenge is to convert this participation into stable, high-productivity jobs.

The revamped PLFS is a significant improvement over earlier low-frequency labour statistics but its success ultimately depends on whether it gauges the reality of the job market – not merely measuring it more frequently. A credible labour market barometer is the need of the hour to capture the livelihoods of millions of workers.

> A fall in unemployment may indicate distress-driven entry into low-productivity jobs rather than genuine employment creation

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18 centuries: tracing Smriti Mandhana's journey to the top

With her record-breaking century at the Asia Cup, Smriti Mandhana surpassed Mithali Raj to become the highest run scorer in women's international cricket

DATA POINT

Devyanshi Bihani

When Smriti Mandhana scored her 18th international century against Hong Kong at the Women's T20 Asia Cup in Dubai on September 3 – in just 57 balls – she set a new record for scoring the highest number of centuries in women's international cricket across all formats. That was not the only record she broke in that match.

By the time she was run out for 124, she had overtaken her former captain Mithali Raj to become the highest run-scorer in women's international cricket. She had taken her career tally to 10,880 runs, 12 more than Mithali's record of 10,868. Her score was also the highest in the history of the Women's T20 Asia Cup, surpassing Chamari Athapaththu's 119 not out from 2024.

Her seven sixes took her career tally to 95, making her the leading six-hitter for India in women's T20Is and the fourth-highest in the world. Smriti also became the first Indian woman to score more than one century in the T20 format, and while doing so, she equalled Mithali's record of 93 fifty-plus scores in international cricket

Mandhana's century-making was a slow burn before it became a sprint. Her international career began with a T20 match against Bangladesh in April 2013, three months before she turned 17. She waited for three years to taste her first century, in her 32nd international innings in 2016 against Australia. But it took 115 more innings and five years to reach her fifth, and another 92 innings to get to 10. Then, the sprint started. Ten of her 18 centuries came within the last two years, and at a notably higher strike rate **(Chart 1)**.

Winning streak

That acceleration becomes even more striking when compared with the other top five century-makers. Australia's Meg Lanning reached 10 hundreds in 123 innings, just about half the number of 239 innings that Smriti took to score hers. All the other four crossed the milestone of 10 before their 200th innings. In contrast, Smriti's performance has soared after she crossed her 200th **(Chart 2)**. Of Smriti's 18 centuries, 14 came from ODIs, two in Tests and two in T20Is.

In ODIs, she has scored 5,411 runs with an average of 47.88. In 16 Test innings, she scored 788 with an average of 52.53 and in 167 T20I innings, she scored 4,681 runs with an average of 30.65. Across all three formats, she has 10,880 runs, 75 fifties and an average of 38.86, showing that her record is built on consistency as much as several spectacular peaks.

Moreover, the pace at which she has accumulated her runs really sets her apart.

While she had already become the fastest woman to reach 10,000 runs in just 281 innings, she has now become the highest run scorer in 303 international innings – fewer than the other four players with more than 10,000 runs, all of whom, except Stafanie Taylor, are now retired from international cricket **(Chart 3)**.

This pace is reflected in how Smriti clearly stands out with her overall strike rate of 99.57. It is nearly 10 points higher than Suzie, the next fastest among the five. Batting average is the only indicator where she lags among the five, but that too only against her compatriot and inspiration Mithali **(Chart 4)**. She is in the same league as the other three.

A few years back, she had said that her mother taught her to persevere – "to go on till reaching the top". Smriti had also said that she wanted to be the best batter in the world. At just 30, she may have already realised that ambition. But, as she said in the press conference after her records-breaking Hong Kong match, "it is just the start".

Gearing up for higher peaks

The data for the charts were sourced from Statsguru, the searchable cricket statistics database available at cricinfo.com. All the figures are as of September 4, 2026, when the data was collected

CHART 1: Ten of Smriti's 18 centuries came in the last two years. Her centuries have also been accompanied by a higher strike rate

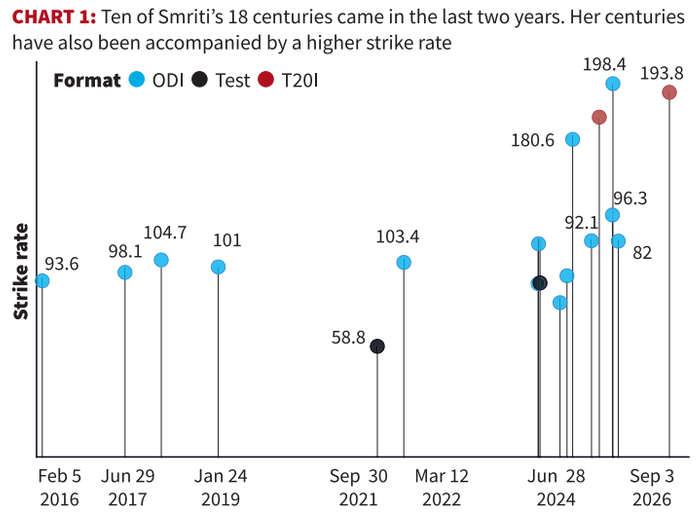


CHART 2: Most of the centuries of the other top scorers came before their 200th innings. Smriti became prolific after crossing her 200th

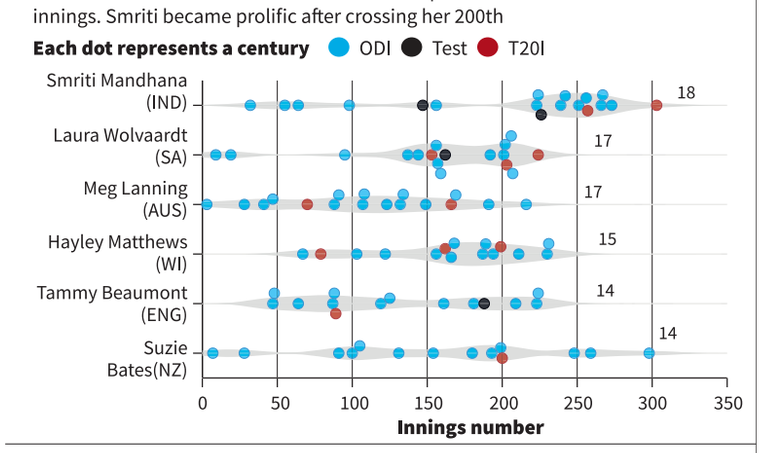


CHART 4: Smriti took fewer innings to become the top scorer with a higher strike rate while Mithali holds the highest average

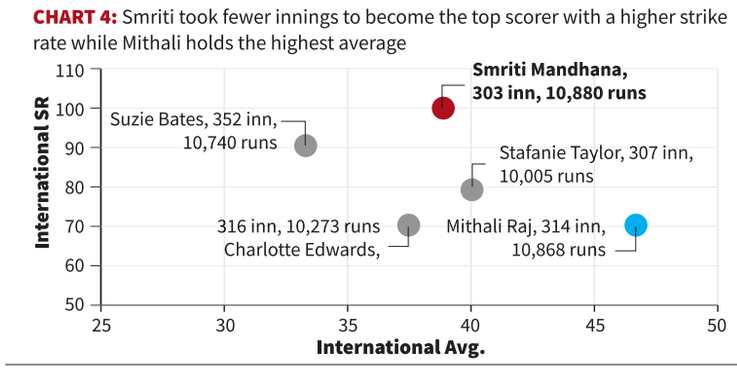
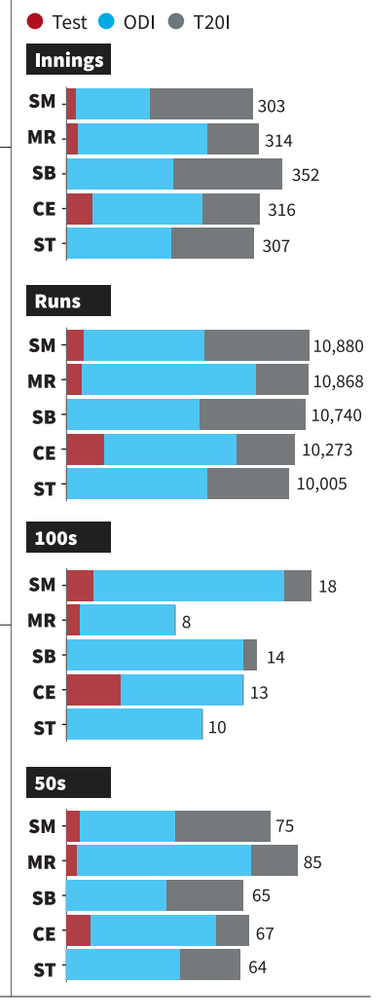


CHART 3: Smriti's innings, runs, centuries, and fifties, in comparison with the other four players who have scored over 10,000 runs in women's international cricket

Mithali Raj - **MR** (IND), Smriti Mandhana - **SM** (IND), Suzie Bates - **SB** (NZ), Charlotte Edwards - **CE** (ENG), Stafanie Taylor - **ST** (WI)



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 7, 1976

Snake boats to be standardised

Kottayam, September 6: A scheme has been prepared by a Government-sponsored Committee to standardise the snake boat which is the main attraction in the boat races in Kerala.

This Government Committee conducts the Nehru Trophy boat race. The existing boat races are losing their charm because the competing snake boats are of different lengths, and the capacity of rowers differ.

Many of the snake boats in Central Travancore like Pacha, Payipad and Kodupunna can carry between 70 and 80 rowers, while the snake boats like Karichal, Kalooparamban and Jawahar Thayankari can take in over 100 persons. Because of this vast disparity in manpower, the snake boats like Karichal and Kallooparamban alone are now winning the trophies in most of the races. In the light of this, a scheme has been prepared by the Nehru Trophy Boat Race Committee to standardise the snake boats with equal length and strength of rowers.

The Committee is also considering the grant of loans to help this standardisation. According to a tentative scheme, a loan of Rs. 10,000 will be given to each boat.

Four major boat races will be held in various parts of Central Travancore this weekend. The Sree Narayana boat race will be held on September 8, while the Vembanad boat race will be conducted on September 9.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 7, 1926

Railway extension in the Punjab

Lahore, September 6: In accordance with the new policy of railway extension in the Punjab, a reference to which was made by the Governor while inaugurating the Kangra Valley Railway in May last, two other lines Shahdara Narowal and Sirhind Rupar Railways have been sanctioned which are the type of those cross connections to which the Governor referred as being essential for the comfort and convenience of passenger traffic. The first is a line between Lyallpur and Jaranwala, which will pass through the rich tract irrigated by the Lower Chenab Canal. The other will link up Rohtak, Gohana and Panipat forming a direct connection between the Delhi-Ambala line of the North-Western Railway.

From Page One

India, China hold talks in Arunachal Pradesh

The mechanism became particularly important following the Galwan clashes, in which both sides suffered casualties.

Since then, India and China have continued to use military and diplomatic channels to manage differences and maintain stability along the LAC.

On August 6, the two countries held the 36th meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs. This was followed by the 25th round of talks between the Special Representatives (SR) on the Boundary Question in Beijing on August 26. National Security Adviser Ajit Doval represented India, while the Chinese delegation was led by Wang Yi, Member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs.

The two sides signed an eight-point outcome document following the SR-level talks. The agreement included a decision to establish two additional Border Personnel Meeting Points and new hotlines to strengthen communication and confidence-building mechanisms along the frontier.

According to sources, one of the newly proposed meeting points will be in the Eastern Sector under the operational responsibility of the 3 Corps, while another will be in the Central Sector. The sources clarified that Joshimath is not among the newly identified meeting points.

Meanwhile, the Indian Army has been closely reviewing its operational preparedness along the frontier. Recently, Army Chief General Dhiraj Seth visited the headquarters of the 3 Corps, where formation commanders briefed him about operational readiness and measures being undertaken to strengthen combat capabilities.

Spurious liquor kills 11 in M.P.; CM orders probe

"A doctors' team is screening for such people, and officials like the SDM are on the spot. We are trying to identify anyone with such symptoms and send them to the Bundelkhand Medical College for observation," the Collector added. She said the initial investigation pointed to the involvement of a gang from Uttar Pradesh.

Mr. Sujania, too, said the liquor could have come from Lalitpur in Uttar Pradesh. "Such activities have been found there even in the past. So, we are working in the same direction and will reach its main source soon. We have detained 10-12 people so far and are trying to establish a link through a systematic interrogation," he said.

Mr. Saxena suspended Kirti Dubey (Assistant Commissioner Excise, Sagar), Dilip Khandate (Assistant District Excise Officer), and Proshni Ureti (Excise Sub-Inspector, Banda Circle). Neerja Srivastava, Deputy Commissioner and in-charge of the Divisional Flying Squad, was attached to the Gwalior headquarters.

The Banda police station in-charge and the Ghughra police outpost in-charge have also been suspended.

"*Prima facie*, it has been found that there had been some complaints in the past few weeks, and the officials were aware of this but failed to act properly. Had they taken any action, the sale could have been controlled. It was their responsibility," Mr. Saxena said.

Five killed as building collapses in Delhi

The South Campus police station received a control room call at 1.34 p.m., reporting a building collapse at Satya Niketan Market.

The area was cordoned off within an hour and student volunteers helped to clear out the area for earthmovers to enter and begin carrying out the debris. Teams from Delhi Fire Services, Delhi Police, the National Disaster Response Force, and the District Disaster Management Authority then reached the spot.

Repair work in basement

Daljeet Singh, a resident helping with the rescue, said the building was not well-built and had been weakened by the repair work. "The foundation of the building is not strong. It is an old building, which had water entering the basement, and has some work ongoing. The adjacent building has also been affected by the impact," he said. "In my 48 years, I have seen the building adding floors slowly," he added.

"The building was without any support with no pillars and thin walls. The five-storey building first collapsed under its weight and then fell forward onto the road. We rushed to the spot as soon as we heard a loud sound and people started screaming," said Rahul Gaur, another resident. He said the ground floor also had a general store, while labourers were working on the basement.

"Most of the PGs here have at least 10 students on each floor," said Abhishek Mishra, a Delhi University law student. "The area is heavily populated by PGs which do not follow safety norms. Most of the students are from other States. Despite paying a monthly rent of ₹13,000 to ₹30,000, the PG managers do not treat students well," he added.

Of the remaining six injured, three were admitted to AIIMS. One of them underwent limb surgery. Another person who sustained minor injuries was discharged. A 19-year-old injured man was taken to Safdarjung hospital and is stable.

No provision in Forest Rights Act to obtain gram sabha consent for projects: Ministry

The law explicitly states that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is responsible for its implementation; Centre's rules and regulations require that all processes under the forest Act be completed before the concerned government authority can issue a certificate diverting the forests formally

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

In deliberations with the Union Ministry of Power over government projects delayed due to the "critical bottleneck" of "100% gram sabha consent under the Forest Rights Act (FRA)" for forest clearance, the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs has said that the 2006 law has "no provision for obtaining consent of the gram sabha for forest clearance", adding that "such matters" related to gram sabha consent "do not fall under the purview of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs".

In an official communication to the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Desk of the Power Ministry on August 31, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs said, "There is no provision for obtaining consent of the Gram Sabha for forest clearance for Stage-II forest clearance in the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and Rules made thereunder. Therefore, such matters do not fall under the purview of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs."

While the FRA itself does not have the language of gram sabha consent specifically with respect to diverting forest land for non-forestry purposes, the Union government's rules and regulations governing the diversion of forests specifically require that all processes under the FRA be completed before the concerned government authority can issue a certificate diverting the forests formally.

These guidelines, under the Forest Conservation Act of 1980, require the identification of potential FRA claimants, the recognition of their rights where applicable, the vesting of these rights, and then obtaining a no-objection certificate (NOC) from the gram sabhas concerned regarding the proposal to divert the said forest land for the stated purpose – all of it as mandated under the FRA. This procedure of obtaining an NOC from gram sabhas is what has commonly come to be known as the procedure for gram sabha consent for forest clearance.

Parliamentary panel report on NHPC Limited said the average time for forest clearance of projects is 106 months.

The FRA explicitly states that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs is the nodal ministry responsible for the law's implementation.

Supreme Court advocate Shomona Khanna, a former legal adviser to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs under both the United Progressive Alliance and National Democratic Alliance governments, reacted to the Ministry's position on the FRA in its latest communication to the Power Ministry by saying, "This is bizarre. If such matters are not under the purview of the Tribal Affairs Ministry, then whose purview is it under?"

House panel report

The deliberations between the Union Power Ministry and the Tribal Affairs Ministry were initiated after an August 3 report by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Undertakings on NHPC Limited. In this report, the committee, based on discussions with NHPC officials, observed that the average time for forest clearance of under-construction projects was 106 months, and that the requirement that all concerned gram sabhas consent to the diversion of forest land required for the projects had become the "single most critical bottleneck, with projects like the Teesta-IV HEP being indefinitely stalled because consent from small minority of Gram Panchayats remains pending". In its report, the committee, headed by BJP MP Baijayanta Panda, took to the NHPC's recommendation that a "qualified super-majority consent" – consent of 70-75% of the affected gram sabhas – should be sufficient for "large hydropower infrastructure projects of national importance".

The House panel had thus recommended that the Power Ministry discuss the "feasibility" of such a proposal with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Previously, in cases such as the Nicobar mega-infrastructure project or other independent cases related to the implementation of the FRA in States like Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and many others, the Tribal Affairs Ministry has claimed that it has no role to play and argued that this was because the FRA mandates implementation of the law to the State or Union Territory governments.

Keep ST classification criteria free of 'political manipulation': tribal body

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A resolution was passed at the national convention of the Left-affiliated Adivasi Adhikar Rashtriya Manch (AARM) in New Delhi on Sunday, outlining a charter of demands on the rights of Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities pertaining to resources, education, employment, and culture. The demands ranged from increasing the reservation percentage for ST communities and introducing reservations in the private sector to including Adivasi languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution and making the criteria for ST classification immune to "political manipulation".

While outfits like the Janjati Suraksha Manch and the Akhil Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram have called for introducing a religion criterion to ST classification that will eventually delist ST communities that have converted to Islam or Christianity, the AARM has explicitly opposed both these demands, articulating that only certain criteria needed to be reviewed to do away with outdated conditions for classification.

Brinda Karat

Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader and AARM vice-president Brinda Karat said that some criteria set by the Lokur Committee, established in 1965 to look into the criteria for identifying ST communities, had become obsolete, such as the ones requiring a community to be isolated or have shyness of contact to be considered ST, and needed to be reviewed.

Ms. Karat said, "I don't want to name the communities. In various States, the BJP is trying to divide Adivasis by helping people who are not Adivasis [and] encouraging them to demand ST certificates; and that is a very dangerous game they are playing. Ever since the BJP has come into power, or where they are in power, where there are large Adivasi communities, what we are finding is that they are using the State governments and the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] to divide Adivasis so that they can prop up their majoritarian identity framework."

The AARM national convention held in New Delhi saw the participation of delegates from across the country.

The demands

The AARM called for a time-bound review of rejected Forest Rights Act (FRA) claims, empowering gram sabhas, scrapping State task forces working outside their statutory ambit, and freezing forest evictions. On employment, the demands included implementing reservation in all forms of government hiring.

The AARM demanded an increase in the budgetary allocation for education in Adivasi regions; nutritious, and hot cooked mid-day meals; the reintroduction of eggs in school menus; an increase in scholarship amounts; and sports facilities for Adivasi students.

Rajnath Singh set for 3-day Sri Lanka visit to boost defence ties

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will undertake an official visit to Sri Lanka from September 8 to 10, marking the first such visit by an Indian Defence Minister to the island nation in 38 years. Mr. Singh will hold consultations with Sri Lanka's top leadership on a range of bilateral, regional and defence-related issues, and also interact with members of the Indian diaspora in Colombo.

The last Indian Defence Minister to visit Sri Lanka was K.C. Pant, who travelled to the country in 1988 while serving in Rajiv Gandhi's Cabinet.

Mr. Singh is expected to meet Sri Lankan President and Defence Minister Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya and Secretary to the Ministry of Defence Air Vice Marshal (retd.) Sampath Thuyacontha.

Rajnath Singh

Discussions are likely to cover defence cooperation, including possible collaboration in air-defence systems, and a review of ongoing security engagements between the two countries.

The two sides are expected to review the full implementation of the India-Sri Lanka Defence Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding signed on April 5, 2025.

Muslim groups slam razing of U.P. mosque

Ziya Us Salam
NEW DELHI

Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind and Jamaat-e-Islami Hind condemned the demolition of a century-old mosque on the Saharanpur Collectorate premises in Uttar Pradesh, terming it "a serious blow to the principles of justice and due process of law".

Mahmood Madani, president of one of the factions of Jamiat, said, "Since the dispute concerned land within the Collectorate premises, the administration and the magistrate had themselves become parties to the matter. It is a universally recognised principle of law that no party can be a judge in its own cause".

He questioned the haste with which the demolition was carried out, saying it had left the affected party with little or no opportunity to seek relief from the higher judiciary.

Four of family among 6 dead in U.P. house collapse incidents

Press Trust of India
KANPUR/BUDAUN

A man and his three minor daughters were killed after their house collapsed amid rain in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur district on Sunday, the police said. Another daughter was seriously injured.

In Budaun district, a farmer died on the spot after the wall of his house collapsed due to heavy rain at night. His wife sustained serious injuries.

In Ballia district, a six-year-old girl was killed on Sunday morning when a mud wall fell on her in Naferpur village.

Kanpur Commissioner of Police Raghubir Lal told *PTI* that in Hirni village, all five members of a family were trapped under the debris after their *kutcha* (thatched roof) house collapsed around 11 a.m.

The police and fire brigade personnel and locals rescued the family members and shifted them to the Community Health Centre (CHC) at Patara, where four were declared dead.

The house in Hirni village in Kanpur collapsed amid rain . PTI

Family seeks inquiry

The family alleged that the treatment at the Patara CHC was delayed because no doctor was available when the victims were taken there.

They demanded an impartial inquiry into the alleged lapses and action against those responsible.

Over 19 lakh hit by floods in Bihar; RJD seeks Centre's aid

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Over 19 lakh people across 11 districts of Bihar have been affected by floods, with authorities sounding an alert in downstream areas after the water level in the Ganga crossed the Highest Flood Level (HFL) mark at Gandhi Ghat in Patna, officials said on Sunday.

A State Water Resources Department (WRD) official said this situation was likely to be observed over the next three days at Hathidah and subsequent downstream gauge stations. The water level at Hathidah might even surpass the previous HFL mark.

A department official also said heightened vigilance was required in the riparian areas of Begusarai, Lakhisarai, Munger, Bhagalpur, and Katihar districts.

"In view of the surge in water levels downstream from Gandhi Ghat, officials and field staff have been instructed to remain alert and continuously monitor the levels," said the official.

People wade through floodwater following a rise in the water level of the Gandak River at Hajipur, in Vaishali, on Sunday. ANI

Meanwhile, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) national working president and Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav demanded that the Central government declare Bihar's floods a "national disaster" and provide special financial assistance of ₹5,000 crore.

He urged the Centre to ensure the support of Air Force helicopters in flood relief and rescue operations.

Mr. Yadav said 76% of Bihar's area was flood-affected, and 19 districts were gripped by devastating floods, with more than 20 lakh people trapped in this disaster.

"Public infrastructure has suffered severe damage. There has been loss of life and property worth thousands of crores. The already bankrupt Bihar government is indifferent to assisting the flood victims. I urge Prime Minister Narendra Modi *ji* to immediately visit Bihar, survey the ground situation, and provide immediate relief," the RJD leader told pressmen in Patna.

'If my party says I should step down as its president, I will'

It is not for the govt. or the BNP to decide who will lead the Awami League, former Bangladesh PM says as she calls for the ban on her party to be revoked; she asks how her press conference could damage India-Bangladesh relations, adding that her intention was simply to tell the truth; she has not met Modi or Sonia during her stay as she has 'decided only to meet party workers and relatives'

INTERVIEW

Sheikh Hasina

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Defending her right to hold a press conference and meet her Awami League party colleagues while in India, Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina says she has no intention of damaging India-Bangladesh ties. In an interview to *The Hindu*, including in written replies and an extensive telephone conversation, Ms. Hasina, who has been convicted of murder and sentenced to death in Bangladesh, says she is undeterred about returning to Bangladesh, and accuses the Tariq Rahman government of continuing to harass and imprison her party workers. Excerpts:

What can you tell us about the events of August 5, 2024, when you fled from Dhaka?

On August 5 (2024), I did not leave Bangladesh by choice. My security personnel, party leaders, and family members urged me to leave the Prime Minister's residence. I was prepared to go to Tungipara [Ms. Hasina's hometown], and I had expressed my willingness to leave and resign as Prime Minister. But I didn't get the chance to resign.

I did not even know that I was leaving the country. Only when I was in the helicopter did I learn from my staff that I was being taken to India.

India received me at very short notice and made arrangements for my security and stay. I am grateful for that. But it was very hard for me to accept that I had been taken out of my own country.

When you reached Delhi on August 5, 2024, did you intend to stay in India, or was there a plan for you to travel elsewhere? Have you applied for asylum or visas in any other country?

No, I did not want to go anywhere else. I am next door to my country, as close as I can be to my people. From here, I can keep in touch with them. Where else would I go? How would I live somewhere else? I do not have any means to live abroad permanently.

Given your personal equations with them, have you met Prime Minister Narendra Modi or Sonia Gandhi during your time here?

Frankly, I did not want to try and meet them, given the circumstances. No doubt, I have good relations with them, but I decided I would only meet my party workers and relatives while here. Maybe a time will come that I will go home and then come again to India, and then meet everyone, including media.

Are you sure the Bangladesh government will allow you to go back, and not stop you at the border?

This is a peculiar situation. They repeatedly ask the Indian government to send me to Bangladesh, but when I say they don't need to send me, I will come myself, then that also seems to be a problem for them.

The Bangladesh government says your recent press conference has damaged the atmosphere for India-Bangladesh relations. Do you think your public remarks are affecting bilateral ties?

When I heard this, I was surprised. How can a press conference damage India-Bangladesh relations? I did not know that I was so powerful that one press conference of mine could damage Bangladesh's foreign policy.

In 2007, Tarique Rahman gave a written undertaking that he would never engage in politics. But when he was in London and took up the BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] leadership, he gave online speeches, held video conferences. Did my government write to the British government raising this issue? No. We did not ask another country to silence him.

My intention was never to damage anything. I wanted to tell the truth. Freedom of speech and expression is part of democracy. So, the real question is not whether my press conference damaged relations. The real question is why truth and free speech are being feared so much.

In your time as PM, you also banned the Jamaat-e-Islami. Was that a mistake? They are now the main Opposition in Bangladesh...

Jamaat-e-Islami members were war criminals – they worked with the Pakistani Army during the occupation, they were convicted for rape, murder and genocide. That is why they were banned. But later, they would be part of coalitions with other parties. In 2013, the courts cancelled their registration, and they could not stand for elections.

That was years ago. Today, even the Indian High Commission and the Foreign Secretary (Vikram Misri) have met with the Jamaat leadership...

If that is so, I have no comment.

Has the Indian government conveyed to you that you should not hold any more press conferences? What kind of support do you expect from India and the international community?

It is important for the world to understand what Bangladesh is going through today. The largest political party, the party that brought independence to Bangladesh, has been banned. My demands are simple. I ask the international community to support the lifting of the ban on the Awami League; the release of political detainees; the withdrawal of false cases; the safety and security of every citizen, especially women and girl children; freedom of movement; and freedom of speech and expression.

If the Bangladesh government were to revoke the ban on the Awami League on the condition that you step down as its president, would you agree?

Awami League is the only party in Bangladesh that works according to a constitution. It is the party that decides who will be the leader. I am prepared to step down, but who is the government or the BNP to decide who will lead the Awami League?

How do you view the recent youth protests in India? Looking back, could your government have handled the protests in Bangladesh differently?

I will not comment on India's internal matters. India is a democratic country, and its people and institutions will deal with their own issues. No matter how differently I would have handled [protesters in Bangladesh], their sole motive was to remove me. There was no compromise with them.

Sudivya Kumar

Jharkhand Minister and close Soren aide Sudivya Kumar dies

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Senior Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader and Minister Sudivya Kumar died of cardiac arrest on Sunday. He was 56.

The two-time MLA for the Giridih constituency was serving as the Higher and Technical Education and Urban Development Minister, besides holding the portfolios of Tourism, Arts & Culture, and Sports and Youth Affairs.

Chief Minister Hemant Soren, in a post on X, said, "Late at night, I received the heartbreaking news of the passing of my elder brother, our beloved Sudivya Kumar Sonu Ji. Accepting this news is extremely difficult for me. His departure has left a void in my life that cannot be expressed in words."

"From the days of the Jharkhand movement, he stood with full devotion and strength alongside the late 'Baba Dishom Guruji' [late JMM patriarch Shibu Soren]. ...he devoted his entire life to the fight for Jharkhand's identity, rights, and pride," he said.

A close aide of Mr. Soren, Mr. Kumar played a key role in managing crises within the JMM, even during Mr. Soren's arrest in 2024 in connection with an alleged land fraud and money laundering case.

Mr. Kumar returned to Jharkhand this week from Karnataka, where he led a State government delegation to explore ways to improve tourism infrastructure management and forest management.

Mr. Kumar is survived by his wife, two daughters, and a son.

CPI(M) identifies 'parliamentary aberrations', failure to follow mass line as key concerns

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

"Parliamentary aberrations", failure in implementing the policy of mass line, and lack of collective functioning have been identified as the three primary shortcomings to be addressed as part of the CPI(M)'s "rectification campaign", party general secretary M.A. Baby said on Sunday.

He was addressing a press conference at the conclusion of a two-day meeting of the party's Polit Bureau in New Delhi. The "rectification campaign" comes in the wake of the party's defeat in the Kerala Assembly election.

"The 24th Party Congress in Madurai had called for a stage-wise rectification campaign within the party. As part of implementing this, we had a discussion. Parliamentary aberrations, lack of adherence to the mass line by party comrades, and issues related to collective functioning have been identified by the party. We have to discuss how far each one of us is free from these," he said.

CPI(M) general secretary M.A.Baby addresses the media after the party's meeting in New Delhi on Sunday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

A Polit Bureau statement issued later said, "The impact of alien class influences like parliamentarism was discussed along with the experiences in implementing the policy of mass line and measures to strengthen collective functioning at all levels of the Party."

Mr. Baby did not explain the phrase "parliamentary aberrations", only stating that it has "various dimensions". He elaborated at length on the need for a better connection with people. "We should be with people, learn from them and listen to them," he said. He added that when the senior leadership visits States, it should take time out beyond formal committee meetings to speak to comrades and listen to them. Each State committee would undertake this rectification exercise, he said.

Former Keralam Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, at recent public meetings in Payyannur and Taliparamba in Kannur, had blamed betrayal, internal sabotage and party workers' susceptibility to propaganda for the party's poor performance in these strongholds and elsewhere in the State.

'Support party's pick'

Mr. Baby supported Mr. Vijayan's stance, saying that if the party decides on a candidate, all members must support that person. Any disagreements should have been raised within party forums, he said.

The Central Committee will meet in New Delhi from October 9 to 11 to discuss and strengthen the report after its deliberations.

On contesting the elections in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Baby said the CPI(M) would remain committed to its goal of defeating the BJP and its allies. Electoral strategies had not yet been finalised and would have to be worked out at the State level. "We will explore all possibilities, keeping this goal in mind, to defeat the BJP and its allies," he said.

Asked about Rahul Gandhi as a possible Prime Minister, Mr. Baby said the question could be answered only after the next general election and that any speculation would be futile.

However, he added: "Naturally, the Leader of the Opposition has the right [to aspire to the position]. But we do not want to engage in an exercise of hypothesising. Our goal is that the fascist regime of the BJP/RSS should be removed from power. Last time we came close to it; if we had been more careful, this could have happened in the last election. We should not miss our chance now."

1.85 lakh names out of Manipur, Sikkim poll rolls after SIR

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

About 6.3% of voter names in Manipur and 11.2% in Sikkim have been removed from the electoral rolls during the special intensive revision (SIR) exercise. The final photo electoral rolls were published in both northeastern States on Sunday.

Before the SIR exercise began, Manipur had 20,93,076 voters, and Sikkim had 4,71,081. After the SIR, the names of 1.85 lakh voters – 1,32,456 in Manipur and 52,614 in Sikkim – have been deleted from the rolls. Manipur now has 19,60,620 eligible voters, while Sikkim has 4,18,467.

Before and during the SIR exercise, Manipur's Kuki-Zo groups expressed fears that community members displaced after the ethnic conflict that erupted on May 3, 2023, would be deleted from the electoral rolls though the government sought to dispel such apprehensions.

More women voters

In Manipur, women voters (10,06,962) outnumber men (9,53,350), recording a gender ratio of 1,056 women for every 1,000 men electors. The State has 308 third-gender electors.

The draft electoral rolls published on July 5 had 19,34,399 electors.

Altogether, 96,985 claims and objections filed during the claims and objections period were processed for the final rolls. In addition, all forms received before July 5 were processed for final publication. "A total of 56,871 electors have been included, and a total of 30,650 electors have been deleted from the draft electoral roll," said a statement from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO).

During the SIR, Kuki-Zo groups had said that those displaced by ethnic conflict could be struck out of the rolls. PTI

The CEO's office said it received 19,34,399 of the total enumeration forms generated for the electors. Altogether, 1,58,677 electors whose enumeration forms were not received were excluded from the draft rolls. Of them, 72,473 were identified as shifted, 43,000 as deceased, 34,740 as absent, 7,394 as duplicate entries, and 1,070 under other categories.

The Sikkim CEO's office in Gangtok said the State's final electoral roll has 4,18,467 voters, after the deletion of 52,614 names.

The draft rolls released in July had 4,33,294 electors, of whom 3,61,159 or 83.35% were successfully mapped with their own or parents' electoral details from the previous qualifying rolls or the last SIR. The remaining 72,135 electors (16.65%) could not be mapped, an official statement said.

'Logical discrepancies'

Among the mapped electors, the Election Commission's digital system identified 52,384 as having "logical discrepancies".

The total number of electors deleted during the claims and objections process was 16,809.

The final roll includes 2,12,534 men voters, 2,05,931 women, and two from the third gender.

Modi turned student event into political campaign: Kharge

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of turning his interaction with students at Delhi University's Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC) into a "political campaign" instead of engaging with questions on the youth and their future and education.

In a post on X, Mr. Kharge said the Prime Minister's visit to SRCC was an opportunity for dialogue with the country's youth but alleged that Mr. Modi chose to avoid their questions. He accused the Prime Minister of using labels for the Opposition to divert attention from the government's failures. Referring to terms such as "*Naraaz Phupha*" (Angry Uncle), "*Dimagi* Naxal", "Urban Naxal," "Khan Market Gang", "*Andolanjeevi*" and "*Parjeevi*", Mr. Kharge said the "adjectives keep changing", but the government's "anti-people policies do not change".

Mallikarjun Kharge

"Outreach is only needed when you become out of reach," Mr. Kharge said.

Mr. Kharge also invoked the Congress's *Chhatron Ki Goonj* campaign, urging Mr. Modi to listen to the programme and find some solutions instead of "beating around the bush".

Delhi CM visits collapse site, says won't spare those guilty

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta visited the site of the deadly building collapse in Satya Niketan on Sunday evening, to oversee rescue operations and ensure that all agencies are working in tandem to rescue those still trapped under the debris, even as Opposition leaders called for accountability, and a relook at the student housing crisis in the national capital.

The Chief Minister has ordered a magisterial inquiry into the incident.

Standing on the first floor of a temple adjacent to the site, Ms. Gupta declared that whoever is responsible for the collapse will not be spared, whether it is the building's owner or a government official.

"The building was old, and some construction and renovation work was under way. Our priority is to save the lives of these children first. All officials are present here, and there will be no shortage of any kind. However, the guilty will not be spared," she said.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta takes stock of the condition of the injured in Delhi. ANI

'Life-threatening crisis'

Calling the incident "heartbreaking" and "alarming", Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said that Congress workers and volunteers from the party's student wing, the National Students' Union of India (NSUI), were at the disaster site and ready to provide every possible assistance.

Students' housing struggles have now turned life-threatening, he said. "Due to the lack of good hostels in colleges or universities, students are forced to live in PG accommodations, 40-40 at a time under one roof, in inhumane conditions. Every student's life is precious, and their protection must be ensured under all circumstances," Mr. Gandhi said in a post on X.

Former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who heads the Aam Aadmi Party, blamed the BJP government's "negligence" for the "tragic" and "alarming" collapse.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his condolences to the families of victims and said authorities were working at the site and assisting those affected in the mishap.

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED
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NOTICE INVITING TENDER
The APTRANSCO invites bids online for Spec.No.PMM32-e-70/2026: Supply of **30 Nos. 220V, 100AH VRLA Battery banks and 28 Nos. 220V, 200AH VRLA Battery banks, Date & Time of availability of above tender: 09.09.2026 at 6:00PM.** Website: **www.tender.apeprocurement.gov.in.** Contact No.CE/Transmission: 0866- 2429230.
R.O.No.GMCC/APTRANSCO/127/26-27 Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER/TRANSMISSION

INBRIEF

FPIs pull out ₹7,443 cr. from equities in first week of Sept.

After investing in Indian equities for two consecutive months, foreign investors turned net sellers in the first week of September, pulling out ₹7,443 crore as a rebound in crude oil prices, rising U.S. bond yields, and a firm dollar dented risk appetite. The outflow came after foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) infused ₹30,919 crore in August and ₹20,200 crore in July. Before that, they remained net sellers for four straight months from March to June. With the latest withdrawal, total outflow by foreign portfolio investors from Indian equities has climbed to ₹2.32 lakh crore so far in 2026, surpassing the ₹1.66 lakh crore withdrawn in 2025. PTI

Punjab Police arrest man wanted in U.S. over fraud

A naturalised American citizen, who allegedly defrauded the U.S. government of at least $600,000 and carried a bounty of $1,15,000, was arrested by the Punjab Police in Jalandhar, officials said on Sunday. Manjeet Singh Bedi left the United States in April and reached India via Canada to evade the law. He was arrested two days ago in a fraud case registered in Rama Mandi, the police said. During questioning, the police learned that he had committed fraud in the U.S. and fled from there. The case in Jalandhar involved allegedly duping a person on the pretext of helping him go abroad. PTI

ISRO's role is by no means diminishing: space officials

Agency will remain the bedrock of the Indian space sector, says IN-SPACe chief Pawan Goenka amid concerns raised by ISRO staff associations over 'privatisation'; agency calls concerns 'baseless'

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The top brass of India's space establishment refuted suggestions that privatisation in the space sector threatened the workforce of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

The role of the ISRO was "by no means diminishing", said IN-SPACe chairman Pawan Kumar Goenka on Sunday, responding to a joint letter from nine ISRO employee associations seeking written clarification on whether the government intends to transfer the agency's launch-vehicle and satellite manufacturing to private firms. "There has been some misleading narrative in the media around the future role of ISRO. Let me say it unequivocally: ISRO's role is by no means diminishing. It will remain the bedrock of Indian space sector." Dr. Goenka said in a post on X.

The reforms that began in 2020, he said, were aimed at expanding India's overall space ecosystem, with IN-SPACe authorising non-government participation and NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) commercialising mature capabilities.

> There has been misleading narrative... the direction is not a smaller ISRO. It is a larger Indian space ecosystem, with ISRO pushing the technological frontier.
>
> **PAWAN KUMAR GOENKA**
> IN-SPACe chairman

Industry would increasingly manufacture and scale mature launch vehicles and satellites, he added, while ISRO would concentrate on advanced R&D, scientific and strategic missions, and infrastructure too complex for private developers – including the Bharatiya Antariksh Station by 2035 and an Indian crewed lunar mission by 2040. "The direction is not a smaller ISRO," he wrote.

Longer clarification

His post was followed by a longer clarification from ISRO, calling suggestions of privatisation "completely baseless and incorrect" and stating that the agency would neither be privatised nor have its importance reduced. Transferring a mature technology, it said, did not amount to withdrawal from that domain; the shift was towards an "ISRO-led national space ecosystem", institutionalised through the Indian Space Policy 2023.

The agency said India now has over 450 space start-ups against a handful in 2020, and aims to grow its roughly $8.4-billion space economy to $44 billion by 2033. Ownership of critical national space infrastructure, it said, would remain with the government. The letter that prompted the responses was dated September 4 and addressed to Dr. V. Narayanan, Secretary, Department of Space and Chairman, ISRO. Its signatories cited Dr. Goenka's public remarks on August 21 that ISRO would eventually not make or manufacture any launch vehicles.

Questions raised

They asked whether that position represented an approved Space Commission decision. They further asked what would happen to sanctioned strength and recruitment over the next five to 10 years, and whether the associations would be consulted before irreversible decisions.

Employees of the Department of Space are exempted from the statutory definition of "industry" and cannot form trade unions. They instead organise as service associations recognised under the Central Civil Services (Recognition of Service Associations) Rules, 1993. The letter was copied to the Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers.

Road map ready to make India drug-free by 2029, says Shah

Press Trust of India
PANAJI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said that the government has prepared a road map to make India drug-free by 2029, asserting that a drug-free youth population would lead to the goal of a *Viksit Bharat* by 2047.

The Centre has adopted a coordinated, nationwide strategy to dismantle the entire narcotics network, from drug trafficking to financing, while also focusing on rehabilitation, as part of its goal of achieving a "Drug-Free India" by 2029, Mr. Shah said at a press conference after chairing a high-level meeting on narcotics attended by Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and officials of the Union Home Ministry and the State government.

Mr. Shah said that in 2019, a four-tier National Coordination Committee for Countering Drug Trafficking (NCORD) mechanism was created at the executive, State and district levels to ensure coordinated action against the drug menace in the country. "Dedicated Anti-Narcotics Task Forces [ANTFs] have been constituted in all States and Union Territories, and local police have been linked with the national strategy."

Amit Shah

He said a Joint Coordination Committee was also formed in 2019 to enable Central agencies and State governments to take joint decisions against major drug networks, their international connections and operational gaps.

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has been strengthened by reorganising its cadre and enhancing its manpower, zonal presence and operational capabilities, Mr. Shah said.

The government has linked awareness, treatment, rehabilitation and livelihood opportunities with the anti-narcotics campaign, he pointed out, adding that the 1933 MANAS helpline has been introduced to support persons with drug addiction.

UN-backed map must reflect Indian position on J&K, Ladakh: govt.

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India on Sunday said a United Nations-initiated proposed world map must depict the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh in accordance with the country's official map, and any "inaccurate" or "misleading" representation will be unacceptable.

New Delhi's assertion came two days after it voted in favour of a UN General Assembly resolution aimed at correcting the world map to promote a more accurate representation of continental landmasses. The resolution titled "Correct the Map: Rebalancing Global Cartographic Representation and Promoting Equitable Representation of the World's Regions, Particularly Africa" was adopted on Friday.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said India highlighted that the resolution does not constitute endorsement of any specific map, projection or depiction of national boundaries.

"India's sovereign territory, including the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, must be depicted in accordance with India's official map. Any inaccurate or misleading depiction is unacceptable," he said.

"Our position on India's sovereignty and territorial integrity is clear, consistent and non-negotiable," he noted.

Mr. Jaiswal further said: "The resolution neither adopts nor authenticates any particular world map, nor does it address political cartography, including international boundaries, disputed territories or place name".

As yoga and Ayurveda become part of India's global health diplomacy, experts press for credible standards

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Yoga and Ayurveda have moved beyond their traditional wellness identity and are increasingly becoming part of India's global health and diplomatic strategy, with the Centre seeking to expand their footprint through medical tourism, international education, practitioner mobility and trade agreements.

The shift is particularly evident in India's recent trade diplomacy. The India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), operationalised in June 2026, and the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA) contain dedicated provisions on health-related services and traditional medicine. These include measures to ease licensing, develop standards and facilitate the mobility of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) practitioners and instructors.

New opportunity

The India-European Union FTA, signed in January 2026, goes further, allowing AYUSH practitioners to use their Indian qualifications in EU countries where no regulatory framework exists and providing for AYUSH wellness centres and clinics.

The agreements represent an attempt to transform AYUSH from being a cultural export to a formalised health and services opportunity.

The India-Oman CEPA contains what the government describes as its first comprehensive commitment on traditional medicine across all modes of supply, while the India-New Zealand FTA has a dedicated "health and traditional medicine" annex covering AYUSH practices.

The Centre issued 1,646 AYUSH visas to nationals from 75 countries between January 2024 and February 2025.

The New Zealand agreement also provides structured mobility pathways, including a dedicated visa quota for AYUSH practitioners. The government said the agreement would institutionalise cooperation in education, training, standards development and wellness services.

However, the diplomatic push also raises questions about how far formal recognition and market access will translate into actual international demand.

Experts point to the need for credible standards, evidence, regulation, practitioner quality and patient safety if AYUSH is to establish itself in increasingly regulated global healthcare markets.

Senior officials in the Ministry of AYUSH said the AYUSH visa, overseas training and exchange programmes were also helping expand the sector.

"Foreign medical arrivals rose from 1.83 lakh in 2020 to 6.44 lakh in 2024, as per our data. Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Germany, Russia, Malaysia, Mauritius and Saudi Arabia are among the important markets for AYUSH and Ayurveda treatment. The government does not publish a current consolidated country-wise ranking of AYUSH patients," he said.

Absence of data

However, the figure of 6.44 lakh refers to overall foreign medical arrivals and not specifically AYUSH patients. The absence of consolidated data makes it difficult to assess AYUSH's actual share of India's medical-value-travel market.

The AYUSH visa, introduced in 2023, is another component of the strategy. Between January 2023 and December 2025, a total of 3,375 foreign nationals travelled to India on AYUSH visas or e-AYUSH visas, while another 579 travelled on AYUSH attendant visas or e-AYUSH attendant visas.

Earlier, the Ministry had reported that 1,646 AYUSH visas had been issued to nationals of 75 countries between January 2024 and February 2025.

Education is also emerging as another channel of influence. Under the AYUSH Fellowship Scheme, 260 students from 32 countries were studying AYUSH in Indian institutions.

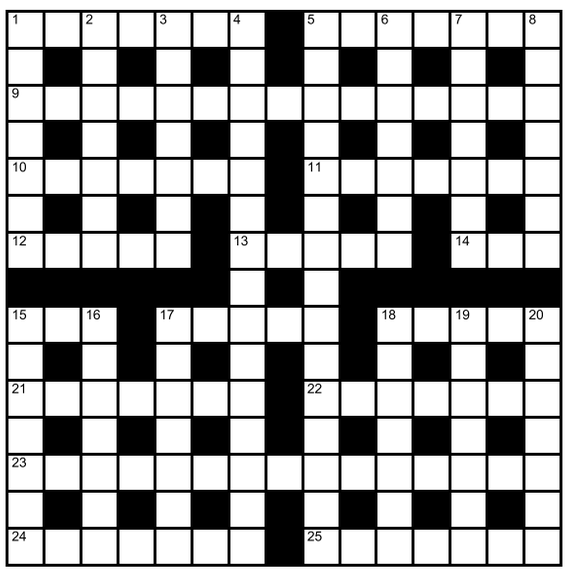
The Ministry's international cooperation programmes also support training, seminars, conferences and knowledge exchange, including yoga and education overseas.

TH CROSSWORD + 14892

(set by Vidwan)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Give me solicitor accepting Euros (4,3)
5 First to finish, Italian gentleman passes over (7)
9 Transformers communicate with this drunk Chilean man? Find out! (7,8)
10 Guess working after retirement is hell! (7)
11 A seed, it magically conceives (7)
12 Fish out millions for parlour (5)
13 King's quality time wasted for a snake (5)
14 Go bankrupt without one (3)
15 Plant scents, ignored at times (3)
17 Generous anchor going back to Sony at last! (5)
18 Fellow with second-hand joint (5)
21 Married Buddhist monk returns, enshrining eleven of the greatest values (7)
22 Some hoodlum brag evokes resentment (7)
23 Every bull and noble died foolishly in front of small golden-haired gals (8,7)
24 Paramour loses head and fight's cut short! (7)
25 Managed palace without slightest of tension or bitterness (7)

Down

1 Silent dumb shows killing men and women with babies (7)
2 Time to move with most comprehensive understanding (7)
3 Working around extremely small letter (7)
4 New Greek foe told about source of wisdom (4,2,9)
5 Murg biryani name spreads - one's root! (9,6)
6 No! No American eagle at court to disregard! (7)
7 It generates power for player (7)
8 Tramples kid of spouse from earlier marriage (7)
15 Part-time expert's broken promise (7)
16 Spooner's copy of document sent over net to a big plant without charge (3-4)
17 Poets freshly rendered, possibly extemporised (7)
18 When upset, Robin synthesises Spiderman's protein? (7)
19 Love going into beach to shop every so often for devil (2-3-2)
20 Doctor left out lower chest (7)

SUDOKU

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

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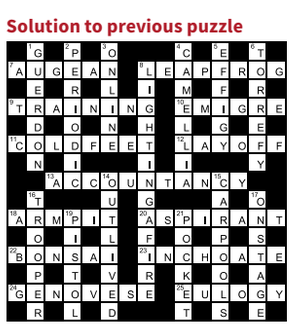
Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Rama answers Vaali

A dying Vaali questions Rama and wonders if He is indeed righteous. What was His enmity with Vaali? Why did He have to kill him, asks Vaali. Rama answers all the questions Vaali puts to Him, said Navalpakkam Vasudevachariar. Rama tells Vaali that Vaali had not cared for conventions or for uprightness. He had not consulted his intellectual superiors on the proper course of action, but had acted as he pleased. Rama points out to Vaali that everything on the earth is under the control of the Ikshvaku clan to which Rama belongs. Not only human beings, but even animals, birds and trees are under the control of this dynasty. One of Vaali's objections is as to what jurisdiction Rama has in punishing Vaali. This is Rama's reply to that objection.

Bharata is ruler of the earth and he is a king who never veers from the moral path. Rama has a duty to enforce rules in Bharata's kingdom. In fact, Rama says to Bharata that while Bharata will be king of people in his kingdom, Rama will be king of all forest dwelling beings. Having assumed this responsibility, he had to punish Vaali. Rama says there are three father figures in a man's life. One is, his biological father. The other two are his elder brother and his teacher. Therefore, that a man should be a father not only to his own son, but also to his younger brother and to his student. Since Vaali is the elder brother of Sugreeva, the latter is like a son to him. But Vaali has misbehaved with Sugreeva's wife. Is that not akin to misbehaving with a daughter-in-law? That is the primary reason for Rama to kill Vaali. How can he spare the life of someone who has sinned and has broken all rules? As the representative of Bharata, Rama cannot tolerate such conduct.

MONEYWISE

Balanced bond portfolio blueprint

Vaishali R. Venkat

It's always easy to buy a bond. A bond can 'promise' regular income but a well-built bond portfolio is a different ball game. It must be able to withstand a default, changing interest rates, and shifting economic conditions. A good portfolio ensures a single issuer's default does not wipe out a large chunk of your investment.

The starting point is simple: ask yourself when and how much money you need, whether you want periodic interest or capital appreciation and how much risk you are willing to take: risk tolerance. The answers to these questions will decide the bonds you choose, the lock-in period and if at all you need bonds in the first place.

The spread

Don't let the bond portfolio turn a collection of similar bets. Mix Central and State government securities, Treasury bonds, corporate bonds and bank bonds, and spread the money across issuers, sectors and banks. Government debt can anchor the relatively safer end of the portfolio, while corporate bonds may offer higher yields with a mix of risk and return rather than depend on a single issuer.

Perpetual bonds

Stagger maturities rather than having all bonds mature at the same time. Perpetual bonds have no fixed maturity and can provide regular income but there is no predetermined date for repayment of the principal. They, therefore, need closer scrutiny and are not risk-free.

Interest structure

The interest structure can be diversified too. A portfolio can include zero-coupon bonds, bought at a discount, and pay no periodic interest; alongside fixed-rate, floating-rate and inflation-linked bonds. Convertible bonds offer another option: these hybrid instruments can be converted into a predetermined number of shares of the issuing company.

Credit rating

Before buying, credit rating must be the first warning signal. Higher-rated bonds such as AAA and AA usually carry lower credit risk than BBB, BB or lower-rated bonds. But a rating is no guarantee against loss; read the offer document and assess issuer before investing.

Rebalancing

A bond portfolio needs regular monitoring. Track interest payments, interest rate changes, RBI announcements, developments involving the issuers, and rebalance when allocation drifts from the original plan. Check whether interest payments are made on time, watch out for defaults and track credit ratings. If these alter the risk profile or portfolio's initial allocation, rebalance accordingly. Review it at least every six months or once a year.

Finally, track the economy. Stay alert for major economic or political developments that might hit issuers. GDP growth, inflation, joblessness, CPI, WPI, Budget and sectoral performance can impact interest rates and bond prices. Follow these along with developments in Indian/global economy to help understand the forces affecting bond holdings.

No single bond, issuer, maturity or credit rating can suit every investor. The objective is to build a combination that matches need for income, capital protection, liquidity and risk. Remember, higher returns generally come with higher risks and even highly-rated debt is not entirely free from risk. Read the key offer document thoroughly, try to make sense of terms and conditions before investing in bonds. A disciplined approach can help ensure that bonds play their intended role.

(The writer is an NISM & CRISIL-certified Wealth Manager and certified in NISM's Research Analyst module)

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

ILLUSTRATION: SAAI

Buying insurance at discount? Think twice

In insurance, the cheapest option is not necessarily the one that gives you the best value. Prudence here is not making assumptions but looking at both sides of the bargain.

BETWEEN THE LINES

K. Nitya Kalyani

Buying insurance is commendable. Being a prudent buyer of insurance is even better.

That means more than bargaining for lower premium or looking for more benefits. Insurance is different from most products and services we buy. The price reflects the risks the insurer is taking and the cover and benefits offered.

So, when you pay less it is worth asking: what, exactly, am I giving up?

In the previous instalment, we saw how an insured, peeved at not getting a discount on a hospitalisation policy, decided not to renew. This meant losing accrued benefits and importantly, the cover itself.

We all love discounts. There is nothing wrong with wanting the best value from a transaction. The problem arises when we focus on what we save without understanding what we may be giving up.

Consider the experience of a neighbour. The owner of several vehicles, he bought a rugged beast of an SUV. He felt he had earned the right to ask his insurer for a concession. After all, he had been a client for a long time and had several vehicles insured with the company.

The agent obliged with what appeared to be a handsome discount on the motor insurance premium.

> You may be making a saving with a discount but always take a sharp look at what you are no longer getting for that saving

A good deal, or so it seemed. Until the SUV faced a dug-up highway, flipped over the median and had to be towed to the dealer's garage. That was when the discount got an entirely different meaning.

The insured found the discounted premium came with a restriction on where the repairs could be done. Repairs at the manufacturer's authorised workshop were not covered under the terms of the discounted policy. Getting the repairs done at a non-network garage could mean delays in getting spare parts, concerns about workmanship and, potentially, implications for manufacturer warranties.

No free lunch

The premium had been reduced but so was the cover. While the restriction was stated in the policy document, the agent did not explicitly tell the client what the discount entailed. The point he missed was: it may be a perfectly legitimate discount, but it may not be a free lunch.

As an aside, buying vehicle cover from the dealer who also has an authorised garage is a win-win decision as said before in these columns. This way, the claim documentation, estimates, approval, repairs and cashless settlement will all take place seamlessly by the same or closely-related entities.

> With most products, paying less means getting the same product at a better price if you manage to negotiate well. Insurance does not quite work that way.

I recalled a long-ago incident where a premium discount on a home fire policy resulted in the removal of flood cover. Chennai, as we know, is no stranger to floods, sometimes with tragic consequences. Luckily, since 2021, flood cover has been inbuilt with a single bundled premium following an IRDAI stipulation.

Claims too

While you have to be careful about discounts when buying or renewing insurance, claims can be fraught too. When a windshield breaks, the damage may be covered by motor insurance. But making a claim for a replacement, costing about ₹8,000, could mean no-claim bonus (NCB) is cut by one slab at least. With some insurers it disappears totally.

If you had accumulated the maximum NCB of 50% of the own-damage premium, losing it could mean paying substantially more at renewal. The claim may be admissible, but is it worth making?

With most products, paying less means generally getting the same product at a better price if you manage to negotiate well. Insurance does not quite work that way. The premium is a price for a particular bundle of risks, conditions, exclusions and benefits. Change the bundle and the price can change too.

Knowing changes

Before accepting a lower premium, ask what has changed. Has an add-on been removed? Has a deductible been introduced or increased? Do you have co-pay now? Has a particular facility or service, like cashless claims, been restricted? Has the choice of repairer or hospital been limited? Has some other condition changed?

You may be making a saving, but take a sharp look at what you are no longer getting for that saving. In insurance, the cheapest option is not necessarily the one that gives you the best value. Prudence here is not making assumptions but looking at both sides of the bargain.

The discount may be real. The cost of the discount may simply show up later.

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

Gold and silver rise

PRECIOUSMETALS

Short-term trend in gold and silver have turned positive post the breakout of key resistance level; the trend would remain positive until the support level is breached

B.Krishnakumar

Breaking the downtrend of several months, precious metals recovered sharply in August. The expectations around interest rate hike by the U.S. Federal Reserve played a key role in influencing the prices. The weakening of the U.S. Dollar too helped precious metals stage a recovery in August.

Comex gold gained 9.73 % in August to settle at $4,497.3/ounce by month end. Comex silver posted an even better performance gaining 16.32% to settle at $67.2/ounce.

Gain in local markets

Mirroring global market trend, the precious metal prices settled higher in the local markets too. The gains were, however curtailed by Indian Rupee strengthening against the U.S. Dollar.

MCX Gold gained 7.75% to settle at ₹1,54,456/10 gm. MCX Silver, too, closed on strong note at ₹2,40,250/kg, a 8.46% gain last month.

Comex gold price managed to breakout above the resistance level of $4,410 mentioned last month. In line with last month's observation, the price later moved to the target zone of $4,650-$4,700. The short-term outlook for gold has turned positive and the price could head to the next target at $4,750-$4,800.

The positive outlook for Comex gold would be under threat only if the price falls below the support at the $4,200-$4,220 zone. Until this zone is breached, expect the gold price to head to the target mentioned above.

Similar to gold, Comex silver price, too, staged a breakout above the resistance level of $66. The short-term outlook as a result has turned positive. The price could now head to the immediate target zone of $72-$74. The positive outlook would be valid as long as the price stays above the support level at $62.5.

MCX gold price, too, crossed above resistance level at ₹1,49,000 and later scaled a high of ₹1,64,773 on August 24 before receding a bit in the past few days. The short-term outlook has turned positive and the price could head to ₹1,66,000-₹1,68,000 zone. The positive outlook would invalidate if the price drops below ₹1,48,000.

Similar to gold, the trend in MCX silver price has turned positive after the price moved past the resistance level of ₹2,45,000. As long as the price stays above ₹2,25,000, the price could move to next target zone of ₹2,56,000-₹2,59,000.

To summarise, the short-term trend in both gold and silver have turned positive post the breakout of key resistance level. The trend would remain positive until the support level mentioned above is breached.

(The author is a Chennai-based analyst/trader. Views, opinions in this column are based on an analysis of short-term price movement in gold and silver futures at COMEX & Multi Commodity Exchange of India. This is not a trading or investment advice.)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks				
AU Small Finance Bank	7.40	6.35	7.40	6.75
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.10	7.10	7.00
ESAF Small Finance Bank	8.00	6.00	6.00	5.75
Jana Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.00	8.00	7.77
Shivalik Small Finance Bank	8.00	6.00	7.50	6.25
slice Small Finance Bank	7.75	6.25	7.50	7.00
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.25	7.25	7.25	8.25
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	7.80	7.25	7.25	7.20
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.10	6.00	7.50	7.00
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	6.50	6.25	6.50	6.50
Bandhan Bank	7.45	7.00	7.25	5.85
City Union Bank	7.25	6.65	6.50	6.55
CSB Bank	7.10	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	6.85	6.30	6.40	6.25
DCB Bank	7.50	6.90	7.00	7.50
Federal Bank	6.70	6.25	6.50	6.40
HDFC Bank	6.50	6.25	6.45	6.40
ICICI Bank	6.50	6.25	6.45	6.50
IDFC FIRST Bank	7.10	6.50	7.10	6.75
IndusInd Bank	7.00	6.75	7.00	6.65
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	7.05	6.55	6.80	6.85
IDBI Bank	6.50	6.20	6.35	6.25
Karnataka Bank	7.00	6.50	6.15	6.15
Kotak Mahindra Bank	6.80	6.35	6.40	6.25
RBL Bank	7.20	7.00	7.20	6.70
SBM Bank India	7.30	7.10	7.10	7.00
South Indian Bank	6.80	6.25	6.20	5.70
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.25	6.80	6.70	6.70
YES Bank	7.25	6.65	7.00	6.75
Public Sector Banks				
Bank of Baroda	6.75	6.25	6.25	6.30
Bank of India	6.85	6.50	6.70	6.00
Bank of Maharashtra	6.65	6.40	5.25	5.00
Canara Bank	6.60	6.25	6.25	6.25
Central Bank of India	6.75	6.10	6.00	6.00
Indian Bank	6.65	6.10	6.05	6.00
Indian Overseas Bank	6.60	6.50	6.10	6.10
Punjab National Bank	6.60	6.25	6.30	6.35
Punjab & Sind Bank	6.85	5.85	5.85	5.95
State Bank of India	6.45	6.25	6.30	6.05
Union Bank of India	6.55	6.20	6.10	6.00

Home Loan Interest Rates

(In %)

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
Public Sector Banks			
Bank of Baroda	7.20-9.00	7.20-9.00	7.20-9.25
Bank of India	7.10-10.00	7.10-10.00	7.10-10.25
Bank of Maharashtra	7.00-9.90	7.00-9.90	7.00-9.90
Central Bank of India	7.10-9.15	7.10-9.15	7.10-9.15
Indian Bank	7.15-9.15	7.15-9.15	7.15-9.15
Indian Overseas Bank	7.20 #	7.20 #	7.20 #
Punjab and Sind Bank	7.35-10.75	7.35-10.75	7.35-10.75
Punjab National Bank	7.30-9.30	7.25-9.20	7.25-9.20
State Bank of India	7.25-8.55	7.25-8.55	7.25-8.55
UCO Bank*	7.15-9.25	7.15-9.25	7.15-9.25
Private Sector Banks			
Axis Bank	8.00-11.90	8.00-11.90	8.00 - 9.10
Bandhan Bank	8.55 - 13.52	8.55 - 13.52	8.55 - 13.52
City Union Bank	8.25-9.50	8.50-10.00	8.75-10.50
CSB Bank	8.30 #	8.30 #	8.30 #
Federal Bank	8.35 - 10.50	7.35 - 10.50	7.35 - 9.50
HDFC Bank	7.75 #	7.75 #	7.75 #
HSBC Bank	7.45 #	7.45 #	7.45 #
ICICI Bank	7.55 #	7.55 #	7.55 #
Karnataka Bank	7.48- 11.80	7.48- 11.80	7.48- 11.80
Karur Vysya Bank	8.50-10.65	8.50-10.65	8.50-10.65
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.60 #	7.60 #	7.60 #
RBL Bank	9.00 #	9.00 #	9.00 #
South Indian Bank	7.25 #	7.25 #	7.25 #
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.90 - 9.30	7.90 - 9.30	7.90 - 9.30
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
Aditya Birla Capital	7.75 #	7.75 #	7.75 #
Bajaj Housing Finance	7.25 #	7.25 #	7.25 #
GIC Housing Finance	8.20 #	8.20 #	8.20 #
Godrej Housing Finance	7.65 #	7.65 #	7.65 #
ICICI Home Finance	7.50 #	7.50 #	7.50 #
LIC Housing Finance	7.15 #	7.15 #	7.15 #
PNB Housing Finance	7.75-10.05%	7.60-10.05%	7.50-9.95
Sammaan Capital	8.75 #	8.75 #	8.75 #
SMFG India Home Finance	9.25 #	9.25 #	9.25 #
Tata Capital	8.00 #	8.00 #	8.00 #

*Extra concession of 0.05% & 0.10% for women borrowers/takeover loans respectively
Rates as on September 2 #onwards Source:Paisabazaar.com

ARABSALIM

Lebanon President calls for U.S. help after 4 killed in Israeli strikes

AP

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun urged Washington and the international community to help stop Israeli attacks after strikes on Sunday killed at least four people despite a truce and an Israel-Lebanon deal. Israel said it targeted Hezbollah operatives and sites in response to a drone attack a day earlier. AFP

RIYADH

'Plans by Israeli Ministers for Gaza expulsions threaten Trump peace'

AFP

Eight Islamic and Arab countries — Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Pakistan, Indonesia and Turkiye — on Sunday condemned plans voiced by Israeli government Ministers for the removal of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip, saying the designs jeopardise a U.S.-backed peace in the territory. AFP

TAIZ

More than 140 killed in latest Yemen clashes: military sources

AFP

Fighting between Yemeni government forces and Iran-backed Houthi rebels in southwest Yemen killed more than 140 combatants between midday Saturday and early Sunday morning, military sources said. Those killed include 84 Saudi-backed Yemeni government troops and 57 Houthi fighters, sources added. AFP

MOSCOW

Russia dismisses drone accusations, says Germany 'wants war again'

AFP

Germany "wants war again", Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in an interview on Sunday, dismissing Berlin's accusation that Russia was to blame for a drone attack on Leipzig airport. The German government blamed Moscow for the incident, saying Russia sent "low-level agents" for an attempted "hybrid attack". AFP

Iran says it struck a U.S. vessel in Hormuz; Washington denies claim

Tehran says it struck the unmanned U.S. vessel attempting to enter the strait, while U.S. military rejects this as a 'total lie'; Iran's Speaker Ghalibaf warns that any further U.S. aggression would face 'faster, more intense and more painful' responses

Associated Press
CAIRO

Iran said on Sunday it struck an unmanned U.S. vessel trying to enter the Strait of Hormuz, a claim that the U.S. military dismissed as a "total lie". The purported attack came a day after the U.S. military said forces struck three Iranian oil tankers in response to Navy warships being targeted with ballistic missiles. Experts called it a dangerous escalation after Iran's previous attacks at sea targeted commercial shipping.

The war began with U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran on February 28. But since a fragile ceasefire agreement was announced in June, on-and-off fighting has persisted, with both sides trying to inflict military and economic pain as negotiations have collapsed.

Dangerous waters: Vessels transit the Hormuz Strait off the coast of the port city of Bandar Abbas in southern Iran on Saturday. AFP

The United States and Iran resumed attacks last week, following a month of relative calm, with the Strait of Hormuz and areas along Iran's southern coast again being targeted. At least five people were killed earlier in the week during a U.S. bombardment that returned attention to the area where a school was hit in the war's opening strikes.

Iran's top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf threatened a more forceful response to any further U.S. attacks.

"The Americans must have understood that the era of proportionate responses has come to an end," said Iran's Parliament Speaker, who has acted as chief negotiator in talks to end the war.

"Any aggression against Iran's interests and security will receive a faster, more intense and more painful response," he added, in a speech carried by state media.

Mr. Ghalibaf added that alongside the military front, Iran's main battle was now over production and people's livelihoods.

Iran's Economy Minister Ali Madanizadeh said that Tehran planned to respond to U.S. economic pressure with reforms and rejected the notion that sanctions would cause it to change course, according to state media.

"They think that by pressuring the economy of a country they can change the decisions of its people," Mr. Madanizadeh said.

(With inputs from AFP, Reuters)

China teams scour ruins at flood-hit border crossing

Reuters
GYIRONG

Chinese officials said on Sunday that workers had recovered 12 more bodies as the search continued for hundreds still missing after a massive mudslide destroyed China's main border crossing with Nepal.

China on Sunday, for the first time, opened up its devastated Gyirong County in Tibet – the site of the destroyed border immigration post – to select media to show the scale of destruction caused by the flash floods. Not only did the immigration post disappear without a trace, most rescue officials struggled to point out the exact location where the building once stood.

The mudslide has killed more than 1,300 people on both sides of the border, with more than 5,000 missing. On the Chinese side, 43 were confirmed dead and 519 remained missing as of Saturday.

Rescue workers conduct relief operations at the Gyirong Port area in Shigatse, Tibet Autonomous Region, China on Sunday. REUTERS

Officials said that recovery teams were taking fingerprints and recording identifying features such as tattoos as bodies were recovered. They had also collected 993 personal items from the site.

Families and diplomats representing countries with missing nationals have privately expressed growing frustration over what they describe as limited information-sharing by China. Beijing's Foreign Ministry has said its release of information about the floods was "transparent and timely".

(With PTI inputs)

U.S. envoys make Kyiv visit amid push for peace in Ukraine war

Reuters
KYIV

U.S. peace envoys Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv on Sunday as the Trump administration renewed its push to end Russia's four-and-a-half-year war in Ukraine.

Mr. Kushner and Mr. Witkoff travelled from Moscow, where they held three hours of talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday but did not appear to secure a breakthrough in the conflict. Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov described Saturday's meeting as "highly useful".

After the first round of talks between Ukrainian and U.S. negotiators that lasted about three hours, the U.S. envoys said that they were looking forward to making more progress.

"Substantive, important, and we are very encouraged," Mr. Witkoff told presspersons after the talks, which also included a working lunch.

Bhutan leads Southeast Asia region in eliminating rabies

Ramya Kannan
CHENNAI

Bhutan has become the first country in the World Health Organization's Southeast Asia region to eliminate dog-transmitted rabies as a public health problem. The WHO, on Saturday, validated Bhutan's achievement. The mountain kingdom's last rabies death was in June 2023.

Rabies is a viral disease that is almost always fatal if clinical symptoms appear. It is estimated that rabies still claims the lives of approximately 59,000 people each year, with a third of these fatalities occurring in India, where it remains a huge problem with local bodies failing at animal birth control and vaccination programmes.

The disease is endemic throughout the country except for the Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands, and cases are reported from all over the country, the year round. About 96% of the mortality and morbidity is associated with dog bites.

Target for 2030

The National Rabies Control Programme aims to reduce mortality from rabies among human beings and progressively achieve the target of bringing rabies deaths to zero by 2030.

Rabies is almost always fatal if clinical symptoms appear.

In a message shared on the WHO website, its Director-General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, congratulated Bhutan "which is another step towards our goal to end human deaths from dog-transmitted rabies by 2030".

He further noted the interventions that made the success possible: "Bhutan's success shows that the health of humans, animals and the environment we share is inextricably linked. By uniting health workers, veterinarians, and communities, Bhutan has shown that the fight against rabies is won not in silos, but through solidarity across all sectors."

Two-pronged strategy

WHO validation recognises that a country has eliminated dog-transmitted human rabies and consequently through the absence of human deaths from the disease for at least two years, while demonstrating the capacity to prevent transmission from re-emerging.

Rabies deaths are preventable. A two-pronged strategy is advocated globally – vaccinating dogs to curb the disease at source, and using post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) after a bite. PEP consists of thoroughly washing the bite area with water and soap, administering a full course of human rabies vaccine, and whenever necessary, rabies immunoglobulins.

Nilesh Buddha, Officer-in-Charge, WHO South-East Asia Region, complimented the country: "The dedication of health workers, veterinary professionals and De-suung volunteers known as 'Guardians of Peace' helped take dog vaccination, population management and community awareness to every part of the country."

A strong collaboration was initiated between the Ministries of Health and the Agriculture and Livestock, together with partners, local governments and communities, united through a One Health approach, Bhutan's Health Ministry sources explained. Continued access to PEP, mass dog vaccination, dog population management, community engagement and strengthened surveillance marked the country's programme.

Sport

Antonelli dazzles to Italian GP victory

FORMULA ONE

Agence France-Presse
MONZA

Kimi Antonelli produced a dazzling drive from the back of the grid to see off Mercedes teammate George Russell and win the Italian Grand Prix on Sunday.

Max Verstappen finished third in his Red Bull ahead of the McLarens of Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri. Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton of Ferrari rounded off the top six.

The race started in dramatic fashion when Charles Leclerc slammed his Ferrari off the track and into the barriers.

The race was red-flagged with Russell in the lead.

Pulling away: Antonelli's seventh win of the season, and his first in the home GP, stretched his lead to 66 points. AP

Antonelli, who began at the back of the field in 19th after exceeding the permitted number of power unit changes, had already moved his way up to 12th and once the race restarted continued to pick his way through the field.

On lap 18, he hit the front for the first time but that was the start of a desperate dogfight with Russell.

The results (53/53 laps):
1. Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes); 2. George Russell (Mercedes) + 3.857s; 3. Max Verstappen (Red Bull) 14.718; 4. Lando Norris (McLaren) 19.056; 5. Oscar Piastri (McLaren) 19.253; 6. Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari) 24.655; 7. Pierre Gasly (Alpine) 27.351; 8. Arvid Lindblad (Racing Bulls) 45.136; 9. Franco Colapinto (Alpine) 47.353; 10. Yuki Tsunoda (Racing Bulls) 58.187; 11. Gabriel Bortoleto (Audi) 65.187; 12. Nico Hulkenberg (Audi) 66.187; 13. Carlos Sainz (Williams) 74.117; 14. Liam Lawson (Red Bull) 75.609; 15. Ollie Bearman (Haas) 78.958; +1 lap: 16. Esteban Ocon (Haas); 17. Alexander Albon (Williams); 18. Sergio Perez (Cadillac); +2 laps: 19. Valtteri Bottas (Cadillac); **DNF:** Lance Stroll (Aston Martin); Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin); Charles Leclerc (Ferrari).
Standings:
Drivers: 1. Antonelli 267; 2. Russell 201; 3. Hamilton 191; 4. Norris 183; 5. Leclerc 155.
Constructors: 1. Mercedes 468; 2. Ferrari 346; 3. McLaren 309; 4. Red Bull 219; 5. Racing Bulls 80.

We are a very good competitor for the Asian Games gold: coach Marijne

HOCKEY

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

After securing a historic fifth place at the 2026 women's FIH Hockey World Cup last month, the Indian team now turns its attention to the Asian Games.

China, ranked No. 4 in the world, poses the biggest challenge to India, which is four places below its neighbour.

India, however, will fancy its chances against hosts Japan (World No. 11) and Korea (World No. 17).

Head coach Sjoerd Marijne believes India has a realistic chance of winning gold at the Asian Games, which would also secure a direct qualification spot for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

Marijne. K. MURALI KUMAR

"We drew against China at the World Cup, but we could have won. Both teams had good opportunities, so a draw was a good outcome for both. We played Japan in the Nations Cup (India won 2-1). Korea is the only country we haven't played for a while," Marijne said in a media interaction organised by the Sports Authority of India here.

> We are 90% about ourselves and 10% about the opponent

"The main thing is to focus on ourselves. We are 90% about ourselves and 10% about the opponent," he said. The Dutchman is comfortable with the high expectations surrounding the women's national team.

"Everybody expects gold; we are a very good competitor for the gold. But before the gold, there are some other matches we need to win," he explained.

Asked about the areas India needs to improve, Marijne said: "We scored some penalty corners, but that is something we can improve. Well, it's not really something to improve because sometimes the opponent defends really well. You want to score more field chances.

"But if we score a lot of field chances, then people question why we don't score more penalty corners. If we score a lot of penalty corners, then it's the other way around. But which country scores many goals in big matches? There aren't any. They are all close contests."

FAVOURITE VENUE

We always perform well at the China Masters, says Satwiksairaj

BADMINTON PHOTO

Playing here (at China Masters) is always good. After coming back from an injury, this has been a tournament that has given us a lot of confidence. In 2024, we played here after the Olympics and made the semifinal. We were not in a good shape last year, but we went till the final — Satwiksairaj Rankireddy.

EARLY EXITS

Yuki and Anirudh fail to clear first round in US Open doubles

FILE PHOTO

Yuki Bhambri, *right*, and Anirudh Chandrasekar suffered first-round exits in men's doubles at the US Open on Saturday. Yuki and Kiwi Michael Venus went down to Americans Ryan Seggerman and Patrik Trhac 6-7(4), 6-7(3) while Anirudh and Belarusian Ivan Liutarevich lost 4-6, 7-5, 4-6 to Great Britain's Arthur Fery and Joshua Paris.

BIZARRE EXPERIENCE

I felt like I couldn't play tennis: Keys on her third-set implosion

GETTY IMAGES

I obviously got off to a really good lead, and then I got really scared, like I couldn't swing. I think she (Zheng Qinwen) started playing better: I started playing poorly. Then I felt like I couldn't play tennis anymore — Madison Keys after squandering a 5-0 lead in the decider to crash out of the US Open.

JOVIC'S TAKE

'We put on a show and it took everything to get through that'

REUTERS

Iva Jovic outlasted Alexandra Eala in an epic three-hour showdown at the US Open on Saturday. "The level was absolutely incredible. We put on a show and it took everything to get through that... losing my earrings, falling literally flat-out on the floor, ending with cuts on my knees, and suffering mental breakdowns," said Jovic.

Third time's the charm for Satwik-Chirag pair

The Indian combination, which had lost in the final of the 2023 and 2025 editions, produces a terrific comeback in the summit clash; it is ready to go 'all guns blazing' at the Asian Games

The band is back: Chirag and Satwik were slow off the blocks, but upped the ante in the crunch. BADMINTON PHOTO

CHINA MASTERS

Press Trust of India
SHENZHEN

The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty produced a stirring comeback to beat China's He Ji Ting and Ren Xiang Yu in a thriller and clinch the China Masters Super 750 title here on Sunday.

Satwiksairaj and Chirag, who had finished runners-up in the 2023 and 2025 editions, fought their way to an 11-21, 21-13, 21-17 victory. The Indians bagged their second title of the season, having earned the Singapore Open crown.

The title is a big boost for the World No. 5 pair as it gears up to defend the gold medal at the Asian Games, scheduled in Japan from September 19. "It feels really special. Obviously, going into the Asian Games, winning a title definitely gives a huge boost. We are working in the right direction," Chirag said after the Indian combine won its 10th BWF World Tour crown.

"I think we will go back home, push ourselves to the limit, train for the next 10 days and go all guns blazing at the Asian Games. We want to go out there and have some fun."

The Indians could not take early control of the rallies as He and Ren zoomed to a 5-0 lead with attacking strokes in short exchanges. He looked in ominous touch, raining down thunderous smashes, while a wide shot from Chirag allowed the Chinese pair to wrap up the opener.

The Indian combination produced a far better show in the second game, tightening the defence and extending the rallies. Satwiksairaj also opted for a flick serve to keep the Chinese guessing and prevented them from engaging in the front court often.

The local hopefuls were behind 8-12 after losing a 45-shot rally, and the Indians stretched the summit clash into a decider with an attacking return from Satwiksairaj.

Although the Chinese secured a four-point advantage, their opponents leveled the score at 7-7. Down by two points at the interval, Satwiksairaj and Chirag kept themselves within striking distance of He and Ren. After drawing parity at 16-all, the Indians had three match-point opportunities, the first of which Chirag took.

Sabalenka keeps her hat-trick hopes alive; Jovic sets up clash with Gauff

US OPEN

Agence France-Presse
NEW YORK

World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka entered the US Open quarterfinals on Sunday, beating American Taylor Townsend 6-4, 6-3 to keep her bid for a rare three-peat alive.

Sabalenka needed all of her resolve against the multi-faceted Townsend.

The match opened with five breaks of serve before Sabalenka managed a comfortable hold for a 4-2 first-set lead.

The Belarusian star's sustained power and precision proved a little too much for Townsend.

Sabalenka will face either sixth-seeded Wimbledon champion Linda Noskova of Czechia or 11th-seeded Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk for a place in the semifinals.

Fourth-seeded Coco Gauff battled through in straight sets, and 18-year-old US compatriot Iva Jovic held off Philippines sensation Alexandra Eala in three sets to reach the last 16 on Saturday.

Former champion Gauff beat Spain's Cristina Bucsa 6-3, 6-4, relying on her defensive skills as she climbed out of a 3-1 hole in the opening set.

Gauff next takes on Jovic, the 14th seed who won the duel of rising stars with 17th-seeded Eala 7-5, 3-6, 7-5.

Six-time Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek saved three set points in the second set, dominating both tie-breakers in her tight 7-6(3), 7-6(3) win over Czech Maria Bouzkova.

Men's top seed Alexander Zverev made short work of Chile's Alejandro Tabilo, winning 6-2, 7-6(2), 6-2. Zverev will meet Italian Luciano Darderi for a quarterfinal berth after the 21st seed beat Australian wild card Dane Sweeny 6-4, 6-3, 6-3.

Fifth-seeded French Open finalist Flavio Cobolli of Italy fell to 21-year-old Alexander Blockx.

Belgium's Blockx shocked Cobolli 6-7(4), 6-3, 6-0, 6-3, winning 11 straight games from 3-2 down in the second set.

Blockx next faces Francisco Cerundolo, who rallied to upset ninth-seeded Taylor Fritz 3-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.

Gritty win: Jovic edged out Eala in a three-setter. GETTY IMAGES

TOP RESULTS

Fourth round: Women:
1-Sabalenka bt Townsend (USA) 6-4, 6-3.

Third round: 5-Andreeva bt Bartunkova (Cze) 6-2, 7-6(5); 8-Swiatek (Pol) bt 25-Bouzkova (Cze) 7-6(3), 7-6(3).

4-Gauff (USA) bt Bucsa (Esp) 6-3, 6-4; 13-Osaka (Jpn) bt 23-Mertens (Bel) 6-3, 3-6, 7-5.

14-Jovic (USA) bt 17-Eala (Phi) 7-5, 3-6, 7-5; 2-Rybakina (Kaz) bt Starodubtseva (Ukr) 7-6(6), 6-3.

Men: 24-Cerundolo (Arg) bt 9-Fritz (USA) 3-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; 28-Blockx (Bel) bt 5-Cobolli (Ita) 6-7(4), 6-3, 6-0, 6-3.
Khachanov bt Bonzi (Fra) 6-3, 6-2, 6-4; 21-Darderi (Ita) bt Sweeny (Aus) 6-4, 6-3, 6-3.
Gea (Fra) bt Zheng (USA) 7-6(7), 3-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.
van de Zandschulp (Ned) bt 31-Bergs (Bel) 3-6, 7-6(3), 4-6, 7-6(6), 6-3.
1-Zverev (Ger) bt 25-Tabilo (Chi) 6-2, 7-6(2), 6-2.
14-Tien (USA) bt 17-Mensik (Cze) 6-3, 1-6, 6-7(2), 6-3, 6-4.

Arsenal delivers statement fightback; Barca coasts

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Arsenal delivered an emphatic response to Chelsea's emergence as potential Premier League title contender with a 2-1 win that ended its rival's unbeaten start on Sunday.

Mikel Arteta's side trailed to Morgan Rogers' second-minute goal but the champion showed why it is the firm favourite to retain the title with a blistering response.

Kai Havertz bagged the equaliser midway through the first half and Martin Odegaard netted Arsenal's winner soon after the interval.

Lamine Yamal struck twice for Barcelona as it demolished Valencia 5-0 on Sunday to maintain its 100% start in La Liga and move three points clear at the top.

Fermin Lopez, Raphinha and Pedri were also on target for Hansi Flick's swaggering visitors on a hot afternoon on Spain's east coast.

Defending champion Bayern Munich was held to a scoreless draw by promoted Schalke in the Bundesliga.

The draw ended Bayern's run of 67 consecutive matchdays atop the Bundesliga table and was its first scoreless draw since February 2025.

A last-gasp winner from Lautaro Martinez sealed a win for Inter Milan as the Serie A champion fought back from two goals down to edge visiting Napoli 3-2.

Sealing it: Odegaard completes Arsenal's comeback with this smart finish. REUTERS

The results: Premier League: Everton 2 (George 83, Maitland-Niles 90+6) drew with Manchester United 2 (Mbeumo 46, Sesko 88); Arsenal 2 (Havertz 25, Odegaard 50) bt Chelsea 1 (Rogers 2).

LaLiga: Valencia 0 lost to Barcelona 5 (Yamal 6, 84, Lopez 22, Raphinha 50, Pedri 79).

Bundesliga: Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Burkardt 6) lost to Augsburg 4 (Ibrahimovic 46, Fellhauer 47, Claude Maurice 65, Rieder 89); Hamburg 0 lost to Mainz 5 (Becker 19, Mwene 41, Tietz 48, 83, Koenigsdoerffer 90+1).

On Saturday: Premier League: Hull 0 drew with Aston Villa 0.

LaLiga: Athletic Bilbao 3 (Nico Williams 46, Navarro 48, Sancet 90) bt Atletico Madrid 0.

Serie A: Inter Milan 3 (Martinez 56, 90+1, Thuram 82) bt Napoli 2 (Politano 50, Hojlund 53); Roma 2 (Hermoso 89, Soule 90+3) bt Atalanta 1 (Ederson 47).

Bundesliga: Schalke 0 drew with Bayern Munich 0.

Pipers beat Grandmasters despite Carlsen's stalemate

GLOBAL CHESS LEAGUE

P.K. Ajith Kumar
BENGALURU

Magnus Carlsen rushing to his chessboard is not a very unusual sight.

He was sporting a shy smile at his fans at Lalit Ashok on Sunday afternoon as he walked briskly towards the venue for Alpine APL Pipers' match against Ganges Grandmasters on day two of the Tech Mahindra Global Chess League.

The World No. 1 from Norway was held to a draw by former World championship challenger Ian Nepomniachtchi.

Carlsen, however, could afford to smile as his team won 11-6.

It was the second victory in as many matches for the defending champion as the two Indians, K. Humpy and Vidit Gujrathi, scored full points – they were playing with black pieces – against Stavroula Tsolakidou and Leinier Dominguez Perez.

Fyers American Gambits, playing at home, lost its first match after posting two wins on the opening day. Gambits were beaten 7-9 by Grandmasters.

Mixed fortunes: Nepomniachtchi's effort against Carlsen eventually went in vain. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The defeat of Javokhir Sindarov, the World No. 4 and the challenger for this year's World championship, to Nepomniachtchi proved costly. It was on time that the Uzbek lost.

There was more disappointment for two-time title-winner Triveni Continental Kings as it went down to Cheq Mumba Masters 9-10. Kings have lost all their three matches while Masters could heave a sigh of relief after losing two, including one to PBG Alaskan Knights (6-11) earlier in the day.

The results: Ganges Grandmasters lost to Alpine APL Pipers 6-11 (Nepomniachtchi drew with Carlsen; Aronian drew with Anish; Dominguez Perez lost to Vidit; Shuvalova bt Divya; Tsolakidou lost to Humpy; Murzin drew with Mendonca).

PBG Alaskan Knights bt Cheq Mumba Masters 11-6 (Anand drew with Vachier-Lagrave; Arjun bt Pranesh; Yagiz Kaan lost to Mamedyarov; Lagno drew with Harika; Batsiashvili bt Yip; Abhimanyu Mishra bt Daneshvar).

Ganges Grandmasters bt Fyers American Gambits 9-7 (Nepomniachtchi bt Sindarov; Aronian lost to Nihal; Dominguez Perez drew with Dubov; Shuvalova bt Bibisara; Tsolakidou drew with Khademalsharieh; Mendonca drew with Maurizzi).

Triveni Continental Kings lost to Cheq Mumba Masters 9-10 (Firouzja lost to Vachier-Lagrave; Wei drew with Pranesh; Aravindh lost to Mamedyarov; Zhu lost to Harika; Kosteniuk bt Yip; Pranav bt Daneshvar).

Olympiad crucial for Gukesh, says MVL

P.K. Ajith Kumar
BENGALURU

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave believes the Chess Olympiad in Samarkand could be crucial for D. Gukesh in the defence of his World title. The Chennai Grandmaster will be taking on Javokhir Sindarov in the championship match in Geneva later this year.

The Olympiad, the ultimate World team event in chess, gets underway on September 15 in Uzbekistan, Sindarov's home country. "If Gukesh can capitalise on the confidence he has from his previous two Olympiads, in which he had excellent performances, and comes up with a great show again, he could suddenly go into the World championship in a much better mood," Vachier-Lagrave told *The Hindu*. "I think it would be very helpful for him if he gets a little bit of confidence back."

MVL, as the Frenchman is known in chess circles, feels Gukesh needs a break to be at his best again. "He has been struggling a bit with his results, but he has also been experimenting and got maybe too much out of his comfort zone," the 35-year-old said. "He is a formidable opponent. I remember some really good clashes with him."

Vachier-Lagrave.
K. MURALI KUMAR

Sindarov may be viewed by many as the clear favourite, but there isn't any for Vachier-Lagrave. "You have two very strong young players who will be fighting it out," said Vachier-Lagrave, who is playing for Cheq Mumba Masters in the Global Chess League here.

"At the last World championship, Gukesh was coming in really strong and Ding Liren looked like he couldn't play chess. But, suddenly Gukesh was under pressure."

MVL has his own World championship to look forward to as he is part of the pilot edition of the newly launched Total Chess World Championship Tour.

INBRIEF

FIFA confirms Infantino will run in presidential election

Gianni Infantino will stand in March's FIFA presidential election despite the backlash over his now-abandoned plan to bring private investment into the World Cup. Football's global governing body made the confirmation on Sunday. "The FIFA president announced in April that he will stand for re-election in 2027," a FIFA spokesperson said. Infantino had declined to answer questions about his future as he arrived for the opening of the women's U-20 World Cup in Poland.

Mansi finishes runner-up at Indonesia Masters Super 100

Indian shuttler Mansi Singh finished runner-up at the Indonesia Masters Super 100 badminton after going down 16-21, 8-21 to China's Xu Wen Jing in the women's singles final in Jakarta on Sunday. The world No. 76 Indian had defeated Canada's Rachel Chan, while Xu beat third seed Anmol Kharb in the semifinals.

Skipper Kishan dons the lead role as East batters dominate proceedings

His unbeaten ton the highlight as the visitor reaches 385 for four; Abhimanyu, Sooryavanshi, Shikhar and Kushagra, too, punish South bowlers

DULEEP TROPHY FINAL

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Ishan Kishan led from the front with a sprightly unbeaten 111 (135b, 14x4, 1x6) as East Zone amassed 385 for four against South Zone on the opening day of the Duleep Trophy final at the MAC Stadium here on Sunday.

The Jharkhand batter built on the efforts of opener Abhimanyu Easwaran (72, 86b, 10x4, 1x6) and No. 3 Shikhar Mohan (85, 120b, 9x4, 3x6) after opting to bat.

While Kishan headlined the day, it was Vaibhav Sooryavanshi who hogged the limelight.

It is not often that you see packed stands for a domestic game in India. Yet, even before the first ball was bowled, the C, D, and E stands at Chepauk were nearly full in anticipation of seeing the wunderkind. And in the first 90 minutes of the day, the youngster kept the fans on their feet through some elegant strokeplay.

Second nature: Kishan kept busy without trying to be aggressive. R. RAGU

The 15-year-old got on his toes nicely to counter the bounce from the red-soil pitch and punched South Zone pacers Mohammed Siraj and M.D. Nideesh to the off-side fence a few times.

And when Siraj went full, Sooryavanshi had no second thoughts about lofting down the ground for a six and a four. The southpaw eventually holed out on the leg-side trying to pull C.V. Milind for 44.

At the other end, Abhimanyu kept pace with the youngster and did not hold himself back, be it pulling Siraj effortlessly or giving the charge to the spinners.

Post lunch, Shikhar and Kishan combined forces, adding 94 for the fourth wicket, capitalising on a below-par effort from the South bowlers.

Shikhar was largely untroubled, confidently driving Siraj for back-to-back boundaries through the off-side before launching off-spinner T. Vijay for a six and two boundaries off consecutive deliveries.

Kishan kept busy without trying to be aggressive, bringing up his half-century off 71 deliveries. In the final session, he pressed on the accelerator and brought up his century in style, driving Shreyas Gopal down the ground majestically.

Alongside his Jharkhand teammate Kumar Kushagra (63 batting, 75b, 4x4, 5x6), the duo added an unbroken 144 runs for the fifth wicket as East established an early hold on the contest.

The scores: East Zone — 1st innings: Abhimanyu Easwaran run out 72, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi c sub (Tanay) b Milind 44, Shikhar Mohan b Milind 85, Sudip Kumar Gharami c Milind b Vijay 6, Ishan Kishan (batting) 111, Kumar Kushagra (batting) 63; Extras (nb-4): 4; Total (for four wkts. in 79 overs): 385.

Fall of wickets: 1-100, 2-133, 3-147, 4-241.

South Zone bowling: Siraj 14-1-96-0, Nidheesh 10-2-39-0, Vijay 22-3-114-1, Milind 13-1-56-2, Shreyas 19-3-77-0, Rasheed 1-0-3-0.

Toss: East.

A special hundred for Shreyas Gopal and a memorable effort from Shikhar

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

On a day when he made his 100th First Class appearance during the Duleep Trophy final, South Zone leggie Shreyas Gopal felt he was happy to prove a point that wrist-spinners can have a long career.

"I was told that there are not too many leg-spinners who have played 30-50 games. I wanted to show that leg-spinners can play red-ball cricket and still be successful. I put a lot of work into my bowling," said Shreyas on Sunday.

The 33-year-old had one of his best years in the Ranji Trophy last season, claiming 48 wickets and scoring 469 runs, playing a key role in Karnataka reaching the final.

"I think it's just tactically trying to get a little better. Using the crease, understanding the situation and when to attack, when to defend," he explained on the areas he has improved.

Pulling his weight: Shikhar made a fluent 85 on the opening day. R. RAGU

"Most times it would come off. Sometimes, like today, it won't come off. But as long as you go in with a plan, it actually gives you a sense of direction," he said.

Last year, Shreyas also led Mangaluru Dragons to title triumph in the Maharaja Trophy KSCA T20 tournament and felt his time with M.S Dhoni at Chennai Super Kings helped him a lot.

"There are so many questions I've asked (Dhoni) over these last two years, and I just tried to take the whole thing over there. I wouldn't say we won because of that, but definitely some of those moves I wouldn't have made if I hadn't had that experience or that time with CSK," said Shreyas.

Meanwhile, East Zone batter Shikhar Mohan, who made a fine 85 on the opening day, was pleased that he could carry his good form from his maiden Ranji campaign last season where he made 613 runs.

"Coming into this match, I just wanted to carry that form from the Ranji Trophy. Ishan (Kishan) *bhaiya* gave me a lot of advice while I was batting. He was telling me which shots were on and which were not. Thanks to that, we had a great partnership," said Shikhar.

All the hard work is paying off, says Rudrankksh as he gears up for Asiad

SHOOTING

Uthra Ganesan
BHOPAL

Going for his second Asian Games, 22-year-old Rudrankksh Balasaheb Patil is a far cry from the teenager who took to the firing station in Hangzhou. It's been only three years but the period since then has seen the shy, nerdy and overthinking kid grow into a more assured, relaxed and quietly confident person.

"Excitement," he declared when asked what was the predominant feeling. The Indian pistol and rifle shooters have gathered here for a short preparatory camp starting Sunday before leaving on the 14th for Nagoya.

Rudrankksh, the only Indian male shooter who will participate in two events, is not bothered with the responsibility, challenge or expectations of managing both.

Motivated: Rudrankksh says the aim is gold, and that his hunger to win is unabated. R.V. MOORTHY

The 10m air rifle and the 50m 3 Position are completely different and come with their own set of challenges. Rudrankksh, though, insists it isn't impossible. "I am getting to participate in two events and I am able to see that all the hard work which I have put in is paying off," he told *The Hindu*.

"This is the first Asian Games and fourth international competition in which I will compete in two events. Every time I have improved a little bit. I have good coaches, good support staff. I am excited."

He missed out on a medal in the 10m by the barest of margins in a shoot-off with compatriot Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar and is not hesitant to admit it hurt.

"Last time I came fourth in a shoot-off, I was really sad about that honestly. I don't want to experience that, I would like to improve my rank. Of course, the aim is gold. So there is a lot of motivation. The hunger and greed is unabated. And I think my training is going decent, so let's see," he said.

He is also learning to understand his own body and to manage it, and his mind, between events. "I used to be at extremes back then; completely in or completely out.

"I would control myself at the moment something happened but once the event was over, I would be very sad or high-strung, wanting to keep winning at all costs. Now I am comparatively more in control," he said.

LIVE TELECAST

Duleep Trophy (final): Day 2, JioHotstar, 9.30 a.m.

Women's T20 Asia Cup: Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 8 p.m.

US Open: SS Select 1, 2 & JioHotstar, 8.30 p.m. & 4.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Serie A: Unite8 Sports 1, 2 & Z5 App, 12.15 a.m. (Tuesday)

LaLiga: FanCode, 1 a.m. (Tuesday)

SNAPSHOTS

India qualifies for under-20 Asian Cup

TASHKENT: India qualified for the AFC under-20 Asian Cup after 20 years. The Blue Colts registered a 3-0 win over Bangladesh in their final Group B qualifier at the Do'stlik Stadium on Sunday. Danny Meitei Laishram opened the scoring in the 25th minute before Vishal Yadav doubled India's advantage with an acrobatic finish on the hour mark. Substitute Md Arbash then sealed the contest with a powerful strike in the 79th minute. The victory took India to six points. Uzbekistan's win over Syria later in the day ensured India finished second in Group B and qualified as one of the seven-best runners-up across the eight groups. Uzbekistan topped the group with nine points while Syria ended up third with a tally of three.

India junior men rally for a draw; women swamp Malaysia

MOQI (CHINA): The Indian men's hockey team showed tremendous grit to rally and secure a 3-3 draw against Japan in its second Pool A match of the Junior Asia Cup on Sunday. The women's team, meanwhile, consolidated its position at the top of the points table with an 11-1 hammering of Malaysia in its Elite Pool match. In the women's match, India had as many as seven different players scoring with four goals from field play, five from penalty corners and two from penalty strokes.

Danny Meitei scored the opener. X@INDIANFOOTBALL

The results:

Men: India 3 (Anmol Ekka 4, 60, Ashu Maurya 10) drew with Japan 3 (Ryushin Sasaki 11, Kazuki Nakanishi 48, 59).

Women: India 11 (Puja Sahoo 1, 42, Purnima Yadav 4, 17, Binima Dhan 8, Krishna Sharma 14, Sukhveer Kaur 21, Geeta Yadav 28, 53, Sanika Chandrakant Mane 43, 58) bt Malaysia 1 (Nur Mohd 38).

Messi creates both Miami goals in Atlanta draw

MIAMI: Lionel Messi set up both goals for Inter Miami as the Major League Soccer champion drew 2-2 with Atlanta United on Saturday in the Argentina star's first match since announcing his retirement from international football.

Modric available for Croatia in Nations League

ZAGREB: Croatia's veteran midfielder and captain Luka Modric will stay with the squad in the forthcoming Nations League matches, the national football federation said on Saturday. Modric, who will turn 41 on Wednesday, confirmed to coach Slaven Bilic and HNS head Marijan Kustic that he remains available to the Croatian national team.

Diamond League finals: Werro wins with a meet record

Agence France-Presse
BRUSSELS

In-form Swiss Audrey Werro was forced into a dip for victory in the 800m while newly minted World record holders Masai Russell and Alison dos Santos also raced to meet records on the second and final day of the Diamond League finals on Saturday.

Werro was pushed all the way by Femke Broeders-Bol.

Werro, 22, dipped for the line after a tight final 200 metres for victory in 1m 54.75s, one of eight meet records set during a high-octane night of track and field in the Belgian capital.

Russell delivered in the final 50 metres to win the 100m hurdles in 12.20s.

In the absence of Norway's Karsten Warholm, Dos Santos led from gun-to-tape in the men's 400m hurdles. The Brazilian timed 46.70s to obliterate the meet's previous best of 47.51 set by American Andre Phillips back in 1986. Two-time Olympic silver medallist Kenny Bednarek equalled his own world lead of 19.62s when winning the 200m – the American dominating a sprint in which reigning Olympic champion Letsile Tebogo of Botswana came fourth in 20.01.

Werro. REUTERS

And Jamaica's Tina Clayton wrapped up the 100m in 10.92s, with European champion Amy Hunt of Britain taking second ahead of American Sha-'Carri Richardson.

China's Ziyi Yan dominated the women's javelin with a best of 68.42m before Jamaica's Rajindra Campbell set a National record of 23.08m, a world leading mark, in the men's shot put.

Italy's Andy Diaz Hernandez then went out to 17.74m in the triple jump before unbeaten Marileidy Paulino clocked 48.64s for a fourth trophy in the 400m to further re-write the King Baudouin stadium record books.

There was a shock in the women's 1,500m as Poland's Klaudia Kazimierska clocked a National record and world lead of 3:54.05, smashing Faith Kipyegon's meet record by a huge 0.70s.

American Hana Moll, 21, followed up on her victory in Zurich by improving by 1cm her personal best to 4.91m to win the pole vault.

Finally, Rumesh Tharanga Pathirage wrote himself into the history books by becoming the first Sri Lankan to become a Diamond League champion by winning the men's javelin with a best of 89.04m.

Winfield should score an encore in Khammam Plate

HYDERABAD: The five-year-old mare Winfield, who won well in her last start, should score an encore in the Khammam Plate, the chief event of Monday's (Sept. 7) races.

1 CHAITANYA CHAKRAM PLATE (1,400m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II), 2.10 p.m.: 1. French Lieutenant (4) Antony Raj 56, 2. Mantle Plume (11) Akshay K 56, 3. Ashwa Jaffna (7) Gaurav 54.5, 4. Belgium Waffle (8) Mohit 54.5, 5. Classy Touch (2) Neeraj 54.5, 6. Costa Mesa (5) Kuldeep Sr. 54.5, 7. Evansville (9) P. Sai K 54.5, 8. Khamagani (6) B. Nikhil 54.5, 9. Kinship (10) D.S. Deora 54.5, 10. Menlo Park (1) Abhay Singh 54.5 and 11. Night Whisper (3) A.A. Vikrant 54.5.

1. FRENCH LIEUTENANT, 2. ASHWA JAFFNA, 3. MANTLE PLUME

2 KHAMMAM PLATE (1,800m) (Terms), 3-y-o and upward, 2.45: 1. Gold Empire (4) A.A. Vikrant 61, 2. Truth (7) Imran Chisty 59, 3. Nonpariel (6) Akshay K 57.5, 4. Winfield (1) Antony Raj 55, 5. Get Lucky (8) Md. Erkram 53.5, 6. Shadow Of The Moon (2) Afroz K 53.5, 7. N R I Superpower (3) Ajay K 52 and 8. Secret Saint (5) Abhay Singh 52.

1. WINFIELD, 2. NONPARIEL, 3. GET LUCKY

3 MAHABUBNAGAR PLATE (Div. I) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 3.20: 1. Vivaldo (5) B. Nikhil 62, 2. Knight Crusader (4) B.R. Kumar 58, 3. Decoy (7) Shivam 57.5, 4. Darling's Boy (9) P. Ajeeth K 56, 5. Annhilator (6) Akshay K 55.5, 6. Azrinaz (3) A.A. Vikrant 55, 7. Star Forever (8) P. Sai K 55, 8. Detective (1) Gaurav 54, 9. Glorious Power (10) M.S. Deora 52.5 and 10. Torchbearer (2) Kuldeep Jr. 51.

1. ANNHILATOR, 2. KNIGHT CRUSADER, 3. DECOY

4 MANCHERIAL PLATE (1,600m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 3.55: 1. Bold Beauty (4) Md. Ismail 60.5, 2. Take A Breath (7) Rafique Sk. 60.5, 3. Sunny Day (2) P. Ajeeth K 59.5, 4. Only My Way (6) Afroz K 58, 5. Silver Arrow (8) A.A. Vikrant 58, 6. Hoping High (5) Mohit 53.5, 7. Secret Option (1) Akshay K 52.5 and 8. Shubhrak (3) Surya Prakash 52.

1. SECRET OPTION, 2. TAKE A BREATH, 3. HOPING HIGH

5 BHADRACHALAM TROPHY (1,200m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 4.30: 1. Dubai Touch (13) M.S. Deora 60, 2. Dyanoosh (6) Md. Ekram 59.5, 3. Warwick (3) P. Ajeeth K 59.5, 4. See The Light (11) B.R. Kumar 58.5, 5. Clara (12) Imran Chisty 57, 6. Kalki (10) Surya Prakash 56.5, 7. Pole Star (8) Akshay K 55, 8. Flying Fury (7) G. Naresh 54, 9. Dashing Charm (5) Kuldeep Jr. 53.5, 10. Sangreal (2) P. Sai K 53.5, 11. Sharanga (9) Abhay Singh 53.5, 12. Colt Pistol (1) Rafique Sk. 51 and 13. Calabasas (4) Ajay K 50.5.

1. WARWICK, 2. SEE THE LIGHT, 3. POLE STAR

6 MAHABUBNAGAR PLATE (Div. II) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 60 to 85 (Cat. II), 5.05: 1. Ragnarök (3) Shivam 60, 2. Exclusive Black (10) Akshay K 58, 3. Victoria Doresaani (1) Mohit 57.5, 4. She Can (4) Santosh Raj 56.5, 5. Gloria (7) Antony Raj 56, 6. Calista girl (2) Kuldeep Jr. 55.5, 7. High Speed Dive (8) Rafique Sk. 54, 8. Dali's Destiny (5) D.S. Deora 53, 9. Romantic Grey (6) Afroz K 53 and 10. Best Buddy (9) Md. Ekram 50.5.

1. GLORIA, 2. EXCLUSIVE BLACK, 3. VICTORIA DORESAANI

Day's Best: **WINFIELD**
Jackpot: 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6.
Mini Jackpot: 3, 4, 5, & 6.
Treble: (i) 1, 2 & 3, (ii) 4, 5 & 6.
Tanala: All races.

The graceful artist's brush with history

It was only fitting that Smriti's record-breaking stroke, in India's Asia Cup match against Hong Kong, came on the off-side. It was not just her former India captain that she moved ahead of on account of her 64-ball 124. She also took the record for the most hundreds in women's international cricket from Australian legend Meg Lanning

P.K. Ajith Kumar

Smriti Mandhana danced down the track. She launched into Ruchitha Venkatesh, and sent the hapless off-spinner over wide long-off.

The six took her past fellow-Indian Mithali Raj, making her the leading scorer of runs in international women's cricket.

It was only fitting that her record-breaking stroke, in India's Asia Cup match against Hong Kong China at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium last Thursday, came on the off-side. She is, after all, the goddess on the off-side.

It was not just her former India captain that Smriti moved ahead of on account of her 64-ball 124. She also took the record for the most hundreds in women's international cricket from Australian legend Meg Lanning, who retired at the age of 31, and South Africa captain Laura Wolvaardt (17 each).

Lanning and Mithali were the two outstanding batters in women's cricket. Ian Bishop had once said, Lanning was one of the very few players, male or female, that he would stop whatever he was doing just to watch her bat. And she is regarded by many, including the great Charlotte Edwards, as the greatest female cricketer of all time.

But for Mithali, humble and amiable off the field and ruthless on it, girls like Smriti would not have had an idol to look up to in India.

Until a decade ago, Mithali was the main reason why people in the country were aware of the existence of women's cricket in India. She would score big runs with remarkable regularity and force her way into the sports pages.

Women's cricket in India may be big now with big money, but for a long time it was the runs of Mithali and the wickets of Jhulan Goswami, along with thankless efforts from their teammates and their predecessors as well as the sacrifices of a man called Mahendra Kumar Sharma (an organiser who sold his property so that he could fund women's cricket), that kept the sport alive.

Mithali and Jhulan are a bit unlucky in that their careers ended a year before the WPL began. They deserved to be part of the most glamorous and lucrative league in women's cricket.

Smriti has certainly been lucky. Or cricket fans have been lucky. The WPL has played a major role in widening the fanbase of women's cricket considerably. So a lot more people have been able to enjoy the sheer artistry of Smriti's batting.

Make no mistake, there is no one in women's cricket that gives as much joy. Yes, Wolvaardt has her own fans, and her cover drive is perfection; it is one of the greatest sights in cricket. And yet, Smriti is in a league of her own. When she gets going, you know why sport, at the highest level, is able to compete with art. The thing with Smriti is that even when she isn't at her best, she can look good enough.

One recalls her speaking at a press conference about how she felt she wasn't exactly at her best, after playing a big knock and some lovely strokes. That was the perfectionist in her speaking. A real artist is like that.

K.R. DEEPAK

While the artistry in her batting may be a gift, her phenomenal success is something she has worked hard for. When she was little, her mother asked her to reach the top of whatever activity she chose for herself. She followed that advice.

Look at the way she is getting better and better. She is scoring faster, and she is converting far better, too. She has of late been hitting more hundreds in international cricket than she used to: last year alone, she made six of them.

Breathtaking

One of those hundreds gave India an excellent chance of pulling off a most unlikely chase against Australia. The Aussie women had made 412, and that too, without even batting for the full 50 overs at New Delhi. That was 111 more than the successful chase in a Women's ODI at the time (since then India and New Zealand have set new records).

That night in Delhi, Beth Mooney, with a brilliant 75-ball 138, seemed to have batted India out of the match, but Smriti was in no mood to go down without a fight. Her breathtaking 125 off 63 balls raised India's hopes. One recalls, while watching the match from the media box, going back to the scorecard of that incredible men's ODI between South Africa and Australia at Johannesburg in 2006 (the host had chased down the target of 435 with Herschelle Gibbs making an unforgettable 111-ball 175).

Like Gibbs, Smriti was batting as if she was in a dream. As long as she was at the wicket, the target was going to be reachable for India: after 20 overs, India was 204 for two. With skipper Harmanpreet Kaur batting alongside Smriti, the Women in Blue had every reason to think of the unthinkable. The two, however, were soon dismissed, and though Deepti Sharma scored a valiant 72, India went on to lose by 43 runs.

It may have come in a losing cause, but that innings by Smriti will be remembered for not just her elegance, but for her aggression and courage. When you add to Mooney's superlative hundred in the first half of the match, it was a shining example of how much the women's game has travelled, how much these brave women have made use of the opportunities that have come their way after decades of negligence.

Smriti had once told this correspondent how glad she was to see that the women's game was getting its due, how the fans had begun to follow women's cricket closely. She spoke of how people were now telling her about Radha Yadav instead of the girl who bowled left-arm spin.

When Smriti began her journey in cricket, you could barely have imagined such a time would arrive. In her Maharashtra town, Sangli, she was the first girl to train under Anant Tambvekar, her first coach. It was after watching her brother Shravan, who played for the Maharashtra junior team, that she wanted to become a cricketer. Rahul Dravid had presented her a bat through him.

Smriti played with that bat during her India debut against Bangladesh in the final T20I at the Reliance Stadium in Vadodara in 2013. Later that year, in the same Gujarat city, she scored a stunning 224 off 150 balls for Maharashtra against Gujarat in a West Zone under-19 one-day game at the Alembic ground. That innings was one of the early signs of her extraordinary talent.

She was 17 then.

Thirteen years later, she holds two of the most significant all-time records in women's cricket. In fact, after her record-breaking innings, she said: "It is just the start, I would say."

She admitted: "Going past the international record of the centuries, I mean, 18 is a good number to go past, firstly I will say that. But again, two of the legends of women's cricket, Meg Lanning and Mithali Raj. Genuinely, these are the two people who I have grown up watching a lot of my cricket, tried to take a lot of things from them as batters. So I am really happy that I could go past them in whatever way."

Smriti will continue to spread happiness wherever she goes. Her batting is like that. Little wonder, her fans are spread across different countries, be it England or Australia. She is hugely popular in the leagues she plays there.

She has also earned a lot of respect from her peers or former stars. When they speak about the batters they enjoy watching, it is Smriti that they often talk about first.

Former England batter Mark Butcher and former Sri Lankan quick Rumesh Ratnayake have said Smriti reminded them of David Gower. W.V. Raman, former India opener who has also worked with her as the coach of the National team, has compared her to Sourav Ganguly.

Of course, Ganguly and Gower were among the most stylish players of their generations. At the moment, few batters could give the connoisseurs of cricket as much pleasure as Smriti.

At 30, there is plenty of cricket left in her yet. So the cricket fans can look forward to more delightful innings from her. She may be the world's best batter, but that doesn't mean that she cannot try to get better. During the Women's T20 World Cup in England recently, when she had an opportunity to chat with former Australian opener Matthew Hayden, she sought tips on batting from him.

Smriti remains committed to her art as ever.

THE GIST

- While the artistry in her batting may be a gift, her phenomenal success is something she has worked hard for
- When she was little, her mother asked her to reach the top of whatever activity she chose for herself. She followed that advice
- Beth Mooney, with a brilliant 75-ball 138, seemed to have batted India out of the match in Delhi, but Smriti was in no mood to go down without a fight
- The stylish opener was batting as if she was in a dream. As long as she was at the wicket, the 413-run target was going to be reachable
- Smriti will continue to spread happiness wherever she goes. Her batting is like that. Little wonder, her fans are spread across different countries, be it England or Australia. She is hugely popular in the leagues she plays there

Sharpest pictures of sun's surface reveal previously unseen whirlpools

In all pictures taken of the sun's surface in the past century, the edges of its convection cells were blurred; for decades, solar physicists wondered if these edges were really frayed or if they could find more detail if they observed the cells using a more powerful telescope; new images have settled the debate

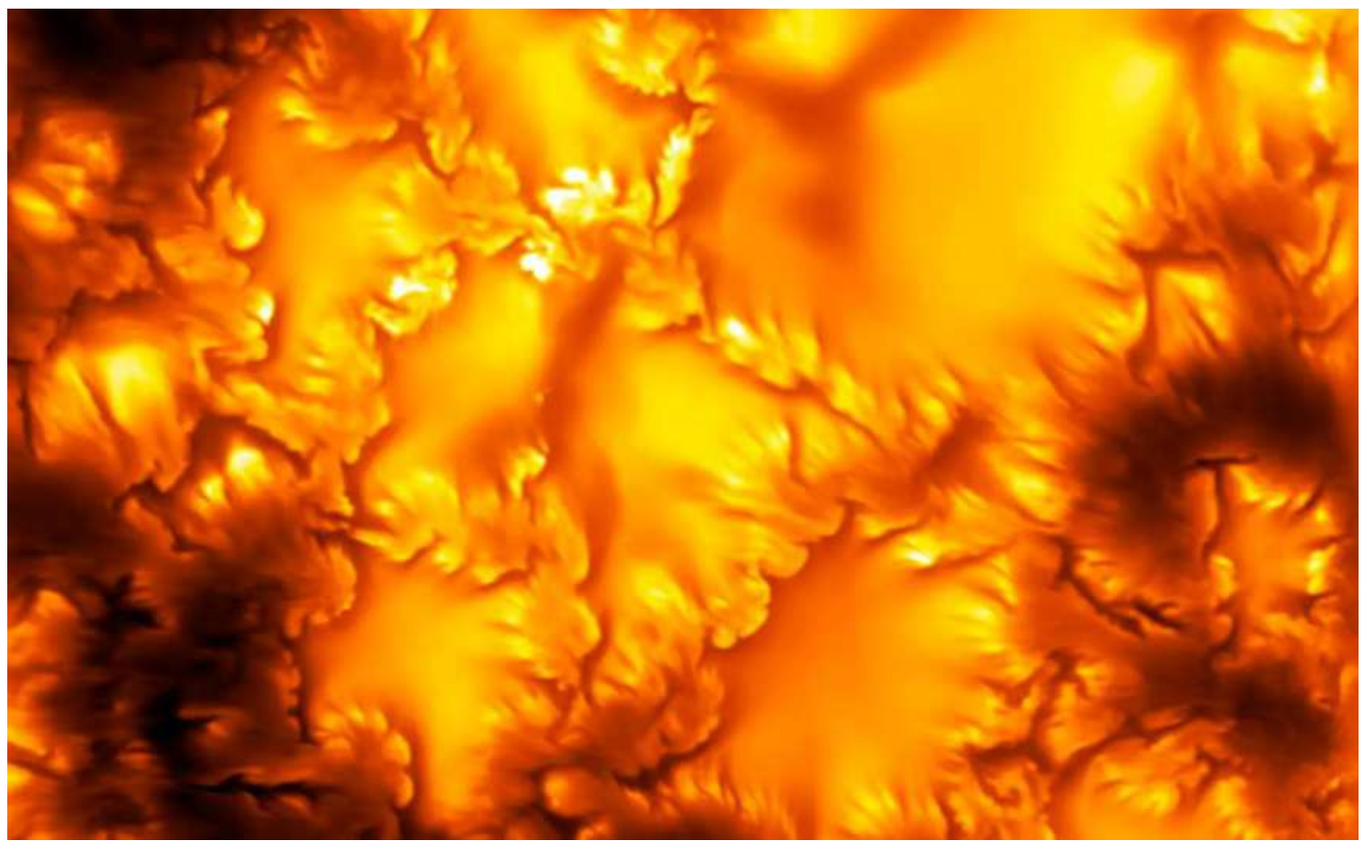
Shamim Haque Mondal

Scientists have used the world's largest telescope to study the sun to capture the highest-resolution pictures yet of the sun's surface, revealing small, violent plasma whirlpools moving across it.

The discovery could change how scientists understand the way energy and magnetic fields move through the sun's atmosphere. These whirlpools seem like an efficient way to move energy and magnetic flux, and could also be responsible for braiding the sun's magnetic fields at small scales.

Such braided fields are thought to store and release the energy that powers solar flares and other eruptions – and may help explain why the sun's outer atmosphere is so unexpectedly hot.

The team's findings were published in *Nature* on August 5.



The highest-resolution image of the sun's surface ever captured, by the Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope. At the edges of the solar granules, the image reveals fringed-looking structures that display swirling motions. NSF/NSO/AURA/MPS

Details on the edge

The part of the sun that we see is called the photosphere. This is a chaotic environment filled with a roiling mass of superheated plasma. The light we see on the earth is energy emitted by this plasma.

Astronomers have been taking pictures of the sun's exterior for a long time, and they have always seen a beehive-like structure there. The cells in this structure are called convection cells. Each cell spans up to around 2,000 km – the distance from Mumbai to Guwahati – and lasts for 5-10 minutes before dissipating. The visible features of a convection cell are called granules. All these granules together form the outer visible layer of the sun.

In all the pictures taken of the sun's surface in the past century, the edges of these granules were blurred. They looked like frayed cotton.

And for decades, solar physicists have wondered if these edges are really frayed or if they will find more detail if they observe them using a more powerful telescope. The new images have settled the debate.

"The weakness is in the telescope's aperture," the researchers – from the U.S. National Science Foundation National Solar Observatory (NSO), Germany's Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research (MPS), and the High Altitude Observatory (HAO) – wrote in their paper in *Nature*.

It seems that with telescopes whose primary mirrors are smaller than two metres wide, it is not possible for physicists to observe the fundamental perturbations on the sun's surface.

For their study, the researchers turned to the NSF Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope (DKIST) in Hawaii. Perched near the 10,000-foot-high summit of the Haleakalā volcano, the DKIST features a giant four metres primary mirror. It started scientific operations in late 2019.

The team used it to observe a magnetically active region on the sun called NOAA 14060, capturing light at a wavelength of 416 nanometres (which is visible light of a blue-violet colour). They also paired the telescope with a high-speed FastCam camera developed jointly by NSO and MPS. The camera had a exposure time of 100 microseconds, capturing up to 740 frames per second.

With the help of this camera, the researchers took many pictures of the sun's turbulent atmosphere.

Then, one member of the research team, Michiel van Noort of MPS, used an advanced image processing technology called multi-frame blind deconvolution to remove the blurring that occurs when the sun is photographed from the earth. Then the team combined multiple cleaned-up images to recover a clear image.

Dr. Noort used this technology to capture images of the sun's surface of dimension 5,800 km x 4,350 km at a resolution of 19 km. This is like being able to spot a 10-rupee coin in Mumbai from Pune. Thus, the team found that the edges of the solar granules are innumerable small coils of plasma, each only 25-170 km long, separated by around 65 km. And they had their own little magnetic fields.

Wind over a river

The researchers also found that these small plasma coils moved along the boundaries of the granules, twisting and interacting with one another. And as they did, they generated whirlpools in the plasma – vortices that spun rapidly and changed shape within seconds.

When a strong wind blows over a calm river, small whirlpools form on the water. Generally, physicists say, a vortex is formed at the interface where two adjacent fluids move past each other at different speeds. The same thing has been found happening on the sun.

Scientists have previously found such whirlpools in the atmosphere of gaseous planets like Jupiter.

This is the first time scientists have seen such a wave moving on the surface of the sun.

These whirlpools in the sun's plasma also rapidly grow in size. The scientists found that the fastest-growing vortices became 2.7-times larger than their original size in just 18 seconds. Even those that grew a little slower took only 71 seconds to reach this size. They rotated at about 1.6-2.8 km/s.

The scientists found that, over three minutes, these whirlpools constantly form, merge with each other, and break up again.

A new way

The team confirmed its observations with the DKIST using magneto-hydrodynamics simulations on a computer. In both cases, the vortices' rotational speed and energy were the same. In other words, these whirlpools are essentially the sun's engines: they capture the sun's internal magnetic energy and radiate it out into the universe.

The simulations also suggested the whirlpools lie 100-400 km below the photosphere.

The findings give solar physicists a new way to investigate the boundary between convection and magnetism. The whirlpools generate turbulence and continuously distort the magnetic fields. In doing so, they could provide the small-scale motion needed to braid magnetic field lines and release magnetic energy higher in the atmosphere.

The next step is to determine how much energy these instabilities transport and how the small vortices are connected to the more energetic events of the sun's atmosphere.

(Shamim Haque Mondal is with the Physics Division, State Forensic Science Laboratory, Kolkata. shamimmondal709@gmail.com)

THE GIST

New images captured by the world's largest telescope have provided the clearest view yet of the sun's surface, helping scientists better understand how energy and magnetic fields move through its atmosphere

Scientists used the Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope in Hawaii, which has a giant four metres mirror, to capture the sharpest images of the sun's surface; its advanced imaging capabilities allowed researchers to observe tiny solar features that smaller telescopes could not detect

Scientists found that tiny plasma coils on the sun's surface continuously move, twist and interact, and create fast-spinning whirlpools similar to those formed when strong winds disturb water. These vortices grow rapidly, merge and break apart within seconds, revealing a highly dynamic process never before observed

BIG SHOT

In this drone photo released by the Geological Agency (Badan Geologi) of Indonesia's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Mount Anak Krakatau spews volcanic smoke in Sunda Strait, Indonesia on September 5. AP

WHAT IS IT?

Sulphuric acid: not so deadly

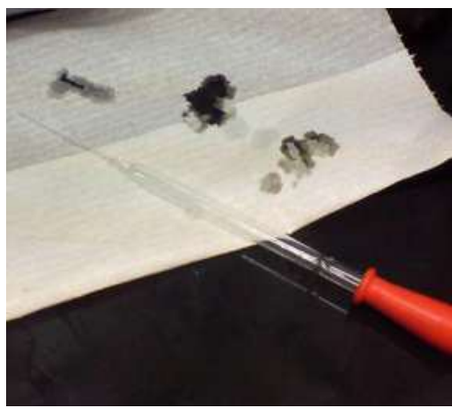
Vasudevan Mukunth

Researchers have found that certain peptides — short chains of amino acids that make up proteins — are not only stable in 98% concentrated sulphuric acid but also fold into the complex 3D shapes required to perform the functions central to life.

Thus, the findings, published *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* on September 4, defy the assumption that concentrated sulphuric acid is a bane for the building blocks of life. Scientists had previously found nucleic acid bases and amino acids to be stable in the same solvent; this is the first time a macromolecule important to biology has been shown to be capable of the same feat.

Normally, strong acids break down peptides in a process called hydrolysis; as the name suggests, water molecules break down one or more important bonds. Since 98% sulphuric acid contains almost no water, the reaction that would normally shred the peptide bonds can't happen, allowing the peptides to remain stable for several weeks at room temperature.

Using nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, the researchers found that these peptides folded into a specific shape called an omega loop, using the sulphuric acid molecules themselves as a kind of scaffolding to help maintain the shape.



Drops of 98% concentrated sulphuric acid rapidly dehydrate tissue paper, leaving behind carbon, which stains it black. PUBLIC DOMAIN

This is however a significant departure from how proteins behave in water, where they typically form different structures like helices or sheets.

The findings are important for the search for life beyond the earth. For example, Venus is covered in clouds of concentrated sulphuric acid, which scientists previously assumed were too harsh an environment to host any complex chemistry. The new findings question this assumption.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Goal speed of Indian Railways' hydrogen train

110 in kmph. The Indian Railways is working to operate the country's first hydrogen-powered train at speeds of up to 110 kmph after completing trials at 120 kmph, Railway Board Chairman and CEO Satish Kumar said. He said consultations were under way with all stakeholders to decide the rail sections on which the new hydrogen train could be operated. PTI

Number of people dead in Israel strikes in Lebanon

4 Lebanon said four people were killed on Sunday in strikes that Israel said it carried out after Hezbollah had launched drones at its soldiers in south Lebanon, the latest escalation amid a fragile truce. Lebanon's Health Ministry reported two people killed in south Lebanon's Nabatieh al-Fawqa and two women killed in nearby Arab Salim. It said 20 other people were wounded. AFP

Number of people affected by floods in Bihar

19.57 in lakh. Over 19 lakh people across 11 districts of Bihar have been affected by floods. Due to the rise in water levels of various rivers in the State, people in 330 gram panchayats across 11 districts — Patna, Bhojpur, Saran, Vaishali, Bhagalpur, Begusarai, Buxar, Samastipur, Munger, Katihar and Araria — have been affected, the officials said. PTI

Flights affected by Indonesia volcanic eruption

209 Indonesia halted operations at its main international airport outside Jakarta on Sunday after ash spewed from the Anak Krakatoa volcano more than 150 kilometres away, impacting thousands of passengers. Mount Anak Krakatoa erupted on Saturday, producing a fountain of lava and booming sounds that could be heard up to 700 kms. AFP

Percentage of voters deleted in Sikkim in SIR exercise

11 in per cent. A total of 52,551 electors were deleted from Sikkim's electoral roll during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), reducing the number of voters by around 11.16%, a statement said. The final roll has 4,18,467 eligible voters, compared with 4,71,018 in the pre-SIR voters' list, the Chief Electoral Officer's office said in a statement. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Does inflation targeting work in India?

India's Phillips curve is found to be flat, while households' inflation expectations remain consistently higher than the RBI's projections; this suggests that inflation targeting can lower output and employment without a commensurate reduction in inflation

ECONOMIC NOTES

Rohit Azad
Indranil Chowdhury

India has just completed a decade of inflation targeting (IT) as a formal policy framework of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Under this framework, the RBI is supposed to contain inflation at 4% within a band of (+/-) 2 percentage points. In this piece, we explain the theory behind inflation targeting and test it against the Indian experience.

Managing demands

The RBI seeks to control inflation through two channels: controlling demand and influencing the public's inflationary expectations. The RBI flexes its policy rate of interest (called the repo rate), which is increased when inflation kicks in. This pushes commercial banks' lending rates up.

Households become wary of taking home or consumer loans, while businesses postpone decisions to build factories. Demand comes down and, as a result, so does inflation.

The second route works through anchoring the inflationary expectations of the public at large. The assumption is that high expectations about inflation tomorrow influence inflation today because capitalists build these expectations into their current pricing decisions and workers into their wage decisions. Inflation is a self-fulfilling prophecy. So, if the RBI can somehow tether these expectations to its projected path of inflation, it can contain this prophecy. Both these routes work through a relationship called the New Keynesian Phillips curve (NKPC).

This curve describes a relationship between the level of GDP and inflation in an economy. It is proposed that a rise in output leads to an increase in inflation. Prices are a markup over costs. For simplicity, let us assume wages are the only costs in an economy. Workers demand wages; capitalists add a profit margin to determine prices. If wages rise, prices follow suit. But why should wages rise with output?

The wage-price negotiation process provides the key to understanding the NKPC. Consider a worker who would like to buy 5 kg of rice during a month for her family. Since she will not receive a sack of rice as her wage, she will have to settle for a money wage with which she can buy that amount of rice.

The time difference between fluctuations in money wages and the purchase of rice makes expectations a key factor in the process. For example, if she expects the price of 1 kg of rice at the time of purchase to be ₹100, she would negotiate for ₹500 as wages to buy those 5 kg. But if she expects the price to be ₹200, she would ask for ₹1,000. Wage costs would go up (for the same bundle of wage goods), as would prices.

A rise in output and employment, this framework argues, makes workers stronger and enables them to demand more rice – say from 5 kg to 6 kg – for the same number of hours of work. Thus, the wage demand curve rises with output (see panel (a) of **Graph 1**). Since prices are nothing but a markup over costs, the price curve (NKPC) has the same upward-sloping shape. On top of that, if the price expectations for rice were to change from ₹100 to ₹200, the wage demand curve, and the corresponding NKPC, would shift up for every level of output/ employment. In other words, the position of the NKPC is determined by expectations, and its slope by the bargaining power of workers and capitalists.

If the economy were to behave in this manner, there are two obvious ways to bring inflation under control (see panel (b) of Graph 1). Slide the economy down along the NKPC curve (the trade-off range marked in the graph where both inflation and output fall) or manoeuvre workers' expectations to a lower level across the board, so that the wage demand curve, hence the NKPC, shifts down, resulting in a fall in inflation with no impact on output. Expectation management is a less painful way of managing inflation. This is inflation targeting in a nutshell.

All of this works well in theory. But what if the real picture of the Indian economy is depicted in **Graph 2**? What if the NKPC is flat and there is no trade-off between output and inflation? Additionally, what if people's expectations do not match the RBI's projections of lower inflation in the future – that is, the flat NKPC stays put instead of shifting down? Then, a policy of inflation targeting, which brings output down without lowering inflation at all, leads to a combination of lower output and flat stagflation (a left-pointed arrow in Graph 2).

Is the Indian Phillips curve upward sloping?

Our academic work published in the Economic and Political Weekly provides a more rigorous test of the Phillips curve, finding it to be flat under multiple configurations and methodologies. For the present purposes, a 'first cut' of that story is presented here. **Chart 1** uses monthly data on industrial output, as measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), and CPI inflation between April 2012 and March 2026. The best-fit trend line in Chart 1 shows India's NKPC is, at best, flat.

But why is there such a gap between reality and mainstream economic theory? Because the basic premise of a rising wage demand curve, and consequently NKPC, as shown in Graph 1, is incorrect. For economies such as ours, an overwhelming majority of workers (around 92%) do not have any bargaining power, let alone fixing wages. They are simply price takers. Wages do not rise with output/employment.

Projections and expectations

Even if the Phillips curve is flat, IT enthusiasts would argue that shifting it down would still do the job. But for this to happen, people's expectations should, by and large, match the RBI's projections. What does the Indian data tell us? The RBI surveys Indian households about their inflation expectations a quarter and one year ahead. These expectations are plotted over this period against the RBI's own projections. **Chart 2(a)** shows that expectations are consistently higher than the projections, that too, on average, by a margin of four percentage points. Even when expectations are plotted against actual inflation, the gap is similar (see **Chart 2(b)**). So, the expectations story is way off what is claimed to defend IT.

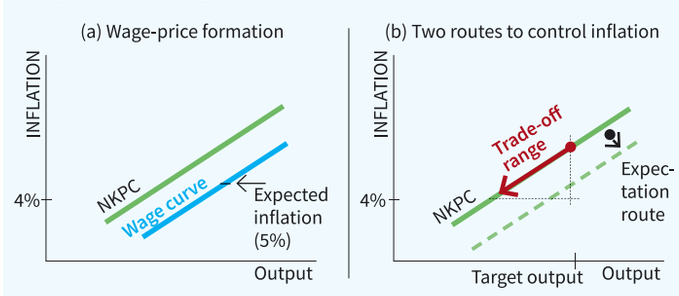
John Maynard Keynes would have asked the RBI: 'When facts change, I change my mind. What do you do sir?' Unfortunately, the RBI does the opposite as it tries to force-fit a macroeconomic model to a world where the underlying assumptions of the model do not hold. In the process, it inflicts pain on the common people of this country by forcing them out of employment without any commensurate gain in controlling inflation.

(The authors are a part of the DevMac (Development Macroeconomics) network, which seeks pluralism in Economics)

Off the mark

Ten years into inflation targeting, the Indian experience raises questions about its underlying assumptions

Graph 1: The New Keynesian Phillips Curve (NKPC)



Graph 2: A flat curve means lower output without lower inflation

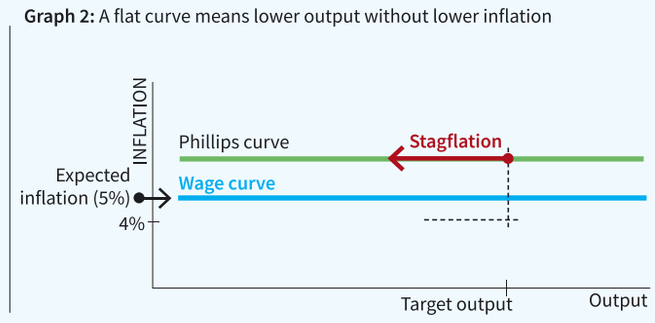
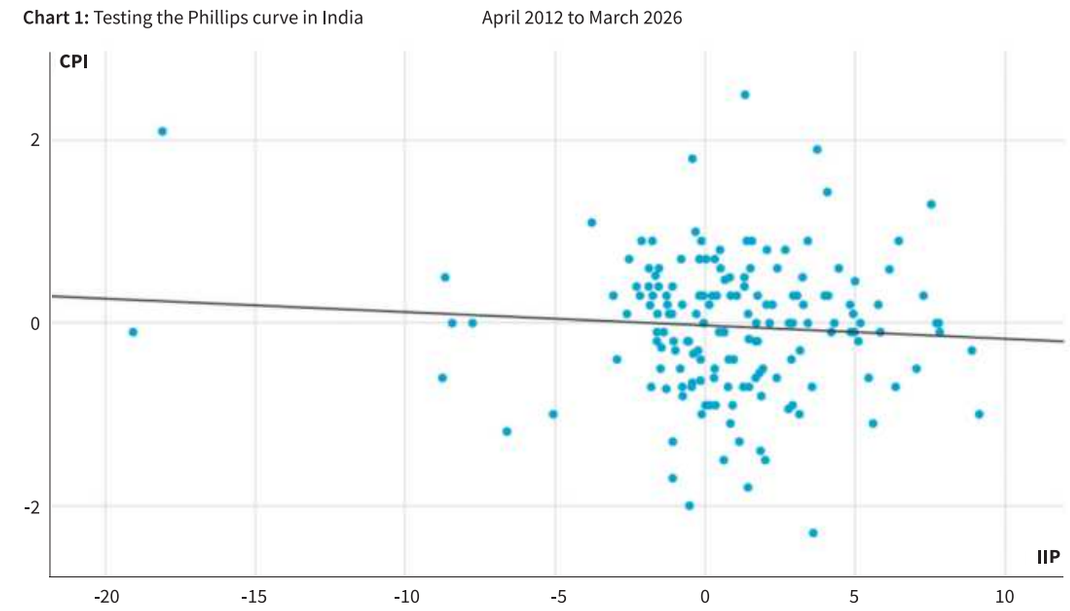


Chart 1: Testing the Phillips curve in India

April 2012 to March 2026



1. The x-axis is the output gap, measured as the de-seasonalised IIP minus the trend IIP. The y-axis is the first difference of CPI-C inflation (base 2012). 2. Since most macro variables grow over time, care needs to be taken while working with them. Because of this common underlying time trend, you may get a clear relationship between two variables, which is actually spurious. This common trend needs to be removed before we can draw any conclusion about the relationship between these variables, a process which is called making data stationary. Often, subtracting the previous year's value from the current year eliminates the time trend.

Chart: Azad & Chowdhury. Source: Database on Indian Economy, RBI

Chart 2(a): Household inflation expectations versus RBI projections

March 2017 - June 2026 (in %)

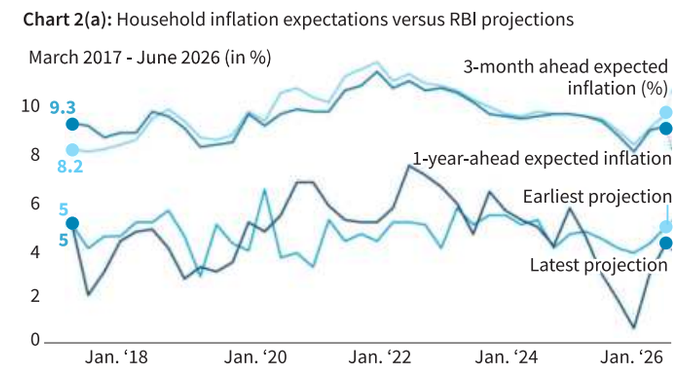


Chart: Azad & Chowdhury. Source: Households' Inflation Expectations Survey and Monetary Policy Statements, Various Years, RBI

Chart 2b: Household expected inflation and actual CPI inflation

April 2022-July 2026 (%)

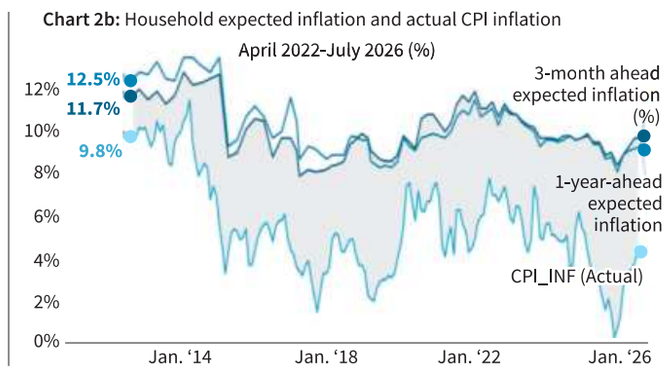


Chart: Azad & Chowdhury. Source: Database on Indian Economy, RBI

THE GIST

- Inflation targeting works through higher interest rates to curb demand and through managing people's expectations of future inflation
- The theory assumes that higher output and employment strengthen workers' bargaining power, pushing up wages and prices. However, this assumption does not hold well in India, where most workers have little bargaining power
- The inflation-targeting framework relies on macroeconomic assumptions that may not reflect the realities of the Indian economy, potentially imposing high costs on employment and ordinary households

CACHE

Music lovers worldwide are noticing signs of AI tracks in both online and offline spaces, even as they call for greater transparency. GETTY IMAGES

Why Australia's music industry banned AI music in chart listing

Australia's ARIA has barred wholly AI-generated songs from its charts while allowing music made substantially by humans with AI assistance; the move has intensified calls for transparent AI labelling and greater accountability from streaming platforms

Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

Australia's music industry body – the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) – on August 25 banned songs wholly made using AI, noting such tracks will be ineligible for listing on its charts. The announcement comes after the viral fame of an AI remix of Madonna's 1989 song 'Like a Prayer,' made by Australian music producer and disc jockey Josh Fawaz earlier this year. The AI song enjoyed multiple weeks on the country's top 20 chart and ranked second on ARIA's top 20 Australian singles chart, per AP. It also scored over 23 million views on YouTube.

The use of AI to compose the song was not clearly disclosed initially, angering listeners and musicians who want synthetic music to be transparently labelled.

Which songs are banned under the new rules?

The industry body ARIA's rules do not ban outright the use of AI in music. Neither does it have a zero-tolerance policy for AI in art. Instead, the updated code notes that a recording developed with the help of Gen AI is eligible for listing when it is "substantially human made" and "raises no stream or chart manipulation concerns." This still leaves a lot of room for artists to create music with Generative AI tools.

In fact, ARIA CEO Annabelle Herd insisted that the chart listings should evolve to "keep room for" artists already using AI tools in their work.

To truly exclude AI-generated music from human creations, even casual listeners need a reliable way to differentiate between the two; for this, transparent labelling standards are required across platforms

"The ARIA Charts will always remain a transparent measurement of the music Australia consumes, but a chart that rewards unlicensed AI output would undercut the very basis of the recorded music we exist to represent," she said.

What penalties will users and distributors face?

ARIA has stated that it may reject ineligible recordings, apart from excluding them and removing them from charts whenever needed, adjusting chart positions, withdrawing accreditations, or rescinding its awards.

But when considering the global music industry as a whole, there is not much punitive action that original music artistes and producers can take against users making AI-generated versions of their songs. The optics of a world-famous singer suing a small creator over an AI remix do not favour the true creators.

Instead, musical artistes and the companies representing them have been taking AI music generation platforms such as Suno and Udio to court, accusing them of using copyrighted works without permission.

In late August, music publishers including Sony Music Publishing and Warner Chappell sued Anthropic, as well as its co-founders Dario Amodei and Benjamin Mann, alleging digital piracy and the data harvesting of copyrighted works.

Anthropic disagreed with the claims and intends to defend itself in court, reported *TechCrunch*.

Scraping copyrighted content to build AI is still a grey area. However, the 2025 ruling against Anthropic in the authors' lawsuit that ended in a landmark $1.5 billion settlement made one thing clear: that U.S. courts may take a more serious view of AI companies pirating copyrighted content for AI development.

Will music platforms be held accountable for AI?

To truly exclude AI-generated music from human creations, even casual listeners need a reliable way to differentiate between the two at first glance. For this, transparent labelling standards are required across streaming platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music.

Later this month, Spotify users can expect to see "AI Persona" labels that identify artists who were entirely created with AI. In addition to this, Spotify will not include AI Personas in listeners' editorial or algorithmic recommendations.

The labels will depend on both self-disclosure as well as the platform's own checking process. Users will also be able to learn if the artist self-disclosed their AI status, or if Spotify had to apply the label.

While this label applies to AI artists, the platform has features such as AI Credits and SongDNA in order to understand if specific tracks were created with AI.

But more users are asking for ways to filter AI-generated or AI-assisted music entirely. A spike in unlabelled AI song tracks on platforms such as Instagram makes it difficult for creators to curate background music for their videos and photos. For example, art-based businesses marketing handmade goods to buyers can face flak over accidentally using AI music in their Reels. Taking down and re-uploading the Reel would cost them views.

Challenges exist offline as well. Music lovers and connoisseurs have complained that AI soundtracks are seeping into more public spaces, as commercial properties such as stores and cafés err on the side of caution by choosing generic AI music over popular licensed tracks they may need to pay for.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Identify these personalities from their Wikipedia page subheadings

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Mohammed Hidhayat

QUESTION 1
Childhood - Public speaker - Pune Ashram - Arrival in the United States - 1984 bioterror attack.

QUESTION 2
Early life - Mathematics career - Life in Montana - Mail bombings - Manifesto.

QUESTION 3
Early life - Founding a blood-testing startup - Self-made female billionaire - Downfall - Fraud charges.

QUESTION 4
Early life - Career - Photography hobby - Later years - Death - Discovery and recognition - Legacy.

QUESTION 5
Early religious and political influences - Founding a new religious organisation - Relocation to a South American country - Mass murder–suicide.

QUESTION 6
Early life - Led own gang - Massacre - Surrender - Political career - Assassination.

Visual Question:
Identify the African leader and fill in the blank. Early life - Rise in Army - Seizure of power - Expulsion of _____ - War with Tanzania - Exile - Death - Erratic behaviour, self-bestowed titles and media portrayal. AP

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. What was the name of the feminist magazine she co-founded in 1971 which survives till today? **Ans: Ms. magazine**
2. Steinem said once that she had never wanted children because she already had one. Who was she referring to? **Ans: Her mother**
3. Steinem was part of the second wave of feminism. Name the book credited with launching this wave, written by Betty Friedan. **Ans: The Feminine Mystique**
4. In 2005, Steinem, Robin Morgan, and X co-founded an organisation that "works to make women visible and powerful in the media." Name X, an actor who starred in Klute and Coming Home. **Ans: Jane Fonda**
5. In a controversial op-ed, Steinem once defended a U.S. President, saying his behaviour with women may have been reckless, but did not meet the legal definition of sexual harassment or assault. Which President was she talking about? **Ans: Bill Clinton**
Visual: Where did she work, which led to her seminal 1963 undercover exposé, 'A Bunny's Tale'? **Ans: The Playboy Club**
Early Birds: Dodo Jayaditya | Prem Nath Tiwari | Rony S. Emmanuel | Sukdev Shet | Tamal Biswas

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Getting him to open up is like pulling teeth

Students urged to think rather than parrot textbook answers

S. Upendran

"It was good to see your mother after nearly three years. Will she be here for some time?"

"Maybe for another two weeks. She said that you'd put on weight."

"She told me the same thing. I've been trying to lose weight for the past six months, but it's like pulling teeth."

"Pulling teeth? Getting one's tooth pulled is not an enjoyable experience. Was my mom saying you're going to have a problem losing weight?"

"The expression 'pulling teeth' has several different meanings – all of them negative. When you say that completing a task was like pulling teeth, it means it was a slow and painful process."

"There were times when you just wanted to throw your hands into the air, and walk away!"

"That's right! Trying to have a conversation with Renu was like pulling teeth."

"How about this example? For many people, getting up early in the morning is like pulling teeth."

"That's a good example. My parents had a tough time waking me up when I was in school."

"Talking about school. Unlike most people I know, you never talk about your school days. Getting information from you about your school days is like pulling teeth."

"You'll find that pulling teeth is a lot easier than getting me to talk about my school days."

"In that case, I will stop asking questions related to that phase of your life."

"Thank you. So, what's been..."

"Tell me, what's the difference between 'aping someone' and 'parroting someone'?"

"Tell me, what does a parrot do?"

"It flies around and ...."

"That's not what I mean. When you talk to your pet parrot which has been with you for a while, what does it do?"

"When I say something, it sometimes repeats what I said."

"Exactly! It repeats what you've said. Doesn't really say anything new, does it?"

"It's not capable of saying anything new."

"Which is why the expression 'to parrot someone' carries with it the sense that it is mindless repetition..."

"In other words, when you parrot someone, you are saying things without really understanding what you're saying."

"Exactly! The Vice Principal parrots whatever the principal says."

"My boss hates that. He doesn't want anyone to merely parrot what he says."

"Such people are difficult to find. Unlike his sister, Ravi is not very bright. He merely parrots everything she says."

"So, now tell me, what does 'ape someone' mean?"

"When you ape someone, you mimic someone. In this case, what you do is to copy his mannerisms, style, the way of walking, talking, etc. And you do a very bad job of it."

"We tried to ape our favourite rock band."

"That sounds good. Children frequently ape their parents."

"We all do that when we are very young."

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Word of the day

Shibboleth:
a favourite saying of a group, organisation, or individual

Synonyms: slogan, motto, idiom, tagline

Usage: *The phrase became a shibboleth among university students.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/shibboleth

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ʃɪbəlɛθ/

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