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COMBATING NARCOTICS

Elite campuses try to keep drugs away

IITs and IIMs to introduce voluntary consent forms for optional drug testing for students during admission

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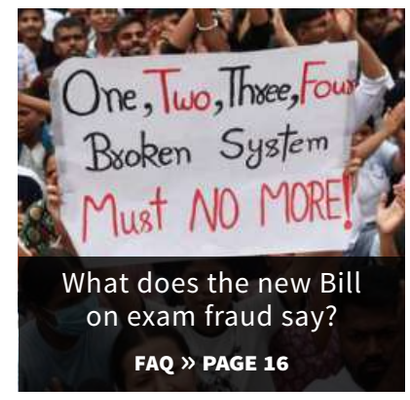
PM Modi unveils new airport in A.P.

STATES » PAGE 6



What does the new Bill on exam fraud say?

FAQ » PAGE 16

Sachin leads India's gold rush at Glasgow

SPORT » PAGE 19

IN BRIEF

AAP chief to lead protest march over E20 fuel

NEW DELHI
AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said that he would be leading a march of 100 people to the Prime Minister's residence to submit a petition signed by people from across the country against E20 fuel. » Page 11

Gupta launches portal for Delhi Lakshmi Yojana

NEW DELHI
CM Rekha Gupta on Saturday launched the registration portal for Delhi Lakshmi Yojana, under which eligible women will receive financial assistance of ₹2,500 a month. The scheme is likely to benefit 17 lakh women. » Page 3

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Eight killed as extremely heavy rain lashes Kerala

Sudden intensity of rainfall triggers landslips in Idukki and Kottayam; water levels rise in rivers as authorities open shutters of several dams; govt. sets up relief camps; more rain forecast across State

Dhinesh Kallungal
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Eight people died in rain-related incidents in Kerala as a spell of intense rain battered the State from Friday night into Saturday, triggering landslips, flashfloods, and widespread destruction, particularly in hilly regions. This comes barely a month after a deadly debris slip triggered by extreme rainfall claimed eight lives at a tunnel construction site in Wayanad.

As of 9 p.m. on Saturday, the death toll stood at eight, including three children, and four people who died in landslips. One death due to electrocution was reported in Wayanad.

Six fishermen, four from Thiruvananthapuram and two from Kollam, went missing in the Arabian Sea, while two residents of Kannur also went missing after they fell into a river. Search operations were ongoing.

The State government opened 65 relief camps, sheltering 1,465 people. According to the Chief Minister's Office, 17 houses were completely destroyed and 127 partially damaged, and the State is ready to open more camps if required.

The sudden intensity of the rainfall caught weather agencies, residents, and disaster management authorities off guard, triggering major landslips in Idukki and Kottayam districts.

A red alert remained in force for nine districts on Saturday, while the India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued an orange alert for 12 districts on Sunday, warning of more heavy rainfall.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 11

Rescue efforts under way at the site of a landslip at Poonjar in Kottayam district. VISHNU PRATHAP

Downpour eases tension over Cauvery water sharing

Shankar Bennur
MYSURU

Improved inflows into reservoirs in the Cauvery basin on Saturday, following heavy rain in the catchment areas, brought some relief to Karnataka amid the ongoing row over the release of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu.

The Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) had directed Karnataka to release water at the rate of 3,500 cusecs daily for 15 days, triggering protests from farmers, who urged the State government not to release water, citing poor storage levels and deficient rainfall. However, with the southwest monsoon turning active and catchment areas receiving rain, the situation improved on Saturday. If the rains continue, reservoir levels are expected to rise.

CONTINUED ON
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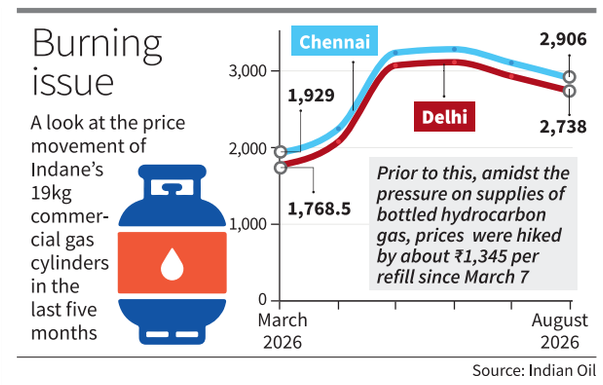

Source: Indian Oil

Price of commercial LPG slashed by ₹200; jet fuel rates up by ₹5

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

Oil marketing companies (OMCs) on Saturday reduced the price of commercial liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by about ₹200 per cylinder. This is the second downward revision since the peak of West Asia crisis that saw prices spiral upwards by about ₹1,345 per cylinder in four tranches.

However, the price of aviation turbine fuel (ATF), or jet fuel, was increased by ₹5 per litre to ₹115 per litre for domestic carriers.

The price of domestic LPG remained unchanged, although the price of five-kg free trade LPG cylinders - primarily catering to migrant workers - declined by ₹46 per cylinder.

A non-domestic LPG cylinder in Delhi now costs ₹192 less at ₹2,738 per cylinder, while a five-kg FTL cylinder is priced at ₹762 from the earlier ₹808.50.

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Gupta launches Lakshmi Yojana; over 30,000 register on first day

CM promises monthly assistance of ₹2,500 through digital wallet or deposits; women aged 21-60 meeting income and residence criteria eligible to apply; applications to undergo four-stage verification; many concerned over documentation

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Saturday launched the Delhi Lakshmi Yojana and opened registrations for the scheme, under which eligible women will receive ₹2,500 a month. Applications can be submitted through the portal, *www.dly.delhi.gov.in*.

Launching the scheme, Ms. Gupta said beneficiaries could choose between two modes of assistance. Under the first, ₹1,000 will be credited to a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) wallet for day-to-day expenses and the remaining ₹1,500 deposited in a recurring deposit (RD) or fixed deposit (FD). Under the second, the entire amount will be deposited in an RD or FD.

CM Rekha Gupta with beneficiaries at the launch of the Delhi Lakshmi Yojana portal in New Delhi. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

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According to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), between 6.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. on Saturday, 33,730 registrations were completed after the portal went live. Of these, 1,940 applications were submitted and 9,170 were awaiting MLA recommendation. Sources said the recommendation was intended to verify that applicants belonged to the constituency concerned and to avoid discrepancies.

The government expects around 17 lakh women to benefit.

"When we made this promise to you, it was a resolve for your happiness, your honour and your better future," said the Chief Minister.

Eligibility criteria

Applicants must be women aged between 21 and 60 and the eldest female member of the family. The annual family income should not exceed ₹2.5 lakh, and the applicant must be a registered voter. Either the applicant, her husband or either of her parents must have been a resident of Delhi for at least 10 years. The family's annual electricity consumption should not exceed 2,400 units. Neither the applicant nor any family member should own a four-wheeler. The applicant should have no more than three kids and should not have a criminal record.

Applications will undergo a four-stage verification process before approval. They will first be scrutinised by the District Programme Management Unit, followed by verification by the District Women and Child Development Officer, before being reviewed by the district-level Approval, Monitoring and Grievance Redressal Committee.

While many women welcomed the initiative, some expressed concern over the documentation and verification requirements. Kamla Mandoria, 58, who has been running a tea stall in Shadipur Main Market for past several decades, said the success of the scheme would depend on whether the assistance reached poor women without bureaucratic hurdles.

"They ask for proof of income and residence, but many of us don't have even salary slips," said Sunali, who supports her children through sex work.

Timings
DELHI

SUNDAY, AUG. 02		
RISE	05:43	SET 19:12
RISE	21:21	SET 08:56
MONDAY, AUG. 03		
RISE	05:44	SET 19:11
RISE	21:51	SET 09:54
TUESDAY, AUG. 04		
RISE	05:45	SET 19:10
RISE	22:23	SET 10:53

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	35	28
Safdarjang	35	28
Palam	34	26

Delhi Palam Today
33°C The weather will be warm. Spell of light to moderate rain & thunder-shower with gusty winds to occur. A comfortable night.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
32°C The weather will be little warm. Few spells of moderate rain and thundershower with gusty winds to occur.

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THE HINDU
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The 22nd Convocation 2026 of SRM Institute of Science and Technology for the Faculty of Engineering and Technology is scheduled as given below:

Venue			Dr. T.P. Ganesan Auditorium, SRM Nagar, Kattankulathur - 603 203
Date	Day	Time	16.08.2026 - Sunday, 03:00 p.m.
Faculty			FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY (All Programmes)
Campuses			Kattankulathur and Vadapalani

The eligible graduands who have completed their degrees from **November 2025 to July 2026** shall apply online for registration.

Visit our website: **https://www.srmist.edu.in** for online registration.

Last date for online registration: **11.08.2026** upto **5:00 p.m.**

For other programmes and campuses, the date(s) of Convocation/ Graduation will be intimated later.

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The Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS), Hyderabad, invites applications for admission to the PhD Programme conducted in collaboration with Telangana University, Nizamabad, with a focus on Development Studies, for the Academic Year 2026-27. The PhD Programme at CESS is in accordance with the UGC Regulations-2022 and the UGC Public Notice dated 27 March 2024 regarding the use of UGC-NET scores for admission to PhD programmes. Candidates qualified in the National Eligibility Tests, such as UGC-JRF and UGC-NET, are eligible to apply for admission. The Programme is offered in the following subjects:

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Please see website: **www.cess.ac.in** for details

1 August 2026 DIRECTOR

Students visit Jantar Mantar to counter 'fake' protest videos

Lavpreet Kaur
NEW DELHI

A week after the 36-day protest led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) ended at Jantar Mantar, students are returning to the site – not to resume demonstrations, but to counter what they describe as "a wave of misleading social media posts" falsely claiming that the agitation is still under way.

Instagram has been flooded with videos claiming to show "live" scenes of students clashing with the police and marching through heavy security at Jantar Mantar.

One video claiming to be a 6 a.m. update on August 1 has crossed 2.8 million views. Another, presented as a 6.30 a.m. update on July 31, has received 1.9 million views, while other similarly labelled clips have attracted tens of thousands of views.

On Saturday evening, workers were repainting the yellow barricades erected outside the protest site, even as visitors and students continued to walk through the area. "We have been seeing videos on Instagram claiming that fresh protests by student unions are taking place at Jantar Mantar. We came here to verify and debunk those claims," said Bhim Kumar, a member of the Krantikari Yuva Sangathan.

Mudita, who participated in the 36-day protest, said the movement had shifted from street demonstrations to outreach.

"We are continuing to reach students across colleges and universities to discuss the larger problems in the education system. The protest was never only about seeking the Minister's resignation; it was about addressing deeper structural issues," she said.

A police officer also rejected claims that a protest was taking place at the site.

Union Minister urges officials to meet Dec. 31 Bhalswa deadline

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal on Saturday inspected the ongoing work to clear legacy waste at the Bhalswa landfill and directed civic officials to ensure that the December 31 deadline is met. He also asked officials to ensure that the processing of fresh waste reaching the site does not slow down remediation efforts.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) informed the Union Minister that 99.07 lakh metric tons of legacy waste had been remediated at the Bhalswa dumpsite till July 31. The remaining legacy waste is expected to be cleared by October 15, while waste accumulated at the site up to March 2026 is targeted for clearance by December 31, the MCD said.

Speaking after the visit, the Union Minister said that the processing of legacy waste and scientific disposal were being accelerated in "mission mode" using modern technologies. He added that efforts were also being made to ensure compliance with environmental standards and to improve cleanliness, public health, air quality, and civic amenities in surrounding areas. "With coordinated efforts of the Central and Delhi governments, all necessary steps are being taken on a war footing to ensure the complete closure of the Bhalswa landfill within the stipulated timeframe," he said.

Union Minister Manohar Lal on Saturday inspected work at the Bhalswa landfill. FILE PHOTO

Bhalswa is one of Delhi's three legacy dumpsites, along with Ghazipur and Okhla, where biomining and remediation are under way to reclaim land and reduce environmental hazards. Bhalswa and Okhla are scheduled to be cleared by December 2026, while Ghazipur is targeted December 2027.

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INBRIEF

Army bids farewell to General Sharma with military honours

The Indian Army on Saturday bid a final farewell to its former chief General Vishwa Nath Sharma (retd), as his last rites were performed with full military honours here. General Sharma passed away in Delhi on Friday morning. He was 96. "The Indian Army paid its final tribute to Gen Vishwa Nath Sharma (retd), PVSM, AVSM, and a former Chief of the Army Staff. His last rites were performed with full military honours today at the Brar Square Crematorium in Delhi," the Army said. PTI

Bhitarkanika National Park reopens; plastic ban imposed

Bhitarkanika National Park in Odisha's Kendrapara district reopened to tourists on Saturday after remaining closed for three months for the annual crocodile nesting season, with authorities enforcing a complete ban on plastics. The national park, which remained shut from May 1 to July 31 to facilitate undisturbed nesting and breeding of estuarine crocodiles, reopened to day visitors as well as overnight guests at forest rest houses and eco-tourism cottages, officials of the Rajnagar Mangrove (Wildlife) Forest Division said. PTI

DMK moves Supreme Court to direct Karnataka to release T.N.'s share of Cauvery water

The application asks Karnataka to ensure a flow of 3,500 cusecs per day at the inter-State contact point at Biligundlu in line with the July 28 direction of the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Dravid Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) urged the Supreme Court on Saturday to direct the State of Karnataka to release the allotted amount of Cauvery water required to protect the water-starved agricultural lands in the lower riparian districts of Tamil Nadu.

The DMK application, filed by advocates Richardson Wilson and Lokesh Krishna and settled by senior advocate P. Wilson, urged the court to direct Karnataka to forthwith and fully implement the July 28 direction of the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC), which was confirmed by the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) on July 30, by ensuring a flow of 3,500 cusecs per day at the inter-State contact point at Biligundlu.

Seeking relief: The application also sought an order from the court to Karnataka to make good the accumulated backlog of about 9.46 TMC due at Biligundlu as on July 26, 2026.

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The application also sought an order from the court to Karnataka to make good the accumulated backlog of about 9.46 TMC due at Biligundlu as on July 26, 2026, computed on the pro-rata/distress-sharing basis. The party said this could be ensured by releasing about 7,000 cusecs of the river water on a per day basis at Biligundlu for over a period of 15 days.

It asked the court to direct the CWMA to monitor the releases and to file a compliance report.

Non-compliance

The application submitted that despite the binding directions of the CWRC and CWMA, the State of Karnataka had "neither released the water nor evinced the slightest intention of doing so". "On the contrary, the responsible functionaries of the State of Karnataka, including at the highest levels of its government, have openly and publicly declared in press conferences that the State of Karnataka 'will not release the water' and will instead pursue its remedies," the DMK said in its application.

"About 14.913 lakh acres (net area) in the Cauvery delta are dependent on the Mettur reservoir for irrigation, which in turn depends upon the flows realised at Biligundlu from the releases made by Karnataka from its reservoirs. About four million farmers and about 10 million agricultural labourers directly and indirectly depend on Mettur water for their very livelihood," it said.

The party said the farmers of the lower riparian districts of Tamil Nadu like Thanjavur, Thiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Mayiladuthurai, Tiruchirappalli, and other delta districts were the worst affected by the non-release of water.

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Leaders urge Vijay to hold all-party meet on water row

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI/TIRUCHI

DMK leader M.K. Stalin

DMK president and former Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and Communist Party of India (CPI) leader R. Mutharasan on Saturday urged Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay to convene an all-party meeting to discuss the Cauvery water dispute.

Referring to recent developments in Karnataka, Mr. Stalin said the neighbouring State had demonstrated political unity on the issue and asked whether Mr. Vijay would convene an all-party meeting. "The Karnataka Chief Minister initially invited Mr. Vijay for talks but has now asked him not to visit and instead decided to convene an all-party meeting on August 2. This shows that all political parties in Karnataka are united on the Cauvery issue," he said in a social media post.

Recalling his earlier advice that talks with Karnataka would not help Tamil Nadu, Mr. Stalin said that was why he had urged the Chief Minister not to visit the neighbouring State. "A legal battle is the only way to deal with a State that has consistently denied Tamil Nadu its rightful share of Cauvery water. Karnataka treats Tamil Nadu as a destination only for surplus water, but Mr. Vijay appears to have believed that he could secure water by holding talks," he said.

'Build consensus'

Speaking to journalists in Tiruchi, Mr. Mutharasan called on the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK)-led government to immediately convene an all-party meeting on the Cauvery water dispute.

He said representatives of farmers' associations should also be invited to the meeting to build a consensus. He pointed out that parties in Karnataka were speaking in a united voice on the issue.

Rahul says no party in T.N. should back Delimitation Bill, calls it 'BJP conspiracy'

The Hindu Bureau
MAMALLAPURAM

LoP Rahul Gandhi meeting NEET aspirants in Chennai. FILE PHOTO

Alleging that delimitation is a Bharatiya Janata Party conspiracy designed to take power away from the people, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Saturday said that any political party supporting the Delimitation Bill in Parliament is a 21st century *Ettappan* (a historical figure seen as a traitor) and would be considered a betrayer of the people of Tamil Nadu.

Speaking to pressspersons during his visit to T.N., Mr. Gandhi said that no Tamil party should support delimitation. "Delimitation is designed to disenfranchise, take away power from people of Tamil Nadu. This is a BJP conspiracy. Anybody who supports delimitation – betraying Tamil Nadu, betraying the future of Tamil Nadu, and allowing RSS/BJP to attack the people and future of Tamil Nadu – is a 21st century Ettappan. No Tamil should support delimitation. Every single Tamil party and national party should defeat the Bill in Parliament," he said.

Mr. Gandhi also met the grieving families of NEET aspirants from T.N., and said that "nothing is more painful than seeing a parent grieve their child".

CAA applications to be cleared in six months; 2.3 lakh apply, says Bengal CM

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

CM Suvendu Adhikari inaugurating the ISKCON kitchen in Kolkata on Saturday. ANI

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Saturday announced that all pending applications for citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in the State would be disposed of within the next six months and asserted that the law was enacted to grant citizenship and "not to deprive anyone of it".

Speaking at a CAA certificate distribution programme at New Town, Mr. Adhikari alleged that the previous Trinamool Congress government had misled people about the legislation. "The CAA is meant to grant citizenship, not to take away anyone's citizenship," Mr. Adhikari said.

According to him, a total of 2,30,605 applications had been received from across the State. Nadia district recorded the highest number of beneficiaries, with 10,191 certificates, followed by North 24 Parganas with 8,930.

Eggs twice a week

Inaugurating a community kitchen of International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) that will help distribute midday meals to schoolchildren in Kolkata, Mr. Adhikari said eggs would be provided to students through a separate arrangement twice a week. The kitchen, operated by the ISKCON Annamrita Foundation, is expected to extend its services to cover all 2.5 lakh students across 1,800 schools under the Kolkata Municipal Corporation within the next three months.

(With inputs from PTI)

SPOTLIGHT

Punjab's Dalits power politics with the purse

The Guru Ghar in Phagwara has emerged as a symbol of the Dalit community's growing social, economic and political assertion. With the Assembly election due early next year, parties are reaching out to a community that accounts for nearly one-third of the State's population

Vikas Vasudeva

Grey monsoon clouds hang low, almost touching the white domes and arched gateways of the Shiromani Shri Guru Ravidass Mandir. The religious complex marks the skyline along the Grand Trunk Road in Chak Hakim village, Phagwara, in Punjab's Kapurthala district.

The Guru Ghar, as it is known among followers, is dedicated to the 15th-century saint-poet Guru Ravidass. It serves as a place of worship but has also become a symbol of the Dalit community's rising economic, religious and political assertiveness, reflecting its gradual shift from historical marginalisation.

Punjab has an agrarian economy, with Jat Sikhs, the dominant landowning community, and Scheduled Castes (SCs) constituting a significant share of its population. According to the 2011 Census, SCs account for nearly 32% of Punjab's population, the highest proportion among all States.

Yet, historically, land ownership has remained concentrated among Jat Sikhs. Most SCs have traditionally worked as agricultural labourers for Jat Sikh landowners, the economically dominant community has over the years exercised considerable influence over State politics.

Today, complexes such as the one at Chak Hakim are changing that pattern. Davinder Kultham, president of the Shiromani Shri Guru Ravidass Mandir Prabandhak Committee, which manages the gurdwara's affairs, says that small landholdings were among the factors that prompted people to migrate in search of better livelihoods. Over time, migration by members of the SC community to Dubai, the U.K., the U.S. and Canada played a significant role in improving the community's socio-economic status, particularly in Punjab's Doaba region.

Punjab is broadly divided into the Malwa, Doaba, and Majha regions, and the Dalit population is unevenly distributed across these regions. Its largest concentration is in Doaba, the region between the Beas and Sutlej rivers.

Guru Ravidass was born near Varanasi into a Chamar family, a community traditionally engaged in leather work and historically regarded as "untouchable" within the Hindu caste hierarchy. After Independence, the community was accorded SC status as part of the country's affirmative action policy in education and public employment.

On the land of a guru

"Today, the third and fourth generations of our community are living abroad. Money sent home by non-resident Indians (NRIs) has brought about a marked change in how Dalit families see themselves and what they aspire to," says Kultham.

A view of the Shiromani Shri Guru Ravidass Mandir at Chak Hakim village in Phagwara, Kapurthala district, Punjab. R. V. MOORTHY

He says the Guru Ghar at Chak Hakim has largely taken shape thanks to contributions from NRIs, with nearly 70% of the funds coming from members of the Dalit community settled overseas. Although construction began in the 1960s, it gathered pace only after 2005. "The land for this gurdwara was donated decades ago by a Dalit NRI who owned a textile factory in England," Kultham says. The complex also has a charitable dispensary, a community kitchen and accommodation for travellers.

Chak Hakim holds deep religious significance for the Ravidassia community. Followers believe Guru Ravidass stayed here for about 70 days and held spiritual gatherings. Across the road from the Guru Ghar stands an older shrine, whose foundation was laid in 1845.

Devotees believe it marks the spot where Guru Ravidass stayed.

The power of money

Forty-five-year-old Gian Sheel from Dhaddey village near Phagwara traces his family's story to his grandfather, who worked in the leather industry when it was still thriving in the Doaba region. As larger businesses entered the trade and local units began to decline, his grandfather migrated to England in 1952. "Over the years, his earnings helped the family establish a financial footing back home. With that money, he bought around 26 acres of land in Narur village near Hoshiarpur," says Sheel.

Sheel, who now runs a spice business, says that while remittances from the NRI diaspora have contributed, albeit modestly, to the socio-economic empowerment of Dalits, government welfare programmes, both at the Centre and in the State, have largely failed to achieve the same objective. In Punjab, he adds, the issue of promotions under the 85th Constitutional Amendment remains unresolved. Successive governments have also failed to create awareness among SCs about welfare schemes. "Sincerity is lacking, regardless of which party comes to power."

With the Punjab Assembly election due in early 2027, the Congress, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) are all courting Dalit voters, underlining the community's growing political significance. Leaders across party lines have been making frequent visits to various *deras* – socio-religious institutions that have long served as important centres of social and spiritual life.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Dera Sachkhand Ballan in Ballan village, Jalandhar, on February 1 this year, to mark Guru Ravidass's 649th birth anniversary, and his subsequent meeting with *dera* head Sant Niranjan Dass on July 17 are seen as part of the BJP's outreach to Dalit voters. Leaders of the ruling AAP, the SAD and the Congress have also been visiting various *deras* to seek the blessings of their heads.

Under-representation

Yash Barna, chairperson of the Guru Ravidass Tiger Force, an organisation that works on issues affecting the Dalit community, recalls how, in the past, hardworking members of the community were often denied fair wages in villages and towns. Barna says that while the Dalit community had intellectuals, poverty remained a major constraint. "As our people gained access to education and employment, those who went abroad also realised the importance of political and religious representation. Today, with the support of intellectuals, working professionals and the NRI diaspora, we feel politically and religiously stronger," he says.

However, despite the community's progress, Barna believes social barriers persist. "The Sri Guru Granth Sahib is installed at the Guru Ghar. Yet, majority of those who visit are from our community. It is still seen as an SC space," he says.

Socially mobile

The impact of emigration is most visible in Jalandhar, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala and Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar, the districts in the Doaba region, where an estimated one in three families has at least one member working abroad.

Dr. Amanpreet Kaur, an Assistant Professor at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, who has extensively researched Dalit issues in Punjab, says international migration among Punjabi Dalits, particularly from the Doaba region, has played an important role in their social mobility.

"They have settled across the world and constitute a significant section of the Punjabi diaspora. They advocate achieved status rather than ascribed status. A large number are employed in the Gulf countries, and their remittances have significantly benefited their families," she says.

Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema, who belongs to the Scheduled Castes community, says the State government is implementing several welfare measures for marginalised communities.

"For the first time, the Punjab government has reserved posts for Scheduled Castes in the appointment of law officers," he says. He also cites the Mukh Mantri Mawan Dhian Satkar Yojana launched this year, under which women aged 18 and above from the general category will receive ₹1,000 a month, while those belonging to the SC category will receive ₹1,500.

vikas.vasudeva@thehindu.co.in

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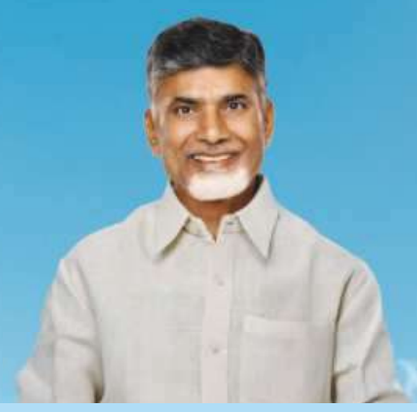

Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu
Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh

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A ND-NDE

UDF govt.'s stand on PM SHRI baseless: Pinarayi Vijayan

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The United Democratic Front (UDF) government's claim that Kerala cannot withdraw from the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme once it has signed the memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been exposed as baseless by Union Minister of State for Education Jayant Chaudhary's July 29 reply in the Rajya Sabha, Leader of the Opposition Pinarayi Vijayan said on Saturday.

Mr. Vijayan was referring to Mr. Chaudhary's reply that "States that do not sign the MoU or withdraw from the scheme stand to miss out on these benefits of PM SHRI scheme." The Minister's reply indicates that there is nothing preventing States from withdrawing from the agreement, he said.

After opposing PM SHRI while in Opposition and then agreeing to implement it after coming to power, the UDF has stabbed people in the back, he said.

The UDF's decision to implement PM SHRI exposes its "subservience to the RSS. "Can anyone be blamed for viewing PM SHRI funds as 'blood money' received by Kerala for betraying the people and surrendering to the Sangh Parivar?" Mr. Vijayan said.

Mr. Vijayan reiterated the LDF stance that although the then Left government did sign the MoU, it later froze it and formally informed the Centre about its decision.

PM Modi unveils greenfield airport in A.P.'s Bhogapuram

Hareesh P.
BHOGAPURAM

PM Narendra Modi and A.P. CM N. Chandrababu Naidu during the inauguration of Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday dedicated the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram in Andhra Pradesh to the nation, and inaugurated development projects worth over ₹17,900 crore from Bhogapuram in Vizianagaram district.

The airport, built at a cost of over ₹5,640 crore by GMR Visakhapatnam International Airport Limited under a public-private partnership, is designed to handle six million passengers a year. It is the first greenfield airport in the State since the 2014 bifurcation.

He said the projects launched or dedicated on the day, covering airport infrastructure, road connectivity and energy security, showed the State's pace of progress. "These development works are a true symbol of the incredible speed at which Andhra Pradesh is advancing," he said. Mr. Modi described the airport as a runway for regional growth. "Serving as the runway for the growth of Andhra and North Andhra, this airport is the ultimate launchpad for a better future for Andhra's youth," he said.

Commending the Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Modi said: "Andhra Pradesh has always possessed the immense capability to become the ultimate growth engine for a Viksit Bharat."

He virtually laid the foundation stone and unveiled the plaque for ASIP Technologies' ₹2,500 crore semiconductor manufacturing facility at Tarluvada in Visakhapatnam.

Vivekananda memorial

The PM also inaugurated the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Youth Centre – Viveka Smaraka – at the historic Niranjana Mutt in Mysuru, commemorating Swami Vivekananda's historic visit to Mysore in 1892.

Alert in Odisha as more water released from Hirakud Dam

Press Trust of India
BHUBANESWAR

Ten districts downstream of the Mahanadi have been placed on high alert as the Hirakud Dam continued releasing water through 22 gates, with the Odisha government warning of flooding in the river's delta region even as conditions improved in the north.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said the floods have till now affected around eight lakh people across 20 districts. While water levels are receding in northern Odisha, authorities are closely monitoring the downstream districts of Cuttack, Puri, Khurda, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapada, identified as the most vulnerable.

According to the CM, about 2.69 lakh people have been evacuated and accommodated in 700 relief camps.

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Brief Tender Notification
(Through KPP Portal)

BESCOM invites online tenders through the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (KPPP) vide Tender No. BESCOM/2026-27/EL/WORK_INDENT1162 from eligible bidders for the work of **"Establishment of Public EV Charging Station near Amarajyothi Skywalk, Domlur."**

The bid documents will be available from **06.08.2026 at 11:00 AM onwards.**

The bid documents can be downloaded, and further information may be obtained from the **Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (KPPP).** Interested bidders shall register on the KPPP portal before participating in the tender.

For any assistance regarding the KPPP portal, bidders may contact the KPPP Helpdesk at **9240214000** or **9240214001**, or visit **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

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Nominations in the prescribed proforma are invited by the Odisha Bigyan Academy, Science & Technology Department, Government of Odisha, Bhubaneswar for the following Awards and Honours **for the Award Year 2025 based on scientific contributions upto 31st December, 2024 and for the Award year 2026 based on scientific contributions upto 31st December, 2025.**

1. **Biju Patnaik Award for Scientific Excellence.**
   (Age of scientists must be 60 years & above on 31st December, 2024 for the award year 2025 & 31st December, 2025 for the award year 2026).
2. **Samanta Chandra Sekhar Award.**
   (Upper age limit of scientists must not exceed 60 years on 31st December, 2024 for the award year 2025 & 31st December, 2025 for the award year 2026)
3. **Odisha Young Scientists Award.**
   (Upper age of Young Scientists must not exceed 35 years on 31st December, 2024 for the award year 2025 & 31st December, 2025 for the award year 2026)
4. **Pranakrushna Parija Popular Science Book Award.**
   (For Authors of Odia Popular Science Books in General & Children category)
5. **Felicitation of Senior Scientists of Odisha.**
   (Age of scientists must be 65 years or above on 31st December, 2024 for the award year 2025 & 31st December, 2025 for the award year 2026)

For detail guidelines and nomination proforma, please log on to Odisha Bigyan Academy website: **www.odishabigyanacademy.in**

The nomination proforma can be downloaded from the above website (Duly filled-in proforma) as per guidelines to be sent to the Secretary, Odisha Bigyan Academy in the following address along with all particulars & documents. Nominees for Biju Patnaik Award for Scientific Excellence, Samanta Chandra Sekhar Award & Odisha Young Scientists Award are required to mention Thomson Reuter Impact Factor against the list of publications and should mention number of total Citations, ***h*** index & ***i 10*** index at the top of a publications list. A nominator can nominate for a particular category of award in a year. As Pranakrushna Parija Popular Science Book Award is a single award, nominee can apply either in General Category or Children Category in an award year.

The last date for receipt of nominations is **30.09.2026 (upto 5.00 pm). Nominations received after due date shall not be taken into consideration.**

Secretary, Odisha Bigyan Academy,
B/2, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751 007, Odisha (INDIA)

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No. EL/1223/Works-1200 Date- 30.07.2026
E-TENDER CORRIGENDUM NOTICE
E Tender was invited by Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/Maintenance, BLW, Varanasi acting or and on behalf of President of India for the following work. **S.N.:** 1, **Tender No.:** EL-1223-W-1200, **Name of work:** Design, Supply, Installation, testing & commissioning of 3.0 MW/6.0 MWh Battery Energy Storage System at BLW Premises. **Approximate Cost Rs.: Rs. 11,89,44,000/-, Completion Period : 12 Months, Earnest Money : Rs. 23,78,900/-**, Following Corrigendum is uploaded on IREPS website.

Description	Earlier Date	Revised Date
Tender Closing date and time	31.07.2026 at 15:00 hrs.	17.08.2026 at 15:00 hrs.

For details and to participate e-tender please visit Indian railways website www.ireps.gov.in.
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TGT-Maths	UR	01	Regular basis
Lab Assistant-Physics	ST	01	Regular basis
Counsellor	UR	01	Contractual basis
Band Master	UR	01	Contractual basis
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OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

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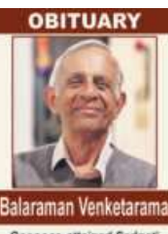
DEATH

OBITUARY



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No.04/STS/DGP/PCW/2026-27 Dated : 01.08.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Inspector General of Police, Police Computer Wing, Karnataka State Police, Bengaluru invited the following tenders through Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **(www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in)** for supply, installation and Maintenance of various items as detailed below.

Sl. No.	Description	Tender No. and Date	Approx. Tender value in Rs Lakhs	Last Date for tender submission
1	Procurement of (12000) Ruggedized table	KSP/2026-27/ IND0597 (Call-2)	42,00,00,000	27.08.2026 17.30 HRS
2	Procurement of (1500) Display Unit	KSP/2026-27/ IND0593 (Call-2)	7,50,00,000	27.08.2026 17.30 HRS

The information on Pre-Bid meeting, Tender Schedule and other details can be obtained at KPP portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** for more information, please contact the above office.

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For Inspector General of Police
Police Computer Wing, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/1936/SA/2026-27

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MADHYA PRADESH BHAWAN
29-C & D, JESUS AND MARY MARG
CHANAKYAPURI, NEW DELHI-110021
Phone No. 011-26772001, 2002

NIT No. NIT No. 10/JUNE/STATIONERY/MPB/2026
Dated: 28/07/2026

TENDER NOTICE (2nd call)

Online tenders for Annual. Supply of Stationery Items at Madhya Pradesh at New Delhi, namely, Madhya Pradesh Bhawan, Plot No. 29 CD, Jesus & Mary Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi-110021 are invited with two bid system (Technical bid & Financial bid) through e-tendering website **www.mptenders.gov.in** in the prescribed proforma from interested parties/ Registered Firms/Registered Companies/Reputed Organizations/Agencies.

S. No	Description of Items	Remarks
1	NIT No. & Date	NIT No. 10/JUNE/ STATIONERY/MPB/2026 Dated 28/07/2026
2	Issuance of tender	M.P. Bhawan, New Delhi website (www.mptenders.gov.in)
3	Pre-bid conference	12/08/2026 at 03:00 PM in the conference hall of Madhya Pradesh Bhawan, Plot No. 29 C-D, Jesus Mary Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi-110021
4	Date of Submission of tender	Submission on or before 18/08/2026 up to 03:00 PM
5	Date of Opening of technical bid	19/08/2026 at 03:00 PM
6	Date of opening of financial bid	25/08/2026 at 03:00 PM
7	Probable Amount of Contract	Rs. 5,50,000/-
8	Cost of Tender cost	Rs. 500/- (to be paid online)
9	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Rs. 16,500/- (to be paid online)

Addl. Resident Commissioner
M.P. Bhawan, New Delhi

G16560/26

TO ADVERTISE
PLEASE CONTACT
Mr. N SELVA KUMAR
PH: 9820350726
selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in
THE HINDU
India's National Newspaper

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tendering Notice

Divisional Railway Manager (Electrical/ General), North Eastern Railway, Varanasi for and on behalf of President of India, invites Online (E-Tendering) "Open Tenders" for the following work. **S.N. - 1 Tender reference no.:** E-Tender-L-26-26-27, Name of Work : Electrical work in connection with: 1) Elimination of MEA deficiencies at 28 stations, 2) Raising & Extension of platforms no-01 at AHM, SDC & MHO stations, 3) Extension & Raising of platforms for 24-coach in Varanasi division (Part-A-05 stn. & Part-B-04 stn.), and 4) Provision of Ramp for FOB at various stations under the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN-I/BSB(05 stn.), Sr.DEN-II/BSB(06 stn.), Sr.DEN-III/BSB (03 stn.) & DEN-G/BSB(03 stn.) Approx. Cost (In Rs.) :17880033.33, Earnest Money (In Rs.) : 357600.00 Completion period : 06 Months, Date & time of Closing Tender : 21.08.2026 14:30 Hrs., Date & time of Opening Tender :21.08.2026 14:30 Hrs. **SN. - 2 Tender reference no. :** E-Tender-L- 27-26-27, Name of Work : Electrical work in connection with: 1) Provision of RCC Overhead Water Tanks with Pump Houses at CPR & Duraundha, 2) Provision of 12 unit Type-II & 4 unit Type-III Staff quarters at CPR, 3) Additional works of EKMA station under ABSS, 4) Interlocking of 02 no. LC gates with RTU & power supply arrangements and 5) Provision of lifts at PF no. 6/7 & 8 of CPR station., Approx. Cost (In Rs.) : 10514360.88, Earnest Money (In Rs.) : 210300.00 Completion period : 06 Months, Date & time of Closing Tender : 21.08.2026 14:30 Hrs., Date & time of Opening Tender :21.08.2026 14:30 Hrs. ● For full details of above E-Tender work and to participate in tender please visit Indian Railway Website: **www.ireps.gov.in**

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/General
CPRO/EL- 122 **Varanasi**

"Never travel on roof and foot boards"

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Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited

(A Govt. of India Enterprise & Group Company of IndianOil)
[CIN-L40101TN1965GOI005389]
Regd. Office: No.536, Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai-600 018. Tel: 044-24346807/24349959
Email Id: lalitkumarmohanty@cpcl.co.in Website: www.cpcl.co.in

NOTICE OF 60th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE is hereby given that the **60th Annual General Meeting ("AGM")** of the members of Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited **("Company")** will be held on **Monday**, the **24th August 2026** at **11:00 AM** (IST) through Video Conference / Other Audio Visual Means **("VC/OAVM")** to transact the businesses as set out in the notice of the AGM.

Notice of AGM and Annual Report:

In compliance with the MCA & SEBI Circular(s), the Notice setting out the businesses to be transacted at the 60th AGM together with the Integrated Annual Report of the Company for the year 2025-26 **has been sent on Saturday, the 01st August 2026** through electronic mode to the members whose email address is registered with the Company / Depository Participant(s). The Notice and the Integrated Annual Report are also available on the Company's website at **https://cpcl.co.in/investors/financials/annual-reports/** and on the website of the Stock Exchanges, i.e. BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited at **www.bseindia.com** and **www.nseindia.com** respectively, and on the website of KFin Technologies Ltd. at **www.kfintech.com.**

Remote e-voting and e-voting during AGM:

The Company provides to the members through KFin Technologies Ltd. the facility to cast their vote(s) on the business as set out in the Notice of the 60th AGM through remote e-voting facility ("remote e-voting") as well as during the AGM to those members who could not cast their vote(s) through remote e-voting. Members are requested to note the following:

i. the company has fixed **Monday,** the **17th August 2026 as the 'Cut Off date'** to ascertain the eligibility of members to vote through remote e-voting or by e-voting at the AGM.

ii. a person, whose name is recorded in the register of members or in the register of beneficial owners maintained by the depositories as on the cut-off date i.e. **Monday**, the **17th August 2026,** only, shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting for voting at the AGM.

iii. the remote e-voting period shall be available as under:

Commencement of remote e-voting : **from 09:00 am (IST) on Thursday, the 20th August 2026**

End of remote e-voting : **till 05:00 pm (IST) on Sunday, the 23rd August 2026**

iv. any person, who acquires shares of the Company and becomes a member of the Company after dispatch of the Notice and holds shares as on the cut-off date, may obtain the login ID and password by sending a request at **evoting.cpcl@kfintech.com**. However, if the member is already registered with KFin Technologies Ltd. for remote e-voting then he/she can use their existing User ID and password for casting the vote.

v. the members who have cast their vote through remote e-voting prior to the AGM can also attend / participate in the AGM through VC / OAVM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again at the AGM.

vi. the remote e-voting module shall be disabled by KFin Technologies Ltd. after **5.00 PM** (IST) on **Sunday, the 23rd August 2026**. The votes once cast by the member, cannot be changed subsequently.

vii. those members, who intend to participate in the AGM through VC / OAVM facility and could not cast their vote on the resolutions through remote e-voting and are otherwise not barred from doing so, shall be eligible to vote through e-voting during the AGM.

viii. the manner of voting for members holding shares in dematerialized mode, physical mode and for members who have not registered their email address has been provided in the Notice of the AGM.

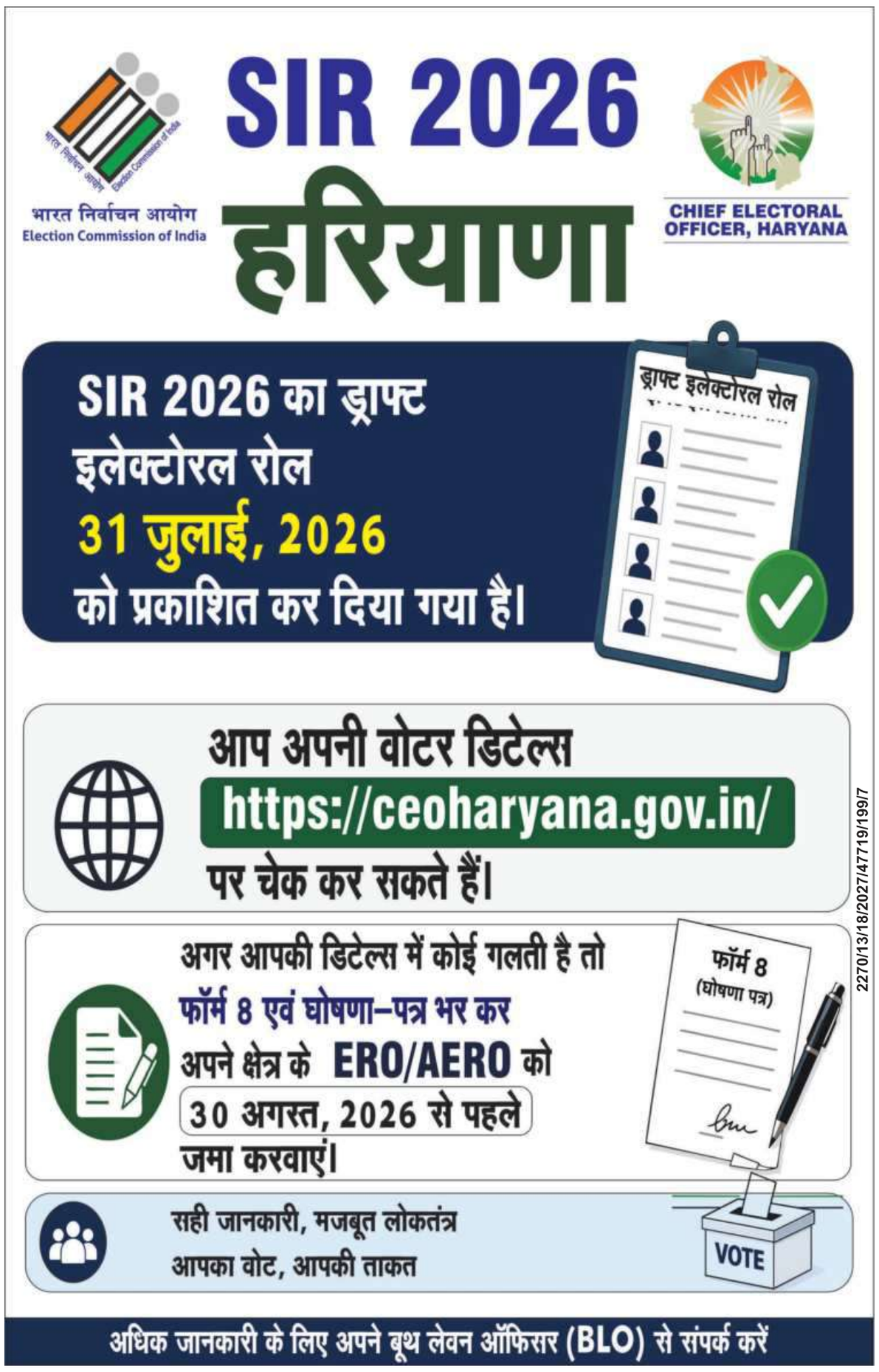
Members are requested to carefully read all the Notes set out in the Notice of the AGM with respect to instructions for joining the AGM, manner of casting vote etc.

Contact Details:

In case of any queries related to e-voting, the members may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for members and e-voting user manual for members available at the download section of https://evoting.kfintech.com or call on toll free no.: 1800-309-4001 or contact Mr.Mohd. Mohsin, Asst. Vice President, KFin Technologies Ltd., at the designated email ID: evoting.cpcl@kfintech.com or Phone No.: +91 40 6716 1700 / 09177401094 to get their grievances on e-voting addressed.

For Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited
Sd/-
(LALIT KUMAR MOHANTY)
Company Secretary
M.No. F6655

Place : Chennai
Dated : 1st August, 2026



Ramesh Krishnamurthi, Chief Executive Officer of Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, in conversation with *The Hindu*'s Senior Deputy Editor A.M. Jigeesh in New Delhi. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Technology must be backed by process reforms: EPFO CEO

The recent reforms seek to simplify access to Provident Fund savings rather than merely digitise services, says the EPFO Chief Executive Officer. He explains the rationale behind changes to claim settlement and withdrawals, and says the Social Security Code expands social security coverage to workers in the unorganised sector

INTERVIEW

Ramesh Krishnamurthi

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has notified new rules for the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) Scheme, the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS) and the Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance (EDLI) Scheme under the Code on Social Security, 2020, while rolling out a series of measures to simplify claim settlement and improve service delivery. The changes come amid continuing debate over higher pension, social security coverage and the financial sustainability of the pension fund. At *The Hindu* MIND, EPFO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ramesh Krishnamurthi speaks to **A. M. Jigeesh** about the reforms and the thinking behind them.

> While members continue to have multiple member IDs, all are now linked under one Universal Account Number in one database

There is an argument, often described as techno-solutionism, that technology is the answer to every problem. Whether it is question of paper leaks or issues in EPFO management, we are repeatedly told that technology will bring transparency. What are your views on this? How has your background in technology helped you steer the EPFO and undertake major reforms, including the revamp of the income tax system?

Technology is not a solution in itself; it is an enabler. Any technological intervention must be supported by changes in processes and the legal framework. EPFO settled nearly six crore claims in 2024-25 and 8.3 crore in 2025-26 – a 30-35% increase with almost the same manpower. We expect to settle nearly 10 crore claims this year. Is it sustainable? No. One major problem was our decentralised database. Each of the 123 Regional Offices maintained its own database. We have now centralised them into a single database. While members continue to have multiple member IDs, all are now linked under one Universal Account Number (UAN) in one database. It has become easy for us to identify your total balance and complete service history.

The second challenge was that the claim withdrawal process was based on a legal framework which had different periods of eligibility. The amount that you could withdraw would vary based on your kind of need. We simplified both the legal framework and the process. There is now a uniform eligibility period of 12 months for all claim categories. We have also merged the employee's and employer's shares for withdrawal purposes, since the entire amount belongs to the member. Withdrawal eligibility has been simplified to either 75% of the total balance or 100% of the eligible balance after accounting for the minimum balance requirement. Members may withdraw the amount in one instalment or in multiple withdrawals, without restrictions. These reforms required changes to both the process and the legal provisions governing the scheme. The simplified withdrawal rules have now been incorporated into the EPFO software. Simplicity, I believe, is the key.

> We have increased the auto-settlement limit from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh

What are the biggest shifts in EPFO's service? Is EPFO being transformed into a fully digital, paperless and member-centric organisation?

The credit for this transformation goes entirely to our Minister of Labour and Employment, Mansukh Mandaviya*ji*. His first instruction to us was to simplify the process. Around 80-85% of our members are blue-collar workers earning PF wages of about ₹15,000. They include security guards, data entry operators and sales representatives. His direction was clear: make it easy for them to access their own money. We have introduced a large number of simplifications. If your UAN is linked to Aadhaar and your KYC is complete, we trust the information you have provided. Bank account validation is carried out through the National Payments Corporation of India in coordination with the concerned bank. We have increased the auto-settlement limit from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh.

Earlier, many claims were rejected because members were unaware of the amount they were eligible to withdraw. We have moved those validations to the submission stage, so eligibility is verified upfront. As a result, rejections have become negligible. Once your KYC is complete, we process the settlement without unnecessary hurdles. We have also introduced auto-settlement for final withdrawals and auto-approval of transfers. If your employment records, KYC details and personal particulars are in order, your PF balance is transferred automatically from your previous account. You no longer need to submit a transfer request or obtain approvals.

The Labour Codes have now been implemented, and the rules have also been notified. One concern, particularly among trade unions, is that the codes could narrow the scope of social security. There have also been reports that employers' contributions to the PF may be reduced or kept at the minimum level. How do you respond to these concerns?

I would like to take this opportunity to allay those apprehensions. The EPF Scheme, 2026, is based on continuity. The 1952 scheme has been in force for more than seven decades, and we have not tried to touch that part. The contribution rate remains 12%, and the wage ceiling continues to be ₹15,000, as notified in 2014. The option of making voluntary PF contributions has always existed. Irrespective of the wage ceiling, many employers have continued to contribute 12% of employees' wages towards the PF. Nothing has changed in that regard. The new scheme does provide flexibility for employers and employees who wish to adopt a different approach, but most employers are not going to change their entire contractual terms simply because the new scheme has come into force.

The Social Security Code also introduces a harmonised definition of wages and expands social security coverage to workers in the unorganised sector, as well as gig and platform workers. The EPFO today offers flexible retirement planning, competitive and compounded returns and greater convenience. Employer contributions of up to ₹7.5 lakh are exempt from tax and are not treated as part of an employee's taxable salary. The interest earned is also tax-exempt. So, why will you not save through PF? This is the best way to save for your retirement.

Are there any plans to enhance benefits such as death insurance, the minimum pension or the wage ceiling?

The Code on Social Security gives the government the flexibility to revise the wage ceiling. As far as the EDLI scheme is concerned, we increased the minimum payout to ₹50,000 last year. Decisions on the minimum pension and the wage ceiling are policy matters that depend on budgetary support. Those are decisions for the government to take.

Will the EPFO reopen the window for higher pension?

The Employees' Pension Scheme is a pooled fund built from the contributions of all its members. At present, membership is capped at a wage ceiling of ₹15,000. The idea was to provide a basic pension safety net for blue-collar workers and those at the lower rung of the formal sector. The scheme combines defined contributions with defined benefits. Of the employer's 12% contribution, 8.33% is diverted to the pension scheme, while the government contributes 1.16%. Pension is then paid according to a prescribed formula.

In 2022, the Supreme Court allowed a one-time window of four months for eligible employees to opt for a higher pension. We have processed almost all the applications received under that order and issued nearly 4.4 lakh demand letters. Every higher pension payout places an additional liability of nearly ₹25 lakh on the pension fund. It's a defined benefit scheme and the money comes out from the same pool. If I drain that corpus to provide higher pensions to a limited group today, what will happen when the current members retire? The sustainability of the fund is therefore critical. We have completed the exercise directed by the Supreme Court, and there is no proposal to reopen the window. EPS is intended to provide a basic pension to poorer sections in the formal sector. I can't rob Peter to pay Paul. There is a misconception that the fund has unlimited resources. Your drawing higher pension out of this is going to deprive 10 or 20 people whose retirement depends on the same corpus.

Question from social media: How far is the EPFO justified in citing financial non-viability while extending pension on higher wages to employees of exempted establishments?

The Supreme Court's judgment was limited in scope. It merely granted an additional four-month window to employees who were otherwise eligible but were not contributed. Eligibility was determined on that basis. Our circular of January 18, 2025, made it clear that the employer has an equal stake in determining whether contributions should be made on higher wages.

Question from social media: If an establishment is already contributing to the PF beyond the wage ceiling, will members have to submit a fresh digital declaration under the codes?

No. If an employer is already contributing to the PF on higher wages, that arrangement can continue. No separate declaration is required under the new scheme. The flexibility to reduce or increase contributions rests with the employer and the employee. It is a matter to be decided between them, without any additional consent, approval or declaration under the scheme.

Aroon Deep: Financial fraud targeting senior citizens has been on the rise. How is the EPFO addressing such fraud?

When a pension payment order is issued, we complete all due diligence to verify the pensioner's identity. The bank account into which the pension is credited is also verified with the concerned bank. Unless there is collusion at the banking level, it is difficult for the money to be diverted to another account. In addition, pensioners need to submit a Digital Life Certificate every year through Jeevan Pramaan. We are also moving to an Aadhaar-enabled payment bridge system and have introduced a doorstep Jeevan Pramaan service through the Department of Posts.

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan: Do you think PF coverage should be extended to gig and platform workers?

Of the total working population of India, which is estimated at 60 to 65 crore, the formal sector covers only 15 crore. The rest work in the informal sector and need the protection of a social security safety net. ILO (International Labour Organization) Convention 102 identifies nine branches of social security, including sickness, health care, children's education and old age protection. The Social Security Code enables such benefits to be delivered through either Ayushman Bharat, ESIC (Employees' State Insurance Corporation) and the EPFO. The government is working on the modalities of a scheme. The idea is to make it contributory or co-contributory.

Sreeparna Chakrabarty: INTUC (Indian National Trade Union Congress), the country's second-largest trade union, has not been represented on the EPFO's Central Board of Trustees for several years. What is the reason?

INTUC has had multiple factions, and that is probably the reason. As far as the EPFO board is concerned, nominations are made by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, which decides which trade unions are recognised and represented on the board.

> Employer contributions of up to ₹7.5 lakh are exempt from tax and are not treated as part of an employee's taxable salary

Devesh K. Pandey: You spoke about KYC and automation. Do you mean that the problems members faced with errors in names, their father's name and other personal details have now been taken care of?

The concept of a UAN came only in 2014 and Aadhaar was linked to it in 2017. Since last year, we have made the UAN generation or allotment based on Aadhaar facial authentication. We have given full power to the employees.

Scan the QR Code to watch the full interview

ADVERTISEMENT

Vriksharopan
Mahayagya 2026

40 CRORE SAPLINGS
ONE HISTORIC DAY

EK PED MAA KE NAAM

A MAHAYAGYA OF GRATITUDE TO MOTHER EARTH

Uttar Pradesh marks a historic milestone by planting **40 crore saplings in a single day** under the **"Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam"** campaign. More than a plantation drive, the initiative reflects the State's commitment to ecological restoration, climate resilience and public participation while strengthening India's vision of sustainable development.

- A people-led environmental movement, "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" transforms tree plantation into a heartfelt tribute to mothers and Mother Earth.
- The campaign reinforces Uttar Pradesh's vision of sustainable development through collective responsibility and ecological stewardship.

THE GREEN JOURNEY

A decade of continuous plantation

- World Environment Day 2026 — **5 CRORE SAPLINGS**
- Previous Campaigns — **OVER 35 CRORE SAPLINGS**
- Over 9 years — **282 CRORE SAPLINGS PLANTED**
- Future Target & Beyond — **275 CRORE+ SAPLINGS**

- Each plantation drive has strengthened Uttar Pradesh's green cover while encouraging citizens to become partners in environmental conservation.
- The 2026 campaign marks another significant milestone in the State's decade-long commitment to a greener future.

- Balanced development demands that infrastructure growth goes hand in hand with environmental protection.
- Modern highways and thriving forests together define the roadmap towards sustainable progress.

GROWING GREENER EVERY YEAR

Forest & Tree Cover

9.96%

of Uttar Pradesh's geographical area

- Continuous afforestation and community participation are steadily expanding the State's forest and tree cover.
- Every additional sapling contributes to biodiversity, groundwater conservation and a healthier ecosystem.

TOWARDS A CARBON-RESILIENT FUTURE

Trees absorb carbon dioxide throughout their lifetime while releasing oxygen, making forests an essential ally in combating climate change.

- Healthy forests naturally regulate climate by capturing carbon and improving air quality for generations.
- Expanding green landscapes today strengthens India's resilience against the challenges of climate change.

NATURE IN INDIAN TRADITION

PEEPAL
Symbol of life, longevity and purity

BANYAN
Shelter for all, strength and sustainability

NEEM
Nature's healer, purifier and protector

VEDIC WISDOM
Harmony with nature is the essence of life

- Indian civilisation has long regarded trees as symbols of life, prosperity and spiritual harmony.
- Planting and protecting native species preserves both our ecological heritage and cultural values.

Every sapling planted under "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" represents a lasting commitment to future generations.

Beyond the record, the campaign reflects collective responsibility, environmental stewardship and the belief that protecting nature is essential for sustainable progress.

PLANT ONE TREE IN THE NAME OF YOUR MOTHER, NURTURE IT FOR GENERATIONS.

Public Health Engineering Department

Public Health Engineering Division, Hilsa

SHORT TENDER NIT No – 10/2026-27/O&M-PHED (R-3)

National Competitive Bidding

(Through e-procurement mode on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

1	Designation and Address of Advertiser	Executive Engineer, P. H. Division, Hilsa
2	Date of issue of Tender Notice	30.07.2026
3	Period of sale (downloading) of tender Bid Document	07.08.2026 to 14.08.2026 up to 15:00 Hrs. through www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
4	Date, time & place of pre-bid meeting	11.08.2026 at 12:00 hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer P. H. Division, Hilsa
5	Last date and time of receipt (uploading) of tender	14.08.2026 up to 17:00Hrs on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
6	Date and time of opening of technical bid	14.08.2026 at 17:30Hrs on www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in
7	Date and time of opening of financial bid	To be informed later after the approval of technical bid.

8. Details of works:

Group No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (in Lakh)	Amount of Earnest Money (in Lakh)	Cost of Tender Document (non-refundable) in Rs.	BSEDC Bid Processing Fee (in Rs.)	Completion Period (in months)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Comprehensive operation and maintenance , routine repairs and Special repairs of i.) Rural Piped Water Supply Scheme (PWS) . Total No. Scheme - 38 ii.) Single Village piped water supply schemes (SVS). Tatal No. Of Scheme-14 iii.) Ward level Piped Water Supply Schemes in quality affected wards (WLS_Quality) Total No. Of Scheme – 5 and iv.) Ward level Piped Water Supply Schemes in non quality affected wards (WLS_Non Quality) Total No. Of Scheme – 226. based on item rates; constructed by the Public Health Engineering Department including payment to the pump operators, electricity bills for five years.	4989.79	59.90	10000.00	As per eproc-2	60 Months

Executive Engineer
Public Health Division, Hilsa

PR- 009098 (PHED) 2026-27

For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार

ZONAL HEADQUARTER CRIME BRANCH JAMMU

Phone No.: 0191-2578901, E-mail: sspcrimejmu@jkpolice.gov.in

LOOK OUT NOTICE

General Public is hereby informed through the medium of look out notice that the present whereabouts of below mentioned person is required for purpose of investigation in case FIR No. No. 04/2017 U/S 380 RPC Sec. 66 (C) IT Act of PS, EOW, Crime Branch Jammu.

PHOTOGRAPH

Name:- **Siddarath Sharma**
Father Name: Rajinder Sharma
Age:- 36 years
Height:- 5:6
Colour: Fair
Address:- H.No. 27 Pakki Daki Near Sheetal Mandir Devi Dwara Jammu

Any body having any information regarding the wehreabouts of above mentioned person may kindly contact office of Sr. Superintendent of Police, EOW, Crime Branch Jammu personally or share the information on **email ID:- sspcrimejmu@jkpolice.gov.in** and **Phone No.0191-2578901**

Sr. Superintendent of Police, Economic Offences Wing Crime Branch Jammu

DIP/J-7132/26, Aug 1 2026

DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS KATHUA

E-mail: sspkathua@jkpolice.gov.in Fax/Phone No.: 01922-234010

LOOK OUT NOTICE

On 26-07-2026, an information received at PP Industrial Estate through reliable source that one unidentified male dead body age about 40-45 years has been found in near Wine Shop opposite PP Industrial Estate Kathua Tehsil and District Kathua under suspicious circumstances and accordingly, an inquest proceeding U/S 194 BNSS has been initiated at PS Kathua vide DDR No. 16 dated 26-07-2026 to ascertain the cause of death.

During the course of enquiry, adequate efforts have been made to establish the identity of deceased which is still unknown and dead body is presently kept in Mortuary Room, Govt. Medical College Kathua for identification/post mortem.

As such, Look out Notice of deceased is being submitted for publication in the leading Newspapers with the appeal that anybody having clue/information about his identity may inform us accordingly. The description of Roll/Photograph of deceased is as under:-

Description Roll:-

- Name Unknown,
- Parentage Unknown,
- Permanent Address Unknown,
- Age About 40-45 years,
- Height 5'-5"
- Eyes Black
- Face Long
- Colour Wheatish
- Identification mark Nil
- Religion Not Known
- Attire Black Kurta/Black Trouser

PHOTOGRAPH

Any information related to his identity may be communicated on following contacts:-

1. DPO Kathua- 01922-234010 (Phone/Fax)
2. dpokathua@jkpolice.gov.in(Mail ID)
3. PCR Kathua- 01922-234311(Phone/Fax)
4. Police Station Kathua- 01922-234310.
5. SHO P/S Kathua-9419191907
6. I/C PP Industrial Estate-9186316027

Sr. Superintendent of Police, Kathua.

DIP/J-7033/26, Jul 31 2026

KARNATAKA STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION

Central Offices, Stores and Purchase Dept, K.H. Road, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560 027

NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO 7 Dated:01.08.2026

Tenders (Pre-qualification and or (Commercial offers) through e-procurement portal are invited for supply of the following Goods/ Services.

Tender Nos. as per E-portal	Nomenclature of Items/ Services/ Equipment	Tender Value in Crores Rs. (Approx)	Last date for submission of tender @17.00 Hrs
KSRTC/2026-27/IND0326	Procurement of Plywood Sheets	0.40	07/09/2026
KSRTC/2026-27/IND0327	Procurement of Densified Wooden Floor Board	1.70	07/09/2026
KSRTC/2026-27/IND0328	Procurement of Ball & Roller Bearing	5.50	07/09/2026
KSRTC/2026-27/IND0330	Procurement of Cotton Waste	0.70	07/09/2026
KSRTC/2026-27/IND0331	Procurement of GHT Bolt & GHT U Bolt with Nylock nuts	1.50	07/09/2026
KSRTC/2026-27/IND0332	Procurement of Automotive Cables & Wires	1.60	07/09/2026
SHORT TERM TENDER			
KSRTC/2026-27/IND0329	Procurement of Adhesive SR-998	0.49	16/08/2026

NOTE:- Interested suppliers need to register in the e-procurement portal. For further information log into **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** In case of further assistance, contact e-procurement cell (Phone. No. 080-46010000/080-68948777). Interested bidders may also contact e-procurement cell for training on bid submission. Mail to **support@eprochelpdesk.com** for further information if required. In case of bidders need assistance from KSRTC, can communicate at **cosp@ksrtc.org**, (contact: 7760990224).

Sd/-
Controller of Stores & Purchases
(Tender Inviting Authority)

DIPR/CP/JA/1934/2026-27

GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

NATIONAL HIGHWAYS PROJECTS

e-procurement notice

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

1. The Executive Engineer, NH, Division HP.PWD, Nahan invites Bid for construction of work detailed in the Table.

S. N.	Name of Work	Name of Division	Approximate value of work(exclusive of GST (Rs)	Bid Security (Rs)	Cost of document (Rs)	Period of Completion
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	One Time Improvement portion between Km 98/300 to 102/900 on NH-72 (New NH-07) Kala Amb Paonta Dehradun Haridwar road (SH:- Providing and laying DGBM and 40mm thick BC in Km 98/300 to 102/900 and road side furniture and c/o drain in various RD in Km 98/300 to 102/900).	NH Division Nahan	Rs.12,55,98,842/- only	Rs.2512000/- only	12000/-	09 Months

The Estimated Project Cost is the Civil Cost* exclusive GST. *All other taxes are to be borne by the contractor.

1.The period of availability of online bid/date and time of Pre-bid meeting / date and time of on line bid submission and date and time of opening of bids are given below.

Availability of Tender on-line for bidders		Date and time of pre bid meeting	Start and end date and time fo on-line submission of bid	Date & Time of Opening of bids	
				Technical Bid	Financial Bid
From	To				
05-08-2026 at 1400 Hrs	16-08-2026 at 1100 Hrs	07-08-2026 at 1130 Hrs	07-08-2026 at 1130 Hrs to 16-08-2026 at 1100 Hrs	17-08-2026 at 1100Hrs	Date to be announced.

Physical Submission of original Documents upto 13-08-2026 upto 10:30 AM

3.Bidding documents can be downloaded from the web site https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app .

HP/2365/26-27

Executive Engineer
NH Division, HPPWD Nahan. Distt Sirmaur H.P
Tel/Fax: 01702-222202

Classifieds

LIFE MADE SIMPLE

Matrimonial

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THE HINDU

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

- BRIDEGROOMS WANTED
- BRIDES WANTED
- BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED
- MARRIAGE BUREAUS
- WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

BENGALI

BENGALI, KAYASTHA ,Girl,33,170 Cm, B.Tech fair pretty working MNC Bangalore, Non veg. never married. seek educated groom working in Bangalore. 70447 16088

COSMOPOLITAN

BEAUTIFUL, INTELLIGENT 28, 163cm, well–educated, mature professional. Cultured, well–to–do S Indian family. Seeks compatible groom. Language/caste no bar. Call/WA 9345 634 365

SOFTWARE DEVELOPER in USA & well settled. Telugu Age 34 yrs, height 173cmLooking for Groom working in USA with Green card/ under process / any valid Visa. CNB Ct:9533166777.

DIVORCEE

SAIVA MUDALIYAR BE., 160 Cms, Aged 35 Years, Working in MNC Company @ Chennai, No Issues, Seeks Only Tamil Vegetarian. Ct : 6380723290

MUDALIAR GIRL 35 Divorcee No Children IT Co. 5L/a seeks Hindu employed single/ divorcee w/o children 35–40yrs, Chennai. 9176686212

WARM, BEAUTIFUL 49, sincere, responsible, progressive professional. Seeks kind, loyal, compatible groom. Caste no bar. Call/WA 93456 34365.

DOCTOR

✔ **ROMAN CATHOLIC, MD (Anaesthesiology), Reputed School, College, 27 yrs, Fair, Highly Educated Family in Chennai, Seeks Doctors Catholic groom, WhatsApp Profile – 7550065082**

CSI CHRISTIAN Nadar, South Tamil Nadu, MBBS MD (Clinical Subject), 29/154, cheerful, pretty seeks same sect. Groom. PG / Student preferred. Send Bio-data 9487452271, 6381784394.

ALLIANCE INVITED for My Daughter Born in Dec-1991 Fair 160 CM Lean MD Radiology both parents in Chennai Doctors Hindu Nadar Similar Profile Doctors, IAS / BE Business Families Aged 34 & Above Send Horoscope Family Details to sureshrkmba@gmail.com Phone : 9345908791.

ENGLISH

ANGLOINDIAN RC GIRL 51yrs 170 cm hospitality professional looking for groom. Whatsapp+919361106574

HINDU DEVENDRAKULAVELLALAR girl 31yrs 164cms 65Kg.B.Tech(IT), MSc (Psycology). Father Retd GM IOC Mother home maker, son preparing for UPSC. Upper middle class, seeks grooms with well qualified clean habits with good family values. Caste No bar. Contact 9444401218, 7550307487.

HARYANVI

Age- 29 Years, Height- 5'4, Occupation- Fashion & Jewellery Designer, Residence- Gurgaon, Currently occupied with her own business of artificial jewellery, Preference- boy should be diligent & of understanding nature with decent educational background working or doing business in any field, Contact- 8860930362

KANNADA

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

MALAYALAM

RC LADY 62/165cm Children Abroad searching Life Partner Doctors, Engineers, Businessman. 74484-36044.

SC GIRL, 38, MBBS, Central government Group A officer. Caste no bar. 8589881011.

KERALA CATHOLIC BRIDE

28/157, Fair, God-fearing. ACCA, IBM, Senior Auditor in Dubai, from a reputed joint Business family in Kochi. Seeks Catholic Groom, professionally qualified or one from a business background (preferably Dubai-based), from a respectable family; God-fearing and teetotaller.

Mob: 7025883117

Email: georgematt2568@gmail.com

TAMIL

RC.NATHAMAR, 28/163 MA.UGC Net Asst Prof Reputed RC College, Seeking Suitable Chennai Groom Ct 9443995144

INTERCASTE RC parents seek Groom for only daughter 1991 born Asst Professor from well placed boys earning above 12 Lakhs PA. Only RC Christian. CT: 9363715717.

CHRISTIAN NADAR, 1994 born PG Employed fair beautiful Girl, Chennai seeks fair, well settled, Religious boy born after 1991. Ct: 9840345969

CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN, MSC, MBA, Divorced, looking for a 2nd marriage groom for my daughter from any subcaste from 35-39, 8137001255

RC, UDAYAR, divorced, Masters in technology, looking for a groom in any European Countries from 31-36, 8137003516

TAMIL

CSI, 25, 7Crores, BE, looking for a entrepreneur, Business, USA, UK PR profiles from 25-29 in CSI and Christian Nadar, 8138009214.

MUSLIM 31/168 MS Gen Surgery Seeks Prof Qualified groom Ct : 8220042091 mdullahsafi@gmail.com

BORN AGAIN Christian, 45yrs/152, MBBS, MD doctor, seeks christian groom, Chennai. CT – 9500188067

AGAMUDAYAR MUDALIAR Girl, B.E., B.Ed., 35 yrs/155 Cms, employed divorced seeking suitable bridegroom for second marriage. Divorcee no bar, Ct : 9442225845.

SOZHIYA VELLALA Bride 27 Yrs Karaikudi. Chartered Accountant, Punarpoosam Star, Seeks Groom. Veg Preferable. Contact: 99428 12699.

AFFLUENT FAMILY, Hindu Bride, 34 Yrs/ 165 cms/ Anusham/ Architect – Masters from premier institution. F– Tamil Yadava (BC), M– Telugu Chettiar (BC). Looking for a well educated well settled Groom from Chennai. Caste No Bar. Ph: 9791113913

GROOM WANTED Hindu Nadar 28yrs, MBBS, MS, Affluent business family Ph: 9841329471,9380791999

GROOM WANTED SC (AD),30yrs, MBBS, MD, well educated family background in Chennai Ph: 6385293227

GROOM WANTED CNB,28yrs,BE,Well Educated,Rich & affluent family Ph:9952619776

MUDALIAR 27/160 BE MBA Fair Girl Chennai Workng seeks Upper Middle Class amiable Profesional Handsome Mudaliar Pillai NV Groom WA 9382554608

MUDALIYAR 98 born a very charming and pretty divorced girl with strong family bonding and values, affluent family background seeks suitable groom Mob: 7560814329

Chettiar, 28 years IT Job Chennai 5 lakhs PA, Divorcee, seeks suitable bridegroom (CNB) Ct: 94870 33503

ALLIANCE INVITES My Daughter. Hindu Mudaliar. 43yrs, +2 Diverse. No Child. Ct: 7708700879 / 9841817000

MUDALIAR 26, B.Com, ACA 162cm Good looking Well Settled Family Seeks Groom CNB Ct. 8778514465/7200866346

VANNIYAR, B.Tech, Canada, looking for equal caste groom from 31-36 NRI profile, 8138900575

SC, B.Com, UAE, Financial professional,70 lakhs P.A, searching from any caste groom from 32-38, 8138900487

GROOM WANTED Mudaliyar,32yrs,BE, MS, working in Bangalore, Affluent family Ph:6385293227

GROOM WANTED CSI Nadar 25 yrs,B.com,M.Sc elite business family Ph: 9380791999,9841329471

GROOM WANTED Naidu,29yrs, MBBS, MS, well Educated business familyPh: 9384772710

MUDALIAR, 44/163CM, MCA USA Remarriage 19 years Daughter Seeks US Profiles only CNB Geetham 9884858014

ADIDRAVIDAR, 26/168CM, BPharm Remarriage shortlived Seeks Wellsettled Profile CNB Geetham 9884858014

SC PALLAR Divorcee 38 Caste No Bar B.E M.S Seeking a Suitable Groom. Call/whatsapp 7539985037.

TAMIL

VADAMAL IYER alliance invited for Revathi, Srivathsam Gothram, bride V.S. Aarthi, 25 years, 160 cm, B.E. (CS), SDE–II, Amazon, Bangalore. Seeking professionally qualified Iyer groom, 27–30 years, preferably based in Bangalore. Horoscope matching essential. Contact 9500012747/ gthr.sathish@gmail.com.

HINDU SC 38 Yrs, BE,MBA, 80,000 pm, Divorcee No Children. Looking for Groom in Chennai under 42, well settled Job.9445111214/ 9840429449

PILLAI/NAIDU 31/160 MBBS MS MRCS Doing Mch Bangalore Seeks PG Doctors Ch, Bangl ok CNB Geetham 9884858014

CHETTIAR (CNB): 28/ V.Fair, MBBS, Preparing for PG, Father Business, Elite Family, Seeks groom Doctor / Business – 9866285839, 8925019776

VELLALAR, AGE–38, MBBS,MD, Star:Magam, Never married. Well settled, Sub Caste ok. 7305460763/ 8754756329

VANNIYAKULA SHATHRIYAR, BDS, 29 Yrs, Pooram, Employed in Chennai, Looking for Groom Govt, Bank officer and Professional. CT : 9841550165.

GROOM WANTED Rich Mudaliar,28yrs, MBA, Running own industries in Chennai. Ph:9952619776

HINDU SC/AD, Age:45, 153cm, Ashwini (Mesha Rasi) B.Sc, MBA Fair & Good Looking girl from Well to do Family. Seeking Engrs/Doctors/ Grade–1 Officers. Ct: 9994219315 / 9943629339

46 YRS /165 cm, Smartha Iyer, BE MS, Divorcee from short marriage, working in reputed MNC seeking issueless, professionally qualified vegetarian groom, 45–51, never married / divorced, earning 40L+ p.a. WhatApp: 9500015455

MUDHALIYAR, ENTREPRENEUR, MBA, looking for Rich/affluent business groom from 29-33, 8137001247

TELUGU

NAIDU 27 BE MBA 40K Chithirai Mother Central govt Officer. Father passed away. Caste no bar. 8056033255

VB TELUGU bride, 1992, 5'6", fair, M.A., working in Digital Media. Seeks Telugu groom, 34 to 37 yrs, 5'9" above Ph: 9866970713 / 8106366930.

KAMMAVAR NAIDU 24/170cm, Doctor Parents in USA Seeks Groom For Medical Student. Ct: 76395 83538

NAIDU, 26/166, Fair, Beautiful, MBBS MS, MGM HOSPITAL, 2000000 PA, Affluent,CNB,9043991629,9043987029

NAIDU, 25/165, Fair, Beautiful, BTech ,FSD, TCS, 1800000 PA, Affluent Family,CNB,9043991629, 9043987029

URDU

Muslim Ansari Fair Girl from UP 24/ 168 Software Engr. in Hybad. Similar post upto 30 yr Boys call 9042445190

UK INDIAN origin boy for P.G. Religious Fair 24/161 working in NHS London, now in Chennai. Ct: 8148084882

URDU Muslim MBBS 25/169cm Fair Well settled Family seeks MBBS/MD Groom 27-29 from TN.Ph:7845029582

SUNNI MUSLIM 27y 171cms B'ful Doctor Girl doing DM Endocrinology fm affluent family. Seek Doc/Professionally q'lfd match. WA/call 9449871312

Chennai-based Urdu, Sunni, decent family for their daughter: 25 yrs, B.E., Software Engineer; fair, well-mannered seeking groom from decent family, good looking, well-settled, highly qualified professional, working in abroad, Please send bio-data & few photos via WhatsApp#: 9840716223.

BRIDES WANTED

BUSINESS

Looking for a suitable Bride, Sunni Muslim Canadian Citizen Boy. Age: 27 Height: 175 cm Contact: 9962162184

COSMOPOLITAN

SMART, SUCCESSFUL 44, well–read professional. Never–married. Seeks well–educated compatible bride. Caste/language no bar. Call/WA 9345634365

HINDU BRAHMIN (46) Vegetarian. Finance Manager, Second marriage, no liabilities, looking for a bride, no location preference. 7559934483.

DIVORCEE

SMART SUCCESSFUL 34, 183cm, warm, positive, UAE–based professional. Cultured, affluent S Indian family. Seeks well–educated, compatible bride. Caste no bar. Call/WA 9345634365

Nair Chennai Settled 42/177, B.Tech, Masters, Own Business, Divorced, No Child. No Bar. Phone: 9841757356

DOCTOR

RC CHRISTIAN Nadar (28, MBBS, MD Doctor) seeks a Fair Doctor or a Bride from a Business Family. Alliance invited from Hindu/Christian Nadar, Mudaliyar, Pillai, Vellalar, Sozhiya Vellalar, Thuluva Vellalar, and Agamudayar castes. Contact: 9500085244

LOOKING FOR a medical–doctor bride for our ONLY son, 27 years old, 173 cms tall, US MD (final year of IM residency), and US/Australian citizen. Elite family; bride should be from a well educated and established family from any part of India /US/Australia. Telephone / WhatsApp +1 331–218–5068

Ezhava Boy MBBS, MD (Pursuing) Age 32 / Height: 173 Cms Contact - 9656693246.

HINDI

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

MALAYALAM

Railway Senior Section Engineer Bangalore Thiyya 34 seeks bride 9495891105.

TAMIL

CHRISTIAN CSI, 35yrs, Chief Manager at Public Sector Bank. Required working bride. Ph: 8939927586

BOY–27, 180CM BE, IT Engineer @ Hitachi, Chennai (MNC) – Salary 40K. RC Christian(SC) Seeks Good–Look Bride <27Yrs (Any Cast). 9940670780

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

CHRISTIAN TAMIL 44/175cm BE, MBA Australia MNC, Divorcee No issues. seeks suitable Bride. Ct: 9094677765

RC CHRISTIAN, 43yrs/170, B.E. Software Engineer, never married, works for mnc, Chennai. CT– 9500188067

IYER GROOM 45yrs/180cm, Pooradathi/ Meenam, TCS–HR, Chennai. Seeks Suitable Brahmin Bride. 9790827138

MUDALIYAR 33, 174cm, fair & good looking Engineer @ Hyderabad. Family is well. Looking for a suitable bride, well settled family. 9884513749

HINDU BRAHMIN 1987 Nithitiba Kashibam Karthigai 4th Patham M Tech Fair Clean Habits Cement Company in Uganda. Earlier in Chennai/ Vizag with L & T. invite brides qualified with or without employment simple marriage Ct Chennai 99947 45007 swamy.viji99@gmail.com

BRIDE WANTED Naidu, 32yrs, BE, MS (US), Divorce, working in Chennai, well educated family Ph: 6385293227

DIVORCEE HINDU. 35yrs No issues, M.Tech, well settled Software Engineer, seeking bride with no issues. Caste no bar. 9841862535, 9941962421

WANTED BRIDE–MT(TAMIL),IT/ENGG background,Caste no bar.Groom details –6'1",Rohini–padam 1 (Rishabam)Very fair,31 yrs,Vanniyar Chettiar,Indo–Newzealander, B.Tech.(Civil),M.S.(Construction Mgmt), Sr.Project Er,NZ. Ph:9941594545.

BRIDE WANTED RC,30yrs, MBA (UK), Elite business family Ph:6385293227

MUDALIYAR, MD, Doctor, searching for a 2nd marriage Doctor, Chartered Accountant from equal caste 8138901383

MUDALIYAR, NRI, MBA, Aviation, looking for a bride who wish to settle in abroad from 27-34, 8137003550

AUDITOR/ 47 Chennai/ Seeks Any Vegetarian Hindu Girl. Contact : 9884398109

BRIDE WANTED Rc Nadar 32yrs,B.tech, SWE 1lp/m, educated family Ph:9380791999,9841329471

BRIDE WANTED Mudaliyar,26yrs,BE, Elite business family in Chennai Ph: 6385293227

BRIDE WANTED Naidu, 32yrs,MBA, Own Constructions,Elite business family in Chennai Ph:9952619776

BRIDE WANTED Mudaliyar, 28yrs,B.Tech,Elite business family in Chennai Ph: 9384772710

NAIDU GROOM Aug 81 born Surgeon BDS & UK MBA seek suitable compatable PQ DR Engr or IT working in India or Abroad CNB. Groom working in Bang as CEO of Hospital. 98867 82390/ 99622 46305

TAMIL

BRIDE WANTED for Yadava, Konar boy 1996/190cm B.Tech/MBA, handsome, clean habits, Bangalore based, currently working as VP in JPMC, USA. Open to come back to India, seeks bride from same cast, bangalore based or educated in bangalore. Reply with horoscope, photograph. Ct: 9880343417.ramakrishnan737@gmail.com

PONKUMAR SANTHOSH, BE,MS (Working in Sweden) 171cm Star Swathi. Looking for Bride in Vanniya Chettiar or any other Chettiar& ready to relocate to Abroad 9962522730, 9080699957

VANNIYAKULA KSHATRIYA Tamilnadu Boy 32 Yrs USA based Seeks Girl below 30 USA based. Ct: 9597937384

BRIDE WANTED Naidu,32yrs, BE, Elite business family in Chennai, Landlord Ph: 6385293227

HINDU MARUTHUVAR 50/ M.sc, M.A/165/ Govt Employed/Ch/1L/pm Salary. Seeks Educated &Employed Girl 9790711988

85 BORN B.E. PGD Kashyapa Swathi Iyengar IT Company need any brahmin bride. Contact: 98434 78891

IYER / Koundinyam / Avittam June '88 B.Com / MBA working in Chennai seeks working bride. Ct : 9443132445.

MBA BRAHMIN iye,r age 33.Srivatsa Gothram Star Swathi working in CMA CGM 14.25lacs/annum. Any brahmin bride. 9363213996

IYER, POURUKUTSYA Gothram, Poosam, 27, tall, fair, slim, Masters in Data science, E&Y Data Scientist, SSM ID 250513, seeks Brahmin vegetarian bride, God fearing, ph: 9884753643, email: shsrnmn23@gmail.com

IYER ASHTASAHS Kasyb divorcee, Barani 40/180, double Masters (India, US) Ph.D (thesis, Germany) Employed Germany seeks qualified unmarried, divorcee short lived marriage No issues bride, employed Europe or Indian willing to relocate Germany. 9444551216/ 8122892822/ 044–26861097

Seeking BRIDE for Bridegroom

Hindu, Kulalar/Udayaar, 44 yrs, 170 cms, M.Tech, IT professional, Caste open for discussion. First Marriage Only

CT: 93842 76066

BRIDES WANTED

Issai Vellalar, 28/ 175, Avittam, Smart, Handsome Advocate, Reputed Law firm 12 Lakhs PA. Seeks good looking, well educated girls. Sub Caste no bar

Ct: 91769 62752

TAMIL

Matrimonial

South Indian, Brahmin groom based at A'bad, 77 born (Never Married) Height-5.10" MBA-Finance earning very Decent income. from Working as CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER Ahmedabad, based Pharmaceutical Organisation seeks suitable vegetarian Brahmin girl from Respectable, Cultured upper middle Class home. (Marriage Bureau & Divorcee Please do not call us.)

Contact Cell: 96382 33444

B.E BITSPILANI 185cm Mudaliar born Nov 91. Wkg in Bengalore. Very High package seeks Bride Tamil, Telugu Allied Castes also Cont: 7382620365

MUSLIM, NEVER married, 1985 born, Education - Master of Science, (U.S.A.) working as Scientist in U.S.A, parents based in Tamilnadu. seeks bride. Contact No: 96262 68383

TELUGU

NAIDU SOFTWARE Engineer BE (EEE) 33Y Senior Technical Lead (IT) MNC Sal: 2LPM, now work from home, divorced seeks any Naidu good looking, good mannered girl between 27-32Y preferably never married / Divorcee. Wapp: 7358758363. Email : govindaswamyguna1953@gmail.com

NAIDU, 31/186, Handsome, MBBS,MD, DM, GLOBAL HOSPITAL, 4000000 PA, ELITE50.Cr, CNB,9043991629, 9043987029

NAIDU, 28/182, BTech, MBA, Sr. Archit, TCS, BANGALORE, 3500000 PA, ELITE, 40 Cr,CNB,9043991629, 9043987029

GAVARA NAIDU Boy 29 MS USA Seeks fair Tamil speaking Naidu Girl with Professional Degree below 28 yrs. Subsects no bar. Ct: 9443724981.

URDU

SUNNY MUSLIM Boy Age 33/183cm, BE E&I doing MS UK Alliance seeks Urdu Muslim bride prefd. 9962394336

MARRIAGE BUREAU

US, UK, Canada All Caste Religion, 1st Marriage, Remarriage.8248757840

GENERAL

SITUATIONS VACANT

MEDICAL

WANTED GYNECOLOGIST, MS, DGO. Lady DMO's with experience. Dindigul (Dt). Ct: 9994913702

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THE HINDU
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9910098105, 9289633341

From Page One

8 killed as extremely heavy rain lashes Kerala

A rain gauge maintained by the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority recorded 361 mm of rainfall at Vadasserikkara in Pathanamthitta by 8.30 a.m. on Saturday. The Anakkampoyil region in Kozhikode received 340 mm of rain over the previous 35 hours, while Meppadi in Wayanad recorded 177 mm rainfall. The shutters of several dams were raised on Saturday, leading to a rise in water levels in rivers, especially in Kottayam and Pathanamthitta districts.

Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan convened an emergency review meeting and directed Ministers in charge of affected districts to remain there and coordinate relief operations. Financial assistance would be provided to families of those killed and to people who lost homes, farms, or livelihoods, while the injured would receive adequate treatment, he said.

Kerala State Disaster Management Authority member secretary Sekhar Lukose Kuriakose said the situation was under control, with vulnerable residents being shifted to safer locations.

Mr. Satheeshan urged the public to follow official advisories and assured them that the government was prepared to handle any emergency.

Commercial LPG price cut by about ₹200

In Mumbai, a commercial LPG cylinder costs ₹2,691.50 (₹194 less), and in Chennai, it costs ₹2,906 (₹200 less). Among the major metros, Kolkata saw the steepest fall of ₹209. It is now priced at ₹2,872.50.

Sagar Daryani, president, National Restaurant Association of India, welcomed the price cut. "It brings some relief to the industry, especially to small and independent restaurants that continue to operate on thin margins," he told *The Hindu*.

Prashant Vashisht, senior vice-president at ratings agency ICRA, said under-recoveries on LPG continue to exist, although diversifying sources of procurement have helped ease some of the pressure.

"Before the war, we were getting a sizeable proportion of LPG supplies from one region [the Gulf]. Since then, we have figured out alternative sources," Mr. Vashisht told *The Hindu*. "Under-recoveries continue to exist although the pressure on supplies would not be the same as at the onset of the crisis," he added.

With the latest revision, the price of the 19-kg cylinder meant for commercial and industrial consumers has declined by about ₹380 per cylinder across two tranches. The price of FTL has also cumulatively been reduced by about ₹60 per cylinder across the two tranches.

Cauvery water dispute: downpour eases tension

The water level in the Kabini reservoir in Mysuru district was just two-and-a-half feet short of its full reservoir level, touching 2,281.43 feet on Saturday against the maximum level of 2,284 feet, following an increase in inflows. The rise was largely owing to heavy rainfall in the reservoir's catchment areas in Kerala.

Earlier in the day, the Kabini dam authorities issued a flood alert for people living downstream after inflows surged. By 3 p.m., water was being released from the reservoir at the rate of 5,000 cusecs. The outflow was increased to 12,000 cusecs at 8 p.m. as inflows rose.

In Kodagu, rain boosted inflows into the Harangi reservoir. At 4 p.m. on Saturday, the reservoir was receiving an inflow of 16,880 cusecs, while the outflow was at the rate of 19,700 cusecs.

Continued rainfall in Kodagu over the next few days is expected to further improve inflows, easing concerns over the Cauvery issue. The realisation of Cauvery water was measured at Biligundlu on the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border.

Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who has convened an all-party meeting on Sunday to discuss the CWRC order and seek suggestions of the Opposition leaders on Karnataka's stand, expressed relief over the rising reservoir levels.

GST collections rose 15.4% in July on imports, sales

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections grew 15.4% to more than ₹2.11 lakh crore in July on higher mop-up from sales and imports, reflecting sustained domestic consumption. Gross GST collections were ₹1.95 lakh crore in July compared to ₹1.83 lakh crore recorded in the same period last year.

Tax collection from domestic transactions grew 10.1% to more than ₹1.44 lakh crore, while gross revenues from imports were up 29% to ₹66,511 crore.

GST collection reflects continued economic resilience despite challenges in the external environment, according to M.S. Mani, Deloitte India Partner.

"Steady growth in GST collections each month on domestic consumption indicates that overall domestic consumption is becoming largely insulated from seasonal variations and external headwinds," Mr. Mani said.

Collegium's unexplained recommendations risk bad appointments, says SC judge

Justice Bhuyan points to former Allahabad HC judge's reported reference to minority community as 'ants'; Collegium's return to opacity has been a relatively recent phenomenon, adds the judge

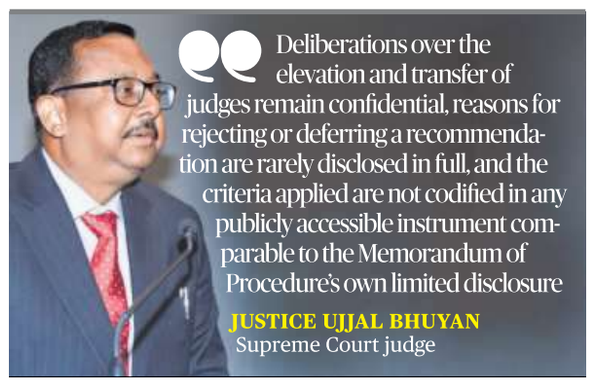
Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge Justice Ujjal Bhuyan stated on Saturday that the top court Collegium's lack of transparency in judicial appointments creates a loophole, allowing individuals who make unconstitutional or derogatory remarks to enter the judiciary.

Justice Bhuyan pointed to a former Allahabad High Court Judge's reported reference to a minority community as 'ants' in a speech he had made while serving on the Bench as an example. He said this in an interaction after delivering the keynote address at Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy's launch of its report 'The Judicial Transparency Index: Assessing Disclosure of Information by the Supreme Court and the High Courts'.

He said that by not providing reasons for its recommendations to constitutional courts, the Collegium was also keeping the public in the dark about the achievements of some deserving candidates.

Justice Bhuyan said the return to opacity by the Collegium has been a relatively recent phenomenon.



Real Creator IAS Edition https://t.me/+8B98m5PQCF84MmQ9

"Deliberations over the elevation and transfer of judges remain confidential; reasons for rejecting or deferring a recommendation are rarely disclosed in full; and the criteria applied are not codified in any publicly accessible instrument comparable to the Memorandum of Procedure's own limited disclosure. I have seen that the last three statements of the Supreme Court Collegium do not contain any reason at all for recommending elevation as opposed to the earlier statements where each of the recommendations was supported by some reason," Justice Bhuyan said in his keynote speech.

Justice Bhuyan said a July 24 order of the top court has drawn clear line between transparency through livestreaming of court proceedings and preventing misuse and commercial exploitation of that process.

Abuse of livestreaming

"The court's concern is that decontextualised fragments of oral exchanges, observations made by judges in the course of argument, not findings, are being circulated with sensational captions, causing reputational harm to judges, advocates, and litigants alike, and distorting public understanding of what had actually happened in court. The order does not retreat from live streaming; it draws a distinction between transparency of the process and the licence to manufacture a misleading narrative from that process," he explained.

Addressing apprehensions over whether the abuse of livestreamed content may prompt the court to do away with the facility, Justice Bhuyan said the livestreaming of court proceedings has been the "most visible transparency development of the last decade".

"Allowing the litigants and members of the public to view courtroom proceedings, ensures that judges apply the law in a fair and impartial manner," Justice Bhuyan said.

The Judge referred to the 2018 *Swapnil Tripathi* judgment of the Supreme Court, which had held that livestreaming expanded the courtroom beyond its physical four walls and epitomised transparency, good governance and accountability.

Justice Bhuyan quoted the Supreme Court's own words in *Central Public Information Officer, Supreme Court of India v. Subhash Chandra Agarwal* judgment of 2020 that "judicial independence is not secured by the secrecy of cloistered halls. It cannot be said that increase in transparency would threaten judicial independence".

Public access to justice and transparency is the "very soul of justice", he said.

Real Creator IAS Edition https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0F

Kejriwal to march to PM's house over E20 fuel concerns

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Arvind Kejriwal

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday, while speaking at a townhall organised by his party against E20 fuel, said that he would be leading a march of 100 people to the Prime Minister's residence to submit a petition signed by people from across the country against this type of fuel. The AAP, he said, has three demands before the Narendra Modi government on behalf of the people of the country – provide the option of both pure petrol and E20 at petrol pumps, make E20 cheaper than pure petrol, and reduce the price of petrol to below ₹84 per litre.

'Something is wrong'

Mr. Kejriwal said that the Modi government is forcibly imposing ethanol on the people of India by saying that E20 is safe and calling anyone raising their voice against E20 an "anti-national" but is refusing to provide any scientific study or engineering evidence to prove their claims.

"Instead of holding a discussion, you threaten and file FIRs against those who raise their voice. That means something is wrong. It means E20 itself is flawed. If E20 actually had no problems, they would sit across the table and discuss it. We would present our evidence and they would present theirs. But when you resort to threats, it means something is wrong," he said.

The former Delhi Chief Minister added that he has reached out to automobile manufacturers who refused to reply to his queries about the damage using E20 fuel would have on an engine that is not compatible but had in personal conversations told him that the government had forced this upon them by threatening them with raids, and shutting down of factories.

At the townhall, several people took the stage to share experiences of their vehicles having been damaged after using E20 fuel, prompting Mr. Kejriwal to ask people not to purchase petrol and diesel vehicles. He asked people not to be hesitant to share videos demanding the rollback of E20 fuel.

Mr. Kejriwal questioned why the government on imposition of ethanol-blended fuel and presented his research to the audience.

India-China trade through Shipki La resumes after six years

Press Trust of India
SHIMLA

The cross-border trade between India and China through Shipki La, known as the ancient Silk Route joining India with Tibet, resumed on Saturday after a gap of six years.

Himachal Pradesh Revenue and Horticulture Minister Jagat Singh Negi on Saturday flagged off 16 traders after presenting traditional Khataks (ceremonial scarves) along with their horses towards Shipki village in Tibet. The Minister said that the exchange of various goods would take place via a barter system.

He also inaugurated a modern trade mart (Chhuppan Trade Mart) constructed in the Shipki La area in the border Gram Panchayat of Namgya in Himachal's Kinnaur district at a cost of ₹1.70 crore to facilitate border trade, a statement said.

Vast scope of trade

Responding to the Traders' Association's request to expand the scope of import-export goods, the Minister stated that the proposal would be placed before Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu so that it could be conveyed to the Chinese government through the Ministry of External Affairs, following the necessary procedures.

Mr. Negi said that the resumption of trade via the Shipki La route would provide new strength to the economy of the border areas and would increase employment and self-employment opportunities for local youth, besides boosting commercial activities in the region.

L-G seeks to protect migrant workers as one more dies in Kulgam attack

Peerzada Ashiq
Shubhomoy Sikdar
SRINAGAR/RAIPUR

As the death toll in the Kulgam terror attack rose to two on Saturday, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor, Manoj Sinha, asked security agencies "to conduct a comprehensive review of the Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) established to protect labourers from outside in J&K".

Suspected terrorists, in a targeted killing, fired upon two non-local labourers from Chhattisgarh on Friday evening in Kulgam's Kellam area.

One labourer, identified as Deepak Ratre, 24, was declared dead in a hospital late Friday evening. Bopinder Kumar, 28, also from Chhattisgarh, died during treatment. Both the deceased, who worked as labourers at a brick kiln, were cremated in Kulgam on Saturday afternoon under tight security arrangements.

Security personnel conduct a cordon-and-search operation in Kulgam on Saturday, after the terrorist attack. IMRAN NISSAR

J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah described the incident as "dastardly" and announced an *ex gratia* relief of ₹10 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai also announced assistance of ₹20 lakh for each of the families of the workers.

Mr. Sai described the "cowardly terrorist attack" as an assault on humanity and the unity of the nation.

L-G Sinha, who chaired a high-level security review meeting attended by top security officials in Srinagar on Saturday, directed employers to provide insurance cover to non-local labourers and register their details with local police and district authorities.

The deaths of the labourers who migrated for better opportunities have left their native villages in shock and mourning.

"Migration meant hope. He thought he would save up enough for the shelter he wanted since losing his father at the age of four. But that wasn't to be," said Dilharan Sande, uncle of Ratre, who hailed from Bundeli village in Sakti district and was the sole breadwinner of his family.

"There weren't enough opportunities here so he along with his family moved to Jammu last year. Now the devastating news of his death has come, the whole village is in mourning," Mr. Sande told *The Hindu* over the phone.

In Chhuia village, Annu, Kumar's younger sister, broke down as she told presspersons that the only son of the deceased worker would never be able to see his father again.

Meanwhile, residents in both the villages expressed disappointment over the labourers not being cremated at their native places.

Amendment to paper leak Bill gets assent from President

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

An amended law that empowers States to set up fast-track courts for speedy trials of accused and enhance punishment in public examination question paper leak cases has received the assent of President Droupadi Murmu.

In a gazette notification issued on Friday, the Union Law Ministry said President Murmu had given her assent to the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026.

Now, investigations into paper leak cases are to be completed within two months. According to the legislation, individuals involved in paper leaks or unfair means in exams will get jail terms for a minimum of five years and a maximum of 10 years, and a fine of up to ₹50 lakh.

Will ensure your safety, Adhikari tells Taslima

Senjuti Sengupta
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Saturday assured exiled Bangladeshi writer Taslima Nasrin of her security in the State, saying the "days of threats are over".

Sharing the stage with Ms. Nasrin at Kolkata's Rabindra Sadan at an event that marked the writer's return to the city after 19 years, Ms. Adhikari said: "You are most welcome to Bengal. Please come here whenever you want and as many times as you wish. Your safety is my responsibility."

Ms. Nasrin was exiled from Bangladesh in 1994 over her writings after which she started living in Europe and then in Kolkata. But she had to leave Kolkata in November 2007, when violence erupted in the city after some organisations called for action against the author over her books. She had blamed the Left Front government and the Trinamool Congress government for not allowing her to return to the city.

She reached Kolkata on Friday to attend the event at Rabindra Sadan.

The Chief Minister said Ms. Nasrin's return indicated that not only had the face of the government changed but the entire system too. "This Bengal is free from any barriers and chains. Every single pillar of the Constitution is safe here. We all have the righteous opportunity for freedom of speech," said Mr. Adhikari, welcoming the writer with a portrait of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the writer of national song *Vande Mataram*.

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari felicitates writer Taslima Nasrin in Kolkata on Saturday. ANI

Veteran BJP leader and former Tripura Governor Tathagata Roy also shared the stage with the writer.

"I have always questioned this city. Did I ever harm you [Kolkata]? I haven't come for any answer today. I have come back to Kolkata with tears in my eyes and also immense love in my heart. This was my dream for the last 19 years. History remembers who shut this door. Now, history will also remember who opened this door again," said Ms. Nasrin, expressing gratitude to the West Bengal Chief Minister for facilitating her return.

"I am thankful to the government. But my gratitude is not my allegiance to any party. I have not come here for any political party. I came here to express my voice over women's liberty and freedom of speech," the 63-year-old said.

‘Safe return of Sikhs from Iran shows govt.’s resolve’

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

The safe return of around 50 members of the Sikh community from Iran reflected India’s commitment to protecting every citizen across the world, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill said on Saturday.

Secure evacuation

Mr. Shergill, who had earlier urged the Indian government to facilitate the safe return of Sikhs stranded in Iran, in a statement expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Ministry of External Affairs for ensuring their secure evacuation during the West Asia crisis.

“The Modi government has once again demonstrated that India stands firmly by the side of every Indian, irrespective of where they live in the world. Under Operation Sindhu, the government rescued Indians caught in the West Asia crisis with remarkable efficiency,” Mr. Shergill said.

“Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s unwavering commitment to the Sikh community has been visible repeatedly, from ensuring the safe return of the ‘*saroops*’ (physical and sacred) of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib from Afghanistan, standing firmly with Punjabis during natural calamities, and now ensuring the safe evacuation of Sikhs from Iran,” he added.

Lajpal Singh Anand, a second/third-generation Iranian Sikh, has thanked the Indian government for ensuring the safe return of Sikh families, a statement by the BJP said.

The Sikh connection to Iran can be traced back to Guru Nanak Dev, when, on his fourth spiritual journey, he visited Mecca and returned via Iran to Kartarpur Sahib.

Students need your apology, not forgiveness: Cong. to PM

Leaked papers and cancelled exams destroy years of preparation overnight, says Rahul Gandhi; Jairam Ramesh hits out at Modi over Ram Temple donation ‘theft’, police action against protesters

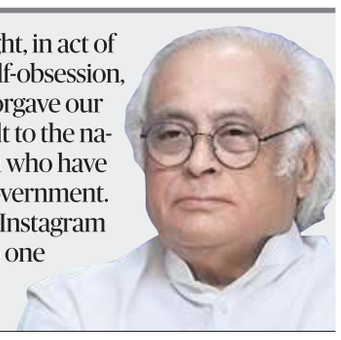
The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of “playing the victim card”, and said he owed an apology to the country’s youth instead of claiming to have forgiven them.

Students do not need the Prime Minister’s forgiveness, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said, but Mr. Modi owes them an apology.

“Nothing is more painful than seeing a parent grieve their child. Behind every young life lost is a family carrying pain that will never leave them - and serious questions about a broken education system,” Mr. Gandhi said in a post on X after meeting the parents of students who allegedly died by suicide in Chennai. Leaked papers and cancelled exams destroy years of preparation overnight, he said. “And the Prime Minister has the audacity to speak of ‘forgiving’ students. He has not met a single grieving parent. He has not sat with a single student whose future was stolen by a leaked paper,” Mr. Gandhi said.

> Late last night, in act of supreme self-obsession, the PM said that he forgave our youth. This is an insult to the nation and to our youth who have suffered under his government. The Prime Minister’s Instagram sabhas are fooling no one
>
> **JAIRAM RAMESH**
> Congress leader



Insult to the youth

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh also posted on X, taking exception to the PM’s reported remarks in an Instagram interaction in which Mr. Modi said he had forgiven the youth.

Describing the statement as “an act of supreme self-obsession”, Mr. Ramesh said that it was “an insult to the nation and to our youth”.

“The self-declared non-biological PM enjoys playing the victim card,” Mr. Ramesh said, alleging that Mr. Modi routinely attacked his predecessors and political opponents, and used Parliament and public speeches to “peddle lies” against them.

“He unleashes an army of foul-mouthed abusers both in Parliament and outside and gives them full protection. The entire nation is wanting the PM to apologise for the trauma inflicted on lakhs of youth through his paper leak-ridden NTA (National Testing Agency) and his Home Ministry-sanctioned brutality on student protesters,” Mr. Ramesh said.

The Congress leader also referred to the controversy surrounding the Ram Temple Trust in Ayodhya, describing it as “*chanda chori, aastha dhoka*” (donation theft, betrayal of trust), and said the Prime Minister should apologise for the issue.

“But late last night, in act of supreme self-obsession, the PM said that he forgave our youth. This is an insult to the nation and to our youth who have suffered under his government and are legitimately demanding an apology from him. The Prime Minister’s Instagram *sabhas* are fooling no one,” Mr. Ramesh said.

Dipke’s post

Cockroach Janta Party founder Abhijeet Dipke on Saturday said he expected Mr. Modi to apologise to the girls who were “brutally beaten up” by male police officers during the protest at Jantar Mantar.

“I think Modi*ji* will upload a new video tonight, so I hope that he will apologise.....he will apologise for the lathi-charge of July 20,” he said.

(With inputs from PTI)

Rahul, two other Opposition MPs booked over skit on Ram temple donation ‘theft’

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Police on Saturday registered a first information report (FIR) in Varanasi against Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and Members of Parliament Pappu Yadav and Awadhesh Prasad over a play that they staged on the Parliament premises in New Delhi on the alleged theft of donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

Based on a complaint from Jagadguru Balak Das, the head of Patalpuri Math and other seers, an FIR was registered in the Kolwali police station around 2 p.m. The petition alleged that deliberate and malicious acts were performed outside the Parliament House, intended to outrage religious feelings.

“Based on the complaint, a named FIR had been registered against Rajesh Ranjan alias Pappu Yadav, Awadhesh Prasad and Rahul Gandhi under Sections 196 (promoting enmity between different groups), 299 (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings), 302 (uttering words or making gestures with deliberate intent to wound religious feelings) and 3(5) (criminal acts committed by multiple people with a shared intention) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS),” a senior police officer told *The Hindu*.

> **The petition alleges deliberate acts outside Parliament intended to outrage religious feelings**

The petition said that the seer community was deeply hurt by what they described as the insult to *bhagwa* (saffron), which is considered a sacred colour in the Sanatana tradition.

In a related development, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders, including Lok Sabha MP Bansuri Swaraj, submitted a petition at the Parliament Street police station in New Delhi, demanding action against Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Yadav and Mr. Prasad for staging the skit.

Mr. Yadav, dressed in a saffron outfit, performed the skit along with other Opposition MPs in front of the Parliament complex on Friday to protest the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram temple in Ayodhya. In the skit, Mr. Gandhi appeared to put money in a box in front of Mr. Yadav, which the latter slipped into his pockets to indicate the alleged theft.

Uttar Pradesh Congress unit president Ajay Rai described the registration of FIR as a blatant misuse of government machinery by the people linked to the BJP and Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP). “The embezzlement at Ram Temple is a major issue, the whole world is aware of it, the BJP-VHP want to hide their corruption, hence the FIR has been registered. I ask why no FIR has been registered against Champat Rai Bansal [former general secretary of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra] in the Ayodhya case. On August 2, Congress workers will submit a petition to the local police for registration of an FIR in the Ayodhya case against such individuals and their protectors,” said Mr. Rai.

CM compromising Odisha’s interests in Mahanadi dispute: BJD

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

The Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Saturday accused Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi of compromising Odisha’s interests for political considerations in the handling of the Mahanadi river water dispute between the State and Chhattisgarh.

The BJD’s criticism came a day after Mr. Majhi returned to Bhubaneswar following a three-day visit to New Delhi. Briefing the media on his discussions regarding the dispute with Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil, Mr. Majhi reiterated that the dispute would be resolved within three months. Interests and rights of the people of Odisha, the welfare of farmers, and environmental protection were given priority during the discussion, he said.

Stating that a technical committee chaired by the Central Water Commission chairperson would submit its report to the Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal within the next three months, Mr. Majhi expressed hope that this would lead to a resolution of the issue.

Mohan Charan Majhi

However, the BJD said, “The State government must raise its voice to safeguard Odisha’s larger interests. It should immediately make public the details of the discussions held on resolving the Mahanadi water dispute.”

‘Arbitrary actions’

“The Odisha Chief Minister should rise above party interests and dedicate himself to the interests of Odisha. He should not compromise or sell out Odisha to please Chhattisgarh. Due to the arbitrary actions of the Chhattisgarh government, Odisha is being neglected,” said Debi Prasad Mishra, senior vice-president of the BJD, while addressing a press conference here on Saturday.

“Despite a ‘triple-engine government’, people of Odisha are being neglected due to a lack of coordination. The BJP government is misleading the public by deliberately not disclosing details of the discussions held during the recent meeting in Delhi..., while offering false assurances to the people,” charged Mr. Mishra.

“The Chhattisgarh government is not paying any heed to Odisha’s concerns. Despite repeated requests, Chhattisgarh has not agreed to install a new gauge near the Saradihi barrage, and the existing gauge is not functioning properly, leading to water management issues,” said Nayagarh BJD MLA Arun Kumar Sahu.

“Due to arbitrary actions of Chhattisgarh, rule-curve norms for the safety of the Hirakud reservoir are not being followed. Backflow water from Chhattisgarh is posing a threat to Hirakud and worsening flood conditions in Odisha,” the party said.

Stating that the Mahanadi is the lifeline of Odisha, with 16 districts depending on it, Mr. Sahu alleged, “The BJP, which came to power invoking Odia identity, has failed to protect this symbol of that identity. Despite the BJP governments at the Centre, in Odisha, and in Chhattisgarh, the dispute remains unresolved. The State government has surrendered itself to Chhattisgarh.”

Bankipur verdict will help gauge public perception in the aftermath of students’ protest

NEWS ANALYSIS

Varghese K. George

On Monday, August 3, the country will get a sense of the public mood, more specifically, in the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) strongholds such as Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. Three Assembly seats, one in each of these States, went to bypolls on July 30.

One seat to be watched closely is Bankipur in Bihar’s capital city, Patna. Bankipur is the heart of the heartland. The outcome in this seat will provide an indication of heartland politics in the aftermath of the student protests that recently rocked the country. The seat was vacated by Nitin Nabin, the BJP’s national president. Jan Suraj leader Prashant Kishor is contesting from the constituency, testing his caste-free, anti-BJP politics in one of the party’s strongest forts.

No BJP candidate has ever lost from this seat. Mr. Nabin himself won it four consecutive times, most recently in 2025. It is an urban constituency with a demographic composition that has long made the BJP appear invincible. Yet the party has been compelled to deploy all its might in this byelection. Hundreds of party leaders from within and outside Bihar have camped there, mobilising every resource at their disposal.

Women show their inked fingers after exercising their franchise in the Bankipur bypoll on July 30.

Bankipur is the first election since the BJP took over the Chief Minister’s post from Nitish Kumar. The party won the 2025 Assembly election with Mr. Kumar as its leader, and he continued to command a strong following among Other Backward Classes (OBC) voters within the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the State. Bankipur will test how the BJP fares when it is fully in command.

Bankipur has 3.79 lakh voters, of whom about 1.6 lakh are upper-caste Hindus, the core of BJP support in the Hindi heartland. There are around 40,000 Yadavs and roughly the same number of Muslims. Yadav and Muslim voters usually tend to support the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), which has never been in contention for much more than a lakh votes here. There are around 50,000 Dalits. The anti-Yadav social polarisation that has been a defining feature of Bihar elections for several years has overwhelmingly worked in the BJP’s favour in this constituency.

Apart from that, Bankipur has also become a hotspot of Hindutva mobilisation. Mr. Nabin began organising large Ram Navami processions in the constituency, which observers estimate drew nearly a lakh participants last March. Muharram processions, in which Muslims gather in large numbers, have also long been a feature of the constituency. Though the two do not occur at the same time, there has been a sense of competitiveness between them, helping to keep communal divisions politically salient over the years.

Mr. Kishor’s candidacy and campaign have challenged this pattern. A Brahmin himself, Mr. Kishor has advanced caste-free politics in the State, seeking votes on a development agenda. But identity politics still matters in Bihar. What became a concern for the BJP was that some caste arithmetic also appeared to shift in his favour. Since the RJD never stood a realistic chance in the constituency, and Mr. Kishor emerged as a viable alternative, a section of upper-caste voters appeared inclined towards him. Muslims found in him an attractive option, while non-Yadav OBCs seemed less enthusiastic about the NDA without Nitish Kumar.

Shah lauds Ajit Doval’s role in boosting India’s defence forces

Press Trust of India
PUNE

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday credited National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval with playing a pivotal role in transforming India’s defence capabilities over the past 12 years, saying the country’s armed forces have undergone a major shift in both defensive and offensive strength.

Addressing a programme after presenting the Lokmanya Tilak National Award 2026 to Mr. Doval here, Mr. Shah said the NSA has also played a significant role in strengthening India’s foreign policy and has provided advice for every decision taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding national security.

“In the last 12 years, the Narendra Modi government has transformed our armed forces’ security capabilities as well as their offensive capabilities, and Doval *Saheb* has made a pivotal contribution to this transformation,” Mr. Shah said.

He noted that the first appointment Mr. Modi made after assuming office in 2014 was that of Mr. Doval as the NSA.

Mr. Shah hailed Mr. Doval’s career in the Intelligence Bureau, crediting him with laying the foundation for the Multi-Agency Centre, which serves as the backbone of internal security.

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
International School of Textiles & Management (SVPISTM)
Peelamedu, Coimbatore-641004, Tamil Nadu

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

SVPISTM invites Expressions of Interest (EoI) from qualified and experienced individual Consultants / Firms and Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) for empanelment to provide technical, advisory, research, project management, training, industry-linked programmes and other professional support services in the field of Textiles & Management Education. For further details, please visit the website **www.svpistm.ac.in. Last date for submission of EoI application:** up to **14.30 Hrs. on 17.08.2026** -Director

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF TELANGANA LIMITED

e-TENDER NOTICE

Specification No. CE/IT-Spec No. e-itwt-01/26, **Description of Service:** Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) for Computers, Printers, Laptops etc., and Local Area Network (LAN) at Vidyut Soudha, Khairatabad and ERP Project Office, CTI, Erragadda, Hyderabad for 2 years period from 01.10.2026 to 30.09.2028. Tenderer can download the tender schedule from e-procurement market place i.e., https://tender.telangana.gov.in. For, further clarification if any contact Details: 040-23396000 Extn. 3394/3579/3611. Email: ce.it@tgtransco.com

Sd/-
R.O. No. : 375-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/2026-27 Dt: 01.08.2026 CHIEF ENGINEER/IT

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS, TIRUPATI
MARKETING DEPARTMENT e- PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

e-Tenders were invited for supply of **1)** 7,00,000 Nos of Cotton uppers **2)** 7,00,000 Nos of Cotton Blouse Pieces **3)** 40,000 Nos of Pattu Sariga Dupattas (Silk x Silk) **4)** 600 Nos of Pattu Sarees (Pure Zari) **5)** 7,200 Kgs of Compounded Asafoetida (Bandhani Hing) Powder **6)**1,80,000 Pairs of Bio-Degradable (Compostable) Hand Gloves **7)** 6,25,000 Nos. of Buttermilk Sachets (180 ml each packet) **8)** 1,80,000 Kgs of Goduma Ravva **9)** 2,00,000 Nos of Appy Apple Juice Tetra pack (125ml) **10)** 2,50,000 Nos of Britania Good Day Cashew Biscuits (Rs.5/-), 2,00,000 Nos. of Parle Monaco Salted Biscuits (Rs. 10/-)and 1,50,000 Nos. of Sun feast Glucose Biscuits (Rs.5/) through e-tenders to the Marketing Department, T.T.Devasthanams,. For Tender notice and tender details log on to the web site http:// www.tirumala.org and https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in. For further details contact phone numbers: 0877-2264079, 2264555, FAX No: 0877-2264554.

TTD-40021(31)/1/2026-PRO SEC(Adv,No,138),Date: 01.08.2026 EXECUTIVE OFFICER

COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTURE
(An Autonomous Statutory Authority of Government of India, constituted under the Architects Act, 1972)

Ref. No. CA/15/AE/PN-2026/001 August 02, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

BEWARE OF QUACKS – FALSELY POSING AS "ARCHITECT"

Attention: General Public, Government Departments, Municipal Corporations, Development Authorities, Educational Institutions, Builders, Developers, Consultants, and all concerned.

The Council of Architecture hereby informs all stakeholders that only persons possessing recognised qualifications and registered as an Architect with the Council under the provisions of the Architects Act, 1972 are legally entitled to use the title and style of "Architect" throughout the territory of India. The Architects registered with the Council do not require any further registration with any Local Body/ Authority to practice the profession of Architecture.

Any person (individual/ legal entity) soliciting Architectural Work/ Services by falsely posing/ mispresenting as an “Architect” or using the title and style of "Architect", shall be liable to be punished in terms of Sections 36 and 37 of the Architects Act, 1972 and relevant provisions of Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita 2023.

The Council calls upon all the unregistered persons to immediately cease and desist from falsely posing/ misrepresenting as Architects and/or from using the title and style of “Architect” for soliciting Architectural work/ services from General Public/ Government Authorities, Developers, etc. in contravention of Sections 36 and 37 of the Architects Act, 1972. Any person found violating the provisions of the Architects Act, 1972 shall be prosecuted before the Competent Court in accordance with law.

Accordingly, General Public and all Stakeholders are advised to:

- Verify the registration status of an Architect through the Council's website at www.coa.gov.in before engaging his or her professional services.
- Report any instance of unauthorised use or misuse of the title and style of "Architect" at website of the Council on the tab “Complaints on Misuse of Title “Architect”.

The identity of the complainant shall be kept confidential, subject to applicable law(s).

Issued in Public Interest. Registrar

INBRIEF

Varsha Ashok Aglawe first woman GSI D-G in 176 years

The Geological Survey of India on Friday said Varsha Ashok Aglawe has assumed charge as its 54th Director General, becoming the first woman to head the country's premier geoscientific organisation in its 176-year history. Ms. Aglawe, a palaeontologist with over three decades of experience, succeeds Asit Saha. She joined GSI in 1992 after a stint with the Indian Bureau of Mines. On taking charge, she said GSI would align its programmes with the government's priorities on critical mineral exploration and mineral security. She also stressed the need to promote advanced geoscientific research, natural hazard studies, and capacity building for young geoscientists. PTI

Counterfeit military combat uniform racket busted

A joint operation by the Army's Intelligence units and the Rajasthan Police has uncovered a counterfeit military combat uniform racket in Rajasthan's Sriganganagar district, leading to the seizure of nearly 1,000 metres of unauthorised Army-pattern combat cloth. According to the Army, the operation was launched after a consignment of counterfeit combat cloth was seized in Bareilly in June this year. The investigation identified a local firm in Sriganganagar as a key link in the supply chain, allegedly distributing counterfeit Army-pattern combat cloth to local shops as well as Lalgarh Jattan, Suratgarh, and other nearby markets.

Delhi HC restrains misuse of Yuvraj Singh's identity

The Delhi High Court has granted interim protection to former India cricketer Yuvraj Singh, restraining individuals and online entities from using his name, image, voice, likeness, and other personality attributes without his consent, particularly using Artificial Intelligence (AI), deepfakes, and other digital technologies. Justice Jyoti Singh passed the order in a suit filed by Mr. Singh alleging widespread misuse of his personality rights through AI-generated images, fabricated videos, and unauthorised sale of merchandise bearing his name and likeness. The court noted that his personality attributes deserve legal protection from unauthorised use.

Ladakh Police registers zero FIR over video against Shah

Ladakh Police on Saturday registered a zero FIR against a social media influencer over the circulation of a Facebook video in which allegedly objectionable remarks have been made against Union Home Minister Amit Shah, officials said. The case has been registered against Yogesh Parmar under sections 197(1)(d) (acts against national integration), 352 (insult to provoke breach of peace) and 353(1) (public mischief) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) based on a written complaint received at the Leh police station, the officials said. The offences carry punishments ranging from two to three years of imprisonment, along with a fine, or both. PTI

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

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Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

Over 3,000 serving officers move SC against CAPF Act

Petitioners include gallantry awardees, women officers; they say the law makes it harder for CAPF cadre officers to be promoted to leadership positions as it allows more IPS officers on deputation

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The CAPFs comprise the Central Reserve Police Force, Border Security Force, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, Sashastra Seema Bal, and the Central Industrial Security Force. FILE PHOTO

More than 3,000 Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) Group A officers have moved the Supreme Court to challenge the Central Armed Police Force (General Administration) Act, 2026. The petitioners include gallantry award winners and women officers.

The Act, passed by the Parliament on April 2 and notified on April 9, will make it harder for CAPF cadre officers to be promoted through the ranks to leadership positions. The legislation was enacted to effectively negate a May 2025 Supreme Court ruling that directed the exact opposite action: to reduce Indian Police Service (IPS) officers in the CAPF leadership and make it easier for CAPF officers to reach top positions.

The law states that in all CAPFs, 50% of the total posts in the rank of Inspector General, at least 67% posts in the rank of Additional Director General, and all posts in the rank of Special Director General and Director General must be filled by IPS officers on deputation.

Until now, such postings were done based on executive orders. The practice of reserving 50% of Deputy Inspector General (DIG) posts for Group A CAPF officers also finds no place in the Act, paving the way for a higher percentage of IPS deputed officers filling those posts.

The petitions in the top court seek to declare Sections 3 and 4 of the CAPF Act as "*ultra vires* [or beyond the powers] of the Constitution of India."

Section 3 pertains to "regulation of recruitment and conditions of service," notwithstanding any judgment, decree or order of any court, and specifies the percentage of posts reserved for IPS officers on deputation. Section 4 gives the Union government the power to amend the First and Second Schedules of the Act through a notification when it considers such action necessary or expedient in the public interest.

Previous ruling

The petitioners have sought directions for the implementation of the Supreme Court's judgment dated May 23, 2025, in *Sanjay Prakash v. Union of India*, and a declaration that Higher Administrative Grade posts in all CAPFs be filled from among eligible executive cadre officers of the respective forces, rather than exclusively through deputation.

On May 23, 2025, the Supreme Court had ruled that Group A Executive Cadre officers of CAPFs are Organised Group A Services for all purposes. Besides progressively reducing the IPS deputation in CAPFs upto the level of I-Gs in the next two years, the court asked for a time bound review of cadre and service rules within six months.

The Ministry of Home Affairs challenged the judgment, but on October 28, 2025, the court dismissed the review petition, making the ruling final.

After several retired CAPF officials filed a contempt petition in the court, the MHA introduced a Bill in Parliament in March, which effectively negated that judgement.

The CAPFs comprise the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

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Real Creator IAS Edition https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0F

Terror suspect had plans for violence at Delhi protest: STF

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

STF personnel escort suspected terrorist Hamim Mondal in Bardhaman on Friday. PTI

The West Bengal Special Task Force (STF) on Saturday said a terror suspect arrested on Friday, identified as Hamim Mondal, had plans for subversive action during protests by the Cockroach Janta Party in Delhi. The police have also picked up his associate, Arpita Sarkar, from Sahebganj in Jharkhand and transferred her to Kolkata.

"Pakistani outfits were asking him to arrange a police uniform and infiltrate the recent student protest in Delhi's Jantar Mantar and engage in violence," STF Inspector-General Gaurav Sharma said.

According to STF officials, he was also targeting Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari, as well as other politicians and multiple police officers. Mr. Sharma said the suspect was tasked with studying the Chief Minister's movements to find vulnerabilities in his security.

Case of brainwashing

"Hamim had relationships with multiple Pakistani outfits. There are many more on our radar who we are yet to arrest," Mr. Sharma added. He said that this was a case of brainwashing and radical propaganda.

Mr. Mondal is suspected to have links with the Pakistan-based Shehzad Bhatti gang and other terror organisations, Mr. Sharma said. The police have recovered gadgets and other documents from the suspects and are analysing them. They are also analysing bank account transactions and encrypted messages to understand their targets and plans.

Mr. Mondal was arrested on Friday, by a six-member team of the STF. He was produced in court and has been sent to 14 days' police custody.

Mr. Mondal was allegedly using Ms. Sarkar to honey-trap and abduct a State Minister's son from Howrah when the police received information about their activities, which brought them under the scanner.

"West Bengal has become the haven of terrorism, and our police force and our Chief Minister have already stated that we will crack down on all kinds of nuisance, terrorism, and criminals," Minister Shankar Ghosh told the media on Saturday.

IITs, IIMs to begin voluntary drug testing as part of admission; results to be confidential

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

Fight against drugs: The initiative is part of the government's broader efforts to tackle narcotics addiction in the country. K.V.S. GIRI

Under directions from the Union government, higher educational institutions across India, starting with IITs and IIMs this year, have begun suggesting that incoming students submit a voluntary urine test for drugs such as amphetamines, cocaine, marijuana, benzodiazepines, and phencyclidine (PCP) with their admission paperwork.

According to government officials and admission documents for incoming students, the test is voluntary and is to be taken on the understanding that it will be kept confidential, is anonymised, and will not influence the student's admission.

This initiative by the Education Ministry's Department of Higher Education is part of the Union government's broader efforts to tackle narcotics in the country, as outlined in the Narcotics Control Bureau's 'Vision Document on Narcotics Control 2026-29' – a key strategy of which is to screen around 10 lakh students across 170 centrally-funded higher education institutes for drugs in the next three years in a phased manner. The vision document has characterised the misuse of psychoactive substances among students in colleges and universities as "a growing health concern".

This comes just as the government is finalising the questions for its next and most expansive yet survey of substance users across India, the results for which will be expected over the next few years. Further, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to launch the 'Nasha Mukt Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan' on Sunday, which is meant to "inspire youth to stay away from substance abuse".

For counselling only

Government officials told *The Hindu* that the basic guidelines for drug testing of college and university students were provided by the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi. Under this framework, the test is meant to be strictly voluntary and confidential, cannot result in any "negative repercussions on the students taking it whatsoever", and should be kept for counselling purposes only.

A document issued to incoming B.Tech students at the Indian Institute of Technology in Goa has noted that the test is voluntary and confidential in nature, and that the Ministry of Education had designed it "primarily for preventive health and support". It adds that any findings from the submitted tests will not affect "academic status, admission, or hostel eligibility" and "shall not lead to disciplinary measures, suspension, or any form of expulsion".

This drug screening programme is being implemented in three phases, with IITs, IIMs, and one central university starting this year under the first phase.

Govt. releasing its share of disaster funds to seven States

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Union government has approved the advance release of its share of the State Disaster Response Fund of ₹2,117.85 crore to support seven flood-affected States during the ongoing monsoon season, an official statement said on Saturday.

Of the affected States, Himachal Pradesh, Odisha, and Nagaland have already received the first instalment of the Central share for the financial year 2026-27.

"To ensure timely availability of funds for relief operations, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has approved the advance release of the second instalment of the Central share of SDRF to Himachal Pradesh and Odisha," the statement said.

Himachal Pradesh has been sanctioned ₹193.95 crore and Odisha is to get ₹500 crore as their second instalments.

The advance release of first instalments has been approved for Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, and Maharashtra by relaxing documentary requirements under applicable guidelines, considering the urgent need for resources for relief measures, the statement said.

The assistance approved for Arunachal Pradesh amounts to ₹44.55 crore, for Assam ₹379.35 crore, for Gujarat ₹500 crore, and for Maharashtra ₹500 crore.

"With this approval, a total of ₹2,117.85 crore has been made available to the flood-affected States to strengthen their ongoing relief and response measures," the official statement added.

CBI files ₹1,816.22-crore EPFO fraud case against Reliance

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a case against Reliance Capital Limited (RCL) for alleged EPFO investment fraud involving ₹1,816.22 crore, the agency said on Saturday.

The First Information Report (FIR) is based on a complaint received by the CBI from the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), Ministry of Labour & Employment, against the company, its former chairman Anil D. Ambani, unknown public servants and others, it said.

The funds involve ₹1,007.55 crore, along with an interest liability of ₹808.67 crore. The agency has invoked provisions alleging criminal conspiracy, cheating, criminal breach of trust and criminal misconduct.

"It is alleged in the complaint that, during 2013 and 2014, Reliance Capital Limited (RCL) issued secured Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs), in which the EPFO invested ₹2,500 crore through four portfolio managers including Reliance Capital Asset Management Limited," said the CBI.

The NCDs were due to mature during 2023 and 2024. The accused persons indulged in fraudulent transactions and diversion of funds, resulting in the default in redemption of the NCDs by RCL.

A Spokesperson for Mr. Ambani said, "The FIR registered by the CBI pertains to Reliance Capital Limited. Mr. Ambani served as a Non-Executive Director/Chairman of its Board from 2005 until November 2021, when the Reserve Bank of India superseded the Board of Directors of the company and appointed an Administrator. Mr. Ambani denies any wrongdoing, whatsoever, and reserves all rights available to him in law."

More choices for test centres among key changes in NEET-PG

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

In a series of changes for the NEET-PG to be held on August 30, the Centre will expand the choice of test locations, give candidates more time to plan travel to their examination cities, and give them more time per question in the test.

The reforms are aimed at making the process more convenient for NEET-PG candidates, according to the Union Health Ministry. The Ministry said that Aadhaar-based authentication has been introduced during both the application process and on the examination day.

Under the new system, candidates will indicate three state preferences for their examination centre, with their correspondence state being the mandatory first preference, enabling allotment of centres closer to their place of residence, the Ministry said. Candidates will be informed of their allotted test city nearly three weeks before the exam, giving them more time to plan travel, it said.

Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda on Saturday reviewed the preparedness for NEET-PG 2026.

India's balancing act to boost China, U.S. investments, trade

NEWS ANALYSIS

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The Centre has over the last few months been walking a tightrope between maintaining strategic objectives and encouraging more trade and investment from the U.S. and China

This has seen gradual relaxations in India's many long-held policies.

Data compiled by the Centre for Digital Economy Policy (C-DEP) and shared with *The Hindu* shows one arena in which this balancing act is playing out is in the manner in which India uses anti-dumping duties.

The usual procedure is for local industry to petition the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGTR) for an investigation.

If DGTR finds dumping is taking place, it recommends to Finance Ministry either imposing an anti-dumping duty or extending a duty for a further period of time. The data from C-DEP shows the DGTR made 1,052 such recommendations to the Ministry of Finance between 1991 and 2020. Of these, the Ministry had rejected five.

However, since 2020, this changed. The data shows while the average annual number of recommendations has been largely the same, rejection rates rose to between 50-62% in 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23. It then fell to 20.8% in 2023-24, 6.1% in 2024-25 before rising again to 41.5% in 2025-26 up to December 31, 2025 and China made up the bulk of the rejections since 2000.

"China has higher share of rejections because it also has a higher share of investigations and recommendations against it," a top government official said.

Rising rejections

The status of anti-dumping duty recommendations made by the DGTR to the Ministry of Finance

Period	Number of recommendations			% rejection
	Accepted	Rejected	Total	
1991- 2020	1047	5	1052	0.5
2020-21	21	25	46	54.3
2021-22	24	34	58	58.6
2022-23	13	21	34	61.8
2023-24	19	5	24	20.8
2024-25	31	2	33	6.1
2025-26 (Up to December 31)	24	17	41	41.5

Source: Centre for Digital Economy Policy

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Changing imports

This increase in rejections of anti-dumping duty recommendations coincides with the focus shifting from finished products to intermediate goods.

"Most of the goods imported from China are capital goods, intermediate goods and raw materials used for making finished products which are also exported out of India," Commerce Minister Jitin Prasada told the Lok Sabha.

However, this comes with political sensitivities.

"There is a mindset among those who advise the government that restricting any kind of import is protectionist," Ashwani Mahajan, National Co-Convener, Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) (an RSS affiliate) told *The Hindu*.

"But in my opinion, this mindset is wrong because anti-dumping duty is a remedy, not a protection."

To boost investments, India made several other changes to China policies.

In 2020, the Government amended the FDI Policy to mandate investment from firms in countries sharing a land border with India can be done only after Centre's approval.

In March 2026, the Union Cabinet approved allowing investments from firms with up to 10% Chinese ownership to enter India.

Then, the Centre in July allowed four firms with Chinese ownership or links to bid for projects tendered by Indian government in the power sector.

To help Indian firms export more, the Centre diluted its stance on FDI by e-commerce companies.

India also won lower tariffs from the U.S. The draft report of the probe released in June proposed 12.5% tariff on India.

Soon after, the Union government notified a ban on the import of goods made using forced labour.

It resulted in the U.S. imposing a final tariff of 10% on India.

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INBRIEF

RBI says $40.82 bn mobilised via swap facility till July 31

The Reserve Bank said its concessional swap facility, introduced to encourage foreign currency inflows, attracted $40.82 billion till July 31. The swap facility has seen avid interest and attracted steady forex inflows since June 8, the central bank said in a statement. With a view to strengthening India's balance of payments, the RBI announced a series of steps, including facility for offering concessional swaps for fresh FCNR(B) deposits, OFCB and ECB inflows on June 5. PTI

Centre releases additional instalment of tax devolution

The Finance Ministry said the Centre released additional instalment of tax devolution to State governments amounting to ₹1.09 lakh crore, which is in addition to the normal monthly amount. Currently, 41% of taxes collected by the Centre is devolved in 14 instalments among States during a fiscal year. "The Union government has released additional instalment of tax devolution to state governments amounting to ₹1,09,019 crore on 1st August 2026," the Ministry said. PTI

Voda Idea gets ₹26.8 crore DoT notice for alleged default

The Telecom Department has issued a notice to Vodafone Idea for payment of ₹26.83 crore in liquidated damages, citing alleged default in minimum rollout obligations in respect of spectrum allocated under auctions of 2022, the telco said on Saturday. The company said it is reviewing the notice received on Friday (July 31) and evaluating next steps. Vodafone Idea, however, said there is no financial or other impact on operations. PTI

Automobile wholesales accumulate momentum

Maruti's passenger car wholesales grew 42% to 1,03,456 units while utility vehicles sales rose 49% to 78,851 units; Tata Motors' wholesales rose 59% despite disruption at Sanand due to flooding

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, India's largest Passenger Vehicles (PV) company in July reported wholesales of 2,41,421 units, up 34% YoY including domestic sales of 2,00,123 units, up 42%.

Passenger car wholesales grew 42% YoY to 1,03,456 units while utility vehicles (UV) sales surged 49% to 78,851 units.

Hyundai Motor India Ltd. reported total sales of 75,360 up, 25.4% YoY, it's highest ever monthly volume since inception.

All auto firms logged growth.

During the month HMIL achieved its highest-ever monthly export sales in over 100 months.

Tarun Garg, MD & CEO, said, "Achieving 75,360 total sales, up 25.4% YoY, our highest-ever monthly volume since inception underscores the immense trust consumers place in brand Hyundai."

Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd. recorded sales of 63,760 units in the domestic and international markets in July, up 59%.

This was achieved despite temporary disruptions at the Sanand facility due to rainfall and floods

In electric vehicles (EVs) the company crossed 15,000 EV wholesales in a month for the first time, alongside record-high Vahan registrations.

Mahindra wholesales

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. (M&M) reported overall auto wholesales of 1,03,860 units up 26% YoY.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) reported wholesales of 32,516 units (32,575). Kia wholesales of 28,200 units registered 27.4% growth.

"The performance reflects the continued trust of customers and strong acceptance of Kia's diverse product portfolio," said Atul Sood, senior VP, sales and marketing, Kia India.

Cotton output to dip in 2025-2026 season

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

Production of cotton during the current marketing season that commenced on October 1, 2025 is estimated to be seven lakh bales less than the previous year.

The Committee on Cotton Production and Consumption that met in Mumbai on July 29 expected the production this season to be 290.24 lakh bales of 170 kg each, while the production in 2024-2025 was 297.24 lakh bales.

Consumption of cotton by large-scale and MSME textile mills, which are the main consumers of cotton in the country, is likely to be 320 lakh bales while it was just about 306 lakh bales last season.

Cotton consumption is likely at 320 lakh bales this season.

While cotton exports so far are six lakh bales less than the 2024-2025 season, imports have increased by by almost 15 lakh bales.

"We expect the cotton season to end in September with nearly 60 lakh bales of import," said chairman of the Southern India Mills' Association Durai Palanisamy.

Record green power reduces coal's share

Reuters
NEW DELHI

The share of coal in India's power-generation mix dropped to its lowest in a year in July as renewable-power generation surged to a record high, government data showed.

Renewable power jumped to 20% of India's mix, the data showed. It was 36.25 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) in July, up 30% from the same month last year.

Coal-power generation fell to 65.7% in July from 69% in June, according to *Reuters* calculations of daily data from the regulator, Grid-India.

The rise in India's clean-energy generation comes as solar and wind output exceeded 100 gigawatts for the first time and accounted for a record 42.8% of India's electricity supply July 13, government data showed.

Most of the peak power demand is happening during daytime where there is increased contribution from solar, said Manoj Kumar, an analyst with the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

India to be biggest stop for Japanese capital: Sikka

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

India will emerge as the biggest destination for Japanese capital in the next 10 years, with financial services, technology, startups and social ventures in the country likely to see an increasing flow of funds, forecasts Sundeep Sikka, chairman of the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) and MD & CEO of Nippon Life India Asset Management, an arm of a Japanese insurer.

He said Japan's huge savings pool and India's consistent, sustained growth made the two nations ideal partners for long-term investments.

Huge capital

"Japan has huge capital; however, it doesn't have growth opportunities within the country. India has both growth and great focus on entrepreneurship. Unless we do something really wrong, India will become the biggest destination of capital flow from Japan," he said.

Sundeep Sikka

The Indo-Japanese investment relationship was entering a new phase, moving beyond traditional focus on manufacturing and infrastructure into financial services and the services sector, Mr. Sikka noted. Bilateral trade currently stood at $40 billion.

"Traditionally, most Japanese investments came into manufacturing and construction. Now, the financial sector and services sector have started opening up. I often receive requests from Japanese firms exploring connections with Indian SMEs in the areas of chemicals, healthcare, technology, etc."

Japan invested about $8 billion in India last year, and this trend would continue as Japanese investors were exploring long-term growth opportunities outside their ageing economy, he said, highlighting Japanese businesses planned for generations instead of focusing on quarterly earnings and quick exits.

SIP boom

India's booming systematic investment plan (SIP) culture fundamentally reshaped the equity market by creating a strong domestic buffer against foreign capital outflows, said Mr. Sikka.

SEBI fines Zee ₹1.5-crore for corporate misgovernance

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) penalised Zee Entertainment Ltd. along with promoters Subhadh Chandra and Punit Goenka ₹1.5 crore and barred them from the stock market for a year for 'diverting company assets to benefit promoter-linked entities.'

In SEBI's final order, the quasi-judicial authority N. Murugan found promoter-owned entity Essel Group pledged ZEEL's Hyderabad property to borrow ₹726 crore from IHFL and used the funds without board and audit panel approval."

SEBI said Mr.Goenka failed to prevent the use of the asset or disclose it to the Board, the Audit Committee and statutory auditors, despite having knowledge of the transaction.

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Online tenders are invited for TN-25(RVU2627GLOB00872) Procurement of Desktop Computers, Laptops and Single-Function Laser Printers for RVUN Jaipur Offices, TN-26(RVU2627GLOB00873) Procurement of Grinding Media i.e. 3 sets of Grinding Roller Tyres and 3 sets of Grinding Track Segments for roller mill ZGM 133G-I for KaTPP & TN-27(RVU2627GLOB00874) for Centralized Procurement of Watermist & Compressed Air Foam (CAF) High Pressure Fire Extinguisher of Various Types/Capacity for RVUNL Power Stations. Tender details are available on **http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** (for e-tender), **www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvunl & www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in.**
Raj.Samwad/C/26/8227 RVUN/PR-4435 Superintending Engineer (TD-II)

कार्यालय नगरपरिषद् चूरू (राजस्थान)
क्रमांक : न.प./सफाई शाखा/2026–27/23660073 दिनांक :– 28.07.2026
ई–निविदा सूचना 46 वर्ष 2026–27
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ADMISSION NOTIFICATION (2026-27)
Applications are invited from the eligible candidates of **AP/ National Level for the Academic Year 2026-27 for admission** into the following courses:
Group-A : M.Sc. Nursing, M.P.T, M.Sc. Allied Health Sciences, M.Sc. Clinical Psychology, Medical Physics Internship programme, Master in Hospital Management and Post Basic Dip. in Nursing Programmes.
Group-B : NC Gupta Pulmonary Fellow - 02 seats.
Group-C : Post Doctoral Fellowship in Interventional Radiology - 01 seat
Group-D : Certificate courses for Medical Graduates:
(a) Emergency Medicine - 04 seats.
(b) Basics of Dialysis Management - 02 seats.
NOTE : The vacancies are offered after fulfilling the candidates from AP State. For more details and application forms visit **https://svimstpt.ap.nic.in. APPLICATION LAST DATE: 05-09-2026.**
DONATE LIBERALLY TO "SVIMS GENERAL DONATION SCHEME" SVIMS ACCOUNT NO.: 62121045670, SBI, IFSC CODE: SBIN0020926, "80G BENEFITS AVAILABLE TO THE SCHEME"
Roc.No.AS/36/Admissions/SVIMS/2026, Dt:29-07-2026 **DIRECTOR-CUM-V.C.**

कार्यालय नगरपालिका रामगंजमण्डी जिला-कोटा (राज0)
क्रमांक :- न.पा.रा./2026/605 दिनांक :- 29/07/2026
ई-निविदा-सूचना 07/2026-27
नगरपालिका रामगंजमंडी द्वारा कार्यो हेतु पालिका में पंजीकृत एवं विभागों में AA, A, B, Class एवं उपयुक्त श्रेणी संवेदको से लिफाफा पद्धति/ई–निविदा पद्धति से ऑनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। कार्य की निविदा बेचे जाने की दिनांक 30.07.2026 से 19.08.2026 एवं अपलोड करने की दिनांक 30.07.2026 से 19.08.2026 सांय 6 बजे तक। ई.एम.डी./निविदा शुल्क/प्रोसेसिंग फीस प्राप्त करने की तिथि : 20.08.2026 समय प्रातः 11.00 बजे तक। तकनीकी बिड खोलने कि दिनांक 20.08.2026 को दोप. 2.00 बजे बाद रहेगी। वित्तीय बिड तकनीकी परीक्षण उपरांत खोली जावेगी। निविदा शर्ते आदि सम्पूर्ण विवरण **http//sppp.raj.nic.in, http//eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** देखी जा सकती है।
NIB – DLB2627A5148
UBN – DLB2627WSOB12420
राज.संवाद/सी/26/8204 अधिशाषी अधिकारी नगरपालिका रामगंजमण्डी

कार्यालय अधिशाषी अभियन्ता जलग्रहण विकास एवं भू–संरक्षण खण्ड दूदू जिला जयपुर
पंचायत समिति परिसर दूदू, जयपुर
E-mail:-eewdsc.dudu@rajasthan.gov.in
क्रमांकः– 734–740 दिनांकः 28.07.2026
ई–निविदा सूचना संख्या– 06/2026-27
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से पी.एम.के.एस.वाई. 2.0 योजना के अर्न्तगत **जिला जयपुर** के ब्लॉक दूदू में बकरा, बकरी वितरण हेतु उपर्युक्त श्रेणी में स्वीकृत विभिन्न सामग्री आपूर्ति हेतु एवं दोष निवारण, के लिए Manufacture/direct importers/Authorized Dealer/ केन्द्र / राज्य सरकार/विश्वविद्यालय/आईसीएआर के संस्थान एवं राजकीय उपक्रम द्वारा संचालित राजकीय फर्मों/रजिस्टर्ड फर्म, जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के विभिन्न सक्षम श्रेणी के संवेदकों के समकक्ष हो, से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई–टेण्डरिंग प्रक्रिया द्वारा दिनांक 29.07.2026 से दिनांक 07.08.2026 को सांय 02:00 बजे तक ऑनलाईन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती है। दिनांक 07.08.2026 को सांय 4:00 बजे कार्यालय में खोली जावेगी। निविदा का विस्तृत विवरण "https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in", "https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in" एवं विभागीय वेबसाईट "www.watershed.gov.in" पर देखा जा सकता है।
NIB CODE :- **WSC2627A0737**
UBN NO:-
1- **WSC2627GLOB01264**
DIPR/C/13293/2026
(प्रीति सुमन मट्टू)
अधिशाषी अभियन्ता
जलग्रहण विकास एवं भू–संरक्षण
पंचायत समिति दूदू जयपुर।

JAIPUR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Indira Circle, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, Jaipur-302004
S. No : JDA/EE & TA to Dir. Engg.-I/2026-27/D- Dated : 31.07.2026
NOTICE INVITING BID
NIB No.: EE & TA to Dir. Engg.-I/18/2026-27
Bids are invited from interested bidders for following works :-

S. No.	UBN No.	Cost of Work (Lacs)	Nature of Work	Last Date
1	JDA2627WLOB00248	4601.47	Sewerage work	18.09.2026

Other particulars of the respective bid may be visited on Procurement Portal website www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and www.jda.rajasthan.gov.in.
Raj.Samwad/C/26/8304 **Executive Engineer & TA to Dir.Engg-I**

APPOINTMENT

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN))
(Dept. of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India)
Muttukadu, East Coast Road, Kovalam (P.O), Chennai - 603 112.
Tamil Nadu – India. Phone: 044 – 27472046, 27472113, 27472423.
website: www.niepmd.nic.in. Email: niepmd@gov.in, director@niepmd.tn.nic.in
~ (Re-Accredited by NAAC B+2nd Cycle)~
Manpower Engagement Notification (Temporary) No.4, 5, 6 / 2026
(Online Application only)
NIEPMD (D) invites online applications from the eligible candidates for the following contractual engagement at NIEPMD (D), Chennai and CRCs and Extension Centre, Chengalpet.

Centre / Organization	Posts
CDEIC, NIEPMD(D), Chennai	1. Audiologist & Speech Language Pathologist 2. Physiotherapist
CRC-A&N Islands	1. Assistant Professor (Clinical Psychology) 2. Lecturer (Physiotherapy), 3. Lecturer (Occupational Therapy) 4. Clinical Assistant (ST)
CRC Madurai	1. Lecturer (Occupational Therapy) 2. Accountant
CRC Karaikal, Puducherry	1. Accountant
Chengalpet Extension Centre	1. Clinical Assistant (PT)
CDEIC - CRC, Madurai	1. Occupational Therapist 2. Audiologist and Speech Language Pathologist 3. Special Educator

The aspiring applicants fulfilling the eligibility criteria in all respect can submit their application through online mode. The online registration of application is made available on NIEPMD(D) website, Chennai official link i.e. **https://niepmd.nic.in/notice-category/recruitments/** For all other details, terms and conditions, please log on to the website **www.niepmd. nic.in**
Sd/-
DIRECTOR

Europe pioneers 'firefighter donkeys' to prevent wildfires

Sambavi Parthasarathy

As firefighters in France and Spain continue to tackle raging wildfires that have forced thousands of people to evacuate, communities farther from the frontlines are turning to donkeys.

The Tivissa Donkey Firefighters and El Burrito Feliz, two grassroots initiatives in Spain, are using these equines to reduce the risk of forest fires by letting them merely be themselves. Because when they are, they feed on dry grass and scrubland, thus curtailing the amount of flammable vegetation, especially in high-risk areas.

While grazing does not replace other traditional wildfire prevention methods like the use of machinery to create firebreaks, early detection, and manually clearing land, the donkey solution has emerged as a cheaper and effective way to slow the speed and reduce the intensity of fires.

Joan Cedo Sans, the founder of Tivissa Donkey Firefighters, which rehabilitates and redesignates donkeys as 'firefighters', told *The Hindu* that the initiative is a win-win for everyone involved: the animals, the people, and the environment. He said he preferred donkeys over other grazing animals due to their greater appetite and better sturdiness. Since donkeys weigh more than, say, goats, he also said they tread harder and thus better break the connected layer of dry foliage that fires often require to spread. The trails left by donkeys also help firefighting teams find paths as they work to contain fires during emergencies.

Founded in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic with just three abandoned donkeys, Tivissa today houses a herd of 62. "All the animals came from abandoned and difficult situations. When we rescue a donkey, we need two or three months or maybe four to rehabilitate them psychologically and physically, or sometimes for a period as long as 18 months."

Such initiatives emphasise how important it is to revive traditional methods and co-exist with animals, but they don't come easy. Mr. Sans said, "It's so difficult at this moment to have or create more projects like Tivissa Donkey because we have a lot of administrative challenges. All the animals have to be identified with a passport and moving them requires a lot of paperwork. It's easier because we've been doing this for more than six years but if somebody wants to start, it's difficult because of the bureaucratic problems."

While governments continue to ramp up efforts to contain the fires, Europe can also count on a herd of donkeys chomping away to prevent the next one.

Real Creator IAS Edition https://t.me/+8B98m5PQCF84MmQ9

New private physics institute hinges success on 'less is more'

Lodha Theoretical Physics Institute is pitching itself as a private-sector alternative to India's state-run research centres; its founding director envisions an environment where physicists can focus on discoveries without constraints

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

India does not lack respected homes for theoretical physics research. When asked why it needs another, Jainendra K. Jain, founding director of the Lodha Theoretical Physics Institute (LTPI), answered by describing what the place will not do. It will be "smaller" than the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), have a reasonably narrow scope, and be funded entirely by private money.

"These other institutes are fantastic," Prof. Jain said of the TIFR, the ICTS, the IISc, and Allahabad's Harish Chandra Research Institute. "We can all be very proud of them." LTPI, however, he said, is about focus and freedom. Where TIFR spreads across biology, chemistry, and even climate science, LTPI will do one thing – theoretical physics – and maintain a steady state of 10-12 full-time faculty members, some 40 postdoctoral researchers, and a rotating cast of visitors.

The larger difference, he said in an interview with *The Hindu*, is that private capital lets the institute sidestep the approvals that decelerate public science in India. Making a faculty-membership offer at a government-funded institute can take a year of clearances. At LTPI, he said, a couple of colleagues who agree on a candidate can simply extend one.

"There will be no caps on travel or group size, no teaching load, no committee paperwork" – frictions, he said, can leave a professor barely "five minutes a day" for research. He anticipated this to be a "paradise for theoretical physicists" modelled on the Institute for Advanced Study in the U.S. and Canada's Perimeter Institute, where people "come, they think about physics, they talk to each other, and push each other to make discoveries."

One casualty of that design, however, is the doctoral programme. LTPI will not award PhDs, at least initially. "In an institute which has only 10 or 12 faculty members, giving a PhD cannot really be done at this stage, because all the faculty members would just be teaching all the time," said Prof. Jain. Doctoral students may still pass through as visitors through collaborations, he added, but the institute will be built around faculty members, postdocs, and guests.

In June 2025, Prof. Jain became the first scientist of Indian origin to win the Wolf Prize in physics, shared with James Eisenstein and Mordehai Heiblum, for explaining how electrons behave in two dimensions under strong magnetic fields. His contribution was the composite fermion – an electron bound to quantum vortices – that could account for the fractional quantum Hall effect and gave rise to what are now called Jain states.

Certain composite-fermion states are predicted to harbour exotic particles that keep a record of how they have been moved around one another, which can in principle form unusually robust qubits in a quantum computer.

The financial muscle behind the institute is Abhishek Lodha, MD of the Lodha Group. His family pledged close to ₹20,000 crore to the Lodha Foundation in 2024. The foundation describes its giving as a "philanthropy of excellence"; it already runs the Lodha Genius Programme for gifted students and has now seeded two research institutes: the Lodha Mathematical Sciences Institute, launched in 2025, and LTPI. Each is to receive around $100 million over 8-10 years.

Measure of success

Private money for Indian science is not new. Jamsetji Tata pledged half his personal wealth to found IISc, which opened in 1909; the Tatas went on to establish the Tata Institutes of Fundamental Research (i.e., TIFR) and Social Sciences (TISS). The Birlas built BITS Pilani. The Ashoka, Azim Premji, and Krea Universities continue that line.

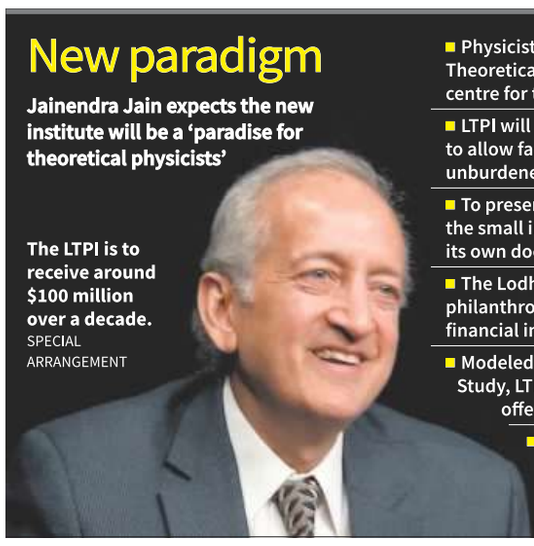
The more important question is endurance. C.V. Raman built the Raman Research Institute with his own funds partly to keep the government at arm's length, yet similar ventures have come to lean on the state over time. Jain's answer is a sufficiently large endowment to sustain the institute from its returns in perpetuity.

He also resisted the idea that publicly funded science is fading. Even nominally, private U.S. universities such as Harvard and public ones such as his own Penn State run on substantial government funding and have world-class facilities, he said. A private institute is meant to "complement" the public system and offer a proof of concept, not replace it.

The measure of success, Jain suggested, will not be citation counts – metrics he considers increasingly hollow in an age when AI can draft a passable paper – but discoveries. "We want people from abroad to come to India and provide a proof of principle, which shows that great, stimulating research and discoveries can be made in India," Prof. Jain said.

New paradigm

Jainendra Jain expects the new institute will be a 'paradise for theoretical physicists'



The LTPI is to receive around $100 million over a decade. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

- Physicist Jainendra Jain is leading the Lodha Theoretical Physics Institute, a new private centre for theoretical physics research
- LTPI will avoid public sector bureaucracy to allow fast hiring, travel freedom, and unburdened scientific research overall
- To preserve faculty members' research time, the small institute will initially forego awarding its own doctoral degrees
- The Lodha Foundation had made a large philanthropic endowment to ensure permanent financial independence for the centre
- Modeled after the Institute for Advanced Study, LTPI will complement public funding by offering a novel proof of principle
- Instead of paper citations, success at LTPI will be measured by breakthrough scientific discoveries made in India

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Is China's AI bet turning U.S. AI labs into new Apple?

DECODED

John Xavier

Two announcements, ten days apart, tell the story of where AI is heading next. On July 16, Moonshot AI released Kimi K3. A month earlier, on June 13, Beijing-based Z.ai – the company formerly known as Zhipu – released GLM-5.2.

Both companies upended Anthropic and OpenAI's narrative. They showed that China was capable of building frontier-level models and that the actual weights can be downloaded and run locally on hardware.

Open by design

Z.ai's GLM-5.2 climbed to the top of the Artificial Analysis Intelligence Index among open-weight systems, scoring within striking distance of Claude Opus 4.8 and GPT-5.5 on demanding coding benchmarks like SWE-bench Pro and FrontierSWE.

Moonshot's Kimi K3 was released on July 16, with the full weights held back until Monday. That promise was kept: Moonshot published K3's weights on July 27 under a Modified MIT licence, making the 2.8-trillion-parameter model available for anyone to download, fine-tune and self-host.

Now that the weights are out, outside developers will distil, quantise and fine-tune the model within days, spinning up a whole downstream ecosystem Moonshot doesn't control and doesn't need to.

Neither Z.ai nor Moonshot is doing this out of generosity. But giving weights away is a smart distribution strategy as it could potentially turn developers, cloud providers and enterprise IT units into resellers, and make it hard for anyone to under-price you as the base model itself is free.

The closed camp has taken the opposite bet to keep the weights, sell access, and protect the model as the product, and they still have a real edge on raw capability as independent trackers put Fable 5, Opus 4.8 and GPT-5.5 ahead of GLM-5.2 and Kimi K3 on the toughest reasoning benchmarks, and some estimate the gap between the best closed and best open systems at roughly seven months.

What does look durable is the emerging split in how AI gets consumed. REUTERS

Beyond the models, there is a more structural shift. According to a Bloomberg report, Z.ai has completed and partially activated a 1 GW data centre, built entirely on Chinese-made chips.

Z.ai has said its recent GLM models were trained on Huawei's Ascend accelerators running Huawei's own MindSpore software stack. The company didn't have a choice as the U.S. placed it on its export blacklist in early 2025, cutting off legal channels to Nvidia's advanced chips.

Now, this data centre is China's response to having no other option. And Z.ai's move comes on the heels of Beijing drafting a roughly $295 billion, five-year national plan to build AI data centres with at least 80% domestic sourcing.

Chinese-made accelerators still trail Nvidia's Blackwell chips on performance per watt, so matching U.S. compute gigawatt-for-gigawatt takes more chips and more floor space. But "trailing" is a very different problem than "cut off," and Z.ai has now shown the gap is one you can build your way around.

And the chip story doesn't end there, as Hefei-based ChangXin Memory Technologies (CXMT) has been racing to close the gap. CXMT is now China's largest DRAM maker, and is targeting mass production of domestic HBM3 by the end of 2026.

But gaps still remain as CXMT still needs access to the world's most advanced chipmaking tools remains, which are restricted.

So does this become the smartphone story all over again – Chinese AI as Android, cheap, everywhere, running on hardware nobody controls centrally, versus a smaller number of premium, tightly integrated American systems sold the way Apple sells iPhones? That analogy holds in places.

Where the analogy strains is control. Android succeeded partly because Google still owned the platform underneath the fragmentation. It isn't obvious anyone owns the open-weight AI ecosystem the same way – GLM-5.2 and Kimi K3 compete with each other as much as they compete with Claude or GPT, and once weights are public, no single company can fully steer what gets built on top of them.

That looks more like a market splitting into a commodity tier and a premium tier at the same time, with the boundary between them determined more by who's willing to pay for the difference.

What does look durable is the emerging split in how AI gets consumed. Routine, high-volume tasks will increasingly be routed to whichever open, cheap model is "good enough," while frontier reasoning work will stay on closed, premium models.

SNAPSHOTS

Colonists brought smallpox to S. America, study finds

Scientists have found direct molecular evidence that European colonisers brought smallpox to South America after recovering the first ancient smallpox genomes from the Americas, in the remains of individuals in Chile. The strains belonged to a now-extinct lineage that branched from European strains around 1296. Analysing the DNA revealed it adapted to human hosts until the mid-16th century, then experienced few changes for 200 years. Smallpox caused Indigenous populations to collapse following European contact.

Plant-based diet's winning hand is protein-fibre combo

Researchers have figured out why plant-based diets improve gut health. While animal proteins are easily absorbed, many plant proteins reach the colon. There, gut bacteria turn them into beneficial compounds like hippuric acid. Soluble fibre protects the gut. When a diet lacks fibre, bacteria often eat the body's own protective mucus, producing toxins. The researchers found fibre prevents this process. So fibre and plant proteins work together to help the microbiome create a healthier internal environment.

Dog's tongue inspires new cooling tech for electronics

Scientists have found small, previously unknown hair-like structures on beagles' tongues that help saliva spread and evaporate rapidly to cool the animal, and based on it created a material called BioCCS. Its surface has microscopic grooves that help liquid spread rapidly across the surface while nanowires within the grooves weaken bonds between water molecules, allowing them to evaporate more easily.

Question Corner

Savoury secret

Why don't any fruits or plant-based foods taste naturally salty?
– *Mahua Ray*

The primary reason plant-based foods are rarely salty while animal products have a more savoury taste profile is that animals have nervous systems and blood and plants don't.
Animals generally need lots of sodium to maintain their extracellular fluids like blood and lymph and to fire neurons. And because salt is vital but historically rare in nature, animals have evolved to seek it out and animal tissues naturally store it in their fluids.
Most plants have no nervous system or circulatory system and use potassium mainly to regulate their internal pressure (called turgor) and growth. In fact, high levels of sodium are actually toxic to most land plants, which is why salting the earth kills vegetation. There are a few plant-based foods called halophytes that naturally taste salty. They include sea beans, sea grapes, and celery. They have evolved to live in salt marshes.
Finally, fruits are sweet to attract animals.A naturally salty fruit would be dehydrating to the animal eating it.

Readers may send their questions / answers to science@thehindu.co.in

Why did NCISM clarify the use of the term 'quack'?

Why has the regulatory body said? Are Indian System of Medicine doctors equivalent to MBBS doctors? Why is the clarification significant?

Bindu Shajan Perappadan

The story so far:

On July 29, the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) issued a circular clarifying that qualified and registered practitioners of India's recognised systems of traditional medicine cannot legally be described as "quacks" or "bogus doctors" simply because they practise the Indian System of Medicine (ISM).

What is NCISM?

NCISM is the statutory regulator established under the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act, 2020, to oversee medical education, professional standards, and the registration of practitioners in India's recognised traditional systems of medicine – Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and Sowa-Rigpa.

What does its circular say and why was it issued?

It says doctors who hold recognised qualifications such as Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery, Bachelor of Unani Medicine and Surgery, Bachelor of Siddha Medicine and Surgery, or Bachelor of Sowa-Rigpa Medicine and Surgery, and are registered under the provisions of the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act, are legally recognised medical practitioners and cannot be called "quacks" or "bogus doctors".

> The circular recognises that practitioners registered under the NCISM Act are legally recognised medical practitioners within their own systems of medicine

NCISM said it had received reports that registered practitioners of ISM were being labelled as "quacks" or "fake doctors", being targeted through public notices, criticised in the media, and subjected to harassment in public forums. NCISM said the clarification was intended to affirm their legal status and discourage such characterisations.

The clarification also draws a distinction between qualified, registered ISM practitioners and unqualified individuals who falsely claim to practise medicine. NCISM said its aim was to prevent misinformation, protect the professional standing of registered practitioners, and ensure that action against fraudulent medical practice is not confused with the lawful practice of recognised ISM.

Does this mean ISM doctors are equivalent to MBBS doctors?

Not exactly. The circular recognises that practitioners registered under the NCISM Act are legally recognised medical practitioners within their own systems of medicine. It does not erase the distinction between different systems of medical education or automatically grant practitioners the legal authority to practise modern medicine in every circumstance.

Whether an Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, or Sowa-Rigpa practitioner can prescribe allopathic medicines or practise modern medicine depends on the laws of the relevant State, specific statutory provisions, government notifications, and court rulings applicable in that jurisdiction.

The law also draws a clear distinction between practising ISM and practising modern (allopathic) medicine. In *Poonam Verma v. Ashwin Patel* (1996), the Supreme Court ruled that a homeopathic doctor treating a patient with allopathic medicines was guilty of negligence, observing that a person practising in a system of medicine for which they are not qualified is effectively acting without authority. In *Dr. Mukhtiar Chand & Others v. State of Punjab* (1998), the Court held that practitioners of Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani cannot practise allopathic medicine solely on the strength of their qualifications. The Court clarified that cross-practice is permissible only where it is specifically authorised under law, including through State government notifications issued under the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules.

Who is a 'quack'?

In common usage, a "quack" generally refers to someone who falsely claims to be medically qualified or practises medicine without the required qualifications or legal registration. While there is no official nationwide estimate of the number of quacks in India, the Health Ministry has informed Parliament on multiple occasions that health is a State subject, and identifying and taking action against unqualified medical practitioners is the responsibility of State governments and State Medical Councils.

Why is this circular significant?

It reaffirms the statutory recognition of Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Sowa-Rigpa practitioners under the NCISM Act, distinguishes between registered practitioners of recognised ISM and unqualified individuals who falsely claim to practise medicine, and also makes clear that legal recognition as an ISM practitioner does not immediately extend to the practice of modern medicine.

What does the new Bill to prevent exam fraud say?

What is the purpose and what are the provisions of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026? How is it different from the 2024 Act? How does it deal with procedural delays? What are the common bottlenecks faced by trial courts?

Maitri Porecha

The story so far:

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026 was passed by both Houses of Parliament following widespread protests over the leak of the undergraduate (UG) paper of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) and the subsequent resignation of Union Education Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan. The Bill seeks to curb examination malpractices through time-bound investigations and speedy trials.

While a copy of the proposed Bill was circulated among parliamentarians on July 25, the Bill was introduced on July 27. It was passed in the Lok Sabha by a voice vote on July 29 and passed a day later in the Rajya Sabha. The legislation has now been sent for the President's assent to officially become law.

What were the incidents over the years leading up to the passage of the Bill?

The crisis surrounding India's competitive exams began with the NEET-UG 2024 exam, where question papers were allegedly leaked in regions including Patna in Bihar and Hazaribagh in Jharkhand. There was panic after 67 students scored full marks, with controversial grace marks, triggering massive student protests and intense judicial intervention. The Supreme Court and the Central Bureau of Investigation subsequently uncovered deep-rooted syndicates allegedly involved in the paper leak. The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act was enacted in 2024 to tackle cheating.

> The 2024 Act did not secure a single conviction over its two years of operation

Despite the law, concerns over institutional accountability persisted, and the Ministry of Education cancelled the NEET UG 2026 exam after discovering that the question paper had been leaked and the integrity of the exam had been compromised. This affected about 22 lakh students and led to nationwide protests, backed by the newly formed Cockroach Janta Party. Consequently, the government pushed stricter legislative amendments, notably the 2026 Bill.

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Protesters celebrate the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in Mumbai. AFP

What is the primary purpose of the Bill? How have penalties been revised as compared to the 2024 Act?

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026 is a revised version of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024. Its primary purpose is to curb exam malpractices, ensure time-bound investigations and speedy trials, and create stronger deterrence against organised crime groups and institutions involved in such offences to safeguard transparent and merit-based selections.

As per the Bill, investigations must be concluded within 60 days – whether conducted by local police, Central investigating agencies, or a Special Task Force – and trials must be wrapped up within three months of the chargesheet being filed in designated special fast-track courts. Also, High Court appeals must be heard by a two-judge Division Bench and resolved within three months.

The penalty for general offences under Section 10(1) has been increased from 3-5 years of imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹10 lakh under the 2024 anti-cheating law to 5-10 years of imprisonment and a fine of up to ₹50 lakh. Fines for service providers have also been raised from a maximum of ₹1 crore to ₹5 crore, alongside a debarment extension from 4 years to 8 years. For directors and senior management held responsible, the fine has been increased from at least ₹1 crore to ₹5 crore and the jail term has been increased from 3-10 years to 5-10 years. For organised crime networks under Section 11, the Bill proposes a minimum imprisonment of 7 years, up from 5 years, along with a fine of up to ₹10 crore, compared with the earlier limit of ₹1 crore.

How does the Bill address procedural delays and court adjournments?

Courts are restricted from granting adjournments beyond the following day without explicit, exceptional reasons. All ongoing cases under the 2024 Act will instantly be transferred to newly designated special fast-track courts. States and Union Territories are mandated to appoint special public prosecutors exclusively for these trials.

What major limitation has been pointed out regarding the investigation timeline?

According to an analysis by PRS Legislative Research, unlike other robust legislation such as the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 or the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989), the Bill contains no provisions or accountability mechanisms explaining what happens if the two-month investigation timeline is missed. Nor does it require officers to record reasons for delays in writing.

Also, the timeline could conflict with Supreme Court rulings. In 2002, the Supreme Court held that it is neither advisable, feasible, nor judicially permissible to prescribe a rigid outer limit for the conclusion of criminal proceedings, and criminal courts are not obliged to terminate trials merely due to the lapse of time.

How does the Bill propose to handle speedy adjudication and what structural challenges do these courts face?

The Bill provides for designating a court of session by each State and Union Territory as a special fast-track court. However, data show severe system-wide pendency. Existing fast-track special courts have battled massive backlogs, with pending cases swelling from over 2.02 lakh in 2023 to 2.45 lakh by 2025. Furthermore, average trial times vary drastically across regions – for example, from 257 days in Andhra Pradesh to 1,717 days in Delhi for Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act fast-track special courts cases.

What common ground-level bottlenecks routinely delay trial courts, as noted by the Law Commission of India?

Key bottlenecks include the absence of accused individuals or the non-production of undertrial prisoners, lack of proactive police efforts to apprehend absconding suspects, frequent and unjustified adjournments sought by advocates or caused by the non-attendance of official witnesses, and deficiencies in judicial case management and court and staff strength.

What was the conviction track record of the preceding anti-cheating law passed in 2024?

The 2024 Act did not secure a single conviction over its two years of operation.

Real Creator IAS Edition https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0F

Why did FIFA scrap its World Cup stake sale?

What was FIFA's plan to sell stakes in the World Cup? What would FIFA's member associations have gained? Who opposed the proposal and why? Has FIFA faced similar resistance before? How did Gianni Infantino respond to the pushback?

Anirudh Velamuri

The story so far:

On July 31, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) abandoned its controversial plan to sell stakes in the World Cup to private investors. What began as FIFA president Gianni Infantino's vision for a new commercial subsidiary, backed by venture capitalist Joshua Kushner, quickly unravelled amid fierce opposition from the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), other confederations, and FIFA's own senior staff.

What did FIFA propose?

Shortly after the 2026 World Cup, Mr. Infantino unveiled plans to create a new subsidiary called FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE). This entity was to consolidate all of FIFA's revenue-generating operations – broadcasting, sponsorships, ticketing, licensing, and tournament operations – under one structure. FIFA stated that it would retain majority control of FFE and bring in outside investors to hold minority, non-controlling stakes. In that regard, venture capitalist Joshua Kushner, through his holding company Thrive Eternal, was reported to be the lead investor under consideration. Mr. Kushner is the brother of Jared Kushner, U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law. Mr. Infantino shares a close relationship with Mr. Trump, as seen in his awarding of a FIFA peace prize to the President and allowing his intervention to overturn U.S. striker Folarin Balogun's suspension during the World Cup.

> By selling stakes now, FIFA would allow private investors to benefit from future growth that would otherwise accrue entirely to FIFA and football

File photo of FIFA President Gianni Infantino speaking during the 2026 FIFA World Cup play-off tournament draw in Zurich. AFP

What did FIFA's member associations stand to gain from this proposal?

By selling stakes now, FIFA, a non-profit organisation under Swiss law, would allow private investors to benefit from future growth that would otherwise accrue entirely to FIFA and football. FIFA had reportedly offered its 211 member associations an upfront $20 million payment upon approval, followed by three more payments of $20 million, $22 million, and $24 million between 2027 and 2038.

In an official press release, Mr. Infantino explained that his move would democratise football. He said, "We intend to invest heavily even in the smallest or most remote parts of the footballing world, places that are too often passed over. Every FIFA member association, whatever its size, resources, or geographic location, will have a voice and the opportunity to determine its own course. Football has become a truly global game and so the benefits must be felt globally."

FIFA gave its 211 member associations until September 19 to decide whether to support the plan, or risk losing the one-time payout offer.

What was the immediate response?

UEFA, the wealthy and powerful European football governing body, held an emergency meeting with its 55 member nations on July 30 and voted to boycott World Cups if FIFA moved forward with the plan. In a statement, UEFA said, "We unanimously and unequivocally reject FIFA's proposal to transfer ownership interests in the World Cup and other FIFA competitions to private investors. The World Cup cannot be treated as an investment product. It is one of football's greatest sporting legacies. It has been built over generations by players, national teams and supporters across every continent. No part of it should ever be surrendered to private investors. The World Cup is not for sale."

Has FIFA ever faced such opposition before?

Yes. In 2018, Mr. Infantino pursued a similar investment deal with Japan's SoftBank to fund the Club World Cup, but that plan fell apart amid public criticism. In 2021, UEFA's threat to boycott helped derail Mr. Infantino's proposal to hold the World Cup every two years instead of every four.

Is UEFA alone in opposing this?

UEFA was the first to oppose FIFA's plans. UEFA has had other run-ins with FIFA too: its president boycotted the World Cup final in protest against FIFA's decision to overturn Mr. Balogun's suspension after Mr. Trump's intervention; and it also criticised other FIFA decisions such as hydration breaks.

But UEFA was not the only one to oppose this plan. CONCACAF (Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football) and AFC (Asian Football Confederation) also raised concerns about the lack of transparency in the process, as did individual federations such as England's FA (Football Association) and the global players' union FIFPRO (Fédération Internationale des Associations de Footballeurs Professionnels).

OFC (Oceania Football Confederation) refused to immediately state how it viewed FIFA's plans and instead said that the proposal would be considered by the OFC Executive Committee at a meeting later this month.

Has anyone from FIFA addressed this issue?

Carlos Cordeiro, Mr. Infantino's senior adviser who represented FIFA on the White House Task Force at the World Cup, resigned and urged other senior FIFA staff to speak out. "I cannot stand by while FIFA considers selling a stake in the World Cup. I oppose it unequivocally," Mr. Cordeiro said in a statement. Kevin Lamour, FIFA's chief operating officer, also issued a statement about the lack of transparency. "Not only must this project not go ahead. The time has now come for football political leaders to ask themselves the right questions and make the right decisions. And if that means I lose my job, then so be it," he said.

How has FIFA responded?

On July 31, Mr. Infantino announced that FIFA would not be moving forward with the proposal. "Having listened carefully to all the views, it has become clear that the project has created divisions of a nature that, regardless of the level of support, are no longer in the interest of the objective set out in the first place. Our purpose has always been – and will always be – to unite and improve. As a result, this proposal will not proceed," he said in a statement.

PROFILES

The three faces of a revolt

Abhijeet Dipke, Ashutosh Ranka and Saurav Das

Fuelled by viral outrage and youthful anger, the Cockroach Janta Party's rapid rise was driven by three very different men whose skills, ambitions and political histories transformed a satirical online campaign into a national protest that brought down Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan

Sobhana K. Nair
Nikhil M. Babu

From satire to sit-in is the most popular, and perhaps the easiest, explanation for the student protest movement that culminated in the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. This explanation is empowering in its simplicity. But it is incomplete.

By now, everyone knows how the story goes. On May 15, 2026, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant likened unemployed youth turning to activism and social media to "cockroaches", triggering widespread backlash. Seizing on the remark, Abhijeet Dipke, an Indian student in Boston, launched a satirical online platform for fellow "cockroaches", transforming an insult into a rallying cry for disaffected youth. Within the first 24 hours, 50,000 people signed up. That number swelled to more than a million within five days, while the movement's Instagram account surged past 22 million followers.

Yet behind the viral posts, soaring follower counts and colourful symbolism stood a trio: Abhijeet Dipke (30), Ashutosh Ranka (30) and Saurav Das (27), whose skills complemented one another. They come from different parts of the country, different social backgrounds and possess markedly different temperaments.

Those who have spent time around Jantar Mantar since the movement began describe Mr. Dipke as politically intuitive, though at times a touch emotional, and the beating heart of the movement. On July 18, after activist Sonam Wangchuk was removed from Jantar Mantar, it was Mr. Dipke who argued that the movement should escalate its demands. Instead of limiting itself to seeking Mr. Pradhan's resignation, he proposed demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Mr. Dipke loves discussing A.R. Rahman's music and reciting Shah Rukh Khan's dialogues from *Swades*. He brought a sense of lightness to the protest, spending time in the evenings talking to the protesters, posing for pictures with them and cracking a joke every now and then.

ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

Fearless fronts: Saurav Das, Abhijeet Dipke, and Ashutosh Ranka.

Mr. Ranka, meanwhile, has been described as decisive, though at times authoritarian, and quicker to lose his temper than others. He remains the mind of the movement and its principal strategist. Mr. Das, the youngest of the three, is known as much for his affable demeanour as for his outreach skills, though colleagues say he can occasionally be indecisive.

If Mr. Ranka and Mr. Dipke rave about Shah Rukh Khan starrer *Swades* and Aamir Khan's *Rang De Basanti*, Mr. Das represents the other end of the social spectrum where his favourite series is *Modern Family* – a mockumentary about a multigenerational family based out of Los Angeles.

Association with AAP

One obvious thread connecting the three is their association with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), a link none of them has sought to conceal. Both Mr. Dipke and Mr. Ranka have worked for the party, while Mr. Das's proximity to former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is hardly a secret.

Mr. Dipke was born in Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (formerly Aurangabad), Maharashtra, into a Dalit family, though his caste identity largely remained in the background during the protest. "He is a student leader who is also a Dalit and not the other way round," a leader associated with the 36-day protest said. One occasion on which he publicly asserted his caste identity came after ink was thrown at him at Jantar Mantar on July 18. His response was brief: "Blue is my colour. Jai Bhim."

He studied journalism at Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth in Pune before moving to the U.S. in 2023 to pursue a Master's degree in Public Relations at Boston University. Mr. Dipke worked in political communications and was associated with the AAP social media team between 2020 and 2023, working closely with senior leader Manish Sisodia.

Mr. Ranka's journey to the CJP was unlike that of most protest leaders. Born and raised in Jaipur, he studied Materials Science and Engineering at IIT-Kanpur, where he was elected president of the Students' Gymkhana, an early indication of his interest in public life.

He served as a Delhi Assembly Fellow during 2019-20, working closely with the team of former Delhi Chief Minister and current Leader of Opposition Atishi during the pandemic, before pursuing a Master's in Public Administration at the London School of Economics. He subsequently worked with McKinsey & Company and with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, before gradually moving away from the worlds of consulting and international policy in favour of Indian public life.

Mr. Ranka also worked on the AAP campaign for the February 2025 Delhi Assembly election, focusing exclusively on the New Delhi constituency, where Mr. Kejriwal was the candidate. He was part of the team examining voter deletions and continued to publicly defend Mr. Kejriwal and the party even after the election. His most recent article as AAP's "national spokesperson" was published on March 16.

Unlike many political organisers, Mr. Ranka has never hidden his ambitions. He has often expressed a desire to focus on Rajasthan politics. Following the 2025 Assembly election, he turned his attention to the State, running campaigns to protect a 100-acre forest near Jaipur. More recently, he gave Rajasthan Education Minister Madan Dilawar a three-month ultimatum to address issues faced by students at Rajasthan University, warning that the CJP would otherwise seek the vice-chancellor's resignation.

Saurav Das, the movement's young spokesman, became its public face. A journalist before he became a protest leader, he understood how newsrooms functioned, how narratives were shaped and, more important, how to keep a movement in the headlines.

Mr. Das spent part of his childhood in Puducherry and speaks a smattering of Tamil. He studied Journalism and Mass Communication at Amity University, Noida, graduating in 2019. He is best known for his detailed profile of former Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud for *The Caravan*, and has also written for *Frontline* and other publications.

'The language of Gen Z'

Mr. Das is also the co-founder of Climate Action Front, an initiative focused on climate governance, sustainability and environmental policy. Alongside journalism, he has been working on his debut book, *Complicit Silence: The Court's Role in India's Quiet Suffering*, which examines the judiciary's role in contemporary India through a series of case studies involving citizens seeking justice. Videos of Mr. Das dancing after Mr. Pradhan's resignation also went viral, attracting admiration as well as criticism. Mr. Das defended the celebrations as "the language of Gen Z", arguing that young people express political victories differently.

None of the three had ever led a protest of this scale before they laid siege to the government near the 18th century observatory, Jantar Mantar. Nor had the majority of the protesters who took to the streets of Delhi, in response to their call. For now, the three insist that the CJP will continue to function as a pressure group rather than a political party.

THE GIST

- Those who have spent time around Jantar Mantar since the movement began describe Abhijeet Dipke as politically intuitive, though at times a touch emotional, the beating heart of the movement
- Ashutosh Ranka, who has been described as decisive, remains the mind of the movement and its principal strategist
- Saurav Das, the youngest of the three, is known as much for his affable demeanour as for his outreach skills, though colleagues say he can occasionally be indecisive

A slice of Europe in Africa

Ceuta

The Spanish exclave witnessed one of its largest migration crises as up to 60,000 Moroccans breached its borders and arrived in the city, seeking asylum

Smriti Sudesh

"They told us we would have a place of refuge in Spain, and it was a lie". That is how one migrant described his journey to Ceuta. He was among tens of thousands who believed Europe had finally opened its doors. Some scrambled over razor-wire fences. Others slipped through gaps in the chain-link barrier. Many plunged into the Mediterranean wearing wetsuits, kicking with flippers or clutching inflatable rings as they swam towards the tiny Spanish enclave on Morocco's northern coast.

For a few hours, Europe seemed within reach.

By Friday evening, the illusion had vanished. According to Spain's Interior Ministry, more than 48,000 migrants had already crossed back into Morocco. Hungry, exhausted, and disappointed, many took the same route they had taken only hours earlier. At least 67 people died in the chaos. Once again, the spotlight fell on Ceuta: a territory barely 15 square km in size but one that has repeatedly found itself at the centre of Europe's migration politics. Ceuta, together with Melilla, further east, is one of only two Spanish territories on the African mainland. Although both are located on Morocco's Mediterranean coast, they have remained under Spanish sovereignty for centuries. Today, they constitute the EU's only land borders with Africa.

AFP

For migrants fleeing war, poverty, or economic hardship, Ceuta is one of the shortest routes into Europe. But reaching Ceuta does not necessarily mean reaching Europe in the way many would imagine. While the enclave is part of Spain and the EU, migrants cannot continue to mainland Spain. For many, Ceuta becomes a waiting room rather than a gateway.

And that reality has transformed the enclave into one of Europe's most heavily guarded frontiers. Double-layered border fences topped with razor wire, surveillance cameras, motion sensors, observation towers, and constant patrols by Spanish security forces line the frontier. Yet, despite heavy border security, migrants continue to attempt dangerous crossings.

Spanish authorities estimate that about 60,000 migrants entered Ceuta over two days. As thousands poured into the city, residents largely stayed indoors while shops and businesses shut their doors.

Court ruling

Why so many people attempted the crossing remains unclear. Spanish officials say trafficking networks spread false claims that asylum could easily be obtained in Spain.

On June 29, Spain's Supreme Court ruled that migrants arriving by sea cannot be summarily deported because they do not cross the physical border referenced in Spanish law. Some believe traffickers and migrants interpreted the ruling as protection against deportation for those entering Ceuta by sea. Many migrants said, according to *an NYT report*, Moroccan security personnel appeared unusually permissive and even encouraged them to "come to Spain". Spain-Morocco ties have long been shaped by disagreements over migration, border management, and the disputed territory of Western Sahara.

The Ceuta crisis also quickly spilled into domestic politics. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez swiftly travelled to the exclave, describing the mass crossing as a "violation of Spain's territorial integrity". The Opposition, meanwhile, saw things differently. Conservative parties and the far-right Vox accused Mr. Sánchez of encouraging irregular migration through policies that offer pathways to legal residency for undocumented migrants already living in Spain. Human rights organisations, on the other hand, criticised the authorities, pointing to overcrowded reception centres and Spain's long-standing practice of rapidly returning migrants from the enclaves.

Most of those who entered Ceuta have now returned to Morocco, and the immediate crisis may have subsided. But for many migrants who believed Europe had finally opened its doors, the journey ended with them back where they had started. "They had nothing for us," one migrant said. "They were screaming, 'Get out of Spain'."

The climate diplomat

Ed Miliband

Britain's new Foreign Secretary, once a strong critic of Donald Trump, says tackling climate change and promoting international development will be his core priorities

Joan Sony Cherian

As Ed Miliband took charge as the U.K's new Foreign Secretary on July 20, he stated that international development and tackling the climate crisis would be the core priorities of the U.K's foreign policy under him.

Under the previous Labour government led by Keir Starmer, Mr. Miliband held the position of Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero. He had previously been the Energy Secretary under Prime Minister Gordon Brown from 2008 to 2010. In that short stint, Mr. Miliband strengthened the 2008 Climate Change Act and implemented the U.K. Low Carbon Transition Plan, which was the country's first economy-wide decarbonisation strategy.

After taking on the role again in 2024 under Mr. Starmer, Mr. Miliband oversaw the implementation of various policies that backed the U.K's commitment to renewable energy. He established the Great British Energy, a publicly owned energy company, to expand and accelerate homegrown clean energy production and deployment.

He also laid out the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan, which aims to reduce the U.K's dependency on volatile fossil fuel markets.

ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR

One of his very first moves as Foreign Secretary was to visit Spain and France, the two countries which are now dealing with devastating wildfire disasters. After Mr. Miliband met with Spain's Foreign Minister, both governments released a joint statement which acknowledged climate change as a global challenge and detailed that these "summer's wildfires demonstrated that climate change was now a national security emergency facing Europe and threatening our way of life."

Seasoned politician

Mr. Miliband is the son of Polish Jewish refugees who came to the U.K. fleeing the Nazis during the Second World War. He started his career in TV journalism before entering politics. He was recruited as a speechwriter by then Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Harriet Harman, in 1993, and climbed through the ranks to work with Gordon Brown. He stood for elections for the first time in 2005, and attained his first Cabinet position under Mr. Brown in 2007.

His older brother, David Wright Miliband, a former labour party MP, had also, coincidentally, served as the Foreign Secretary in the Brown Cabinet from 2007 to 2010. Both of them ran against each other for the post of Labour Party leader in 2010 after Mr. Brown resigned. The race was eventually won by the junior Miliband.

One of the prominent reforms that Ed Miliband made as Labour Party leader from 2010 to 2015 was to abolish the electoral college within the party, and make it a 'one member, one vote' system. He also sought to unify the party, under the campaign 'One Nation Labour', as one working for the country and its people as a whole rather than for sectional interest groups.

Mr. Miliband was once one of the biggest critics of U.S. President Donald Trump. After Mr. Trump's election as President in 2016, Mr. Miliband had remarked that he had "lowered the bar for idiocy." However, in his statement after his appointment as Foreign Secretary, Mr. Miliband affirmed that he would "nurture our strong, enduring and essential alliance with the United States".

Rebuilding ties with the EU, post- Brexit, is also a distinct challenge for Mr. Miliband. "Britain's national economic and security interests are served by having a stronger relationship with our European allies," Mr. Miliband said in his statement.

Domestically, the immediate challenge seems to be the shift in Prime Minister Andy Burnham's stance on new drilling licences for oil and gas in the North Sea.

Mr. Miliband has vociferously opposed renewed drilling for oil and gas in the North Sea as it would delay the transition to clean energy. He has also argued that since North Sea energy is sold on the international market, domestic consumers would not see much of a reduction in their energy bills. If Mr. Burnham goes ahead with allowing drilling in the North Sea, Mr. Miliband and he could potentially be at loggerheads.

DEIR AL-BALAH

Israeli strikes in Gaza kill two; medical supply warehouses hit

AP

Israel's military on Saturday killed two Palestinians in Gaza and destroyed two warehouses near a hospital that stored medicine in separate strikes, amid uncertainty over whether Israel has accepted a deal reached with Hamas over the group's disarmament. The military said those targeted were Hamas militants. REUTERS

SANAA

Houthis deny plans to impose fees on ships sailing through Red Sea

AFP

Yemen's Houthi-run maritime coordination body denied on Saturday that it planned to impose fees on commercial ships transiting the Bab el-Mandeb strait, saying no such decision had been taken and that passage through the strategic waterway remained free. REUTERS

ADDIS ABABA

Ethiopia army, Tigray rebels clash in northern region, raising tension

AFP

Fighting between the Ethiopian army and Tigray rebels took place in northern Ethiopia on Saturday, raising the spectre of a new war breaking out, a senior Tigray official said. "The federal government launched an attack this morning against Tigrayan forces in Shererina," close to the border with Sudan, he said. AFP

KATHMANDU

Famed climber Nirmal Purja, nine others, die in avalanche in Pakistan

AFP

Celebrated Nepali climber Nirmal Purja, who set a record for the fastest ascent of the world's 14 highest mountains, died in an avalanche during an expedition in Pakistan, his company said on Saturday. Purja, 43, and nine others had been missing since Thursday. Officials said the bodies were yet to be retrieved. REUTERS

Russia pounds Kyiv, kills 9 people; Ukraine appeals for Patriot missiles

Moscow's early morning attack on Kyiv used 35 missiles, including 27 ballistic missiles, and 185 drones; Ukrainian leader says only one of the 27 ballistic missiles was intercepted, 'simply because there are no interceptors for the Patriot system'

Reuters
Agence France-Presse
KYIV/MOSCOW

Russia pounded Kyiv in a heavy ballistic missile attack early on Saturday, killing nine people, as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned that Ukraine had run out of interceptor missiles for its U.S. Patriot air defence systems.

Mr. Zelenskyy said that Russia launched 35 missiles at Ukraine, including 27 ballistic missiles, and also 185 drones. Only one ballistic missile was intercepted, "simply because there are no interceptors for the Patriot system", he said.

A police officer stands near bodies of residents killed at a site of a Russian missile strike, in Kyiv region, Ukraine on Saturday. REUTERS

More than a dozen explosions reverberated through the city during several waves of attacks, according to witnesses.

"Every package of ballistic missile interceptors saves the lives of our people. And every night without them results in more casualties," Mr. Zelenskyy said on the Telegram app.

With the war in its fifth year, fighting is raging along about 1,200 km of front line. But Russian advances have slowed by more than half this year, and Ukraine has been launching strikes inside Russia hitting its oil facilities, logistics sites and weapons production.

At the same time, Russia intensified its attacks on Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities, while Ukraine is chronically short of air defences capable of downing ballistic missiles, which travel at several times the speed of sound.

Moscow and Kyiv both deny targeting civilians in the war launched by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Elsewhere, Ukrainian drones sank a Russian-owned container ship in the Black Sea early on Saturday, forcing its 17-member crew to abandon the vessel, the ship's owner said.

Rosatom, Russia's state-owned nuclear power operator, said at least two Ukrainian drones struck the *Yanina* cargo vessel as it sailed near the Russian port of Novorossiysk.

The ship was carrying civilian goods including frozen food and construction materials, Rosatom said. "Such an attack cannot be interpreted as anything other than piracy and robbery at sea," the statement quoted Rosatom CEO as saying.

Spain to put containment fence on Ceuta's border

Associated Press
CEUTA

Spain announced it was installing a 500-metre-long containment barrier on the sea border between its North African territory of Ceuta and neighbouring Morocco after nearly 60,000 migrants breached the frontier earlier this week.

The death toll climbed to 67, including some who drowned and others who were killed in a stampede to cross a breakwater barrier, the Spanish government said on Saturday.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez slammed the reaction of some other European Union leaders to the events in Ceuta, saying calls for Spain to be suspended from the EU's borderless Schengen zone were "driven by prejudice, fake news, ignorance, or political interest". "In the current international context, the European Union cannot afford this kind of selfish, polarising and unlawful reaction," Mr. Sanchez wrote in his letter.

Migrants pass through a broken fence as they leave Ceuta towards the Moroccan town of Fnideq, on Saturday. AFP

A handful of exhausted migrants who swam to Ceuta's urban Tarajal beach on Saturday morning were met by soldiers who escorted them back across the border. Spain's Interior Ministry says the majority of those who entered the territory have already returned to Morocco.

"We are relentless against those who break the law," Spanish Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska told presspersons in Ceuta on Saturday.

U.S. embassies urge citizens to 'consider departing' West Asia

Agence France-Presse
AMMAN

U.S. embassies in several West Asian capitals warned American citizens to beware an "unforeseen escalation" in the regional conflict and urged them to be ready to leave.

"Americans in the region should consider departing, or be prepared to depart should there be escalation," said a security alert, versions of which were posted on social media by the U.S. missions in Amman, Jerusalem and Baghdad. The messages urged citizens to check flight details and to follow safety advice from authorities.

Iran's military, meanwhile, has accused Washington of "escalating tensions" in the region, and warned: "Any country serving as defensive shield for criminal and aggressive America will be engulfed by the flames of war."

The war broke out on February 28 when the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran.

Gor calls on Bangladesh to join Pax Silica initiative and discusses bilateral relations

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

U.S. Special Envoy for South and Central Asia Sergio Gor on Saturday discussed bilateral ties, trade and investment with Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman and called on Dhaka to join the U.S.-led Pax Silica initiative, local media reported.

In a meeting with PM Rahman at his office in Tejgaon here, Mr. Gor said that Bangladesh has significant potential to become a partner in the global economic security alliance focused on critical minerals, energy, semiconductors, and artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure, the *Dhaka Tribune* newspaper reported, citing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Pax Silica, led by the U.S. State Department, aimed to reduce reliance on Chinese tech dominance.

The two sides also discussed bilateral relations, trade and investment, regional cooperation and other issues of mutual interest during the meeting, state-owned *Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS)* quoted PM's Deputy Press Secretary Shahadat Shadhin as saying.

Sergio Gor

"Today I called on the Honourable Prime Minister @trahmanbnp to discuss the great opportunities between the US and Bangladesh to strengthen economic cooperation and enhance our partnership. This is a priority for the United States, and working together we can achieve real results," Mr. Gor, who is also U.S. Ambassador to India, posted on X after the meeting.

Expressing confidence in PM Rahman's leadership, Mr. Gor said that stability has returned to Bangladesh under his leadership, the *BSS* report said. He also said the U.S. has revised its travel advisory for Bangladesh.

China holds drills near disputed shoal in South China Sea

Associated Press
BEIJING

China conducted military drills near the disputed Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea on Saturday as territorial tensions with the Philippines intensify.

The joint naval and air drills near the shoal, which is known as Huangyan Island in China and Panatag Shoal in the Philippines, tested the army's ability to coordinate air and sea operations and provide rapid reinforcements, according to state broadcaster *CCTV*.

The drills came after Beijing criticised Manila's attempts to extend its seabed rights in the South China Sea, a vital global trade route with rich undersea deposits of gas and oil that China claims almost in its entirety.

China also released a set of rules for a nature reserve it established around Scarborough Shoal. The regulations ban unauthorised fishing, mining and harvesting of corals.

Sport

Tanvi advances to Taipei Open summit clash; Unnati loses

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
TAIPEI CITY

Young Indian shuttler Tanvi Sharma stayed on course for her maiden BWF World Tour title, beating Taiwan's Huang Yu-Hsun in straight games to enter the women's singles final of the Taipei Open Super 300 badminton on Saturday.

The 17-year-old defeated World No. 24 Huang 21-17, 21-11 in a last-four clash that lasted just 33 minutes. Unnati Hooda could not set up an all-Indian title decider as she went down 15-21, 18-21 to World No. 21 Nguyen Thuy Linh of Vietnam.

Tanvi displayed her repertoire of attacking strokes, unsettling Huang with her steep cross-court smashes and disguised pushes to the back court.

Tanvi kept her composure at the crunch. BADMINTONPHOTO

While the Indian enjoyed a narrow lead at the start of the opening game, the local hope ensured she stayed within touching distance of her opponent. The teenager raced away to a six-point lead at 17-11, but Huang narrowed the deficit to two points at one stage. Tanvi, however, raised her intensity at the closing stages to pocket the opener.

In the second game, Huang drew level at 9-9 but Tanvi reeled off 12 of the last 14 points to wrap up the contest.

In the other match, Nguyen took control midway through the opening game after she was locked in an intense battle with Unnati in the early exchanges.

The results (semifinals): Tanvi Sharma bt Huang Yu-Hsun (Tpe) 21-17, 21-11; Nguyen Thuy Linh (Vie) bt Unnati Hooda 21-15, 21-18.

Syndrela, Sutirtha, and Ankur stage upsets

C'WEALTH TT

Amol Karhadkar
NEW DELHI

Syndrela Das, Sutirtha Mukherjee and Ankur Bhattacharjee emerged as giant-killers on Saturday, spearheading a dominant Indian showing as the host nation secured a clean sweep of the singles podium at the 22nd Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships at the Thyagaraj Sports Complex.

The Bengal trio upset higher-ranked Australian opponents in the quarterfinals, ensuring all eight semifinal berths across the men's and women's singles belonged to India. With the doubles events also entering the decisive phase, the host remained on course for a clean sweep of titles.

Giant-killer: Syndrela stunned top seed Yangzi in six games.
SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

The biggest upset of the tournament came courtesy of 16-year-old Syndrela, who stunned top seed and World No. 31 Yangzi Liu in six games. Having lost to the Australian in Ultimate Table Tennis barely a fortnight ago, Syndrela turned the tables with a fearless display. The teenager looked set for a comfortable finish after racing to an 8-2 lead in the sixth game. Yangzi, however, claimed six of the next seven points to reduce the deficit to 9-8. Syndrela's tactical timeout proved decisive. Regaining her composure, she produced a trademark backhand winner before Yangzi miscued a backhand topspin, sealing the biggest victory in her career.

Minutes earlier, Sutirtha had accounted for second seed Min Hyung Jee in five games, relying on her powerful forehand winners to book her place in the semifinals.

Sutirtha.
SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

The men's quarterfinal between Ankur and third seed Nicholas Lum proved the afternoon's most absorbing contest as the Indian's backhand-oriented game outweighed Lum's explosive forehand topspins.

Hometown hero Payas Jain, too, bested fourth seed Harmeet Desai in an absorbing all-Indian contest to set up a last-four clash against top seed Manush Shah.

The results: Quarterfinals: Singles: Men: Manush Shah bt Aditya Sareen (Aus) 11-6, 11-8, 2-11, 13-15, 11-8, 11-5; Payas Jain bt Harmeet Desai 8-11, 12-10, 12-14, 12-10, 11-6, 11-9; Ankur Bhattacharjee bt Nicholas Lum (Aus) 7-11, 15-13, 10-12, 11-5, 11-9, 11-9; Manav Thakkar bt Connor Green (Eng) 5-11, 11-8, 13-11, 11-8, 11-6.
Women: Syndrela Das bt Yangzi Liu (Aus) 10-12, 11-9, 12-10, 11-8, 7-11, 11-8; Sreeja Akula bt Tin-Tin Ho (Eng) 13-11, 1-4, 11-9, 12-10; Yashaswini Ghorpade bt Constantina Psihogios (Aus) 11-5, 11-5, 11-8, 11-5; Sutirtha Mukherjee bt Min Hyung Jee (Aus) 11-6, 11-3, 10-12, 11-6, 11-7.

Semifinals: Mixed doubles: Richard Yap & Ai Xan Tee (Mas) bt Ronit Bhanja & Anusha Kutumbale 11-8, 11-7, 4-11; 4-11, 11-9; Sathiyan & Sreeja bt Sareen & Psihogios (Aus) 11-5, 11-5, 8-11, 11-8.

DOMINANT DISPLAY

Soman, Shubham shine as para athletes end up with record haul

GETTY IMAGES

Indian para athletes made history at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games as they equalled the haul of all the previous editions put together, winning seven medals. Soman Rana clinched gold in the men's F57 shot put with 13.40m while Shubham Juyal (13.28) and Cameron's Cedric Azamdzi (12.57) won the silver and bronze.

STAYING STRONG

Gulveer completes a historic double with 5000m bronze

FILE PHOTO

Gulveer Singh became the first Indian to win a 5000m medal in the Commonwealth Games with a bronze, completing a historic double in Glasgow on Saturday. Gulveer, who had won a silver in the 10000m on July 28, finished third in 5000m with a time of 13 minutes and 24.95 seconds.

UPS AND DOWNS

Judoka Unnati wins bronze medal, Harsh loses the playoff bout

GETTY IMAGES

Indian judoka Unnati Sharma won bronze in the women's (less than) 63kg category at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, beating South Africa's Skye Knoester by ippon in the playoff. India's Harsh Tokas lost the men's (less than) 81kg bronze-medal contest to Australia's Keishin Ochi.

STELLAR SHOW

India climbs to fourth in the table after penultimate day's medal rush

PTI

India's haul of 39 medals (13 gold, 17 silver, nine bronze) vaulted it to fourth in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games table at the time of going to the press. Only Australia (148 overall), England (99), and Canada (57) were ahead. The Indian boxers, led by Jaismine Lamboria, contributed significantly to the tally.

Growing strength: Neeraj, right, and Yash Vir's 2-3 finish underlines India's depth in javelin. PTI

Pathirage wins gold as Neeraj, Yash Vir complete the podium

K. Keerthivasan
GLASGOW

An iconic sportsperson that he has become, Neeraj Chopra drew large crowds at Scotstoun Stadium here on Friday, with Glasgow residents – including a sizeable number of Indians – turning out to witness the Olympic and World champion compete in the men's javelin throw at the Commonwealth Games.

However, in chilly conditions hovering around 14 degree Celsius, it was not Neeraj but Sri Lanka's Rumesh Tharanga Pathirage who adjusted quickly to the tough setting. The 23-year-old produced a stunning second-round throw of 89.75m to seize the gold medal, pushing Neeraj (85.83m, his season's best) to second place.

India's Yash Vir Singh secured his maiden Games medal with a superb performance in his sixth and final attempt. His throw of 85.41m not only earned him a bronze medal but was also his personal best. Grenada's Anderson Peters finished fourth with an effort of 83.88m, even as India's Rohit Yadav came seventh (81.56m).

Pathirage's celebrations after his second throw suggested that he knew he had produced a mark that would be extremely difficult to surpass – and it remained so for the rest of the final.

After the Sri Lankan's gold-winning throw, it took some time for the officials to confirm the distance, with initial announcements suggesting that the throw could have been beyond 90m. Defending Commonwealth Games champion Arshad Nadeem of Pakistan had a disappointing outing, failing to make the top eight after managing only 77.41m and finishing ninth.

Neeraj said he was happy with silver and more so because there were two Indians on the podium. "It was similar at the Asian Games in 2023 where I won gold and Kishore Jena won silver. Yash Vir has done his personal best here, which was very important for him. I am very happy that we are on the podium. I am always happy whenever the national anthem is played. But it's ok [to win silver] as I did my season best and my comeback is getting better".

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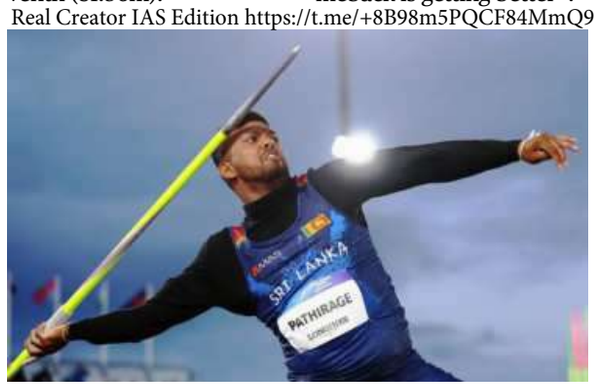

Letting it rip: Pathirage's monster second throw proved to be the golden one. GETTY IMAGES

The magnificent seven

Preeti, Jaismine, Sakshi, Priya, Arundhati, Sachin and Ankush take home the yellow metal as the Indian pugilists put on a show; Jadumani, Lovlina and Narender fall at the final hurdle

C'WEALTH GAMES

K. Keerthivasan
GLASGOW

To have 10 boxers – six women and four men – reach the finals across 14 weight categories is no mean feat and a testament to India's commanding performance at the Commonwealth Games at the Scottish Event Campus here on Saturday.

India capped its finest-ever boxing campaign at the Games, with seven gold medals and three silver.

Sachin Siwach rallied to down Tryagain Morning Ndevelo of Namibia in a thrilling men's 60kg gold medal bout. Sachin made a sensational comeback after trailing in the first two rounds. With time running out, the 26-year-old forced a standing count against Ndevelo and went on to win the tie 3-2 in a split verdict.

Earlier, Preeti Pawar opened the floodgates for India. Facing a relentless Scarlett Delgado, Preeti absorbed the pressure with calm defence and struck effectively when opportunities came her way, earning a 5-0 win over the Canadian in the women's 54kg title clash.

It was then Jaismine Lamboria's turn to showcase her technical brilliance against Northern Ireland's Michaela Walsh in the women's 57kg final, and the reigning World champion did so in emphatic fashion, cruising to a 5-0 victory.

Jadumani Singh, meanwhile, produced an entertaining display in the men's 55kg final against Australia's Jye Dixon. But Dixon's accuracy and control ultimately proved decisive as Jadumani went down fighting 0-5.

Sakshi Chaudhary earned India's its third gold with a 5-0 win over Ruby White of England in the women's 51kg final. Priya Ghanghas' hard-fought 4-1 victory over Canada's Marie-Bathoul Al-Ahmadieh in the women's 60kg summit clash sparked celebrations in the Indian corner as the country claimed its fourth boxing gold of the Games, eclipsing the three it had secured at Birmingham in 2022.

Arundhati Choudhary put on a sparkling display to outwit Chantelle Reid of England 5-0 in the women's 70kg gold medal bout. Although Reid appeared to be the aggressor early on it was Arundhati who dictated the tempo with her sharp, direct combinations.

Emma-Sue Greentree of Australia dashed Lovlina Borgohain's hopes of a maiden gold in the mega event. The Tokyo Olympic bronze medallist lost 1-4 in a split decision in the women's 75kg final. Ankush Panghal got the better of Dimeji Shittu of England in men's 80kg final in a split 4-1 verdict to secure India's seventh gold shortly after Sachin's triumph.

Narender ended up with a silver in the men's 90+kg as he came second best to Damar Thomas of England in a 0-5 verdict.

Cornering glory: Sachin, Sakshi, Preeti, Arundhati, Priya, Jaismine and Ankush made it a memorable day for India in the boxing ring. GETTY IMAGES, PTI & REUTERS

Fierce competitor: Tejaswin overcame both physical and mental challenges to finish on the podium. ANI

Tejaswin digs deep, earns a historic bronze in decathlon

K. Keerthivasan
GLASGOW

In the back-breaking, unforgiving world of decathlon, where each discipline tests a different facet of an athlete's body and mind, Tejaswin Shankar battled pain from a knee injury, self-doubt and Glasgow's biting weather, with temperatures hovering between 14 and 16 degree Celsius over two gruelling days, to script history in the Commonwealth Games at the Scotstoun Stadium here on Friday.

The 27-year-old dug deep to produce personal-best performances in three disciplines – long jump, discus throw and javelin throw –overcoming both physical and mental challenges to clinch a historic bronze medal.

Tejaswin amassed 7,976 points to become the first Indian to win a medal in decathlon at the Games. Grenada's Lindon Victor clinched his third straight title with 8,096 while Canada's Damian Warner took the silver (8,036).

Winning medals in successive editions of the Games made the latest achievement even more special for Tejaswin. "I'm very happy that after two days, I was able to do all the things that I had to and give everything I could. It's even more special because I won a bronze in the previous edition (2022) in high jump. Now, it's a bronze in decathlon, which is completely different," he said.

What made it even more memorable, Tejaswin insisted, was sharing the podium with athletes he had idolised ever since he took up the sport.

"These are the people whose videos I've watched almost every single day since I started competing in the decathlon. To be able to share the podium with them is pretty special," he said.

Tejaswin also credited long jumper M. Sreeshankar for helping him navigate the mental challenges of returning from a serious knee injury.

"The one person whose advice I valued the most was Sreeshankar because he had suffered a similar injury after rupturing his tendon. He told me, 'Just take it one day at a time. All you should do is show up.' Those words kept echoing in my mind throughout the competition," he said.

Going into the final event, the 1500m, the battle for bronze was still alive, with England's Sammy Ball lurking close behind in overall standings. Tejaswin knew exactly what was required.

"My goal was to run as fast as I could and not let Sammy get too far ahead. I knew he had to beat me by about eight seconds, so I just had to stay close to him," he added.

Triple jumper Praveen erases pain of the past with silver, Selva takes bronze

K. Keerthivasan
GLASGOW

A painful memory stayed with Praveen Chithravel long after the Commonwealth Games triple jump competition had ended in Birmingham in 2022.

The Indian missed out on a medal by a mere three centimetres despite delivering a leap of 16.89m.

The fact that an Indian podium sweep could not be achieved must have hurt him more – his compatriots Eldhose Paul and Abdulla Aboobacker had secured a historic gold and silver.

At the Scotstoun Stadium here on Saturday, the 25-year-old erased that disappointment with a silver show. With a performance of 16.58m in his fourth attempt, he secured his first Games triple jump medal, turning a scar into a moment of redemption.

For the 21-year-old Selva Prabhu, it was a debut to cherish. The NCAA champion produced a 16.52m effort in his fifth and penultimate attempt to clinch bronze. He revealed that a bout of diarrhea a week or so before the Games disrupted his preparation.

Selva. GETTY IMAGES

"It feels great to win my first major international medal. I could have done better, but it is fine. I have won a medal for the country. I thank all my coaches and support staff. I am proud of myself as this was my parents' dream," the youngster said.

That 16.72m was enough to win gold – Jamaica's Jordan Scott was the winner – showed how difficult the conditions were.

The temperature hovering around 14 degree Celsius made it challenging for the jumpers to reach their season or personal bests.

National record holder Praveen arrived as one of the favourites, having been ranked No. 2 in the field on season's best behind Scott's 17.69m. The Indian had come up with a 17.08m leap at the Inter-State meet in Ranchi in May, underlying his medal credentials.

Redemption: Praveen bagged his maiden Commonwealth Games medal. GETTY IMAGES

INBRIEF

Patidar to lead Central Zone in Duleep Trophy

Rajat Patidar will lead Central Zone in the Duleep Trophy, starting later this month in Bengaluru. Middle-order batter Rinku Singh will be the deputy to Patidar, the two-time IPL winning skipper with Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

The squad: Rajat Patidar (Capt.), Rinku Singh (Vice-Capt.), Aryan Juyal (wk), Saransh Jain, Aman Mokhade, Kunal Chandela, Zeeshan Ansari, Aryan Pandey, Arshad Khan, Ayush Pandey, Yash Rathod, Harsh Dubey, Kunal Singh Rathod (wk), Yash Thakur, and Nachiket Bhute. **Standbyes:** Amandeep Khare, Mayank Mishra, Saurabh Rawat, Bhargav Merai, Kunal Yadav, and Kumar Kartikeya.

India drawn with Maldives and Pakistan in SAFF C'ship

Defending champion India has been drawn with Maldives and Pakistan in Group B of the SAFF Championship 2026, following the draw conducted in Thimphu, Bhutan, on Saturday. The 15th edition of the sub-continental football tournament will be hosted in Dhaka from November 4-17. Chasing a record-extending 10th SAFF championship title, India will begin its campaign against Maldives on November 5 before taking on Pakistan on November 11. Hosts Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan are placed in Group A. In the event that FIFA's suspension of the All Nepal Football Association is lifted by September 1, Nepal will be included in Group A. If the suspension stays, the SAFF Championship 2026 will go ahead with six teams.

Barcelona snaps up teenager Bisiwu from Club Brugge

Barcelona signed teenage winger Jesse Bisiwu from Club Brugge on Friday for a reported €8.5 million. "FC Barcelona and Club Brugge have reached an agreement for the transfer of Jesse Bisiwu, who signs up to be a blaugrana until 30 June, 2031," Barcelona said in a statement. The 18-year-old Belgian follows Anthony Gordon and Karim Adeyemi in joining the Spanish champion.

All smiles: *Top:* Third-placed Akilan, International Surfing Association course presenter Lee Rayan, winner Sivaraj Babu, and runner-up Ramesh Budihal. *Below:* Second runner-up Riva Aurora, Lee Rayan, second-placed Sugar Shanti Banarse, and victor Kamali Moorthy.

Mahabalipuram's Sivaraj and Kamali win Point Break Challenge — Stop 3

SURFING

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Mahabalipuram's Sivaraj Babu and Kamali Moorthy stormed to titles on home waves on the final day of the Point Break Challenge – Stop 3 of the Surfing Federation of India (SFI) National Surf Series here on Saturday.

Sivaraj Babu was in commanding form in the Men's Open, topping the final to continue his run of back-to-back titles. Kamali Moorthy won two crowns in a single day – clinching both the Women's Open and the 18 & Under Girls titles. In the 18 & Under Boys' category, Som Sethi claimed his first title, with Tayin Arun runner-up once again.

The results:

Point Break Challenge Champions: Men's Open: Sivaraj Babu.

18 & Under Boys: Som Sethi; **14 & Under Boys:** Prahalad Sriram; **SUP Technical Men:** Sekar Pachai; **SUP Technical 18 & Under:** D. Rajesh; **Women's Open & 18 & Under Girls:** Kamali Moorthy.

Anshuman guides Superstarz to victory

Pacer triggers a dramatic collapse to have Riders bundled out for 165; Anmol anchors the chase as the South Delhi side gets home comfortably

DPL

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Anshuman Hooda's five for 24 helped South Delhi Superstarz defeat East Delhi Riders by four wickets in the Delhi Premier League at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Saturday.

Having been sent in to bat by Superstarz skipper Ayush Badoni, Riders were bundled out for 165.

With Arpit Rana contributing a 39-ball 66 at the top, the Riders team seemed set for a daunting total after motoring to 136 for four in 14 overs. But Anshuman, a 25-year-old pacer, came to the fore at the back end and triggered a dramatic collapse.

The pursuit of 166 was anchored by opener Anmol Sharma, whose knock of 64 enabled Superstarz to reach home with 11 balls to spare. Anmol's innings comprised eight fours and two maximums.

He was ably assisted by Pranav Pant and Badoni, whose cameos ensured that Superstarz were well in control of the required rate right through.

Speedster Mayank Yadav, who recently featured for India in a three-match T20I series against Zimbabwe, removed Sanat Sangwan off the first ball of the chase while Ashish Meena and Rounak Waghela chipped in with two wickets each for East Delhi.

Later, defending champion West Delhi Lions rode on Ayush Doseja's 84 to register a 19-run win over New Delhi Tigers.

Destructive: Anshuman put Superstarz in the driver's seat with his stunning performance. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The scores:

East Delhi Riders 165 in 18.1 overs (Arpit Rana 66, Kavya Gupta 37, Ayush Badoni 2/29, Anshuman Hooda 5/24) lost to South Delhi Superstarz 169/6 in 18.1 overs (Anmol Sharma 64, Ashish Meena 2/24, Rounak Waghela 2/54).

West Delhi Lions 170/5 in 20 overs (Ayush Doseja 84, Mayank Gusain 46 n.o., Hrithik Shokeen 2/24) bt New Delhi Tigers 151 in 20 overs (Vaibhav Rawal 31, Manish Sehrawat 51, Manan Bhardwaj 3/20, Kulwant Khejroliya 3/25, Shubham Dubey 2/29, Mayank Gusain 2/29).

Hardik's trade gains traction as MI plans to hit reset button

Amol Karhadkar
NEW DELHI

Hardik Pandya could be at the centre of the Indian Premier League's biggest trade story ahead of the 2027 season, with Mumbai Indians considering a significant overhaul after enduring its longest title drought in the competition.

While no trade has been officially confirmed, conversations around Hardik's future had gathered momentum even before the conclusion of IPL 2026.

Chennai Super Kings has emerged as a possible next stop for the India all-rounder – and, given his profile, there would be no shortage of suitors if he does become available – while Rajasthan Royals, Kolkata Knight Riders and Delhi Capitals have also been understood to be considering the Hardik option.

The speculation comes after three contrasting seasons for MI. After a disastrous 2024 campaign, the five-time champion recovered to reach the playoffs in 2025 before another underwhelming performance in 2026 prompted a comprehensive review within the franchise.

"Our post-season review is currently on and we are looking into all aspects. Contrary to reports, we are not engaged in conversations with regard to player trade. The same is only possible once the review is complete," an MI spokesperson told *The Hindu* on Saturday. "A range of options and ideas are being evaluated, which require time... hence no decisions have been made."

In focus: The speculation surrounding Hardik's future had gathered momentum even before the conclusion of IPL 2026. EMMANUAL YOGINI

That review extends well beyond the captaincy. Sources close to the franchise indicate MI is evaluating its leadership group, coaching staff and overall cricket operations as it looks to rebuild a side that has failed to challenge consistently for the title in recent years.

Despite the growing buzz, Hardik's exit is far from certain. His decision to part ways with MI's talent management arm has fuelled speculation, but it is not being viewed as a complete break with the franchise.

Historically, MI has retained its core players for long periods and continues to be regarded as one of the strongest player-management ecosystems in Indian sport, making any move involving its captain a complex one.

The trade market, meanwhile, remains in its early stages, with most franchises still conducting post-season reviews before finalising their plans – meaning multiple scenarios will likely continue to circulate across the league in the coming weeks.

Whether Hardik leaves or not, one thing appears increasingly clear: Mumbai Indians is unlikely to head into IPL 2027 with the same core that has represented the franchise over the last three seasons.

And if the India all-rounder does switch teams, it could prove to be the defining move of this trade window.

Ajaraie scores hat-trick as NEUFC routs Bodoland, begins title defence in style

On song: Ajaraie, right, opened the scoring for the Highlanders while Moyano completed the tally. X@NEUTDFC

DURAND CUP

Sports Bureau

NorthEast United FC kicked off its Durand Cup title defence by thrashing regional challenger Bodoland FC 6-0 in the Group F opener in Guwahati on Saturday.

Moroccan forward Alaaeddine Ajaraie marked his comeback to the team with a fine hat-trick.

Lalrinzuala, and substitutes Redeem Tlang and Antonio Moyano added a goal each to complete a dominant display by the Highlanders.

Bodoland put up a disciplined performance for much of the first half, frustrating NorthEast's attacking efforts.

Ajaraie broke the deadlock in the first-half stoppage time to give the host a 1-0 lead at the interval.

NorthEast returned with renewed intensity after the break and overwhelmed Bodoland FC with five second-half goals.

Ajaraie completed his hat-trick in a memorable return after spending the previous season on loan at Indonesian club Persija.

The result: Group F:

NorthEast United FC 6 (Alaaeddine Ajaraie 45+3, 67, 86, Lalrinzuala 58, Redeem Tlang 70, Antonio Moyano 90+1) bt Bodoland FC 0.

Vozinha gets the nod to display nickname on jersey in Primera Division

Associated Press
SANTIAGO

Vozinha, the breakout Cape Verde goalkeeper who rose to global fame during the World Cup, will be allowed to display his nickname on his jersey when he joins Chile's Primera Division. The exception was unanimously approved on Friday by the ANFP, which organises the league. Top executives across Chilean clubs backed the request on behalf of the player, whose full name is Josimar Jose Evora Dias. Announced a week ago as a marquee signing for Colo-Colo – Chile's most decorated club – the 40-year-old Vozinha was initially scheduled to land in Santiago on Tuesday.

Vozinha. AFP

After visa issues delayed his travel to Thursday, he ultimately failed to board his flight.

Infantino backs out of private investment plan after backlash

FOOTBALL

Agencies
PARIS

FIFA president Gianni Infantino has lost the "confidence" of European football's governing body after his plan to allow private investment in the World Cup was withdrawn following a global backlash.

"The current FIFA leadership has not only lost UEFA's confidence but also that of many other members of the football family," read the statement.

Infantino's decision to back out of the investment plan came after his senior adviser, Carlos Cordeiro who sat on a White House panel resigned and Asia's football body joined Europe and North America in opposing the plan.

"Having listened carefully to all the views, it has become clear that the project has created divisions of a nature that, regardless of the level of support, are no longer in the interest of the objective set out in the first place," Infantino said in a statement on Friday.

"Our purpose has always been – and will always be – to unite and improve.

"As a result, this proposal will not proceed."

UEFA had been at the forefront of the opposition to FIFA's plan, which had envisaged raising up to $4.2 billion based on a valuation of $20 billion for FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE), a planned commercial subsidiary to run events such as the World Cup and Club World Cup.

Criticism

While UEFA welcomed the withdrawal of a proposal unanimously rejected by itself and also by other confederations "whose job it is to protect football" it did not hold back in its criticism of Infantino.

The statement said the 56-year-old Swiss had broken promises he had made when he sought to be elected in 2016 – namely to be "transparent" and that FIFA's money was "your (the member associations) money and "not the money of the FIFA president."

"On both these promises, he has failed to deliver," said UEFA.

FIFA's chief operating officer Kevin Lamour, too had issued a statement, saying that the staff of FIFA was deceived by president Infantino's lack of openness in planning the sale over recent months and that the project must not continue.

"It is the project of one person," Lamour, a long-time colleague of Infantino at both FIFA and UEFA, had written, before the project was withdrawn by Infantino.

Shiv Neel dominates Mini class in IAME India Series karting

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Shiv Neel from Coimbatore showcased his racing pedigree with a brilliant performance to dominate the Mini class in the third round of the IAME India Series karting, promoted by RA Motorsports and organised by the Madras Motor Sports Club at the Madras International Karting Arena (MIKA), here on Saturday.

Similarly, Aaruthran Prabhu (Kartkrew Motorsports) from Kumbarapuram, the gold medalist at the FIA Asia-Pacific Championship in Sri Lanka last year, won both the Super Heat and Finals in the Mini Under-10 segment that was run concurrently with the Mini class.

Equally impressive was Chennai's Rehan Khan Rasheed (Momentum Motorsports) who took the honours in the Junior Finals with a near-flawless drive. Rehan Khan, starting the Finals from P2, blasted off the line and opened a huge lead which kept increasing with each lap as he completed a commanding win.

The results (Provisional – subject to post-race scrutiny):

IAME X30 - 125cc Seniors (Finals, 16 laps): 1. Armaan Dhawan (Leap Frog Racing) (13:28.933); 2. Kairav Roberson (MSPORT) (13:29.078); 3. Madhusudhan (Kartkrew Motorsports) (13:36.239).

Super Heat (14 laps): 1. Kairav (11:45.380); 2. Armaan (11:45.717); 3. Madhusudhan (11:50.137).

Juniors (Finals, 14 laps): 1. Rehan Khan Rasheed (Momentum Motorsports) (11:55.505); 2. Abhishikt Barse (Crest Motorsports) (11:59.906); 3. Adithya Pratap (Momentum Motorsports) (12:04.715).

Super Heat (12 laps): 1. Abhishikt (10:24.324); 2. Rehan (10:24.440); 3. Adithya (10:24.815).

IAME X30 - 60cc Mini Class (Finals, 12 laps): 1. Shiv Neel (NKRA with KKM) (11:13.089); 2. Rudra Gokulnath (NKRA with Momentum) (11:13.626); 3. Eeshan Swaroop (Kartkrew Motorsports) (11:20.842).

Super Heat (10 laps): 1. Shiv Neel (09:22.918); 2. Rudra (09:22.966); 3. Eeshan (09:26.244).

Mini Under-10 (Finals, 12 laps): 1. Aaruthran Prabhu (Kartkrew Motorsports) (11:13.415); 2. Ayansh Patil (MSPORT) (11:13.797); 3. Saakhir Joseph Nagpal (Peregrine Racing) (11:18.716).

Super Heat (10 laps): 1. Aaruthran (09:20.580); 2. Yeshwin Vinay Kishore (Peregrine Racing) (09:22.092); 3. Ayansh Patil (09:27.055).

LIVE TELECAST

West Indies vs Pakistan: Second Test, Day 1, FanCode, 7.30 p.m.

CWG 2026: Closing Ceremony, Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 1.30 a.m. (Monday).

Against waves: Migrants make their way from Morocco into the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on July 30, as the border witnessed its biggest migrant surge in years. AP

Waiting game: Migrants gather around a burnt-out vehicle near Fnideq, Morocco, on July 31, waiting for an opportunity to cross into Ceuta. REUTERS

Border tensions: Migrants gather on a hillside during clashes with Moroccan security forces near Fnideq, as thousands attempt to reach Ceuta. AFP

First steps: A migrant gestures after reaching the Spanish side of the border in Ceuta, following the hazardous journey by land and sea. REUTERS

The long swim to Ceuta

Ceuta witnessed its largest migrant influx in years as over 50,000 people crossed from Morocco; the surge prompted Spain to send back thousands of migrants and declare the situation an attack on the country's sovereignty

Ceuta, the Spanish exclave that shares borders with Morocco, witnessed its largest migrant surge in years last week. More than 50,000 migrants had rushed into the Spanish city since July 30, mostly by swimming or crossing on inner tubes and improvised floatation devices from Morocco. Many arrived by inner tube with cell phones zipped in waterproof pouches, and upon reaching shore cheered for Spain and kissed the ground. For many others, the crossing turned deadly: at least 57 were reported dead, including people who drowned and others crushed while climbing the breakwater fence.

The influx marked the largest arrival of migrants in Ceuta since 2021. Ceuta's regional president declared an "absolute humanitarian and social emergency" and called on Madrid to send troops to reassert control. Spain's left-leaning Prime Minister Pedro Sanches rushed to the exclave on Friday and slammed the mass crossings as an attack on Spain's sovereignty. Ceuta and Melilla, both Spanish exclaves in Africa, are part of both the European Union and the Schengen Area.

By Friday, Spain announced that more than 48,300 of the arrivals had already been sent back to Morocco under existing bilateral arrangements. Troops were mobilised to Ceuta. But it remains unclear what suddenly triggered the surge. Spanish authorities say trafficking networks spread misinformation that asylum could easily be obtained in Spain. Some say Moroccan authorities allowed large-scale migrant movement. Both Spain's critics abroad and Mr. Sanchez's political rivals at home seized on the crisis to attack Madrid. As of now, Spain claims that the situation is returning to normalcy. But Ceuta remains on the edge.

(Text by Stanly Johny)

Sea route: People swim around the border barrier separating Morocco and Ceuta on July 31. AFP

Divided voices: Far-right demonstrators protest the mass arrivals in Ceuta outside the Moroccan Embassy in Madrid on July 31. AFP

Safe ground: Emotion washes over a migrant after he reached Ceuta on July 31, ending a perilous journey across the border. REUTERS

Quick reaction: A Spanish soldier escorts migrants back towards the Moroccan border on August 1, as Spain rapidly returned most of those who entered Ceuta. AFP

Under watch: A Spanish soldier questions a migrant in Ceuta after thousands crossed into the enclave by land and sea. REUTERS

Turning back: Spanish police and soldiers escort migrants towards the border after authorities begin returning arrivals to Morocco. REUTERS