MONDAY
August 10, 2026
DELHI
CITY EDITION
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MILKY MIST DAIRY FOOD LIMITED is proposing, subject to applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, receipt of requisite approvals, market conditions and other considerations, to make an initial public offering of its Equity Shares and has filed the RHP with RoC, SEBI and the Stock Exchanges on August 4, 2026. The RHP shall be available on the website of SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in, and is available on the websites of the Stock Exchanges i.e. BSE and NSE at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com, respectively, on the website of the Company at www.milkymist.com and the websites of the BRLMs, i.e., JM Financial Limited, Axis Capital Limited and IIFL Capital Services Limited (formerly known as IIFL Securities Limited) at www.jmfl.com, https://www.axiscapital.co.in/ and www.iiflcapital.com, respectively. Any potential investors should note that investment in equity shares involves a high degree of risk and for details relating to such risk, see ''Risk Factors'' beginning on page 23 of the RHP. Potential investors should not rely on the DRHP and should instead rely on their own examination of our Company and the Offer, including the risks involved, for making any investment decision.
The Equity Shares offered in the Offer have not been and will not be registered under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the "U.S. Securities Act") or any state securities laws in the United States and, unless so registered, may not be offered or sold within the United States, except pursuant to an exemption from, or in a transaction not subject to, the registration requirements of the U.S. Securities Act and applicable state securities laws. Accordingly, such Equity Shares are being offered and sold (i) outside of the United States in offshore transactions in reliance on Regulation S under the U.S. Securities Act and the applicable laws of the jurisdiction where those offers and sales occur; and (ii) within the United States to "qualified institutional buyers" (as defined in Rule 144A under the U.S. Securities Act), pursuant to the private placement exemption set out in Section 4(a) of the U.S. Securities Act. The Equity Shares have not been and will not be registered, listed or otherwise qualified in any other jurisdiction outside India and may not be offered or sold, and Bids may not be made by persons in any such jurisdiction, except in compliance with the applicable laws of such jurisdiction. There will be no public offering in the United States.

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*In the organized market with a market share of approximately 19% In terms of the organised packaged paneer market value in Fiscal 2026 in India (Source: 1Lattice Report) | **In South India in Fiscal 2026, with a market share of approximately 12% In terms of market value in the Southern region's organised cheese segment (Source: 1Lattice Report) | #With a market share of approximately 13% in terms of market value in the organized yogurt market in India (Source: 1Lattice Report)

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IN BRIEF

'Rice scam' in city: AAP; BJP points to Kejriwal-era 'graft'

NEW DELHI
The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the BJP on Sunday traded corruption allegations. While the Opposition party claimed a "rice scam" in the city, the BJP pointed to "graft" during CM Arvind Kejriwal's tenure, citing 24 CAG reports. » Page 2

'JNU move to nix event on Khalid anti-student'

NEW DELHI
The Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union on Sunday hit out at the JNU administration for cancelling a discussion on a book by former student Umar Khalid, calling it "anti-student". » Page 10

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 17

Netanyahu rejects Trump's 15-point proposal for Gaza

Israeli military will not withdraw from Gaza unless Hamas is 'genuinely disarmed', says the Israeli PM amid pressure from right-wing base ahead of election; willing to 'challenge' Trump, he adds

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday rejected a U.S.-led Gaza plan endorsed by Hamas, putting distance between himself and U.S. President Donald Trump as he tries to shore up his base ahead of close elections.

After more than a week of gradually escalating criticism of the plan proposed by the Board of Peace, and despite receiving assurances that Israel would not need to start withdrawing from Gaza immediately, Mr. Netanyahu explicitly opposed the deal following pushback from his right-wing allies.

"Israel rejects the 15-point document," Mr. Netanyahu said, referring to the plan Hamas agreed to in late July.

The Israeli military "will not carry out any withdrawal until Hamas is genuinely disarmed, and will continue to thwart threats against our forces and our citizens", he told a Cabinet meeting.

Mr. Netanyahu described Mr. Trump, who had hailed the Gaza deal as a milestone for peace, as "our greatest friend in the White House", but quickly made clear he was willing to challenge him, saying Israel was raising its objections with the United States.

"They have ideas; some of them are acceptable to us and some are not, and we know how to stand our ground on these matters," he said.

Mr. Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader, is running even or trailing in some polls ahead of October 27 elections, the country's first since the devastating October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas that sparked the war on Gaza.

Polls show that the Gaza plan is unpopular with Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing base, and far-right members of his Cabinet have urged him to kill it.

Hamas, days after selecting a new leader, Khalil al-Hayya, announced it supported the Gaza plan, and has since called on Washington to push Mr. Netanyahu to accept it.

Hamas in a statement said it was still committed to the plan.

Difference of opinions

The Israeli PM's opposition to the proposal comes after more than a week of gradually escalating criticism of the plan

What the plan says:
- Hamas would surrender weapons to a nascent Palestinian governing body
- Israel would begin pulling out forces in tandem with the disarmament

> They [U.S.] have ideas; some of them are acceptable to us and some are not, and we know how to stand our ground
>
> **BENJAMIN NETANYAHU**
> Israeli Prime Minister

Jharkhand govt. cancels 3 exams as protests continue

Suruchi Kumari
RANCHI

The Jharkhand government on Sunday agreed to cancel the 14th Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) preliminary examination and the JPSC backlog examinations held in 2023 and 2025 following discussions with protesting student groups.

The State's Technical and Higher Education Minister, Sudivya Kumar, said the government had accepted "98% of the demands" of the protesting groups. The government also announced an Enforcement Directorate probe into alleged financial irregularities in the JPSC exam.

However, the students remained firm on their demand for a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the alleged irregularities in the Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission-Combined Graduate Level (JSSC-CGL) examination and said the agitation would continue, including a march to the State Assembly on Monday. The announcement came even as all three JPSC members resigned and Chief Minister Hemant Soren assured protesters that "justice will be delivered with full transparency".

A Jharkhand government delegation with student representatives at the State Guest House in Ranchi, after the meeting on Sunday. PTI

'No jurisdiction'

"The government has agreed with the demand for cancellation of the 14th JPSC and backlog examinations of 2023 and 2025," Mr. Kumar said, adding that the State cannot recommend a CBI probe "as we do not have jurisdiction over the JSSC-CGL exams that happened in line with High Court and Supreme Court directions".

The protesting groups, led by Jharkhand Loktantrik Krantikari Morcha (JLKM) and JPSC-JSSC Reforms Manch, said they wanted cancellation of the JSSC-CGL and all exams connected to the TSR Data Processing Private Ltd., a blacklisted entity.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10
'WILL SAFEGUARD FUTURE'
» PAGE 10

Houthis hit Saudi oil facility, kill 11 in Yemen

Agence France-Presse
ADEN

At least 11 persons were killed in Houthi strikes in Yemen's port city of Mokha on Sunday while a drone salvo by the Iran-aligned rebels targeted a Saudi Arabian oil refinery on the Kingdom's Red Sea coast.

The attack in Mokha comes after a years-long truce in the civil war between the Houthis and the Saudi Arabia-backed, internationally recognised Yemeni government appeared to collapse as fighting between the rebels and the Kingdom in West Asia flared in recent weeks.

A medical source in Mokha said three civilians and eight military personnel had been killed in the Houthi attack. Mokha is one of the main ports under Yemen's internationally recognised government and has been renovated to handle shipping that avoids the Houthi-held port of Hodeida.

Two sources with the government forces earlier confirmed at least eight troops had been killed and more than 40 personnel were injured, saying that the Houthis attacked Mokha with several waves of missile and drones.

The Houthis' military spokesperson Yahya Saree said the group targeted "Saudi enemy" troops and equipment in the area with missiles and drones.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Almond season

Valley of plenty: Farmers collect almonds during the harvesting season at a village in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. Almond cultivation is a key agricultural activity in the Kashmir Valley, contributing to the livelihoods of thousands of families. IMRAN NISSAR

J&K group flags 'terror threat' against Pandits

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

A Kashmir organisation on Sunday expressed concerns over purported online threats issued by terrorists to Pandits living in the Valley and demanded a probe, saying that the threats had "forced many minority community employees" working in the region to "go on leave".

The Panun Kashmir, a Jammu-based organisation of Kashmiri Pandits, said the purported threat communication, dated August 7 and issued in the name of the United Liberation Council, "has specifically named members of the Kashmiri Pandit community and disclosed their telephone numbers".

Scores of Pandits working in Kashmir have left the Valley after the fresh threat, sources say

Official sources said scores of Pandits working in Kashmir under the Prime Minister's rehabilitation package had left the Valley in the face of the fresh threat. They said departments in "volatile and sensitive locations" in Kashmir had allowed Pandit employees to go on leave till August 20. However, there has been no official communication from the government.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

NATIONAL SONG ROW

Kerala Minister hints at withdrawing directive

STATES » PAGE 5

SLOGANS RAISED

Mamata faces protest in West Bengal district

NEWS » PAGE 11

Ladakh to lead Independent India's first caste census

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Ladakh, one of the two youngest Union Territories in the country, is set to lead the way in demonstrating how caste will be enumerated for the first time in Independent India. The second phase of the Census – the Population Enumeration (PE) – which starts on August 17 in Ladakh and other snow-bound areas, is likely to ask questions on 40 parameters and provide an open-ended column for caste enumeration.

While the ongoing exercise is India's first digital Census, officials are making an exception for Ladakh by printing a sufficient number of paper schedules. The move takes into account the presence of large defence establishments in the region bordering China and Pakistan, whose locations cannot be geo-tagged because of security concerns. The digital Census mandatorily requires enumerators to geo-locate the structures on a mobile App. Respondents who self-enumerate on Census portal are also required to do the same.

As reported by *The Hindu* on July 6, the rehearsal, or the "pre-test", for the PE phase was conducted from July 1 to 20 in 16 States and Union Territories, where respondents, other than those from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, recorded their castes in an "open column", or the enumerator noted a resident's caste as declared by them. The methodology is likely to be retained in the final form.

Enumerators interact with residents during an awareness campaign in Birbhum, West Bengal, as part of the Census 2027. PTI

Ladakh's case is peculiar as it was not among these 16 States and Union Territories.

Though the questionnaire or the schedule is yet to be notified by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RG&CCI), preparations have begun in Ladakh and snow-bound areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand to conduct PE from August 17 to September 30, ahead of the rest of the country, where the exercise will be conducted in February 2027. The Directorate of Census Operations, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, has concluded a three-day Master Trainers' Training Programme for Census 2027 population enumeration, marking the next phase of field preparedness.

According to Chief Principal Census Officer, Amit Sharma, the three-day programme provided comprehensive training on all aspects of Census 2027 population enumeration, covering census concepts, caste and demographic data collection, digital tools, self-enumeration, interviewing techniques, and hands-on use of the mobile application.

A senior government official said that, in the absence of the pre-test in Ladakh, the master-trainers are being trained based on tentative questions, around 40, which are likely to be notified this week.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Police still harassing us, allege student protesters

Lavpreet Kaur
NEW DELHI

A former president of the Bhagat Singh Chhatra Ekta Manch alleged that Delhi Police personnel have been visiting her parents' home in Delhi every seven to 10 days for several months, asking about her whereabouts and serving notices in connection with old cases, including defamation cases. Police scrutiny has continued long after the demonstrations ended, students told *The Hindu*, describing a sustained pattern of harassment.

DETAILS ON
» PAGE 10

INBRIEF

Sandhu directs govt. to frame rotation policy for officials

Lieutenant-Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Sunday directed the Delhi government to frame a policy for the systematic rotation of officials and transfer those holding the same posts for long periods. Sources in Lok Niwas said he also instructed that vigilance officers be posted in all sensitive departments to ensure transparency and financial probity, and called for standard operating guidelines to monitor adherence to Chief Vigilance Commission norms.

High Court to hear ED plea against Kejriwal's bail today

The Delhi High Court will on Monday hear the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) plea challenging the bail granted to former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the 2021-22 excise policy-linked money laundering case. The petition, filed in 2024, is listed before Justice Manoj Jain. Mr. Kejriwal has been granted interim bail in the case by the Supreme Court, which referred questions on the "need and necessity of arrest" under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act to a larger Bench. Earlier, a trial court had granted him bail, but it was later stayed by the Delhi High Court. The ED and the CBI had arrested him in 2024. PTI

Two policemen suspended after youth dies in Gurugram

Two policemen were suspended and an inquiry was initiated into the allegations of police negligence following the murder of 22-year-old Sagar in Farrukhnagar in Gurugram. A senior officer said head constable Ashok and constable Vinod were suspended after the victim's family alleged that timely action could have prevented the incident. The police said Sagar was shot dead during an assault at his home on August 6 by a group allegedly led by a man named Sachet. PTI

Two killed, one injured in Dwarka Expressway accident

Two persons were killed and one seriously injured after the scooter they were riding rammed a truck parked on the Dwarka Expressway, the police said on Sunday. The accident occurred around 8.30 p.m. on Saturday near BPTP Society. According to a complaint, the truck was parked in the middle of the flyover. An officer said an FIR has been registered and search is under way for the truck driver, adding that the heavy goods vehicle did not have reflectors. PTI

'Rice scam' unfolding in Delhi: AAP; large-scale lapses under Kejriwal exposed by CAG: BJP

Govt. mum over 'racket' unearthed by Centre, Sirsa must resign, says Bharadwaj; Parvesh denies allegations; Food Supplies Minister threatens legal action, gives AAP 24 hours to issue an apology

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

AAP Delhi chief Saurabh Bharadwaj alleged that rice meant for the poor is being diverted; Food Supplies Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa termed the allegations 'fabricated, malicious'. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP/ PTI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday traded corruption allegations, with the Opposition party alleging irregularities in the procurement and sale of subsidised rice meant for the poor in Delhi.

AAP claimed that the "racket" could involve rice worth ₹22,000 crore over three years. Public Works Department Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh denied the allegations and cited a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report tabled in the Assembly on August 7 that pointed to "large-scale financial irregularities" during AAP's 11-year tenure in the Capital.

31,000 tonnes of rice

Addressing a press conference, AAP Delhi unit president Saurabh Bharadwaj said that, on the recommendation of Food Supplies Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa's department, the Food Corporation of India had agreed to supply 31,000 tonnes of heavily subsidised rice every week to the North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited in Assam for distribution among Delhi's poor for a period of three years.

"Instead, the corporation allegedly sold the rice to a private company in Haryana at nearly double the price, generating ₹70 crore to ₹71 crore in commission every week. At this rate, rice worth ₹22,000 crore would have been sold over three years, generating ₹11,000 crore in commission," Mr. Bharadwaj claimed.

He said the "racket" had been detected by the Central government's vigilance officials and that an officer had been suspended; however, the Delhi government had remained silent on the matter. Mr. Bharadwaj demanded that Chief Minister Rekha Gupta seek Mr. Sirsa's resignation and fix responsibility for the alleged scam.

Responding to the allegations, Mr. Sirsa threatened legal action. He gave AAP leaders 24 hours to withdraw their allegations and issue a public apology, failing which he said he would initiate appropriate legal proceedings against them. "Saurabh Bharadwaj and Sanjeev Jha have today again made baseless, false, fabricated and malicious allegations against me, clearly intended to defame and malign me. Such a malicious campaign appears to be their *modus operandi*. Apologise or we will meet in court," Mr. Sirsa stated in a post on X.

'Ex-CM flouted rules'

The Delhi government said it had received 24 CAG reports in the past 18 months, with each "exposing corruption" involving thousands of crores of rupees during AAP's tenure.

Citing the findings of a CAG report, the PWD Minister alleged that former CM Arvind Kejriwal had flouted rules, floated 1,185 manual tenders and inserted arbitration clauses in tenders, leading to large-scale irregularities and loss of public money.

'Outstanding liabilities'

"A total of ₹70,410 crore in tax revenue was outstanding against some businesses. The GST Department, in collusion with certain industrialists and business owners, allowed their outstanding GST liabilities to remain pending," Mr. Singh said.

He added that the CAG report stated that "bogus" e-way bills worth ₹68,680 crore had been generated.

Kanwariyas with idols of Lord Shiva; (below) CM Rekha Gupta showering flowers on pilgrims on Sunday. R. V. MOORTHY/PTI

Gupta promises child beggar-free city, visits camps for *kanwariyas*

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The government will soon launch a 'child beggar-free Delhi' campaign to protect children found begging in public places and at major road intersections across the Capital, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has said.

In a video message posted on X on Saturday, Ms. Gupta said the campaign would be implemented across all 13 districts to provide a secure future to children involved in begging.

She added that children would not be removed from the streets by force. "Instead, the government, in coordination with the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights and non-governmental organisations, would counsel their families, understand their difficulties and provide alternatives," she said.

"The drive will also help us identify and prosecute organised gangs that are forcing children into begging and help secure their future," the CM added.

Welcoming pilgrims

She also visited Kanwar service camps in Mayapuri and Pitampura to review arrangements and welcomed *kanwariyas* by showering them with flowers.

In a release, Ms. Gupta stated that there is a deep sense of reverence and respect for *kanwariyas* who arrive in Delhi carrying Ganga water. The government is committed to ensuring that every Shiva devotee passing through the Capital gets a safe, smooth and comfortable environment, the CM added.

Body of man swept away in drain found

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The body of an 18-year-old man who was swept away by rainwater in a drain in south-east Delhi's Priyanka Camp area was retrieved from Agra canal on Sunday, the police said.

The body of Ankit, a resident of Bhim Colony, was retrieved during a search operation carried out by rescue teams from the Delhi Disaster Management Authority and the Delhi Fire Services, the police added.

The incident took place on Friday evening near the Priyanka Camp drain in Madanpur Khadar amid heavy rain.

Board-based admissions at 2 DU colleges highlight limits of centralised system

Ashna Butani
NEW DELHI

Bhagini Nivedita College has 985 vacant seats. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Two women's colleges of Delhi University (DU) have begun admitting students on the basis of their Class 12 board exam results after nearly 2,000 seats remained vacant under the university's centralised admission process through the Common University Entrance Test (CUET).

The separate admission process at Aditi Mahavidyalaya in Bawana and Bhagini Nivedita College (BNC) near Najafgarh has brought into focus the difficulties faced by colleges that were established to serve students from rural and semi-urban areas. Aditi Mahavidyalaya has filled no more than 40% of its seats since CUET came into effect in 2022.

It has around 1,000 seats lying vacant while BNC has 985 unfilled seats. Last year, DU conducted a mop-up round based on board results to fill vacant seats across the university. This year, for the first time, it has allowed the two colleges to conduct admissions separately.

"We granted permission for separate admissions because seats were not being filled. This is primarily because the colleges are on the outskirts," a DU official said. Admissions are being conducted online and offline, with both colleges having completed their first round on Friday.

Aditi Mahavidyalaya principal Neelam Rathi said centralised systems are not suited to institutions intended to serve students in the surrounding rural belt. "Those who seek admission via CUET want to be in the campus area. Many also prepare for competitive examinations," she said.

"We are happy that the university has allowed us to conduct separate admissions. It will motivate girls from nearby areas areas to pursue higher education."

Students seeking admission this year also pointed to a lack of information about CUET and the centralised admission process.

Radha, 17, who secured admission to Aditi Mahavidyalaya, said she had not appeared for CUET. "Our teachers never told us about CUET," she said.

Another student from Bawana said CUET information in her school was directed mainly at high-performing students.

Meanwhile, Sumaiya Khan, 18, from Rampur in Uttar Pradesh, said despite scoring 93% in her board exams, she could not secure admission to a DU college because of the subject-mapping requirements.

A Class 12 science student, she wanted to pursue humanities. "My school did not have arts subjects, so I took science. I appeared for humanities subjects in CUET and then realised that this made me ineligible for DU colleges," she said.

On the basis of her board results, she has now secured a seat in the BA Programme at BNC.

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Mr. N SELVA KUMAR
PH: 9820350726
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Timings
DELHI

MONDAY, AUG. 10		
RISE	05:48	SET 19:05
RISE	02:40	SET 17:23
TUESDAY, AUG. 11		
RISE	05:48	SET 19:04
RISE	03:52	SET 18:13
WEDNESDAY, AUG. 12		
RISE	05:49	SET 19:04
RISE	05:03	SET 18:55

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	35	26
Safdarjang	35	26
Palam	34	25

Delhi Palam Today
33°C The weather will be warm and uneasy. Night will be comfortable. Few spells of moderate rain and thunder-shower to occur.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
31°C The weather will be slight warm. Few spells of moderate rain & thundershower to occur. Night will be comfortable.

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This is to inform the general public that Mr. Anuj Mahto, son of Sitaram Mahto, resident of Sangam Vihar, who was earlier engaged with M/s UBT registered office in Sriniwaspuri, New Delhi, as a Sales employee, stands terminated from M/s UBT with effect from 18 July 2026. Mr. Anuj Mahto is no longer authorised to represent M/s UBT in any capacity. M/s UBT shall not be responsible or liable for any acts, deeds, representations, transactions, or dealings undertaken by Mr. Anuj Mahto, purporting to represent M/s UBT, on or after the above date.

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Email / sealed LOI is invited from reputed and experienced book vendors. Last Date for Submission: **24/08/2026.**

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MEMORANDUM

The last date for submission of applications for the ex-cadre posts of **(i) Chief Engineer, PWD (Buildings), (ii) Chief Engineer, PWD (National Highway), (iii) Chief Executive Officer, Tripura Housing & Construction Board** under the Public Works Department, Government of Tripura, as circulated on 22.07.2026, has been extended up to **25.08.2026** due to administrative reasons.

2. All other terms and conditions of the advertisement shall remain unchanged.
3. For further details, candidates may visit the official website of PWD, Government of Tripura at https://pwd.tripura.gov.in.

Joint Secretary, PWD
Government of Tripura

ICA/D/738/26

Office of the Commandant 25th Battalion SAF, Bhopal

No.-25th Bn/Petrolpump/3089/2026, Dated: 07/08/2026

INVITING TENDER FOR SILENT DIESEL GENERATOR SET

Bid proposals are invited from reputed manufactures & venders for the supply, installation and commissioning of following item at police petrol pump operational at 25th Battalion SAF, Bhadbhada road, Bhopal.

S. No.	Name of Item	Approximate amount	Earnest Money Deposit	Cost of Bid Document	Period of Contract
1.	Supply, Installation & Commissioning of 25 kVA Silent Diesel Generator with AMF PANEL	5,25,000/-	16,000/-	2000/-	14 Days

Interested bidders can view the MP Tender Portal on website https://mptenders.gov.in/ & MP Police Portal on website https://www.mppolice.gov.in/en/tenders.

1. The Bid Document can be downloaded only online from 10:00 AM (time) (date) 08/08/2026 to 16:00 (time) (date) 22/08/2026.
2. Bid schedule:
   Start date of bid submission: - 10:00 AM (time) (date) 08/08/2026.
   Last date of bid submission:16:00 PM (time) (date) 22/08/2026.
   Technical bid Opening - 16:30 PM (time) (date) 24/08/2026.
3. Amendments to NIT, if any, would be published on website https://mptenders.gov.in 02 national, 02 state level and 02 local newspaper and https://www.mppolice.gov.in/en/tenders

COMMANDANT
25th Battalion, S.A.F. Bhopal

G16911/26

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
SKIMS MEDICAL COLLEGE-HOSPITAL
Bemina, Srinagar Kashmir 190018
Materials Management Department
Ph. No. 0194-2493226, Email: mmo@skimsmc.edu.in

Sub: Procurement of Liquid cooling media for cooler, required for **rTMS Machine (Model:Magpro X100)** on Proprietary Article basis Notice for invitation of objections thereof.

SKIMS Medical College-Hospital, Bemina, Srinagar J&K,intends to procure Liquid cooling media for cooler, required for the existing **rTMS Machine (Model: Magpro X100)** from the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM), **M/s Mag Venture**, Denmark, through its Authorized Indian Distributor, **M/s Aerobe, Pvt. Ltd.** 5th Floor, Ghanshyam House, 25 Nehru Place, New Delhi, 110019, on a Proprietary Article Certificate (PAC) basis, in accordance with the provisions of Rule 166 of the General Financial Rules (GFR), 2017.

In this regard, objections, if any, are invited from manufacturers, authorized distributors, or suppliers who manufacture or market similar items that are compatible with the above-mentioned equipment and capable of delivering the intended performance/results. Such objections, along with supporting documentary evidence, if any, may be submitted through email at the address mentioned below on or before **21.08.2026 up to 02:00 PM.**

Email: mmo@skimsmc.edu.in.

In the event that no objections are received within the stipulated period, it shall be presumed that no manufacturer, supplier or other stakeholder has any objection to the proposed proprietary procurement, and the proprietary claim in respect of the aforesaid consumable items shall be deemed to have been accepted for initiating further procurement action.

No: SKIMS/MCH/MMD/216/18/5339-45
Dated:07/08 /2026

Sd/-
Sr. Materials Management Officer
(SKIMS MCH Bemina)

DIPK-NB-1339/26

Arunachal group seeks nixing of 20% job quota for non-residents

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A tribal group in Arunachal Pradesh, claiming support from 38 organisations, has set August 15 as the deadline for the State government to scrap a decades-old policy to recruit 20% non-residents for various government jobs.

The Arunachal Frontier Tribal Front (AFTF) also demanded the government to make Scheduled Tribe status and Permanent Resident Certificate mandatory for recruitment examinations conducted by the Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission and the Arunachal Pradesh Staff Selection Board.

"The government will be responsible for developments after the deadline to scrap the 80:20 recruitment policy," AFTF chairperson Tadak Nalo said after a final mass referendum rally organised in Itanagar on Saturday. The recruitment issue concerned the rights and future of the State's youth, he said.

There cannot be any fair delimitation, it is a fraud, says T.N. Congress chief

Tagore criticises political parties for 'changing their view on the delimitation Bill in just a matter of months'; State's rights, freedom in danger, Bill will suppress its voice in Parliament: Chakravarthy

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Congress president B. Manickam Tagore on Sunday said there could be no "fair delimitation" and criticised certain political parties "for changing their tune in their opposition to the delimitation Bill in just a matter of months".

Speaking at the anti-delimitation march held at Medavakkam in Chennai, Mr. Tagore said, "When Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Kamaraj, and Vallabhbhai Patel called for the Quit India Movement on August 8, 1942, two groups did not take part in it: one, the *sanghis*, and the other, everyone knows who they are."

He said those who did not participate in the meeting of MPs from Tamil Nadu were now "talking about fair delimitation".

Strong opposition: Congress leaders taking out a march to oppose the delimitation Bill, in Chennai on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The DMK, AIADMK, and their allies had stayed away from the delimitation discussion meeting chaired by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay on Saturday.

'Centre denying share'

"This is a fraud – how can there be a fair and an unfair delimitation when it is a fraud? The [Prime Minister Narendra] Modi government is denying Tamil Nadu its financial share and schemes. We have 39 MPs from Tamil Nadu. In April this year, we defeated the Bill [on delimitation] by voting against it. But those who said 'no to delimitation' are now calling for a 'fair delimitation'. What is fair delimitation? They may increase the seats of Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh by 50%. But the 40 seats will become 60, and 80 will become 120. The difference in the number of seats between Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh will be 60 after the delimitation. 'Fair' delimitation is a scam," he said.

Congress Rajya Sabha member Praveen Chakravarthy said, "Tamil Nadu's rights and freedom are in danger. The delimitation Bill will suppress its voice in Parliament. The share of MPs from Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh should remain the same. That's our demand. But the BJP is trying to increase the representation of north Indian States. They are trying to defraud us by showing some numbers... if they increase our seats by 20, they will increase U.P.'s by 40. We have to oppose this. All parties in Tamil Nadu should oppose the Bill... if they don't, it is a betrayal."

Rajasthan LoP criticises Nadda over maternal deaths as one more woman dies in childbirth

Press Trust of India
KOTA

Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Rajasthan Assembly Tikaram Jully on Sunday criticised Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda for "not reviewing" maternal deaths in government hospitals in the State during his visit to Jaipur.

"Nadda, being the Union Health Minister, should have held a meeting with the Rajasthan Health Minister and senior government officials to review the circumstances leading to the deaths of women, and discuss measures to prevent such incidents in future," Mr. Jully said.

"Was he not aware that several women have died in government hospitals in Rajasthan allegedly due to negligence?" said the senior Congress leader.

Mr. Jully accused the Bharatiya Janata Party-led governments at the Centre and in Rajasthan of being insensitive to women's health and alleged that neither was taking the issue seriously. The remarks came against the backdrop of a series of maternal deaths in government hospitals in the State, including the latest death of a 25-year-old woman at Bundi District Government Hospital on Sunday.

Congress leader Tikaram Jully

'Developed chest pain'

Nisha Meena, wife of Jagdish Meena of Dhanatri village, died on Sunday within hours of delivering her baby. She had been admitted on Friday and was advised a surgical delivery for obstructed labour, but her family requested a normal delivery, Principal Medical Officer Dr. L.N. Meena said.

Nisha delivered her baby around 11 a.m. and soon developed severe chest pain before collapsing. However, the hospital administration denied negligence, saying that the woman could not be revived despite efforts.

Her death is suspected to have been caused by amniotic fluid embolism, a rare and fatal emergency in which amniotic fluid or fetal cells enter the mother's blood, causing pulmonary complications, collapse and heart failure, acting PMO Govind Gupta said.

Following the incident, the hospital transferred all nursing and support staff on duty in the labour room. The hospital has ordered an inquiry and a maternal death audit involving three gynaecologists.

The latest casualty comes against the backdrop of five maternal deaths following C-section deliveries at hospitals in Kota between May 5 and 17.

Investigations into the incidents found that spurious oxytocin injections containing water instead of the active medicine had been administered, leading to uncontrolled postpartum bleeding.

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Haryana power staff to go on strike as talks fail

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

Haryana power employees and engineers on Sunday announced a three-day strike from 10 p.m. on Monday after talks with the management of power distribution and transmission companies failed to yield any result.

The talks between the Haryana Electricity Employees and Engineers Joint Struggle Front and the management were held at Shakti Bhawan under the chairpersonship of Additional Chief Secretary, Energy Department, Ashima Brar.

The Joint Struggle Front leaders said the management failed to provide any concrete assurance on issues including parallel distribution licences, proposed formation of an Agri distribution company, and smart metering.

They also said no assurance was given on regularisation of contract workers, equal pay for equal work, risk allowance, removal of conditions imposed under the ex gratia employment scheme, and other pending demands.

Patna HC transfers *habeas corpus* case to CBI

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

The Patna High Court has transferred the case of a missing youth to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), citing inaction by the local police.

The case concerns the alleged unlawful detention of Sanoj Kumar by Excise Police officials in Bhojpur district under the Bihiya police station on August 13, 2025. His father, Gauri Shankar Ram, moved the High Court and filed a petition for a writ of *habeas corpus* on May 17 this year seeking a CBI inquiry.

Justices Rajeev Ranjan Prasad and Alok Kumar Sinha ordered the transfer of the case to the Central probe agency on August 7.

The court order stated, "On going through the entire materials available on record, this court has no iota of doubt that since lodging of the FIR, the State investigating agency did not show any urgency to investigate the matter. This court is, therefore, of the considered opinion that in this case, the very credibility of the State investigating agency is at stake".

INBRIEF

Amit Shah presents President's Colour to Puducherry Police

Union Home Minister Amit Shah presented the President's Colour to Puducherry Police on Sunday and praised the force for its commitment and dedication in ensuring the country's internal security. In his address, Mr. Shah said the new criminal laws are based on the "three pillars of technology, timeline, and trust". The President's Colour is the highest honour given to a military unit or police force of a State or Union Territory. The Home Minister also flagged off the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' yatra at Rajiv Gandhi Square. Carrying a 40-foot national flag, hundreds of BJP members marched together in the procession.

Bihar CM announces panel for examination reforms

Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Sunday announced several measures to strengthen the State's education system, including setting up a State-level committee to ensure quality education in schools and examination reforms, and introducing AI-based assessments. Addressing a two-day State-level workshop organised by the Education Department in Patna, Mr. Choudhary said the State government is committed to making education more qualitative, student-centric, transparent, and technology-driven. PTI

Amid 'dissent' in Punjab BJP, Dhillon meets Nabin

Discussed strategy for 2027 Assembly election, says State party chief; Congress questions Akali Dal's 'desperate' bid for tie-up with BJP, says both parties will have no chance of victory if they join hands

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

Punjab BJP chief Kewal Singh Dhillon on Sunday said he held a key meeting in Delhi with the party's national president, Nitin Nabin, and discussed the strategy for the 2027 Assembly poll and steps to strengthen the party organisation.

The Punjab BJP president and State organisation secretary Manthri Srinivasulu were summoned on Saturday amid dissent among sections of party leaders that accused the State leadership of sidelining the old cadre during the recent organisational reshuffle, sources said.

Launching a sharp attack on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, he said Punjab is "grappling with crises such as the scourge of drugs, deteriorating law and order, and the migration of youth abroad, but the ruling party has no concrete solution to these problems".

He said the BJP is committed to making Punjab a safe, prosperous, and progressive State once again, and that the organisation is being strengthened down to every village and booth in pursuit of this goal.

Punjab BJP chief Kewal Singh Dhillon (left) said talks to strengthen the State unit were held with party president Nitin Nabin. FILE PHOTO

Meanwhile, State Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring on Sunday asked why Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal was so "desperate" for an electoral alliance with the BJP that he had to make a "U-turn" on a sensitive matter like delimitation of Assembly and parliamentary constituencies.

The remark came a day after the Akali Dal demanded that Parliament pass the women's reservation Bill and the delimitation Bill with a uniform 50% increase in seats for States so that they are implemented without further delay. The party announced its revised stand on the issue after Mr. Badal's recent meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi.

Mr. Warring reminded Mr. Badal that the party had strongly opposed the delimitation bill in April. "So, what changed within these three months that you started seeing merit in the same Bill that you otherwise found against Punjab's interests?" he said.

Mr. Warring asserted that even if the Akalis and the BJP come together for the election, they stand "absolutely no chance of victory". "The people of Punjab have neither forgotten the sacrilege nor the atrocities on farmers that the two parties are respectively guilty of," he alleged.

Senior Congress MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira on Sunday urged Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhwan to extend the Assembly session to allow adequate discussion on six Bills listed for consideration. The Bills, which include proposals related to three digital universities, GST, and outsourced and contractual employees, were introduced at the fag end of the session, Mr. Khaira said.

'Serious job crisis'

Meanwhile, Akali Dal leader Daljit Singh Cheema demanded that the AAP government issue a White Paper on the employment and recruitment situation, alleging that Punjab is facing a "serious employment and service-related crisis".

Mayawati opposes 'creamy layer' in quotas for SCs, STs

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

BSP president Mayawati

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Sunday opposed the 'creamy layer' concept in reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), arguing that affirmative action is linked to social transformation, economic emancipation, and self-respect. She also criticised the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) for "politicising" the issue.

"For the SC and ST sections, which have been divided, oppressed and marginalised for centuries, it [reservation] becomes a crucial issue, especially when caste-based hatred, exploitation, torture, injustice and atrocities show no signs of abating," wrote Ms. Mayawati on X.

She said creamy layer for SCs and STs is "against the objectives" laid down by the Constitution.

The BSP president questioned RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat over his recent remarks that reservation had been politicised, creating bitterness in society, and that beneficiaries should voluntarily give up the benefits. She termed the RSS's position a reflection of a "casteist mindset".

'Casteist mindset'

"While the RSS chief recently reiterated his statement that, 'Reservation has been deliberately politicised, leading to bitterness in society, and that beneficiaries of reservation should voluntarily give up its benefits.' In reality, this is a casteist mindset that may serve narrow political interests, but undermines constitutional objectives," she added in the post.

"Reservation is essentially meant to provide the constitutional and legal right to equality on humanitarian grounds to millions of exploited, oppressed, neglected, and despised people who have been victims of the caste system for centuries."

Kerala schoolteacher suspended over quiz question on Savarkar

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala General Education Department has suspended a teacher who was involved in preparing a controversial question that identified Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) ideologue V.D. Savarkar as the freedom fighter who received the "most punishment" from the British in a quiz conducted for school students in Kasaragod.

Guru Prasad, a teacher at A.U.P.S. Pallathadukka, has been suspended pending inquiry.

Detailed inquiry

The Director of General Education had directed the Deputy Director of Education, Kasaragod, to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the teacher and conduct a detailed inquiry.

The controversy arose from the Social Science Club's 'Freedom Quiz 2026,' conducted at the school level on August 6. The lower primary quiz contained 15 questions and five tie-breaker questions. The fifth question was, "Who is the freedom fighter who received the most punishment from the hands of the British?". The answer given in the answer key was V.D. Savarkar.

According to the order, the questions were prepared by a group of teachers under the leadership of Mr. Prasad.

The inquiry found that framing a question in a manner that could spread a misleading impression was "very serious".

In Pradhan's ouster, BJD sees chance to regain lost ground

NEWS ANALYSIS

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

The resignation of Dharmendra Pradhan as Union Education Minister following protests by students in Delhi last month has marked a notable shift in national politics. For Odisha's principal Opposition party – the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) – the development has signalled a chance to reclaim lost ground.

The BJD's renewed confidence appears to stem from conversations on the ground that reflect dissatisfaction over the pace of development under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Naveen Patnaik's BJD appears upbeat based on public mood, which is critical of development under the BJP govt. FILE PHOTO

After the setback in the 2024 Assembly election, the BJD ceded more ground to the BJP, losing three Rajya Sabha seats, while its strength in the Assembly dropped from 51 to 42 following the defection of eight MLAs during the Rajya Sabha election.

Despite these developments, political observers note that the Naveen Patnaik-led party's disintegration is far below what was anticipated after 24 years of uninterrupted rule and the accumulated weight of anti-incumbency. The exodus, though notable, also falls short of the turbulence seen in other regional parties such as the Trinamool Congress and the Shiv Sena (UBT).

'Were never in doubt'

"We were never in doubt about our ability to bounce back as a strong regional force. We knew the new BJP government would eventually struggle under the weight of public expectations. It clearly lacks the capability to sustain the pace of development Odisha witnessed under Naveen Patnaik," said BJD's senior vice-president Debi Prasad Mishra.

Veteran journalist Rabi Das echoed the concern.

He said the distribution of error-ridden school textbooks affecting lakhs of students has been one of the "most glaring administrative failures" of the Mohan Charan Majhi regime.

The "deteriorating" law and order situation has dented the government's image. Meanwhile, the BJP has placed heavy emphasis on announcing investments. Political observers, however, note that such announcements have had limited impact as they do not translate into immediate improvements in people's living conditions.

SPOTLIGHT

A flood of woes in Assam

The scale of devastation by one of the State's worst localised floods that occurred at an unprecedented speed has increased the challenge of recovering from the shock, with 101 dead and 7.21 lakh people affected

Rahul Karmakar

Tamuli Gaon, a village in eastern Assam's Jorhat district, is about 40 km west of neighbouring Sivasagar district's Bihubar, the epicentre of destruction by one of Assam's worst localised floods since the 1950s. The gushing waters that submerged much of Sivasagar and adjoining Charaideo districts on July 19-20 lost momentum by the time they reached the periphery of Tamuli Gaon, but inundated the surrounding, low-lying paddy fields, to turn this village of 110 families into an island.

Biju Kumar Sarmah, a teacher in the village nicknamed Gospuli for his obsession with plantation drives to "reclaim what's lost", explains why Tamuli Gaon was spared. "The water did not have enough force to cut through the embankments in our area, unlike those a few kilometres to the east, toward Sivasagar district," he says.

He is not sure whether the distance from Bihubar would provide Tamuli Gaon with insurance against a bigger disaster, with at least two more months of rain to go. "The floodwaters have less than half the distance to travel from Bihubar to Tamuli Gaon than from Mon to Bihubar," he says.

Mon, the headquarters of Nagaland's district of the same name, bore the brunt of extremely heavy rainfall that drenched parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Nagaland from July 18 to 22. The rainfall triggered landslides, killing 11 people in Mon town, and large volumes of water from five major rivers and numerous streams originating in Mon district gushed downstream, carrying earth and debris, to swamp more than 80% of Sivasagar and Charaideo districts.

"The water trickled in gently around noon on July 19. It suddenly became a *mahapralay* (total destruction), and before we could understand what was happening, we were being thrashed about in neck-deep water," says Shivraj Sharma of Bihubar Nepalikhuti, a village near the Assam-Nagaland border that was home to about 200 families of mostly dairy farmers.

The Sivasagar, Charaideo, and Jorhat district authorities, too, were caught unawares by the deluge. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, after touring the flood-hit districts, admitted that the administration in each could not mobilise rescue and relief operations for seven days since the disaster struck. He said this was understandable, as these districts do not have a history of major floods and the authorities were not as disaster-ready as other districts that experience floods regularly. These three districts accounted for 71 of the 101 people who died in the floods across 16 districts from April to August 9, 2026, and more than 94% of some 7.21 lakh flood-affected people.

Residents being evacuated from the waterlogged Rukminigaon area of Guwahati. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Disaster management experts explained why the government machinery was underprepared in the three districts. "There's a flaw in the government's approach to disaster management, which is to identify risks and concentrate on high-risk areas. The planning needs to change. If low or zero-risk areas become high-risk overnight, there's very little people can do, as was the case with the three districts," says Partha Jyoti Das, a climate, water, and disaster specialist with Assam-based biodiversity conservation group Aaranyak.

He says getting the right people for climate-smart or climate-resilient flood management is crucial. "Ditto with factoring in fluctuating climate change scenarios in everything to minimise disasters."

When the National Green Tribunal banned Meghalaya's hazardous rat-hole coal mining in April 2014, green activists in Assam sought attention to similar, potentially "more dangerous", activities along the State's borders with Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

Mining menace

A 2018 PIL plea filed by Congress leader Debabarata Saikia, then a party MLA from Nazira, in the Gauhati High Court indicated rampant coal mining was not the only source of disaster for Sivasagar and adjoining districts. It conveyed that illegal sand and stone mining and encroachment of fragile river beds were inviting trouble. It focussed on the Dikhow, Sivasagar's lifeline-turned-sorrow, seeking an immediate ban on the potentially catastrophic riverbed mining.

Following the court's directive, the government sent teams from January to March 2019 to verify the allegations, concentrating on Bihubar and adjoining areas near the Assam-Nagaland border. The inquiry revealed eight stone quarries, 81 stone crushers, and the seizure of about 10,000 cubic metres of minor minerals in the area. The report described Bihubar and the surrounding areas as a hub of mining, distribution, supply, and interstate transportation. It also said that most of the gravel and boulders were transported from Nagaland.

Sivasagar MLA and Raijor Dal president Akhil Gogoi was more vocal about the "indiscriminate" coal and stone mining. "Rainwater accumulated in the hollowed coal pits in Nagaland, eventually burst out and caused widespread devastation in Assam," he says, also pointing to the "rape of the rivers" by the mining mafia. His Sivasagar-based party leader Manas Konwar went a step further, naming two local BJP legislators, one of them a Minister, as the kingpins of the stone and coal mining operations along the Assam-Nagaland border.

While the Assam Chief Minister, speaking to the media, denied any mining activities in Assam, community-based organisations in Nagaland rejected "theories" that their hill State and their people were responsible for Assam's floods.

Post-flood trauma

Sivasagar was formerly known as Rangpur, the administrative and political capital of the Ahoms, who ruled large swathes of Assam for 600 years until the British took control of the region in the early 1800s. Historians say Sivasagar (Charaideo was carved out of it in August 2015) was strategic for the Ahoms to administer a vast region, and that the region was relatively flood-free compared to the rest of the Brahmaputra Valley. The Ahom royal chronicles refer to flooding in and around the capital at intervals of more than a hundred years, including in 1691 and 1793.

"Sivasagar's misery indicates that the flood cycle may have reduced (after the last one recorded 60 years ago) and become more catastrophic due to several factors, mostly man-made. The unpredictable climate change scenario is adding to this misery, making old water discharge data on which flood control measures are designed redundant," says Bibhash Sarma, an engineering teacher and consultant to Assam's Water Resources Department.

Aaranyak's Das adds that the ever-changing rainfall pattern is the new normal. "The administrative machinery must understand that no part of Assam or anywhere else in the northeast is safe from floods and associated disasters. Everyone, down to the farmer, needs to be wired to anticipate such calamities during the six rainy months in the region."

District officials say the challenges in the areas returning to normality include clearing several feet of silt and debris from houses and paddy fields, sanitising the foul-smelling flood-hit areas, and ensuring adequate healthcare for livestock and people vulnerable to water- and vector-borne diseases such as Japanese encephalitis, which claimed 19 lives this year, before the floods.

The biggest challenge could be the trauma of expecting the worst in a State that recorded 160 and 181 human deaths during the 2017 and 2022 floods, respectively. "I don't think anyone in Jorhat, Sivasagar, or Charaideo can sleep peacefully, at least during the remaining two months of the monsoon this year," says Sarmah, whose Tamuli Gaon village is 18 km south of the Brahmaputra.

rahul.karmakar@thehindu.co.in

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INBRIEF

Telangana launches portal for families of police 'martyrs'

Recalling the sacrifice of 28 police personnel from erstwhile Warangal district who laid down their lives fighting naxalism, Telangana Director-General of Police C.V. Anand said that peace in the region was built on the sacrifices of personnel who placed duty above their lives. Mr. Anand launched TG-VEER, a dedicated portal for the families of police martyrs to register grievances relating to financial assistance, compassionate appointments and other benefits.

Auto driver, friend 'sexually assault' two children in A.P.

Two 13-year-old girls studying at a State-run institute and staying in its hostel were allegedly sexually assaulted by an autorickshaw driver and his friend in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. The girls had left school two days ago and boarded an autorickshaw at Machilipatnam later that night. The police booked the accused under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, and other relevant provisions, including rape, on Saturday.

Protest held in A.P. against seafarer deaths in war zones

The Merchant Navy Officers Welfare Association, Visakhapatnam, conducted a silent protest from the Kali Mata temple to the Beach Road in Andhra Pradesh on Sunday, condemning the killing of seafarers in war zones. Around 40 merchant navy seafarers took part in the protest and expressed solidarity with seafarers who lost their lives. The association sought compensation and adequate support for the kin of deceased seafarers from shipowners and agencies.

Kerala govt. may withdraw directive on *Vande Mataram*

Following Opposition allegations of 'toeing RSS line', Health Minister says only the first two stanzas would be sung at State govt. programmes; CMO is yet to officially clarify or withdraw instruction

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Following Opposition allegations of toeing the Sangh Parivar's line on the recital of *Vande Mataram* in its entirety, the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) government in Kerala appeared to backtrack on the Chief Secretary's directive to government departments to ensure the song was recited in its entirety during the Independence Day celebrations.

Although the Chief Minister's Office is yet to make an official clarification or withdraw the directive, Health Minister K. Muraleedharan told the media on Sunday that only the first two stanzas will be sung in the State government's programmes. He said that the Chief Secretary sometimes issues circulars based on Union government directives. Though Mr. Muraleedharan and Education Minister N. Samsudheen of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) said that the Chief Secretary had acted as per Lok Bhavan's directives, Lok Bhavan has reportedly denied issuing any directions.

The Health Minister said the Chief Secretary sometimes issues circulars based on Union government directives. FILE PHOTO

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Even as the Opposition Left Democratic Front (LDF) lashed out at the UDF government for "surrendering completely" to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's (RSS) agenda, the Ministers of the ruling front had found it hard to defend the directive.

Opposition's criticism

Leader of the Opposition Pinarayi Vijayan said that singing the first two stanzas of *Vande Mataram* was not wrong, but the song in its entirety goes against the country's secular spirit.

CPI(M) leader T.M. Thomas Isaac said that even though in a federal system States might be forced to follow Central directives, the State should at least make a mark of protest.

Ladakh hoteliers seek mandatory resident papers for registration

They fear a fallout on family-run guest houses, homestays of locals if outside players enter the tourism sector

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Fearing a fallout on family-run guest houses and homestays of locals if outside players enter the Ladakh tourism sector, there is a growing demand to make the Ladakh Resident Certificate (LRC) a mandatory document for tourism business registration in the ecologically sensitive region.

"The government has committed to providing constitutional and legislative safeguards, including the long-awaited Sixth Schedule/Article 371-related protections for Ladakh. Until these safeguards are implemented, the LRC is an essential and practical interim mechanism to protect local participation in the tourism sector," Rigzin Wangmo Lachic, president of the All Ladakh Hotel and Guest House Association, told *The Hindu*.

The growing concern among locals engaged in the tourism sector stems from record footfall of 3.30 lakh tourists visiting the region between January and July 2026, already touching the 2025 figures of 3.35 lakh. The administration plans to expand tourism infrastructure in the region.

The executive body meeting of the tourism players association in Leh on Saturday was attended by representatives from Nubra, Changthang, Sham, Zanskar and other parts of Ladakh. "All tourism players reflected the growing recognition that this is not an issue concerning one town, one district or one category of business. If there are no safeguards for local participation, opportunities for the next generation could gradually diminish as larger and better-capitalised external businesses enter the sector," Ms. Lachic said.

Mainstay of economy

Tourism is the mainstay of Ladakh's economy, with one estimate suggesting that it contributes around 50% to the region's Gross Domestic Product.

According to official figures, Leh district, one of the seven districts in the region, has 317 hotels, 691 guest houses, 1,055 homestays and 105 camps.

However, tourism players warn against uncontrolled tourist footfall. "Ladakh is not an ordinary tourism destination. It is a high-altitude, water-scarce and ecologically fragile region with a very limited carrying capacity. Those who live here understand this fragile environment and will continue to live with the consequences of development. They must have a meaningful stake in determining how tourism grows," Ms. Lachic said.

The hoteliers' body has asked the government "to work on a framework that... ensures that tourism remains locally rooted".

Karnataka portfolios set to be announced

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

With the Monsoon Session of the legislature set to begin on August 13, the Congress government in Karnataka is likely to allocate portfolios to the 19 newly sworn-in Ministers on Monday.

While the new Ministers were sworn in amid confusion, revolt, and last-minute changes last Monday, the discussion on portfolio allocation is still under way. Party sources said that portfolio allocation has become difficult owing to insistence by the Ministers on getting portfolios of their choice.

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar left for Delhi on Sunday to meet the Congress Central leadership and hand over the list of possible portfolios for the Ministers. "The list is likely to be finalised by Monday," government sources said.

Kerala Police arrests Hindutva ideologue

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Kerala police on Sunday took into custody Hindutva ideologue T.G. Mohandas for his alleged inflammatory statements made in connection with the youth protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi.

Mr. Mohandas, a former head of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) State intellectual cell, had stated in a YouTube video that he would have ordered a curfew at the protest site and shot the student protesters if he were in control.

In another video, he said secular women who take part in protests "enjoy being gang-raped".

A team of cyber police officers had carried out searches at his Mattancherry residence on Sunday afternoon. He would be taken to Thiruvananthapuram, a police officer said.

'Mastermind' in illegal explosives case arrested

The Hindu Bureau
MALAPPURAM

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has reportedly arrested T.A. Harris, the alleged mastermind in a case involving the seizure of a huge cache of explosives from Chemmad, near Tirurangadi, in the Malappuram district of Kerala. He was reportedly arrested from Manjeri in the district.

According to the NIA, Mr. Harris played a key role in illegally procuring, stockpiling and distributing the explosives.

The seizure

The case relates to the seizure of 89,600 gelatin sticks and 10,500 non-electric detonators from a hollow bricks factory compound at Chemmad on February 7, 2026. They were stored in boxes and found hidden among onion sacks.

The case was handed over to the NIA after the explosives were found to have been brought without a licence. The NIA took over the investigation citing its national security implications.

19 locations searched

The NIA conducted searches at around 19 locations across Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, recovering digital devices and documents.

Three people were arrested in Karnataka earlier, while the total number of arrests in the case has now reached 10.

The agency had also searched quarry-related locations in Kozhikode, Kasaragod and Kannur districts before arresting the suspects.

Cultural showcase

Indigenous rhythms: Kommu Koya tribal dancers perform during the World's Indigenous Peoples Day celebration at Kumram Bheem Adivasi Bhavan in Hyderabad on Sunday. SIDDHANT THAKUR

BJP, JD(S) launch march against Bidadi Township project

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy and Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly R. Ashok on Sunday flagged off a joint *padayatra* by the JD(S) and BJP at Bidadi in Bengaluru South district, against the Bidadi Township project.

The *padayatra* will reach Bengaluru on Tuesday, where a large protest will be held at Freedom Park. The development comes just before the start of the Monsoon Session.

This is the first major joint protest by the BJP and JD(S) and is being spearheaded by JD(S) youth wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy.

While the JD(S) is leading the *padayatra*, the BJP is all set to debate the township project during the upcoming session.

Mr. Kumaraswamy launched the march by reading excerpts from the fact-finding report on the Bidadi Township project prepared by Congress leaders in 2006.

He pointed out that while the report had described the project as disastrous, the Congress itself is pursuing it now. The Minister said the report states that there are 3,000 houses in the area proposed for acquisition, along with 1.56 lakh coconut trees, 48,000 areca nut trees, and 13,000 neem trees.

Video of BJP leader's Bidadi issue remarks goes viral

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA/BENGALURU

The Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party and its State president B.Y. Vijayendra faced embarrassment after a video of Mr. Vijayendra purportedly saying that the party was extending "symbolic" support to the cause of the Bidadi Township Project and that the farmers were gradually accepting the compensation, went viral on Sunday.

The video showed a casual conversation between Karnataka Minister Madhu Bangarappa and Mr. Vijayendra, who is also the MLA of Shikaripur, at a drought review meeting held in Shikaripur on Saturday.

A.P. govt. will protect rights of tribal youth, says Naidu

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said on Sunday that the Andhra Pradesh government was working on an alternative mechanism to protect employment opportunities for tribal youth, following the striking down of G.O. No. 3, while setting a 2027 deadline for ensuring every tribal family in the State had access to safe drinking water and housing.

Struck down by SC

The GO No. 3, issued in 2000 to reserve 100% of teacher posts in the Scheduled Areas for the local tribal candidates, was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2020, prompting Mr. Naidu to explore a legally sustainable alternative to protect tribal youth employment. The G.O. remained a major issue for tribal communities, with the tribal groups protesting its scrapping and demanding restoration of safeguards for local youth in government employment.

Addressing the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples programme, Mr. Naidu said the government was committed to protecting the rights of tribal communities.

Mr. Naidu said ₹4,764 crore had been allocated for the comprehensive development of 27.39 lakh tribal people, with focus on infrastructure, livelihoods, employment and skill development through the Integrated Tribal Development Agencies (ITDAs).

He also stressed the need to increase tribal incomes through value addition, processing and branding of forest produce such as Seethampeta turmeric, Rampachodavaram rubber, Parvathipuram pineapple, honey and palm jaggery.

As many as 1.5 lakh tribal youth would be provided skill training, while special initiatives would be taken to prepare tribal students for competitive examinations, he said.

Combined effects of climate and geology caused 2024 Wayanad landslide: study

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

Sam Paul A.
KOZHIKODE

The devastating 2024 landslide in Kerala's Wayanad cannot be attributed to extreme rainfall alone but was also likely influenced by geological, geomorphological and structural factors, according to a new study published in the international peer-reviewed journal *Landslides*.

The study, published on the journal's website, notes that while intense monsoon rain triggered the collapse, underlying geological conditions influenced where the landslide began, how it travelled, and why it became one of the most destructive landslide recorded in the Western Ghats. It was conducted by researchers from the University of Kerala, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Mohali, and Savitribai Phule Pune University.

The researchers conducted extensive field investigations across the affected valley in April 2025. FILE PHOTO

To understand why the landslide became so destructive, the researchers conducted extensive field investigations across the affected valley in April 2025. Geological mapping was carried out from Chooralmala to Punchirimattam, while rock samples were analysed in the laboratory. As the landslide crown remained unsafe to access, drone-mounted LiDAR and high-resolution aerial imagery were used to investigate it.

"The study reveals the interplay of climate and geology. Extreme rainfall acted as the immediate trigger, but the pre-existing geological framework determined where the slope failed, how the debris moved and why the event became exceptionally destructive," said Y. Anilkumar and K.S. Sajinkumar, assistant professors at the Department of Geology, University of Kerala.

Shifting sands

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye will struggle to create credible deterrent

The joint defence agreement, signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye in Mecca on August 7 reflects their shared strategic anxieties and the changes under way in West Asia's security architecture. The three countries have pledged to bolster collective security and deterrence, and promised to treat an armed attack against one as an attack against all. On paper, this is a formidable alliance. Pakistan is a nuclear-armed country with a powerful military; Saudi Arabia, one of the world's largest crude oil exporters, has deep pockets and considerable influence across the Muslim world; and Türkiye has an expanding military industrial base, including advanced drone production capabilities. That the pact was announced in the middle of the war on Iran and Israel's continuing bombing campaigns in the region is no coincidence. Faced with the prospect of reduced American strategic presence in West Asia, regional powers have begun looking beyond the traditional U.S. security umbrella for new partnerships. In September 2025, a few weeks after Israel bombed Qatar, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia announced a bilateral defence agreement. The war on Iran, which saw Tehran retaliating by striking U.S. bases across the Persian Gulf, and Israel's wars in its neighbourhood, have further deepened the security concerns of Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. They have now decided to turn the page on their often fraught relationship and build a trilateral framework with Pakistan, which fought a short aerial war with India in May 2025.

This agreement shows the growing appetite of regional powers for formal security pacts. Türkiye, which has long sought a bigger role in West Asia, will gain more strategic space. Pakistan, traditionally a South Asian regional power overshadowed by India, is also seeking to expand its role as a West Asia security provider and mediator. The alliance would allow the three countries to deepen defence cooperation and military interoperability though it is too early to say whether it would help them address their security challenges. Alliances based on collective security, such as NATO and CSTO, are generally formed to build deterrence against conflicts. The biggest liability of the Mecca Agreement is that it was signed amid ongoing wars. Over the past five months, Saudi Arabia has faced repeated Iranian missile and drone attacks. The collective security pledge is unlikely to deter Iran from targeting U.S. bases in Saudi Arabia if the war, currently on pause, escalates further. Existing conflicts, therefore, make the promise of collective defence largely symbolic from the very outset. So, the credibility of the Mecca Agreement will ultimately depend on whether the three partners can turn their political commitment into a credible deterrent, which is currently non-existent.

Podium finish

India's women boxers were the highlight of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games

In the truncated Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, India performed well, exceeding expectations and retaining fourth place behind developed nations such as Australia, England, and Canada, despite a sharp drop in medals from 61 to 39, including 13 gold, 17 silver, and nine bronze. The gold rush on the penultimate day, powered by the spectacular performance of the boxers who won seven gold and three silver medals, improved India's position. While some weight classes had weaker draws, several categories posed strong challenges. Propelled by determination and hard work, five women boxers – Sakshi Chaudhary, Preeti Pawar, Jaismine Lamboria, Priya Ghanghas, and Arundhati Choudhary – and two men, Sachin Siwach and Ankush Panghal, ensured India's best-ever showing of 10 medals, three more than that in the last edition. The women boxers' fearless approach established them as a force to reckon with. India won 16 medals in athletics and para-athletics, with notable contributions from para-athletes Dilip Gavit, Soman Rana, and Sharmila Dhankar. In world-class fields, the country's athletes won 10 medals compared to eight in Birmingham 2022. Neeraj Chopra recovered from injury to take a creditable silver and lead the country to twin-medal glory in javelin along with Yashvir Singh and underlined India's rising status as a javelin powerhouse. Other moments to cherish included triple jumpers Praveen Chithravel and Selva Prabhu's twin podium finishes, Gulveer Singh becoming the first Indian to medal in 5000m and 10000m, Murali Sreeshankar winning his second straight long jump silver, Tejaswin Shankar claiming the country's first-ever decathlon medal, and Sarvesh Kushare pocketing a high jump silver.

Asmita Dey and Harsh Singh sprang a surprise by winning the country's first gold medals in judo, while Mirabai Chanu lived up to her billing to clinch her third successive gold medal. She led Indian lifters to a significant haul of eight medals. The country's strong show, against an expectation of around 30 medals, helped the contingent leave Glasgow on a high as Ahmedabad prepares to host a bigger Games offering more medals in 2030. Indian athletes' praiseworthy performance in Glasgow has raised hopes for the Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games next month, where a bigger haul is expected from a wider range of disciplines. While India is capable of securing impressive medal collections at the Commonwealth and Asian Games, it needs to raise its level manifold to be counted among the best globally. Aspiring to host the 2036 Olympics, it must identify priority sports and invest in them to ensure a higher finish, even while waging a perennial war against doping.

Either culpable or incompetent

Rahul Gandhi

Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Member of Parliament for Rae Bareli, Uttar Pradesh, and Member of the Indian National Congress

On July 20, 2026, India's young people came together to demand a fair education system and accountability for paper leaks.

These young women and men came from every caste, class, region and religion. They were brave enough to demand justice, wise enough to know their Constitutional rights, tender enough to laugh at their own turmoil, and earnest enough to believe that they could fight and win.

The nation watched the protesters in awe, as they sang, danced, laughed, held hands and stood together. Their resistance gave voice to the pain both of their own generation, and of crores of Indians who are suffering but have been silenced by fear.

Met with violence

The protests carried forward India's proud legacy of peaceful resistance, a tradition which won it independence and is protected by Article 19 of the Constitution.

Yet, the government tried to crush the youth's voice with a brutal assault. They were attacked with tear gas shells, beaten with nail-studded lathis and shot with pellet guns.

Nineteen-year-old Sahil Lochab, whom I met, had hundreds of lead pellets lodged all over his upper body. A pellet struck his eye, likely blinding him. Policemen wielding batons brutally assaulted young women, injuring many on their private parts. Minors were beaten with lathis, their bones broken, gashes and bruises on their bodies. In Bihar, student protesters were shot with firearms, including an AK-47, in Siwan, leaving many severely injured.

Who authorised this illegal and unconstitutional violence?

> Five hundred metres from Parliament, students were brutally attacked by forces which report to one man

Centralised power

The Narendra Modi government prides itself on its centralised control. Whether it is a mission to Mars or an Olympic medal, it repeatedly trumpets that the credit is due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. Nothing moves without their approval.

The violence happened in the heart of Delhi, barely 500 metres from Parliament. Both the security forces deployed, the Delhi Police and the Rapid Action Force (RAF), report directly to the Home Minister.

There are only two possibilities. First, he authorised the attack on the students – in which case he is culpable. Second, he had no idea that it was taking place – which means that he is entirely incompetent. Either way, as Home Minister, what happened on that day is his responsibility, and he must resign.

Instead, his inaction proves that he approves of the attack on students. He has not ordered any inquiry or even issued a statement. He has refused to come to Parliament, and motions filed daily by the Opposition asking for a discussion have been summarily rejected.

At the same time, Prime Minister Modi, desperate to protect his image, has activated his propaganda machinery and *Godi* media. First information reports and detentions of young protesters continue, in order to intimidate them. The Bharatiya Janata Party's online trolls threaten young female protesters and their parents, forcing them to issue public apologies. Prime Minister Modi personally made a video "forgiving" the youth of India for exercising their legitimate right to express themselves. How absurd it is for a Prime Minister to forgive his own people when they are demanding accountability.

Standing with India's youth

Since Prime Minister Modi is clearly so out of touch, let me warn him – young people across the country have awakened. His image is destroyed and can never be rebuilt. The youth of India will not allow him, Home Minister Shah, or any official to escape the consequences of their actions. We in the Opposition stand with the youth. We will not allow these crimes to pass unpunished.

On July 20, 2026, Sahil and thousands of young people across India demanded accountability from those they elected to office. Sooner or later, they will get that accountability. And we will ensure it.

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A new security triangle emerges with the Makkah Pact

Mahesh Sachdev

Retired Indian Ambassador, specialising in the Arab world and oil issues

The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MJDA), signed on August 7, 2026, by the top leaders of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan, is the first regional realignment since the geostrategic tsunami of the United States-Iran war. While the MJDA text has not been revealed, the joint statement issued specifically states that "any armed attack against any one of the three states shall be regarded as an attack against them all".

This echoes infamous Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) – never invoked – leading speculators to claim that the MJDA was a harbinger of a "Muslim NATO". It appears to be part of a jerky Saudi response to specific security challenges, including a Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA) with Pakistan last year and a 14-country Multinational Maritime Defence Alliance (MMDA) in the last week of July.

Shifting alignments, uncertain stakes

Any analysis of the MJDA faces multiple uncertainties, including ongoing regional turbulence, partners' previous karma, and their varied expectations. This hazy context creates a push-pull effect: from anticipation of the MJDA having profound cascading implications to it being a seemingly desultory, inconsequential response to their asymmetric defence and security challenges. Some also see it as inducing counter-polarisation and alarming other stakeholders from Iran and its non-state allies, Israel, Kurds, and Greece to the United Arab Emirates and India. To walk back, the Saudi Deputy Foreign Minister has clarified that it is neither an effort to establish a military axis nor a sectarian bloc. He denied any link to nuclear ambitions or an arms race.

This denial is unlikely to pierce the statement's conspicuous silence about the precise threats that the MJDA is geared to confront, the U.S.-Iran war roiling the region, Israeli aggressiveness, threats from the non-state actors, and the impact of choke point constrictions. It also refrains from either inviting like-minded regional powers to join in or an uplink with the existing collective security architectures provided by the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Observers point out that the Arab-Muslim world has remained divided against Israel for close to eight decades. Hence, the prospect of the MJDA being a precursor to a Muslim NATO polarised against Iran and its Arab proxies appears far-fetched at this stage. Moreover, even as all three MJDA signatories are allies of the U.S. (which remains suspiciously silent), it is unclear if it is meant to substitute the regional Pax Americana or to serve as a surrogate for the *ancien régime*. In the same vein, if the proposed Muslim NATO in future decides to confront Israel, the U.S. would have scored its own goal.

Moreover, the MJDA is beset by various snags. The Saudis have bitter memories of the Ottoman rule, which brutally suppressed the Al-Saud. For similar reasons, from Türkiye, Ankara's boots on the ground have been shunned by most post-independence Arab regimes.

> Depending on how different scenarios unfold, the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement (MJDA) could affect India's interests in several ways

Till recently, Türkiye promoted the Sunni outfits such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas and motley Syrian militias, many of which are anathema to the Gulf regimes. Türkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Neo-Ottoman ambitions to lead the Sunni Islamic world collide with the Kingdom's self-image of being the Custodian of Islam's Two Holiest Shrines. Riyadh does not continence playing second fiddle to Turkey or any other Muslim power. President Erdoğan had a testy relationship with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MbS) over the 2018 murder of Jamal Khashoggi, a U.S.-based Saudi journalist, in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Turkish leaks on this episode sullied MbS's image, making him a western outlier.

On the other hand, Pakistani troop deployments in Saudi Arabia in the past resulted in frictions due to chain of command disputes, Islamabad's refusal to have its troops shorn of Shias and its reluctance to confront Iran or Yemen. Armed forces in Türkiye and Pakistan have a long-standing tradition of Bonapartism. Saudis have kept armed forces and the National Guard, both with an American-styled set up, out of politics since the Ikhwan militia insurrection (the late 1920s) and the Makkah siege of 1979. Both Türkiye and Pakistan have an active border with Iran – offering a potentially lucrative post-war economic bonanza that they would be loath to forego. Pakistan's enthusiasm for the MJDA is circumscribed by its 900 kilometre-long border with Iran, a large Shia minority, internal security challenges and hostility with India and Afghanistan. In a typical doublespeak, last week, Pakistan began formal discussions on a Free Trade Agreement with Iran, notwithstanding the U.S. sanctions, the MJDA and the SMDA.

Riyadh's security needs

The MJDA is clearly fulcrumed around Saudi security requirements, which Riyadh expects Türkiye and Pakistan to mitigate as part of a "friends with benefits" arrangement. However, the current threats faced by Saudi Arabia are complex and asymmetric, ranging from air attacks on its vital and vulnerable oil and civil infrastructure by Iran and its proxies, the closures of the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandeb and the possible insurrection by the restive Shia minority. It is unclear if Türkiye and Pakistan can meet such challenges, where the U.S. Central Command, with its large, long-standing presence and state-of-the-art equipment, failed. The new allies could perhaps upstage the U.S. in having more boots on the ground in Saudi Arabia, but the Kingdom is unlikely to face a ground invasion. Moreover, relying on foreign forces to address internal security challenges would be bad optics for the Kingdom. The foregoing is not to deride the MJDA as merely a cosmetic exercise. It symbolises the congruence of the three large Sunni powers with considerable complementarity: the Saudi $83 billion defence budget, Türkiye's booming military industrial complex exporting $10 billion annually and Pakistan's 6,60,000-strong armed forces. Their defence and security cross-pollination through military exercises, interoperability of weapon systems and co-production and development of hardware would be beneficial to them all. Additionally, Türkiye and Pakistan could gain political influence in the Kingdom and enrich themselves.

At this stage, the MJDA's future appears uncertain. It may flourish if a low-burn attrition war continues to ripple through the region. Ironically, if an all-out shooting war breaks out, Türkiye and Pakistan may be hesitant to commit forces against Iran, their neighbour. At the other end, if peace prevails, the MJDA would become superfluous. A market share scrimmage among the oil exporters would create a glut, affecting the Saudi capacity to bankroll the MJDA partners.

Having suffered Iranian doggedness and Trumpian tantrums, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arabs are currently experimenting with various security alternatives. The Saudis began the SMDA with Pakistan last year and have felt the need for an MMDA and MJDA. They do not appear to be playing a zero-sum game between semi-reliable Pakistan and India. U.S. President Donald Trump's unreliability was on full display to the Saudis recently in his last-minute Abraham Accords rider to the recent nuclear agreement with the Kingdom. The Saudis may not wish to further complicate their dependence on Uncle Sam by deepening their entanglement with Ankara and Islamabad, both ultimately subject to Washington's dictates.

The implications for India

Depending on various scenarios panning out, the MJDA can impact India's interests in multiple ways. While India needs to keep a steely eye on Pakistan's attempt to align the MJDA partners with it against India, New Delhi should not overreact. As the world's third-largest crude oil importer, India is slated to drive global demand for the next 15 years. India has been the Kingdom's third-largest market and second largest trading partner. Like Saudi Arabia, India has been both a consistent and moderate pro-status quo power amenable to simpler paradigms of economic complementarity.

Riyadh finds ties with India uncluttered by extraneous considerations. India is a geo-strategically safe bet for the turbulent Gulf. Riyadh, facing a huge paradigm shift, is most unlikely to wade into supporting Pakistan's adventurism against India. So, while the MJDA may give Islamabad an adrenaline high, Pakistan's quest to match India's rise through military fluster in West Asia is unlikely to succeed.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Approach to delimitation

Neither the votaries of delimitation nor its critics have come up with any convincing arguments or acceptable points. If the purpose of delimitation is to ensure equal population representation in every constituency, it is high time that delimitation is undertaken. But the foremost question is whether this will in any way improve the provision of civic amenities and address other social issues. If the delimitation exercise is merely a ruse and the real objective is to improve electoral prospects, it requires deeper introspection. Unless political parties come clean about their genuine concerns and spell out the pros and cons, this issue will not be resolved to the satisfaction of the people. Data from previous exercises should come in handy to support the case for delimitation, while the resultant increase in the number of people's representatives could act as a deterrent. This critical issue requires deft handling.

V. Lakshmanan,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

Tariffs as a weapon

The U.S. Senate's overwhelming approval of a Bill threatening 100% tariffs on countries continuing to import Russian oil should concern India deeply. Washington's objective may be to squeeze Russia's war revenues, but using trade as a secondary sanction risks penalising countries pursuing their own energy security. India cannot abruptly replace Russian crude, particularly when supplies through the Strait of Hormuz remain uncertain. At the same time, New Delhi must recognise that continued dependence carries a growing geopolitical cost. India should intensify diplomatic engagement with Washington while diversifying energy sources and markets. Strategic autonomy now requires both economic prudence and diplomatic agility.

Gopalaswamy J.,
Chennai

Such an exorbitant protectionist measure could engender profound distortions in supply chains, exacerbate inflationary pressures and erode the sanctity of the multilateral trading architecture. India must, therefore, exercise strategic circumspection while safeguarding its economic interests. Diplomatic engagement, market diversification and calibrated reciprocity would be more efficacious than retaliatory brinkmanship. In an interdependent world, protectionism is ultimately inimical to shared prosperity and sustainable economic growth.

Nagarajamani M.V.,
Hyderabad

Reviving Chennai's rivers

The Tamil Nadu Budget has highlighted the plan on cleaning up the Adyar and Cooum rivers in Chennai. Successive governments have allocated crores of rupees towards cleaning these rivers. Yet, for decades, none of them has made any serious attempt to even begin the project in a meaningful way. What Chennai needs today, however, is not merely announcements about river restoration, but flood-free neighbourhoods and roads. The TVK government should prioritise completing the pending drainage works and take concrete steps to protect Chennai from flooding during the monsoon season. Restoring the Adyar and Cooum could also spell significant tourism potential for Chennai. Clean and well-maintained riverfronts could add to the city's attractiveness as a tourist destination.

N. Mahadevan,
Chennai

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

Xi Jinping's doctrine for a self-governing party

Manoj Kewalramani

Chairperson, Geostrategy Programme, The Takshashila Institution

The July meeting of the Politburo of the Communist Party of China (CPC) ended with an announcement that the fifth plenary session of the 20th Central Committee will convene in Beijing in October.

The meeting said that the plenum would focus on major issues concerning comprehensive and strict self-governance within the party. This concept has been closely connected with the ruthless anti-corruption and conduct improvement campaign that China's President Xi Jinping has been carrying out ever since he first took charge in 2012.

The plenum's focus on it is indicative of an effort to further deepen Mr. Xi's control over the party ahead of the 21st Party Congress next year, where, in all likelihood, Mr. Xi will seek a fourth term as General Secretary.

The tables appear to have been set for precisely that outcome as there is no serious contender in sight, and much of the machinery that Mr. Xi has built over the past 13 years has been geared, in one way or another, towards ensuring that there is none.

Beyond scale

It is difficult to overstate the scale of Mr. Xi's anti-corruption campaign.

Between 2012 and 2025, some 7.011 million party members were disciplined or dismissed, among them 930 'tigers', or centrally managed senior cadres. The unprecedented reach of all this is underscored by a striking fact: that three members of the 20th Politburo – a body constituted only in October 2022 – have been sacked.

Additionally, alongside the anti-corruption wave, a sweeping campaign has been targeting the persistent issues of formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism and extravagance within the party, which are the four ills that undermine party conduct, according to the central Eight-Point Regulation issued in 2012. By official accounting, roughly 1.5 million people have been caught in this crackdown since 2012. Mr. Xi has left little doubt that neither drive will ease. If anything, the message from Beijing is that the pressure will be sustained, and intensified.

Yet reading the comprehensive and strict party self-governance project through the anti-corruption lens alone misses its ambition.

Mr. Xi's party-building agenda is considerably more broader.

> It is difficult to overstate the scale of Mr. Xi's anti-corruption campaign. Between 2012 and 2025, some 7.011 million party members were disciplined or dismissed

Strengthening the foundation

Earlier this year, Cai Qi, a member of the Politburo Standing Committee and a close confidant of Mr. Xi, formally announced the establishment of 'Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building' – a branch of the wider canon of 'Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era'.

Chinese media commentary and policy discourse have since stressed the depth of its significance, emphasising that this is not merely a set of instructions on discipline, but rather a systematised body of doctrine that distils the laws governing how a long-term ruling Marxist party should build and govern itself.

In practice, this means an ideological and institutional edifice is being constructed to further entrench Mr. Xi's authority, and bind the CPC ever more tightly to his vision. Ideology supplies the frame, organisational control and incentive structures shape who rises, and discipline enforces loyalty. Together, they are the tools with which Mr. Xi is remaking the party in the image of his own reading of China's trajectory and policy goals, the future he believes the country must pursue, and the kind of cadre he believes must carry it there.

This mindset runs through a recent authoritative essay from the party's discipline inspection and supervision apparatus. There are three key takeaways from it, which are indicative of what one can expect in the months and years ahead.

First, there is unabashed praise for Mr. Xi. The essay attributes all the achievements of discipline work in the new era to Mr. Xi's "navigation and helmsmanship" and instructs cadres to mould themselves in Mr. Xi's "selfless and fearless" image. The goal of discipline, in other words, exists in no small part to put the chairman at ease.

Second, the essay repeatedly presses for institutional innovation to make compliance permanent, calling to "lock power in an institutional cage," to turn discipline into "a genuinely electrified high-voltage line," and to build a "digital" inspection system that harnesses big data to detect and pre-empt wrongdoing.

And third, the animating purpose of discipline is not just loyalty to Mr. Xi but also to the cause that he has outlined. So inspectors are called to ensure that "what the Party Central Committee advocates is resolutely responded to, what it decides is resolutely carried out, and what it forbids is resolutely not done", and to "clear obstacles and provide escort" for the goals and tasks of the 15th Five-Year Plan.

Moulding a political class

In essence, the goal of the Xi Jinping Thought on Party Building and comprehensive and strict party self-governance is not simply to punish wrongdoing.

Rather, the aim is to produce a political class that is, by design, composed of believers and adherents. Of course, this is much easier said than done, as evidenced by the fact that the anti-corruption campaign seems to be an endless affair for a leader who has been in power for 13 years.

The solutions he continues to offer are more of the same pursued with greater intensity, and now dressed in the permanence of doctrine and institution.

Mediating Telangana's inter-State issues

The Centre must act decisively to amicably resolve issues between States

STATE OF PLAY

M. Rajeev

The Telangana Government is gearing up to present its views against the unauthorised projects taken up by the neighbouring State of Karnataka across the river Krishna to the Central Government.

The State is focussing on raising the disputes under Section 3 of the Inter State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 which allows it to complain to the Union Government in the event of river water disputes arising with neighbouring States. Telangana is firming up plans to furnish its views at the 31st Southern Zonal Council (SZC) meeting scheduled to be held at Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu on August 20.

The Union Government has invited Telangana to attend the SZC meeting, claiming that it provides an excellent forum for deliberating upon and amicably resolving issues of mutual interest between the Centre and the States as well as among the States themselves. According to the agenda approved tentatively by the Union Home Ministry, the State Government will insist on its demand for conferment of national project status to the Kaleshwaram and Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Projects. Interestingly, the agenda of the meeting indicates that the Karnataka Government is also planning to complain to the Centre about the new projects being taken up by Telangana.

The Karnataka Government has maintained that the liberty to use the remaining water in the Krishna river mentioned in the final order of the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II is not devolved upon Telangana and that the State could not take up any permanent construction to utilise the surplus waters.

Given the firm stances adopted by the two neighbouring States, the zonal council meeting is likely to witness heated arguments between the two sides if river water sharing forms part of the final agenda.

Slow progress

The Telangana Government is preparing detailed notes to present a strong case in support of its stand on major projects at the SZC meeting, which will be chaired by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union Home Secretary. The planning department of the State has been directed to identify key inter-State and regional issues that require deliberations at the SZC meeting while the other departments have been instructed to prepare a list of pending issues so that inter-State issues can be put on fast track mode.

The departments are accordingly finalising Telangana's agenda; the recommendations to be made at the council; and the State's submissions regarding pending matters that require the Union Home Ministry's approval.

Senior officials are however sceptical about the outcome of the SZC meetings as the resolution of pending issues has been relatively slow. Officials say that the focus of the previous meetings was on resolving the issues connected to the Central Government rather than issues pertaining to individual States. While the issues raised by Telangana in the past have been deliberated in the meetings of the standing committee, they were subsequently dropped.

For instance, the issue over a subsidy from the Centre between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh remains unresolved till date. The subsidy amount, which was due to both the States, was credited to the account of Andhra Pradesh. Telangana has been claiming a refund of its share which was considered positively by the SZC which directed Andhra Pradesh to credit the amount to Telangana. The latter is yet to release the amount along with the applicable interest to Telangana.

A similar conundrum is seen with the division of assets pertaining to institutions not listed anywhere in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014. Telangana is firm that only cash balances should be shared between the two States while institutions should be apportioned on a location basis. However, Andhra Pradesh, referring to Section 66 of the Act, is insisting that some of these institutions be included in Schedule IX or X.

It is better for the Union Home Ministry to take a serious view on addressing the issues raised by States so that they will be motivated to raise their issues at the national level rather than prolonging them. The Centre's intervention for the speedy resolution of pending issues will go a long way in helping the States focus on issues which need immediate attention.

rajeev.madabhushi@thehindu.co.in

The cost of unconditional cash transfers

Data show that an overemphasis on cash transfer schemes is bound to eat into investments needed for other public service sectors such as education

DATA POINT

Dipa Sinha
Vijay Ram S.

On August 1, the Delhi Chief Minister launched the Lakshmi Yojana which will provide eligible women with an Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) of ₹2,500 per month, fulfilling one of the ruling party's central promises during the Assembly elections. With this, Delhi joins the list of States/UTs which now have such a UCT scheme for women.

Over the last two years, many studies, including the Economic Survey and the 16th Finance Commission (FC) report have raised concerns over the increasing fiscal burden of such schemes. Recent reports show that in States such as Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, the number of beneficiaries has been reducing in the name of rationalisation. In Delhi, even before the scheme has been rolled out, restrictive criteria such as requiring a recommendation from the local MLA or MP have been included, plausibly to keep the numbers in check. Evaluations of these schemes show that the money received by women is mostly spent on useful expenditures such as food, health and education. The usual barriers to access such as lack of documents, access to banks, and errors in digital records also remain. The question to be asked going forward is whether the finances for these schemes are coming at the cost of other investments in public services such as education and health. **Chart 1** shows the expenditure of these schemes relative to total expenditure and the expenditure of these sectors for some major States.

As a proportion of total State expenditure, expenditure on these UCT schemes range from over 10% in Jharkhand to less than 0.3% in Himachal Pradesh. According to the 16th FC report, almost 44% of State expenditure is tied up in interest payments, pensions and salaries; this indicates that States do not have much space to manoeuvre towards financing new initiatives or investing in necessary infrastructure. The 16th FC also shows that the States' social sector revenue expenditure as a proportion of total revenue expenditure has remained stable since 2011-12. However, as a proportion of GDP they show a declining trend since 2020-21, indicating that there has been no commensurate increase in spending on these sectors with the increase in spending capacity.

In Jharkhand, Karnataka and West Bengal, which happen to have the largest UCT schemes, the spending on UCTs is more than half the entire spending on education **(Chart 2)**. Further, in Jharkhand, Karnataka, West Bengal, and Maharashtra, the spending on these schemes exceeds the entire State spending on health **(Chart 3)**. This shows that household benefits notwithstanding, there is a need for informed discussions on what the long-term implications of such schemes might be.

As these schemes expand, they increase the fiscal burden on States, which is likely to generate pressure on other forms of social sector spending, including existing expenditures towards providing health and education services. Given the resource-constrained position of State governments, this is not an unreasonable apprehension. Over time, the implications of underfunded public services must be considered.

Some scholars have been arguing that such cash transfers are a 'compensation' for the failure of the state to create opportunities for all. The timing of the cash transfers, immediately before elections, has also led many to call them a 'dole'. It could be argued that the recent protests demanding better facilities and greater accountability are an indication that people are no longer satisfied with only 'compensation' and demand a fair share in resources.

Burden or benefit?

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Data were sourced from the Reserve Bank of India. Dipa Sinha and Vijay Ram S are affiliated with the Centre for the Study of the Indian Economy, Azim Premji University. Views expressed are personal

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Cost of welfare: Women receive the Pongal gift items, along with ₹1,000 provided by the Tamil Nadu government in Madurai in January 2023

Chart 1: Expenditure of UCT schemes as a share of total expenditure for select States (in %)

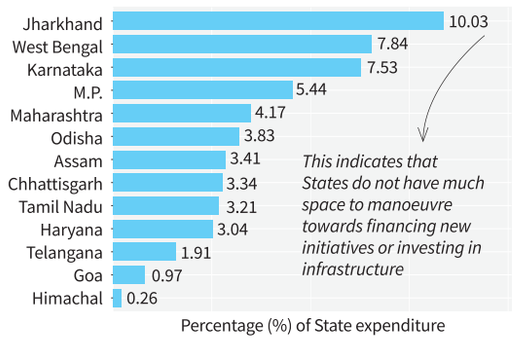

Chart 2: Expenditure on UCTs as a % of State expenditure on education for select States

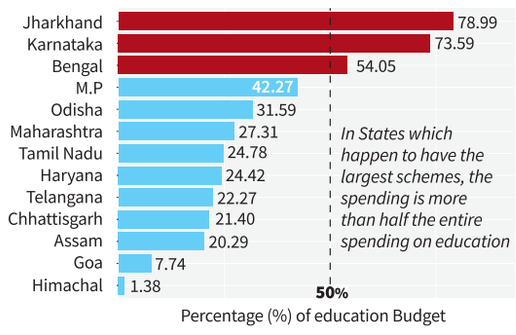

Table1: A State-wise list of unconditional cash transfer (UCT) schemes, which have increased since 2023

State	Scheme name	Monthly amount (₹)	Year of introduction
Goa	Griha Aadhar Scheme	₹1,500	2016 (renewed in 2023)
Sikkim	Sikkim Aama Sashaktikaran Yojana	₹40,000 (per year)	2022 (expanded in 2023)
Karnataka	Gruha Lakshmi Scheme	₹2,000	2023
M.P.	Ladli Behna Yojana	₹1,500	2023
T.N.	Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thogai	₹1,000	2023
Telangana	Mahalakshmi Scheme	₹2,500	2023
Maharashtra	Mukhyamantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana	₹1,500	2024
Jharkhand	Mukhyamantri Maiya Samman Yojana	₹ 2,500	2024
Odisha	Subhadra Yojana	₹10,000 (per year)	2024
Chhattisgarh	Mahtari Vandan Yojana	₹1,000	2024
Assam	Orunodoi 3.0	₹1,250	2024
Himachal	Indira Gandhi Pyari Behna Sukh Samman Nidhi	₹1,500	2024
Haryana	Lado Lakshmi Yojana	₹2,100	2025
Kerala	Sthree Suraksha Scheme	₹1,000	2026
Punjab	Mukh Mantri Mawan Dheeyan Satkar Yojna	₹1,000 - 1,500	2026
Delhi	Lakshmi Yojana	₹2,500	2026 (replacing earlier scheme)
West Bengal	Annapurna Bhandar	₹3,000	2026 (replacing Lakshmir Bhandar [2021])

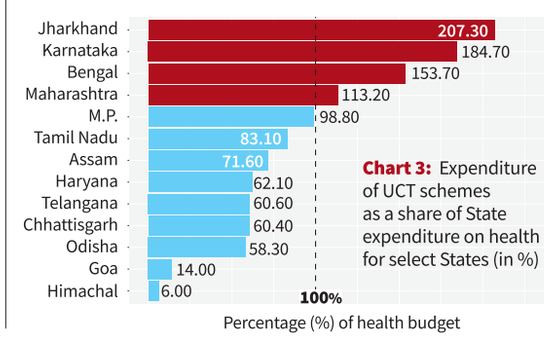

Chart 3: Expenditure of UCT schemes as a share of State expenditure on health for select States (in %)

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 10, 1976

12 gunny bags of watches seized

Bombay, August 9: The Bombay Customs to-day made a big haul of watches seizing 12 gunny bag loads of it from the rocky terrain adjoining the light house at Khar-Danda near the northern suburb of Bandra.

The watches, both ladies and gents, were neatly packed in lots of 1,200 or 500 depending on their sizes in water-proof cellophane bags which were hidden in the gunny bags found ashore by the Marine and Preventive section of the Customs Collectorate.

Announcing this at a news conference, Mr. M.L. Wadhawan, Collector of Customs (Preventive), said the bags contained as many as 13,500 pieces, totally valued "at a little over Rs. 10 lakhs."

Mr. Wadhawan described it as "the biggest of the season" since July is a lean month for contraband because smuggling by sea during monsoon is rendered difficult by gusty winds and high waves. It would be very risky for the dhows to make the trip from West Asia to Bombay shores, it was stated.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 10, 1926

The Cauvery floods

Trichinolpoly, August 10: There has been a very slight rise in the Cauvery since yesterday. The reading at the Upper Anicut which was 10.9 at nine this morning rose to 10.97, at eleven and at Trichinopoly bridge, it is now eleven feet. The overflow at Konakarai still continues and this is due to a small breach near the toll-gate where the water from the river rushes into the Konakarai area. Practically the whole road for about half a furlong from the Church of the St. Joseph's College to the Fort railway station including the station compound is still under water, the volume having increased since yesterday in this and other places.

The railway District Engineer and his staff are sanding up either side of the line between the distant and home signals of the Fort railway station where water is nearer the line than at other places. The fierce wind and drizzling which still continue are believed to be the forerunners of more freshes, but the report received from Dhanagiri in Mysore shows that water is to-day 30.5 feet as against 30.7 feet yesterday with a tendency to fall.

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of flight cancellations due to Typhoon Dolphin

1,300 Typhoon Dolphin made landfall in densely populated eastern China on Sunday, meteorological authorities said, after the storm triggered more than 1,000 flight cancellations, evacuations and a top-level alert. AFP

Grievances resolved by Delhi Police received during public hearings

368 The Delhi Police has resolved 368 complaints and grievances received during public hearings held at police stations across the national capital on Saturday, as part of its Thana Divas-Jansunwai initiative. The initiative was launched in June. PTI

Area of safe haven carved out for lions in Gujarat

100 hectares. Stepping up efforts to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts, the Gujarat forest department is establishing a 100-hectare enclosure at the Ambardi Safari Park in Amreli district to house Asiatic lions that have attacked humans, an official said on Sunday. PTI

Subsidy to be provided by Himachal Pradesh govt. for cold storage

70 in per cent. The Himachal Pradesh government will provide a 70% subsidy for establishing 5-metric-tonne cold storages, freeze-dry units and refrigerated vans. The cost has been fixed at ₹15 lakh for a 5 MT cold storage unit, ₹10 lakh for a freeze-dry unit and ₹20 lakh for a refrigerated van. PTI

Estimated annual rise in Taiwan's defence spending for 2027

16 in per cent. Taiwan's cabinet will propose a 16% annual rise in defence spending for 2027 which will for the first time exceed T$1 trillion ($31 billion), the official Central News Agency reported on Sunday, as Taipei bolsters its military. REUTERS

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The stakes in India's delimitation debate

What triggers delimitation? How will the 2027 Census affect seat allocation? Can the exercise be completed before 2029? Which States could gain or lose seats? What happens without a constitutional amendment? How will women's reservation be implemented? How can new boundaries affect electoral outcomes?

EXPLAINER

Varghese K. George

The story so far:

The BJP is keen to kick off a fresh delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies. It is trying to garner a two-thirds majority in Parliament to pass a Constitutional amendment for this purpose. In April 2026, it had moved the amendment but could not pass it. The Centre has not revealed its exact proposals. The proposals that the Centre placed before Parliament in the previous Session were the following:

1) Increase the size of the Lok Sabha up to a maximum of 850 seats; 2) distribute these seats among the States based on the 2011 Census through a fresh, countrywide delimitation of constituencies; and 3) reserve one-third of the total seats for women.

According to the existing Constitutional provisions, a fresh delimitation is possible only after the data of the 2027 Census is published, and reservation for women can be rolled out only along with it.

What happens if there is no Constitutional amendment?

For a fresh delimitation to happen, a Constitutional amendment is not required. A fresh delimitation will be triggered soon after the data of the 2027 census is published. The terms for the next delimitation are already written into the Constitution, principally in Articles 81 and 82. A Constitutional amendment is required only if the existing constitutional provisions relating to delimitation are to be changed.

Articles 81 and 82 mandate that after the data from the first Census conducted after 2026 is published, two things will happen.

The first is a reallocation of the existing strength of the Lok Sabha among the States and Union Territories on the basis of the population recorded in that Census, which would, in this case, be the 2027 Census. The second is the delimitation of individual constituencies within each State.

Therefore, if there is no Constitutional amendment at all, there will be a delimitation exercise that must begin after the data of the 2027 Census is published.

Gearing up: A fresh delimitation will be triggered soon after the data of the 2027 census is published. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Can a fresh delimitation be completed before the 2029 Lok Sabha elections?

May or may not. In the past, delimitation exercises took several years. The last one was set up on 12 July 2002, after the 2001 Census. Its recommendations were implemented in 2008, and the 2009 Lok Sabha elections were held based on newly drawn constituencies.

The last delimitation did not involve a reallocation of seats of individual States; only the existing constituencies within each State were redrawn. The last time Lok Sabha seats were reallocated among States was in 1973, based on the 1971 Census. That ratio remains as of today.

The 2027 Census is the first time that data gathering has been completely digitalised. Theoretically, it is possible that the delimitation process could be quicker than before. If the exercise is not completed before the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, it could continue into the term of the next Lok Sabha and the government.

The last Delimitation Commission was appointed during A. B. Vajpayee's tenure as the Prime Minister, and its work was completed during the first term of the Manmohan Singh government, with a Lok Sabha election in 2004 in between. The same can happen with the next Delimitation Commission.

What will be the mandate of the next Delimitation Commission?

If a fresh delimitation is triggered under the existing provisions of Articles 81 and 82, the following will happen.

At present, the distribution of the 543 Lok Sabha seats among the States is based on the population figures of the 1971 Census. When the benchmark changes from the 1971 population to the population recorded in the first Census after 2026, the seat distribution is likely to change **(Table 1)**. Broadly speaking, the southern States are likely to face a reduction in their share of Lok Sabha seats, while the Hindi-speaking States, particularly Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan, are likely to gain seats. The maximum number of Lok Sabha seats allowed by the Constitution is 550. A third of the Lok Sabha seats nationally, and one-third of the seats within each State, will be reserved for women.

So, in the absence of any Constitutional amendment, the following sequence is envisaged: first, the reallocation of Lok Sabha seats among States; second, the delimitation of constituencies within States; and third, the implementation of women's reservation – all tied to the Census 2027.

How is the allocation of seats to each State determined?

Think of India as one large joint family and the States as its constituent family units. Imagine that each individual across the joint family was entitled to one acre of land **(Image 1)**. A family with five members got five acres, another with seven members got seven acres, and so on. Each family then divided its share among its members. At that point, everyone got roughly the same share. In political terms, every vote had roughly the same value. But then time passed. Some families grew much faster than others. In the larger families, the same land had to be shared among more people. In the smaller families, fewer people shared the same land. As a result, the value of each person's share began to differ.

That is, in a sense, what has happened to votes in India. In 1967, an MP across most major States represented roughly four to five lakh electors. Today, a MP from Kerala represents about 14 lakh electors, while in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the figure is around 19 lakh.

This variation is the result of a deliberate decision by all parties, taken on two occasions, in 1976 and 2001, not to punish States that had stabilised their populations. The Constitution gives that leeway. The size of Lok Sabha constituencies is not necessarily based on a national average, which today would be about 18 lakh voters per constituency. Article 81 requires seats to be allocated among States "so far as practicable", on the basis of a national average. This leeway for variation allows for a balance between two principles that can be in tension: federalism, or representation of States, and democracy, or one vote, one value.

And that is the central tension the debate on delimitation now needs to resolve.

Image 1

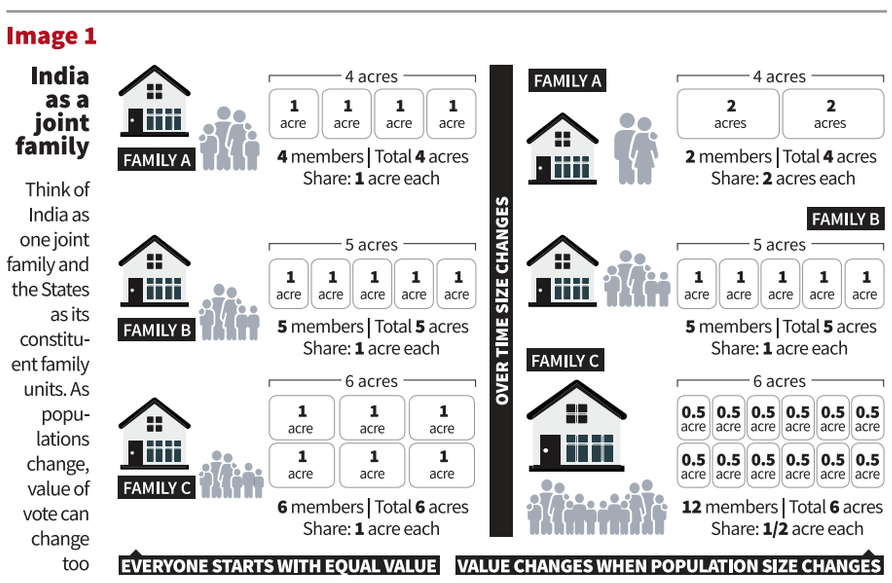
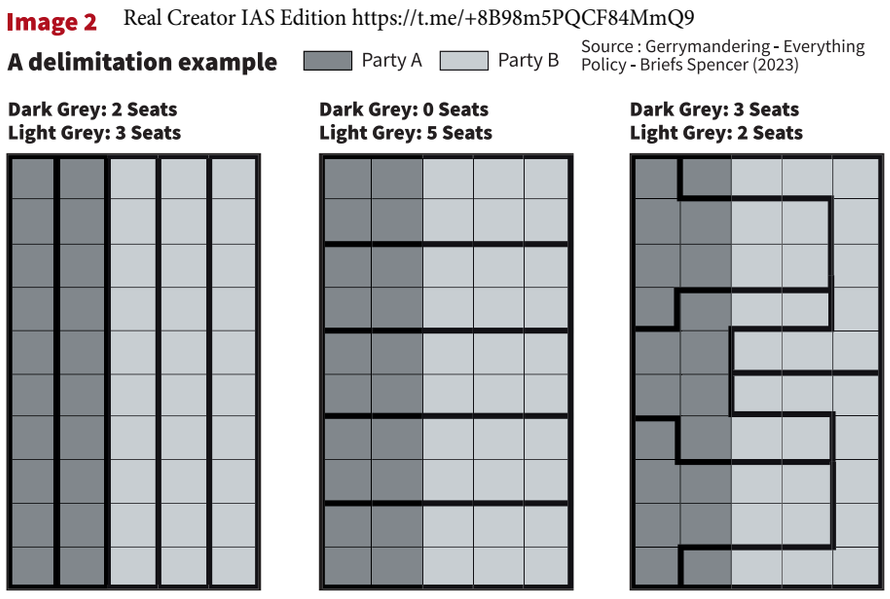


Image 2 Real Creator IAS Edition https://t.me/+8B98m5PQCF84MmQ9



Comparison of Lok Sabha seat distribution based on 2024 electors and 2011 population

State/ Union Territory	Current Seats (543)	Seats*	Seats**
A.P.	25	23	22
Arunachal Pradesh	2	0	1
Assam	14	14	14
Bihar	40	43	47
Goa	2	1	1
Gujarat	26	27	27
Haryana	10	11	11
H.P	4	3	3
Karnataka	28	30	27
Kerala	20	15	15
M.P	29	31	33
Maharashtra	48	52	50
Manipur	2	1	1
Meghalaya	2	1	1
Mizoram	1	0	0
Nagaland	1	1	1
Odisha	21	19	19
Punjab	13	12	12
Rajasthan	25	30	31
Sikkim	1	0	0

State/ Union Territory	Current Seats (543)	Seats*	Seats**
Tamil Nadu	39	35	32
Tripura	2	2	2
U.P.	80	86	90
WB	42	42	41
Chhattisgarh	11	11	11
Jharkhand	14	14	15
Uttarakhand	5	5	5
Telangana	17	18	16
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1	0	0
Chandigarh	1	0	0
Dadra & NH and Daman & Diu	2	0	0
Delhi	7	8	8
Lakshadweep	1	0	0
Puducherry	1	1	1
J&K	5	5	6
Ladakh	1	0	0
Total	**543**	**541**	**543**

*If seats are redistributed as per the 2024 electoral roll

**Seats are redistributed as per the 2011 population

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What is gerrymandering?

When we discuss the democratic principle of One Person, One Vote, One Value, the first requirement is that every Lok Sabha constituency should have roughly the same number of voters. But equal numbers alone do not guarantee equal value for every vote. Why? Because even when constituencies contain the same number of voters, the way those voters are grouped can dramatically affect electoral outcomes.

Consider a simple example **(Image 2)**. Imagine there are 50 voters. Party A has 20 supporters and Party B has 30 supporters. There are five constituencies, each with 10 voters and electing one representative.

In the first scenario, voters are distributed fairly across the five constituencies. The result broadly reflects the overall vote share. Party A and Party B win seats broadly in proportion to their support. In the second scenario, Party A's voters are spread thinly across constituencies. This is called cracking. Although Party A has 40% of all voters, it may not have enough support to win even one constituency. Thus, 40% of voters could end up with no representation at all.

In the third scenario, Party B's voters are heavily concentrated in a few constituencies. This is known as packing. Party B wins those seats with huge margins but ends up wasting votes, allowing Party A to win more seats despite having fewer supporters overall.

The way constituency boundaries are drawn can profoundly shape democratic representation and electoral outcomes.

Extracted from the author's introduction to 'The Delimitation Debate: The Union and its Units,' published by The Hindu. Order the book here:

THE GIST

- The 2027 Census is set to trigger a fresh delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies under Articles 81 and 82, even without a new Constitutional amendment.
- The exercise could significantly alter the distribution of Lok Sabha seats, with southern States likely to lose their share and Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan likely to gain.
- Redrawing constituency boundaries could also affect electoral outcomes, as the grouping of voters through 'cracking' and 'packing' can influence which parties win seats.

CACHE

A common blueprint for India's industrial heat electrification

India's next phase of energy transition must focus on electrifying industrial heat; a coordinated approach involving innovative financing, skilled workers, demonstration projects and cluster-level planning can help scale the transition and strengthen manufacturing competitiveness

Vrinda Gupta
Srinivas Ethiraj

India's energy transition is already mainstreaming renewable-powered electrification across major demand centres. Electric mobility is replacing internal combustion engines, agriculture is increasingly powered by solar irrigation, and buildings are adopting smarter appliances. The next phase lies in electrifying industrial heat, particularly across India's MSMEs, to strengthen manufacturing competitiveness, energy security and decarbonisation.

India's solar photovoltaic revolution reduced solar tariffs by more than 85% over the past decade through a coordinated ecosystem of supportive policies both at the national and state level, innovative financing, competitive vendors and markets, institutional mandates, and sustained private sector investment. Now, scaling industrial heat electrification will require a similar approach. The focus has shifted to how India plans and scales this transition.

No blanket solution

First, facility-level engineering assessments should become the foundation of industrial heat electrification. Most industries have limited visibility of their thermal systems beyond fuel consumption. Steam flow is rarely metered, process temperatures are often unmonitored, and waste heat streams remain unquantified. Without robust engineering assessments, industries risk investing in technologies unsuited to their process requirements. So, engineering assessments should evaluate legacy boiler performance and operating costs, optimise steam systems, identify recoverable waste heat, and where feasible, replace steam with more efficient direct heating before electrification.

Electricity can be used only where it delivers the greatest value. So, process integration tools such as pinch analysis should identify internal heat recovery opportunities before electrification.

Representative facilities can be used to develop standardised process profiles that estimate hourly thermal demand, identify electrifiable heat loads, and inform future electricity demand for utilities and grid operators. Aggregated across industrial clusters, these assessments can support district-level industrial decarbonisation plans tailored to local industrial profiles, renewable resources, and infrastructure readiness. Localised planning recognises that there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

Second, India should adopt a technology-inclusive approach. Industrial processes vary widely in temperature, production schedules, and thermal demand. So a single technology solution is impractical.

Heat pumps are well suited for low- and medium-temperature applications, particularly where waste heat can be recovered. Electric boilers currently offer a practical pathway for steam generation above 200° C. Mechanical vapour recompression systems can recover and reuse process vapour in evaporation-intensive processes. Thermal energy storage solutions can act as thermal buffers by storing surplus heat generated when renewable electricity is abundant or recovered from industrial waste heat, and releasing it when process heat is required, improving operational flexibility and reducing peak electricity demand.

Powering up: A successful electrification programme hinges on affordable and reliable renewable electricity supply. GETTY IMAGES

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Access to capital

Third, a successful electrification programme hinges on affordable and reliable renewable electricity supply. While renewable generation costs have fallen dramatically over the past decade, the delivered cost of renewable electricity for industries remains influenced by network charges, open-access provisions, and other transaction costs.

As India's commercial and industrial renewable energy market matures, reforms should focus on reducing these costs by streamlining open-access procedures, rationalising banking provisions, reducing transactional complexity, and strengthening grid infrastructure, particularly for electrification projects that replace fossil fuel-based heating. Renewable electricity planning should be integrated with industrial electrification, enabling industries to align thermal demand with periods of renewable generation.

Fourth, financing models must evolve alongside technologies. The principal challenge in scaling industrial heat electrification extends beyond technology to reducing engineering and investment risks, particularly for MSMEs with limited access to capital and technical expertise.

Technology leasing, heat-as-a-service, energy service company models, and blended finance can lower the upfront investment and technology risks. Equally important is demand aggregation. Facility-level assessments should feed into cluster-level investment pipelines, allowing industries with similar thermal profiles to aggregate demand, reduce procurement costs, and improve access to low-cost finance.

Demonstration projects

Fifth, India needs skilled workers and implementation capacity tailored to cluster needs. Many industries, particularly MSMEs, face capability and skill gaps that slow technology adoption, reduce efficiency, and limit innovation. Most of the vocational and industry training programmes often focus on routine operations and maintenance. Industrial heat electrification will require an engineering transition at the shop floors rather than a simple equipment replacement exercise. Scaling it requires a workforce of engineers, technicians, and operators with capabilities in process integration, system design, installation, commissioning, operation, and maintenance, and digital automation and control systems.

Sixth, India needs demonstration projects before it needs large-scale mandates. India needs first-of-a-kind demonstration projects across representative sectors, process temperatures, and industrial clusters. This will generate engineering evidence, validate business models, and reduce investment uncertainty. The priority should be to identify the most suitable first-mover facilities.

Based on our analysis in brownfield settings, units that meet these screening criteria are the best candidates for early deployment of low- and medium-temperature (up to 250 °C) electrification technologies **(Table 1).**

Common blueprint

Finally, industrial heat electrification needs a coordinated national framework supported by place-based implementation. It should establish engineering standards, designate institutional responsibility, facilitate demand aggregation, mobilise finance, and support early demonstration projects. Its implementation should be driven through district and cluster-level industrial energy transition plans, allowing each industrial cluster to transition according to its unique thermal profile, local context, electricity market, and renewable energy potential.

India now needs a common blueprint to transform industrial heat electrification into a scalable industrial strategy. Industrial heat offers an opportunity to decarbonise manufacturing, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and build a more resilient and future-ready industrial economy.

(Vrinda Gupta is associate director, Energy Transition, Vasudha Foundation. Srinivas Ethiraj is assistant manager, Energy Transition, Vasudha Foundation)

The right fit

The following criteria can help identify brownfield units best suited for early deployment of low- and medium-temperature electrification technologies:

Screening criterion	Indicative threshold
Steam generation cost	> ₹2.8 per kg of steam
Steam-to-fuel ratio	< 3 kg steam per kg fuel
Recoverable waste heat	Temperature ≥ 50° C; flow rate ≥ 60 cubic metres per hour
Delivered cost of renewable electricity	< ₹6 per kWh
Boiler service life	> 18 years

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KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

The rejection punctured his enthusiasm

The proposal was dead on arrival from the very beginning

S. Upendran

"The monsoon is here, finally! The people in our building are celebrating."

"I, for one, am over the moon. Sujatha is throwing a party this weekend."

"She told me, but I won't be able to come. I'm busy Sunday."

"You're busy Sunday? You mean, 'I'm busy on Sunday', don't you?"

"We're both right! In informal contexts, it's acceptable to say, 'I'm busy Sunday', without the 'on'. Americans do it quite often."

"I see. How about this example? The children's school reopens Tuesday."

"Sounds good. But remember such sentences are okay in informal contexts. But they'll be frowned upon in writing."

"Especially if it's a formal email or letter you're writing."

"That's right! Anyway, whether Sujatha's party is Sunday or on Sunday, I won't be able to come. Meeting Gautam Sunday evening."

"How is he doing? I heard that his partner took over his company."

"He never expected his partner to do it. His ego was punctured, and he..."

"Does it mean his ego had a flat tyre?"

"In a sense, yes. When someone punctures your ego, what he does is to make you lose or weaken your confidence."

"That happens whenever I talk to Bala. Every time we have a discussion, he punctures every argument I put forward."

"It's not just the argument that you put forward. He punctures everyone's arguments. By the way, it's not just arguments that can be punctured. A person's beliefs, feelings and dreams can also be punctured. For example, Mayank's love for cricket was punctured when he saw his brother being hit on head by a bouncer."

"A hit on the head can definitely puncture one's enthusiasm for the game, I guess. Hemant's dream of buying a new flat was punctured when the bank turned down his application for a loan."

"When I learnt that Revathi was a member of the selection committee, my positive mood was punctured."

"Revathi's cutting remarks have punctured the ego of many candidates."

"That's so true! She can be quite nasty when she's in a bad mood."

"Do you think Management will accept the changes she's recommended?"

"Not a chance! I think the proposal is dead on arrival. It needs...."

"What are you talking about?"

"It means that it is unlikely to be passed. It's unlikely to get the required number of votes. It will fail."

"I see."

"It was first used with patients who died before they could reach the hospital. The doctors declared my grandfather dead on arrival. The expression is often abbreviated to DOA. Over the years, it has acquired a figurative meaning. You normally use it to suggest that something - it could be a plan, and idea, proposal, etc. - that is unlikely to be accepted."

"I see. If you ask me, the bill that the Speaker has tabled is dead on arrival."

"The peace plan that we put forward yesterday is dead on arrival."

"That must have punctured your ego!"

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Persnickety: characterised by excessive precision and attention to trivial details

Synonyms: careful, picky, fussy, particular

Usage: *She is persnickety about how her room is arranged.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/persnickety

International Phonetic Alphabet: /pəsnɪkəti/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

On August 10, 1793, one of the most famous museums in the world, the Louvre, was opened for the public. A quiz on the museum and its works

Joan Sony Cherian

QUESTION 1

The establishment of the museum is closely linked with this paramount event in 1789. Name the event.

QUESTION 2

A steel-and-glass pyramid, known as the Louvre Pyramid, serves as the entrance to the museum. Name the architect who designed it.

QUESTION 3

During the Nazi occupation of France in the Second World War, many treasures of the museum, including the Mona Lisa, were transported to secret hiding places. Name the director of the museum who was responsible for ensuring the safe transport of these artifacts.

QUESTION 4

The Louvre was once the official residence of French Monarchs. When did it stop becoming the royal seat?

QUESTION 5

Last year, the Louvre was burgled by brazen thieves who entered the museum disguised as construction workers. What did they steal?

Visual Question:
What is this building and where is it located? SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. Why was August 7 chosen as the National Handloom Day? **Ans: To commemorate the 'Swadeshi Movement'**

2. After whom is the country's highest recognition for handloom weavers who have demonstrated extraordinary craftsmanship and dedication to the preservation and promotion of India's weaving traditions named? **Ans: Sant Kabir, who was a weaver**

3. Which State is synonymous with the Wangkhei Phee and Shapee Lanphee weaves? **Ans: Manipur**

4. Name the master weaver of the Gods in Hindu mythology from whom the silk weavers of Kanchipuram consider their descendance. **Ans: Sage Markanda**

5. What is special about Eri silk, locally called Ryndia, from Meghalaya? **Ans: It is 'Ahimsa' or 'Peace' silk where the yarn is spun after the moth exits the cocoon naturally**

6. Which popular weave from Central India was patronised by Queen Ahilyabai Holkar? **Ans: Maheshwari**

7. Where is Calico Museum of Textiles? **Ans: Ahmedabad**

Visual: Name this social reformer affectionately called 'Hatkargha Maa' (Handloom Mother) **Ans: Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay**

Early Birds: Tsewang Chosdon | Saniya Kumari | Abhay Krishan | Prem Raj P. | Devan Monga

From Page One

Jharkhand cancels 3 exams as stir continues

Responding to the demand over Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission-Combined Graduate Level (JSSC-CGL) examination, the government said a committee will be formed under a retired judge for a judicial probe and the CID will investigate the criminal angle. It has not yet agreed to cancel exams conducted by the TDPL.

Piyush Kumar, a student delegation member, said that the resolution was "unacceptable". "We first want the cancellation of the exam and then the investigation," he said.

The four-member committee of State Ministers informed the protesting groups that a fast-track court will be established for the speedy disposal of cases on the alleged exam irregularities. The court will file a charge-sheet within 90 days, Minister Kumar said. "A panel will also be formed with experts drawn from IIT-ISM Dhanbad, IIM Ranchi and XLRI Jamshedpur to suggest examination reforms," he said.

But Chandan Kumar, another delegation member from Jharkhand Loktantrik Krantikari Morcha said that there is "no clarity over the timeline."

Houthis hit Saudi oil facility, kill 11 in Yemen

Earlier, the Houthi military spokesperson said the group had struck an oil facility on Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast after the Gulf kingdom's Energy Ministry said it had extinguished a fire at the Jazan site.

The Saudi Arabian Ministry said relevant authorities were completing procedures to deal with the incident at the attacked site, which processes 4,00,000 barrels of crude oil per day in southwestern Saudi Arabia. No injuries were reported, it added.

Mr. Saree said that the attack on the facility operated by Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil firm Aramco was launched in response to incursions by drones from the Gulf monarchy into northwest Yemen. The group had struck Aramco sites before in Jazan and Yanbu on the Red Sea.

J&K group flags 'terror threat' against Pandits

"The communication represented a serious escalation because it went beyond generic threats and appeared to identify individuals as potential targets while claiming access to information about their families, locations and places of work," said Agnishekhar, convener of Panun Kashmir.

Mr. Agnishekhar demanded an investigation into the authenticity of the claims made in the letter. He also urged J&K Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha "to immediately direct the police and security agencies to undertake a comprehensive threat assessment of all persons named in the communication and their immediate families".

The Pandit organisation also sought appropriate security measures for the individuals identified in the communication and a review of the security of Kashmiri Pandit employees working in sensitive government departments.

Referring to the letter, Mr. Agnishekhar said it needed to be established whether the perpetrators actually possessed such information or were "attempting psychological warfare". "The authorities must investigate the source of the information, the digital trail behind the communication and whether any surveillance, profiling or reconnaissance of the targeted persons has taken place," he added.

A sense of fear returned to Kashmir after terrorists killed one policeman and two non-local labourers in south Kashmir in the past 20 days in two separate targeted killings.

Ladakh to lead India's first caste census

"The broad contours have been conveyed to us. This time the questions are descriptive and will also include caste. The caste column will be open-ended, and enumerators will record the name of the caste as provided by the respondent," said the official.

The official added that since the Census envisages counting all structures and buildings, enumerators are being told to exercise caution and record defence structures along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) as "special charges" on paper schedules.

The open-column methodology had resulted in the 2011 Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) returning over 46 lakh different "caste names", largely owing to the differences in what people understand by caste.

On August 3, the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India notified in the gazette of India that "the conduct of Census of the population shall be undertaken in the Union territory of Ladakh and the snow-bound non-synchronous areas of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the snow-bound non-synchronous areas of the States of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, from 1st September, 2026 to 30th September, 2026 with a revisional round from 1 October, 2026 to 5th October, 2026".

An option for self-enumeration will be available from August 17 to 31, the notification said.

Will safeguard future of students: Jharkhand CM

Hemant Soren urges protesters not to be misled by political parties, says the State government would ensure 'strict action' and 'justice' over alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Sunday assured students protesting in Ranchi that the State government was fully committed to safeguarding their rights and future.

It was the government's responsibility to ensure justice for the youth protesting against alleged irregularities in recruitment examinations, Mr. Soren said.

Hundreds of students have been protesting at the Jaipal Singh Munda Stadium in the State capital for the past 16 days against alleged irregularities in competitive exams for government jobs in the State, including in the Jharkhand Public Service Commission Combined Civil Services Examination, and the Jharkhand General Graduate Level Combined Competitive Examination.

Hemant Soren addresses the public gathering during Jharkhand Adivasi Mahotsav in Ranchi on Sunday. ANI

While addressing the Jharkhand Adivasi *Mahotsav* in Ranchi, Mr. Soren said the strictest action would be taken against those held responsible for the irregularities, and the individuals involved had already been identified.

"I want to send a clear and open message to all students, a message I always convey – that we operate a vast system, and our intentions regarding the people of this State have always been deeply sensitive," Mr. Soren said.

"Whether they are residents of villages or small towns, farmers, labourers, women, educated youth, or those with little to no formal education, we are concerned about the well-being of everyone. Regarding the issue for which our youth are currently agitating and protesting, the government is indeed listening to their grievances," Mr. Soren said.

'No politics needed'

"Have faith, we were born of this soil and will be laid to rest in this very soil. No one needs to see this protest from a political lens. You are students, you have rights, and it is the government's responsibility to ensure you receive those rights and secure justice – a responsibility that will be fulfilled," Mr. Soren said.

"Many are focusing on the youth. Political parties are actively working on a large scale to mislead them by contaminating the truth with falsehoods," he said.

State ready for dialogue

He emphasised that every problem could be resolved through dialogue and not through the use of batons and bullets. "Forces such as batons and bullets are meant for enemies at the borders, resorting to such measures does not solve problems," Mr. Soren said.

"Your problems are our problems. I assure you completely that justice will be served, and it will be done transparently," Mr. Soren said.

Bengal CM orders fresh investigation into R.G. Kar case

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on Sunday announced a fresh probe into the rape and murder of a doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9, 2024.

"Ratna Debnath (mother of the victim and now BJP MLA from Panihati) had written to me, requesting a fresh investigation. After extensive discussions with the Chief Secretary and a team of experts, I am announcing a fresh investigation under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952," the Chief Minister said, speaking at an event at Panihati.

Different angles

The Chief Minister directed the Commissioner of Police, Barrackpore, to investigate how the body of the victim was cremated without the family's approval.

Former Trinamool Congress MLA Nirmal Ghosh and other Trinamool leaders have been accused of hurriedly cremating the body.

Suvendu Adhikari

He said the Central agencies are already looking into different angles of the case, including the rape and murder, financial irregularities, and the attack on the hospital.

Mr. Adhikari also raised questions on why the Supreme Court took up the R.G. Kar case *suo motu*.

"It is beyond my understanding and the understanding of Ratna Debnath why the Supreme Court took up investigation in the case," he said.

Govt. job a way past barriers for Adivasi youth

Suruchi Kumari
RANCHI

For 26-year-old Sarita Munda, the struggle to get a government job has stretched across years, exam cycles and disappointments.

She came to Ranchi from a village near Latehar with a familiar plan among young Adivasi youth in many parts of Jharkhand: study, prepare for the State recruitment examinations, find a government job and build a life that guarantees a place in the system that governs them, visibility and a source of income other than agricultural work or daily wage labour.

But preparation costs money. Ms. Sarita has been doing domestic work in Ranchi to support herself while studying. Her brother and sister have also spent years preparing for the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) and Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission (JSSC) examinations.

She appeared for an examination in 2024, only to see it cancelled. The following year brought another round of uncertainty and allegations of irregularities. Now, in 2026, she finds herself once again in the middle of a student movement demanding that the recruitment process be made credible.

For her, the dispute is not simply about an examination. It is about whether the years spent preparing for it will lead anywhere.

'Core Adivasi issue'

For many, JPSC and JSSC represent perhaps the clearest route to secure employment in a State where the private sector offers limited opportunities, particularly for young people from rural and Adivasi communities.

According to the 2011 Census, Scheduled Tribes account for roughly 26% of Jharkhand's population. The Census also maintains separate data on the educational levels of Scheduled Tribe communities in the State.

According to the 2011 Census, Scheduled Tribes account for roughly 26% of Jharkhand's population. ANI

For Adivasi youth, government job means being the first person in a family to enter the formal system that makes decisions about the community that remains on the margins.

That is why Akriti Lakra believes the current agitation cannot be separated from the Adivasi question. Ms. Lakra, who is from a village near Namkum, has been attending the protest and joined the Adivasi Bachao Yuva Manch's programme around International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples on Sunday.

She questioned the absence of an Adivasi voice from much of the visible leadership of the agitation, arguing that education has always been at the heart of the Adivasi struggle after *jal, jungle, zameen* (water, forests, land.)

Students from Adivasi communities, she said, have been part of the protest from its beginning, even while leaving behind agricultural work during monsoon.

That dependence is visible in the stories of aspirants who have spent years preparing. There is the cost of books, coaching, rent, food, travel and examination fees. There is also the opportunity cost: years that could otherwise have been spent pursuing another career.

Every delay, therefore, carries a different meaning for a student who has already spent several years preparing. "By the time another opportunity arrives, private-sector employment may no longer be an easy alternative," said Nishi Kumar, 39, who has lost years to unsuccessful conduct of exams.

ED Director Rahul Navin gets one-year extension

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Centre has extended the tenure of Enforcement Directorate Director Rahul Navin by a year, a government order said.

Mr. Navin's tenure as the ED chief has been extended by one year beyond August 13, 2026, "including extension in service beyond the date of his superannuation i.e. July 31, 2027, or until further orders, whichever is earlier", the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet said.

The 1993-batch IRS (Income Tax) official had joined the agency as a Special Director in November 2019. He was given the additional charge as ED Director in September 2023. In August 2024, he became full-time chief.

Protests over, but students in Delhi allege continued police harassment

Lavpreet Kaur
NEW DELHI

For Gurkirat, a former Delhi University student now pursuing a Master's in Sociology at Panjab University, Chandigarh, fear is no longer confined to what might happen to her. She worries about what the police might do to her parents.

Ms. Gurkirat, former president of the Bhagat Singh Chhatra Ekta Manch, alleged that Delhi Police personnel have been visiting her parents' home at Shivaji Enclave in the city every seven to 10 days for several months, asking about her whereabouts and serving notices in connection with old cases, including defamation cases.

According to her, the personnel have told her parents, "If you can't control your daughter, then we will do it in our way".

On August 6, 2026, when Ms. Gurkirat was visiting her parents in Delhi, she was arrested in connection with a case pertaining to the February 2026 protests over the University Grants Commission's Equity Regulations at Delhi University, and granted bail on the same day. Police personnel subsequently told her, she alleged, that while she had secured bail in one case, "the next will be a big Maoist case".

A student claims they were held for three days and subjected to continuous harassment and intimidation. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Pattern of surveillance

Students told *The Hindu* that police scrutiny has continued long after the demonstrations ended, describing a sustained pattern of harassment, surveillance, intimidation, and political labelling. Students from different parts of the country said personnel have visited and contacted their families in Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Bengaluru.

Ilakkiya, 24, who completed her Master's in Psychology and is preparing for a Ph.D. in Delhi, alleged that the police reached her family in a remote village in Erode district of Tamil Nadu.

"Men claiming to be from the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the police visited my parents twice. They told them that I was an 'urban Naxalite'. My father is a small-scale farmer and does not understand English or Hindi and was intimidated by the warnings and terminology," Ms. Ilakkiya said.

She was among the students picked up by the Delhi Police in March 2026 while preparing for a permitted programme of the Bhagat Singh Chhatra Ekta Manch, a part of the Forum Against Corporatisation and Militarisation, which was planning a public convention at Ambedkar Bhavan on March 31, Bhagat Singh's martyrdom day.

According to her, men in civilian clothes took the students to an unknown location, where they were kept for three days and subjected to "continuous harassment and intimidation". They were released after *habeas corpus* proceedings were initiated before the Delhi High Court. *The Hindu* reached out to the Delhi Police but did not receive a response at the time of writing this report.

Students' body slams JNU for cancelling event on Khalid book

Jaideep Deo Bhanj
NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehu University Students' Union (JNUSU) on Sunday hit out at the JNU administration for cancelling a discussion on the book *Fractured Communities: Adivasi Histories and the Politics of Power*, written by former student Umar Khalid, scheduled to be held at the SSS-1 auditorium on August 10.

The JNUSU in a statement said discussing a book was a fundamental part of academic culture and democratic engagement on any university campus.

"By cancelling the venue for this event, the JNU administration has once again exposed its anti-student and anti-intellectual agenda, one that seeks to suppress critical thought and silence dissenting voices rather than foster the free exchange of ideas that a university is meant to protect," the JNUSU said.

Umar Khalid

The administration, in response, said the JNU was a democratic and decentralised institution and that permission for the event was given by the Dean, School of Social Sciences.

"The booking of the auditorium SSS-1 stands cancelled because of non-disclosure of the full facts about the programme," the university said.

The JNUSU said cancelling a room did not cancel a conversation and that the programme would take place outside the venue.

The RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad claimed responsibility for the cancellation of the programme.

'Press Modi for rollout of women's quota Act'

Yohaan Varghese
MUMBAI

The Congress on Sunday asked NCP (SP) MPs, scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, to demand the immediate implementation of the Women's Reservation Act.

In a post on X, All India Congress Committee national secretary Sachin Sawant said, "It is understood that MPs from the NCP (SP) will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday regarding issues in Maharashtra. We request that they firmly convey to Mr. Modi the INDIA alliance's resolute stance that the Women's Reservation Bill, passed in 2023, must be implemented immediately and should not be linked to delimitation. The unity of the INDIA bloc and the Opposition must be made clear to the Prime Minister."

The post follows an announcement by NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule on Saturday that a delegation of eight MPs would meet the Prime Minister on Monday to address Maharashtra's water crisis, farmers distress, and challenges posed by rapid urbanisation.

The NCP (SP) has also opposed the FCRA Bill in its current form.

Will strongly oppose FCRA Bill in Parliament: Congress

The party warns govt. against repeating events of December 2023, when key laws were passed after suspending 146 Opposition MPs; it asks INDIA bloc MPs to be present from August 10 to 12

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday said it would strongly oppose the proposed Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill in Parliament, warning the government against repeating the events of December 2023 when several key laws were passed after 146 Opposition MPs were suspended during the Winter Session.

Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal said the government should not assume that it could introduce and pass the FCRA Bill in the remaining days of the Monsoon Session without resistance.

"If the Central government thinks they can cook up and introduce the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill within these two or three days, they should keep that wish to themselves," he said, addressing presspersons in Alappuzha.

The Congress's warning came alongside a reminder by party general secretary Jairam Ramesh that the government had used the absence of a large part of the Opposition to push through major legislation in 2023. "History should not repeat itself," Mr. Ramesh said in a post on X, recalling that 146 MPs – 100 in the Lok Sabha and 46 in the Rajya Sabha – were suspended between December 14 and 21, 2023.

Congress MP K.C. Venugopal speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, in New Delhi. FILE PHOTO

With minimal Opposition presence, the Parliament subsequently passed the three new criminal law Bills, replacing the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act. The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill was also passed.

Mr. Venugopal alleged that the proposed FCRA changes were aimed at minorities and NGOs and said the Opposition would not allow the Bill to be passed.

He also questioned the alleged foreign funding received by organisations associated with the RSS. "If you have the courage, try controlling the RSS," he said, alleging that organisations operating lawfully under the FCRA would instead be targeted.

The Alappuzha MP accused Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of avoiding Parliament for fear of facing questions. "If students in India are asking the crucial question of who ordered the use of pellet guns, lathi charges and tear gas shells against them, Amit Shah should come forward and answer it," Mr. Venugopal said.

On delimitation

On the proposed delimitation legislation, Mr. Venugopal said it would penalise States that had successfully implemented population control measures, particularly in southern India and parts of the Northeast. "This Bill effectively chokes States that have successfully implemented population control," he said.

The Congress has issued a three-line whip to its MPs in both Houses to remain present from August 10 to 12, when the final week of the session is expected to see consideration of the FCRA Bill and the possibility of a Constitution amendment Bill on delimitation.

The party has also urged its INDIA bloc allies to ensure the presence of their MPs in Parliament.

Mizoram Chief Minister, Christian bodies appeal to Shah to roll back FCRA Bill

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Chief Minister of Mizoram, Lalduhoma, and several Christian institutions on Sunday took to social media to appeal to the Centre and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to roll back the Foreign Contribution Regulation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, and send the legislation to a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) for further consultation.

The government is likely to consider the appeal despite an earlier plan to discuss the passage of the Bill in the Lok Sabha on August 12, 2026, sources said. The Monsoon Session of Parliament concludes August 13.

Among the organisations which made synchronous appeals on You Tube, Facebook and Whatsapp are the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI), the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI), and the Council of Churches in Mizoram. Since July 5, the Christian groups, Mr. Laduhoma and Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma, have held at least four meetings with Union Home Minister Amit Shah to express their

Lalduhoma

objection and concerns against the provisions of the Bill, which they say is against the minorities, and the Christian community in particular.

Mr. Lalduhoma said on Facebook that he met Mr. Shah on August 6 along with members representing all Christian denominations in New Delhi and placed their concerns regarding the Bill.

"In the spirit of democratic consultation, we respectfully appeal to the Union government to refer the Bill to a JPC. This would provide an opportunity for concerns and suggestions from different parts of the country and across stakeholders to be carefully examined and considered before the legislation is finalised," Mr. Lalduhoma said. He hoped that the Union government will give due consideration to the request in the larger interest of inclusive, transparent and consultative policymaking.

The CBCI, the apex body of the Catholic church in India also made a similar appeal. Mr. Shah on July 10 assured the CBCI that the Bill is not against the Christian NGOs, which receive a little under 15% of the total foreign donations.

"As long-standing partners in nation-building through education, healthcare, and humanitarian service, we respectfully appeal to the Government of India to reconsider and roll back the FCRA Bill 2026. While we fully support transparency and national security, certain provisions present significant operational challenges for genuine, charitable organisations. We humbly request that the Bill be referred to a JPC to facilitate structured dialogue with civil society and faith-based leaders, ensuring we can work together toward balanced solutions that protect both regulatory integrity and essential community service," Jonathan Lalremruata, adviser to the CBCI, told *The Hindu*.

BJP MP lists Bill on restriction of social media for children

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

Amid the debate over whether to impose a social media ban on children under 13 or 16, a private members' Bill listed in the Lok Sabha by BJP MP Baijayant Panda offers a glimpse of what such a measure could look like in legislative form. The Bill also comes amid the Union government's stand-off with Meta.

Baijayant Panda

The Safeguarding Healthy Internet Environments for Little Digital-Natives (Shield) Bill, 2025 was listed on Friday but could not be tabled as the House was adjourned early.

It is "now well established by multiple studies that many social media algorithms are not only designed to foster addiction but also to embellish and reinforce narrow and extreme viewpoints, rather than shed light on all angles of any issue," Mr. Panda told *The Hindu*.

It was "particularly harmful for young teenagers and children", Mr. Panda said. Many social media platforms had acknowledged these conclusions, and consequently, several countries had started imposing restrictions on social media access to minors, especially those under the ages of 16 or 13, with the Centre also seized of the issue. "I had drafted a private member's Bill for this purpose a year ago, after wide consultations with all stakeholders," he said.

"Opposition parties need to reflect and rethink their blanket disruption of Parliament even on issues such as this, where there is no dispute with the Treasury Benches," the BJP legislator said.

Parental consent

The Bill specifically states that no child under 13 years of age shall create an account on any social media or online gaming platform without verified parental consent, and that every intermediary shall provide parental control dashboards enabling guardians to monitor activity, manage privacy settings, and restrict screen time.

Any harmful content reported by an individual, guardian or parent shall, subject to verification by the intermediary, be removed or disabled within 36 hours of receipt, or 24 hours if it involves child sexual material. Every application shall have a reporting button titled "Report Child Harm" accessible to all users.

Any intermediary who fails to comply with the Act shall be liable to a penalty of up to ₹10 crore, and wilful or repeated violations will lead to suspension of the intermediary's services or blocking under the provisions of Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

Officers designated by intermediaries who fail to observe due diligence in matters, specifically child safety or content removal obligations, will be personally liable and could face imprisonment for up to three years, a fine of ₹10 lakh, or both.

An annual child safety and risk assessment process, identifying exposure risks related to content algorithms and interactions on a service, has to be carried out and submitted to the government. Information collected about users via the verification requirement cannot be used for behavioural profiling, the Bill says.

Mamata faces protests during visit to house of deceased party worker

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday visited the residence of a Trinamool Congress worker who was found dead in police custody at Halisahar in North 24 Parganas.

Ms. Banerjee faced protests from local people who raised slogans against her and attacked the vehicle in which she was travelling. The Trinamool chairperson stated that bricks were thrown at her vehicle by BJP supporters and blamed the police for the attack. Ms. Banerjee was accompanied by Trinamool MPs Kalyan Banerjee and Dola Sen.

Birju Keot, husband of former Trinamool councillor Jenny Sharma Keot,

Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee speaks to the media following the attack on her vehicle on Sunday. ANI

was arrested by Halisahar police on Friday on allegations including extortion and corruption. He was presented before a Barrackpore sub-divisional court, which remanded him in police custody for five days. On Saturday, Birju Keot was taken to a State-run hospital from the police lock-up, where he was pronounced dead.

"I condemn this. Even after a custodial death, they are threatening the family of the deceased," Ms. Banerjee said, adding that instead of providing security to her, the police allowed "lumpen from outside" to attack her vehicle.

The former Chief Minister stated that her party would move court over the custodial death.

'Informed police'

The former Chief Minister claimed that she had informed the police about the visit to the deceased Trinamool Congress worker's residence.

"This is nothing but a conspiracy. I had informed the police that I would be coming, but despite that, no security measures had been taken. My car has been attacked with stones, shoes and mud," Ms. Banerjee told presspersons.

She said her head could have been smashed. "I could have died here," she said. Lok Sabha MP Kalyan Banerjee who was accompanying her said the attack was a plan to kill her.

Shah must answer for action against students, says Rahul

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Sunday mounted a sharp attack on Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the alleged use of batons and pellet guns by the security forces against students protesting at Delhi's Jantar Mantar on July 20.

He said Mr. Shah would "sooner or later" have to answer for the "crime".

In a post on *X*, Mr. Gandhi referred to a student he met at his '*Chhatron Ki Goonj*' programme in Prayagraj on Saturday who, he claimed, told him that he had "no options left".

The student had spent years preparing for examinations, sold family land and left his parents burdened with debt, Mr. Gandhi said. "This is not his failure, it is the failure of a system that refused to reward his hard work," he said.

The Opposition leader said several days had passed since the students called off their agitation over paper leaks, but Mr. Shah had not spoken about the police action against them. "Batons and pellets were used against young people on the streets of the capital – and you did not utter a single word. Sooner or later, you will have to answer for this crime," Mr. Gandhi said.

The issue has also disrupted the Parliament, with the Opposition insisting that Mr. Shah make a statement in both the Houses on the police action.

Rahul Gandhi

'Disruption of event'

Speaking to presspersons in Alappuzha, Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal also targeted Mr. Shah and defended Mr. Gandhi's student outreach in Prayagraj. He alleged that the BJP government attempted to disrupt the event.

"Yogi Adityanath and Prime Minister Narendra Modi tried their best to disrupt that event in Allahabad. They even spread human waste along the path leading to the venue," Mr. Venugopal said. He said the venue was initially denied after pressure was allegedly exerted on the college management, but permission was eventually granted.

"But what was the scene witnessed there yesterday, in Allahabad? Those were not typical Congress workers, Youth Congress, or NSUI members. That was India's real Gen Z," he said.

M.P. govt. hospital faces inquiry for transporting body in garbage vehicle

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

A viral video from Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur district has prompted an inquiry after the body of a woman was seen being carried home from a government hospital in a garbage-collecting tractor of the municipal body.

The incident took place on August 5 at the civil hospital in Bada Malhara town after the family members of Rukhsana Khan prepared to take her remains after a post-mortem examination.

According to officials, the woman had been missing for about a month. Her body was found on August 5 and sent to the hospital by the police.

In the three-minute video, men are seen wrapping the body in a plastic sheet and placing it on the tractor-trolley bearing the name 'Nagar Parishad, Bada Malhara', even as a relative alleges that they had been provided with the vehicle that picks up garbage for the civic body.

> The administration is recommending disciplinary action against the local Block Medical Officer based on an inquiry
> **MRINAL MEENA**
> Chhatarpur Collector

Disciplinary action

Chhatarpur Collector Mrinal Meena, who took charge on August 7, told *The Hindu* that the district administration is recommending disciplinary action against the local Block Medical Officer (BMO) based on an inquiry by the Chief Medical Health Officer and the local Sub-Divisional Magistrate.

"Meanwhile, we are also carrying out a probe to ascertain other lapses in the matter such as whether they were on part of the hospital or the municipal body. We are also looking into whether a mortuary van was available or not and who arranged the tractor," he said.

"So far, it has been established that it was the BMO's responsibility to make necessary and dignified arrangements even if an ambulance or a mortuary van was not available," Mr. Meena said.

In the video, the relative raises questions over the lack of basic amenities at the hospital that appears freshly painted while accusing the local administration of ignorance towards the basic needs of patients. "A mortuary van has been sanctioned for this hospital for several months. This hospital has become clean and renovated on the outside but the body will be transported for the funeral in a garbage vehicle. Is this not an insult to a deceased person?" the relative can be heard saying in the video, alleging that several bodies are transported from the hospital in the same way.

'Extremely shameful'

The case adds to a list of several incidents in recent months that highlight gaps in Madhya Pradesh's health infrastructure, especially in rural areas.

Earlier on July 27, a 21-year-old man died in Mandla district after the government ambulance taking him to the district hospital for dialysis allegedly ran out of oxygen.

Congress MLA and Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Umang Singhar hit out at the BJP government, terming the Chhatarpur incident "extremely shameful".

The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd
(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking) Sankaramangalam, Kollam-691 583
Phone: 0476-2651215 to 2651217, e-mail: md@kmml.com, URL: www.kmml.com

TENDER NOTICE

For more details please visit E-Tendering Portal, https://etenders.kerala.gov.in or www.kmml.com

Sl No.	Tender ID	Items
1	2026_KMML_864611_1	Supply of Electric Hoists
2	2026_KMML_864480_1	Supply and application of Acid Resistant Tiles at ARP
3	2026_KMML_864235_1	Supply and Fixing Aluminium partition above sill level at west side of first floor of ARP DCS building
4	2026_KMML_864682_1	Supply of Crucible Assembly for Ladle Furnace
5	2026_KMML_864826_1	Supply of 1536 MT of Sodium Silicate

Chavara 07.08.2026 Sd/- Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd

INBRIEF

Trainer aircraft veers off runway at Baramati airfield

A Cessna C172 trainer aircraft with two people onboard suffered damage after veering off the runway at the Baramati airfield on Sunday afternoon. There were no injuries or fatalities, according to the Civil Aviation Ministry. The air safety team from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is travelling to the site in Maharashtra to conduct a preliminary investigation, the Ministry said. The runway excursion incident occurred at 12.25 p.m. The Cessna, VT-SEX, was operated by Carver Aviation's flying academy. On January 28, a chartered plane carrying Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others crashed near Baramati airfield, killing all five onboard. PTI

Six of Gujarat family killed as truck hits van in M.P.

Six people belonging to a family from Gujarat were killed and one injured in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district on Sunday after a speeding container truck collided with a van they were travelling in, the police said. Dhar shares a border with Gujarat. The incident took place on the Ujjain-Badnawar road when a truck coming from the wrong side crashed with the van head-on, killing six out of seven passengers on the spot, according to the police. The driver of the truck has been taken into custody for allegedly driving at high speed and in a rash manner, Dhar SP Sachin Sharma told *The Hindu*. One passenger is currently in hospital in a critical condition, Additional SP Vijay Dawar said.

Two-thirds of nursing staff not listed in national registry: data

Only 14.24 lakh of the country's 46.02 lakh registered nursing personnel are enrolled on Nurses Registration and Tracking System, or NRTS, resulting in delays in accessing many basic services

Soibam Rocky Singh
NEW DELHI

More than two-thirds of India's registered nursing workforce are yet to be brought under the Nurses Registration and Tracking System (NRTS), despite the digital platform having been introduced over seven years ago to create a national registry and streamline registration-related services.

Government data tabled in the Lok Sabha last month show that only 14.24 lakh of the country's 46.02 lakh registered nursing personnel – comprising Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives (RN & RM), and Lady Health Visitors (LHVs) – have been enrolled on the platform, leaving 31.78 lakh outside the national system.

The incomplete rollout has left many nurses waiting months for No Objection Certificates (NOCs) required to change their place of employment, while others seeking overseas employment have encountered delays in credential verification, affecting their career opportunities and livelihoods.

The State-wise figures point to stark disparities in implementation. Karnataka, which has more than 5.58 lakh registered nursing personnel, has enrolled only around 82,000 on the NRTS. Tamil Nadu, with over 4.76 lakh registered nurses and midwives, has enrolled just 57,000, while Andhra Pradesh has brought only 92,000 of its 4.52 lakh registered personnel onto the platform. Kerala has enrolled about 1.5 lakh of its 4.2 lakh registered personnel. The rollout, however, has been relatively successful in a few States. Bihar has enrolled 62,020 of its 62,591 registered nursing personnel on the NRTS, making it one of the best-performing States. Jharkhand has brought 24,640 or around 90% of its 27,160 registered personnel under the system.

Incomplete registration

State-wise figures point to stark disparities in implementation of the NRTS. A look at the States ranked at the top and bottom

State	Total personnel	Enrolled on NRTS	Yet to be enrolled	Coverage
Bihar	62,591	62,020	571	**99.1%**
Jharkhand	27,160	24,640	2,520	**90.7%**
Odisha	98,194	78,244	19,950	**79.7%**
Nagaland*	6,808	1,024	5,784	**15.0%**
Karnataka*	5,58,851	82,194	4,76,657	**14.7%**
Tamil Nadu*	4,76,264	57,084	4,19,180	**12.0%**

**bottom-ranked States (data tabled in Lok Sabha last month)*

MP's letter

Congress MP Anto Antony recently urged Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda to complete the enrolment of all registered nurses and issue National Unique Identity (NUID) cards within six months.

In a recent letter to the Health Minister on July 30, the MP said the incomplete implementation of the NRTS had caused considerable hardship to nurses, particularly those seeking NOCs, inter-State registration and verification of credentials for overseas employment.

The NRTS was launched by the Indian Nursing Council (INC) in association with the National Informatics Centre (NIC) to maintain a live national register of nursing personnel and provide a common online platform for primary registration, renewal, reciprocal registration, higher qualification registration and other services.

Meanwhile, nursing organisations argue that the uneven implementation has undermined the very purpose of creating a centralised digital registry. The Indian Professional Nurses Association (IPNA) contends that several State Nursing Registration Councils continue to process registration, renewal and reciprocal registration through their own systems, resulting in delays and duplication.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Siju Thomas, Joint Secretary of the IPNA, called the NRTS "the hope of nurses across the country" and alleged that its failure was the result of "mismanagement and lack of accountability" on the part of the INC.

Real Creator IAS Edition https://t.me/+8B98m5PQCF84MmQ9
Real Creator IAS Edition https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029Van2VRb6RGJOKH6oBd0F

Centre says report on theatre commands under consideration

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

The long-pending plan to operationalise theatre commands for the Indian military has entered a decisive phase, with the final report on the proposed restructuring of the armed forces now under consideration by the government, according to the latest report of the Standing Committee on Defence submitted in Parliament.

The development assumes significance as the theatrisation exercise moves into a crucial phase following the appointment of General N.S. Raja Subramani as Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) after General Anil Chauhan demitted office at the end of May.

"The final report for operationalisation of theatre commands is under consideration and further deliberations are ongoing," the Defence Ministry told the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence.

The committee has classified theatre command operationalisation as the only recommendation among the 34 recommendations in the report for which a final government reply is still awaited.

The committee noted that the Joint Staff had taken the theatrisation process to an "advanced stage". A dedicated team comprising officers from the Army, Navy and the Air Force has been constituted under the Chief of Integrated Staff to the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC), to fast-track the exercise.

Holding consultations

The committee report further reads that the three Joint Staff officers are studying global military organisations and holding consultations among the three Services to streamline the reorganisation.

Under the proposed architecture, HQ Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) will continue to coordinate operational issues involving the theatres with the three Service headquarters during the transition and thereafter. Operational coordination between theatres, as well as between theatres and the individual Services, is envisaged to be handled through a Joint Operations Staff under the structures finally approved, it reads.

The theatrisation exercise is aimed at creating a more integrated war-fighting structure by bringing the capabilities of the three Services under unified operational command structures.

ED registers plaints against Anil Ambani Group firms

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Sunday said it has filed a prosecution complaint against Reliance Infrastructure (RInfra) Limited and others in an alleged money-laundering case and a supplementary complaint in a case involving the alleged diversion of funds by Reliance Communications (RCom) Limited.

In the RInfra case, the agency named former Reliance Anil Ambani Group executive Sateesh Seth, and others.

In the RCom case, the ED has filed a complaint against the company, Reliance Telecom Limited, former Reliance Anil Ambani Group executives Gautam Bhailal Doshi, Sateesh Seth, Amitabh Jhunjhunwala, and others.

Water purifiers developed during Rajasthan deluge delivered to Assam

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

A set of specialised water purifiers developed during the 2006 deluge in Barmer, Rajasthan, have been delivered to the flood-hit districts of Charaideo, Jorhat, and Sivasagar in eastern Assam.

On Sunday, two scientists from the Nagpur-based Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI) began distributing 100 units of the emergency insta-portable water purification system. The system is called NEERI-ZAR.

CSIR-NEERI's Atul Maldhure and Kumar Amrit assembled the filtration units at the CSIR-North East Institute of Science and Technology in Jorhat. These will be distributed by Monday.

According to the scientists, the purifier meets the requirements for drinking and cooking water in emergencies. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"Of the 100 units, 25 are community-based, and 75 are household units. Collectively, they can produce 2,500 litres of purified water per hour, require no electricity, and have no operational cost," Mr. Maldhure told *The Hindu*.

"The best thing about these gravity-based units is that they can purify ambient water from rivers, ponds, and wells by removing suspended matter, turbidity, and microbial contamination," he said.

According to the scientists, the NEERI-ZAR unit meets the requirements for drinking and cooking water in emergencies and will ensure a stable drinking water supply in flood-affected regions.

"Designed for easy operation, the unit is easy to transport and install," Mr. Maldhure said.

The technology was developed in 2006, during the Barmer floods. It was improvised and deployed during the 2009 cyclone in the Sundarbans, Uttarakhand (2013), Chennai (2015), Kerala (2018), and Bihar (2019).

The scientists said the filtration units would go a long way in addressing a challenge posed by plastic pollution from thousands of units of bottled water and soft drinks distributed as relief to flood-affected people since the disaster struck the eastern Assam districts on July 19.

"Water in plastic bottles is a quick-fix solution in disaster zones, but they come at a cost – environmental and financial – unlike the NEERI-ZAR," Mr. Maldhure said.

SC Collegium names Chief Justices for four High Courts

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant has recommended Chief Justices to four High Courts.

The Collegium, in a meeting held on August 6, of which the resolution was published on Sunday, has proposed new Chief Justices to the High Courts of Patna, Calcutta, Bombay, and Punjab and Haryana.

Delhi High Court judge, Justice V. Kameswar Rao, has been recommended for elevation as the Chief Justice of Patna High Court. Justice Rao was appointed Additional Judge of the Delhi High Court in April 2013 and became a Permanent Judge in March 2015.

Justice Ravindra V. Ghuge, a Bombay High Court judge, has been recommended for the Calcutta High Court Chief Justiceship. Justice Ghuge is presently serving as the acting Chief Justice of Bombay High Court after the appointment of Justice Shree Chandrashekhar to the Supreme Court. He was elevated as the judge of the High Court in 2013.

The Collegium has proposed Justice Mahesh Chandra Tripathi, a judge of the Allahabad High Court, for elevation as the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court.

Justice Ashwani Kumar Mishra, whose parent High Court is Allahabad and currently serving on the Punjab and Haryana High Court Bench, has been recommended for the Chief Justiceship of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Nine injured in Jharkhand steel plant explosion

Press Trust of India
RAMGARH

At least nine workers were injured in an explosion in a furnace chamber at a private steel plant in Jharkhand's Ramgarh district on Sunday afternoon, an official said.

Following the incident, all the injured were admitted to a private hospital in Ramgarh. Chief factory inspector Manish Sinha said two critically injured workers have been referred to a private hospital in Ranchi.

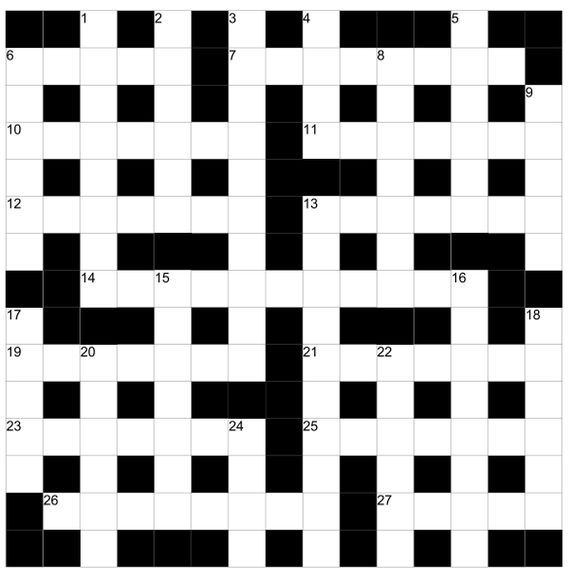
"Workers sustained burn injuries after hot metal splashed following an explosion in the furnace chamber of the plant. The factory inspector in Hazaribag has been directed to inquire into the issue and submit a detailed report at the earliest," Mr. Sinha said.

TH CROSSWORD + 14868

(set by Crossant)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



ACROSS

6. Move forward suddenly with energy after a breather (5)
7. Drunk giant beating one in a suit (8)
10. Sweet simpleton about to lose (7)
11. Lots following latest in protein food (7)
12. Salad vegetable you eat finally instead of essentially sweet items seen often on the table (7)
13. Figure study about past is boring (7)
14. Need tip from proven inside source (11)
19. Open dancing club on Western border of Kentucky (7)
21. Starmer finally dismissed in England — not unexpected (7)
23. Fancy cloak worn by wealthy mostly (7)
25. Poor cautious husband overcome by panic in the middle (7)
26. Not worried about a judge concealing source of earnings? (8)
27. Firm promoted clothing — Indo-Western primarily (5)

DOWN

1. Energetic Team India playing without inhibition from the beginning (8)
2. Rule about replacing girl in class (6)
3. Kid's storage device? (6,4)
4. Something done to attract attention mostly causes shock (4)
5. Do this when fully charged? (6)
6. On a vacant country estate (6)
8. Good study about origin of curry — hot Indian dish (7)
9. Dreaming, wasting money — what addicts are often doing (5)
13. Look-alike of late Queen outside club (4,6)
15. Word for one, included in MS Office finally (7)
16. Trouble with data after new digital enhancement tool (4,4)
17. Left group starting late for midday meal (5)
18. Norwegian perhaps went ahead and settled (6)
20. Lesser action near entrance of popular place (2-4)
22. Apprehension about Europeans losing exports essentially (6)
24. Uncovered vehicle carrying dead body and organs (4)

SUDOKU

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

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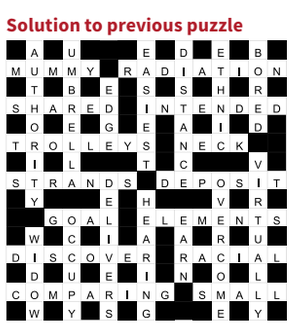
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Janabai's devotion

Janabai is one of the most prominent saints of the Varkari tradition, said Vishaka Hari in a discourse. Janabai demonstrated through her life that work and worship need not be separate. Every task she performed became an act of devotion, transforming her entire day into uninterrupted remembrance of Lord Panduranga (Vithoba).

Lord Panduranga of Pandharpur is renowned for His countless divine plays (*leelas*) with His devotees. Among the inspiring lives of saints such as Namdev, Tukaram, Dnyaneshwar and Sakubai, the story of Janabai holds a uniquely intimate place because of the Lord's personal affection for her. Janabai was a simple, innocent girl who came to the sacred town of Pandharpur drawn by deep devotion. She found refuge in the home of Saint Namdev, where she lived as a humble servant doing household chores. She proved that sincere devotion does not require seclusion or rituals alone; even ordinary household work can become divine worship when performed with love for God.

In a beautiful divine play, disguised as a humble blanket seller, Lord Panduranga adorned Janabai with His own yellow silk garment (*Peethambaram*), divine ear ornaments, and the sacred Vaijayanti garland. He then playfully accused her of stealing these ornaments. Through this extraordinary *leela*, the Lord revealed to everyone that Janabai was His most cherished devotee and that He Himself is the true "*Chitta Chora*" – the One who steals the hearts of His devotees. This divine act proclaimed Janabai's greatness to the entire world, ensuring that her devotion would be remembered and celebrated for generations.

If your NPS corpus is too small

COVERNOTE

K. Nitya Kalyani

"What's the point of receiving a pension of just a few hundred rupees a month?" an acquaintance asked me recently. We were discussing the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority's (PFRDA) revised exit rules for the National Pension System (NPS).

It is a fair question. At a certain age, you begin to simplify life. Activities reduce, commitments turn fewer, unnecessary work is quietly dropped and somehow the little glass figurines in the showcase disappear as well!

Investments get streamlined, portfolios are consolidated, scattered mutual fund folios merged and the lone fixed deposit in a distant bank is redeemed. The objective is not merely to maximise returns but to make life simpler. For some people, an NPS account now falls into that category.

This is not true for everyone. But if you shifted to the new tax regime, no longer receive additional tax deduction for NPS contributions and accumulated only a modest corpus, it may be time to review if continuing the account still serves financial goals. Why discuss NPS in an insurance column? Because the NPS end game is purchase of an annuity viz. a pension product offered by life insurers. And why now? Because the revised PFRDA rules have made it easier for some subscribers to exit.

Little use: If the corpus is small, the pension generated is likely to be modest.

Changing equation

If the NPS corpus is up to ₹8 lakh, you can withdraw the full amount without purchasing an annuity. Earlier, part of the corpus had to be compulsorily used to buy one. For many investors, that changes the equation.

An annuity has its place. It provides an income for life, something few financial products can promise. But if the corpus is small, the pension it generates is likely to be modest. A corpus of about ₹8 lakh may translate into an annual pension of roughly ₹5,000, depending on age and option chosen. Some investors may decide they would rather deploy the money elsewhere.

Large corpus, more choices

If your corpus is larger, you have more choices. You can continue with NPS, defer exit, withdraw a part of the corpus and use the balance to buy an annuity or simply keep the account without making fresh contributions. The right answer depends on overall retirement income not NPS alone.

Advantage of buying annuity

There is another point worth remembering. Buying an annuity via NPS has one important advantage: there is no GST on the purchase. Your entire amount goes towards buying the pension. Outside NPS, GST is payable. Depending on corpus size, this benefit can be meaningful.

The new rules are therefore not an invitation to exit NPS. They are an opportunity to rethink it. Retirement planning is not only about accumulating investments. It is also about knowing when to simplify them. If your NPS account has become a small holding that no longer offers tax benefits and adds little to your retirement income, this may be the right time to decide whether it still deserves a place in your portfolio.

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

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

ILLUSTRATION: SAAI

Mutual Fund flows and takeaways for you

Investors are staying invested despite volatility, getting comfortable delegating market-cap allocation decisions to fund managers and warming up to one-stop asset allocation via MAFs

FLOW CHART

Joydeep Sen

Mutual Funds (MFs) come in multiple categories, spanning equity, debt and hybrid structures. Tracking categories receiving more flows than others give us a clue on what a majority of investors are preferring at a point in time. You have to gauge which category is suitable for your risk appetite and time horizon.

Two categories have been excluded from this analysis. One is Sectoral/Thematic Funds since the AMFI data for this category is a cumulation of multiple sub-categories from banking to infrastructure to pharma and is not comparable with other single-strategy categories. The other exclusion is Liquid Funds as this is dominated by corporate investors parking treasury money. Our data source for this piece is the AMFI Monthly Note.

Flexi Cap leads flows

The category receiving the highest flows from December 2025 to June 2026 is Flexi Cap funds. Gross flows, before redemptions, has been ₹55,225 crore. Here, the fund manager faces no curbs in allocation to large-, mid- or small-cap stocks and is entirely at manager's discretion.

Given the flexibility, strategy varies from one AMC to another. That said, there is a general bias towards large caps in most such portfolios since they are relatively less volatile vis-a-vis mid- or small-caps, cushioning the fund in times of market stress.

> In Flexi-cap funds, the fund manager faces no curbs in allocation to large-, mid- or small-cap stocks and is entirely at the discretion of the fund manager

The inference is instructive. Though equity market has been somewhat volatile, that investors are continuing to build portfolios is a sign of their growing maturity. It also tells us investors are comfortable with the fund manager handling market-cap allocation decision. That is the value proposition a Flexi Cap fund offers which investors seem to be recognising.

Multi-assets gain

The next most popular category in terms of flows over the last seven months is Multi-asset allocation funds or MAFs under which gross flow was ₹45,453 crore. A MAF combines three or more asset classes such as equity, debt, global equity, gold, silver, REITs and InvITs in a single fund structure.

Rather than investors buying separate equity, debt and gold funds and then manage the allocation, a single MAF does the job. This imparts the benefit of asset allocation in one product and inculcates discipline. When the intended allocation ratio gets altered, for instance if equity rallies and weight in portfolio rises beyond the target, the fund manager books profit in equity and rebalances towards the original ratio. If investors were to attempt this on their own, there would be a tax implication every time they switched funds. MAF Inflows picked up after equity turned volatile after September 2024. The rally in gold prices till February contributed to MAFs positive sentiment.

> As fewer taxpayers find it worthwhile to stay in the Old Tax Regime to claim this deduction, the flow of fresh money into ELSS funds has naturally tapered off

Mid-, small-cap flows

The other two categories seeing buoyant flows over the last seven months are Mid-cap and Small-cap funds. Valuations of mid-cap and small-cap stocks are relatively stretched compared with large caps.

The risk level in the categories is relatively higher and investor must have a long investment horizon to ride out the volatility coming with it.

The one category consistently losing corpus is Equity Linked Savings Schemes (ELSS).

ELSS funds lose

The primary motivation for investing in ELSS was the tax benefit under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act, now Section 123 of the new Income Tax Act. Given the New Tax Regime is more beneficial for an overwhelming majority of the I-T payers, the Old Tax Regime and the relevance of Section 80C (now Section 123) deductions is steadily losing charm. As fewer taxpayers find it worthwhile to stay in the Old Tax Regime to claim this deduction, the flow of fresh money into ELSS funds has naturally tapered off.

The takeaway

Data across categories tells a fairly coherent story. Investors are staying invested despite volatility, increasingly getting comfortable delegating market-cap allocation decisions to fund managers via Flexi Cap funds and warming up to the idea of one-stop asset allocation via MAFs. At the same time, elevated flows into Mid- and Small-cap funds call for caution than imitation. As always, use this as a reference point for what the market at large is doing and then map it against goals, risk appetite and time horizon before deciding what is right for you. Popularity and suitability are not the same.

(Joydeep Sen is a corporate trainer (financial markets) and author)

Transfer to core from satellite?

THINKINVESTOR

You can transfer gains from your satellite to a core portfolio but not the other way around; this constraint is very important to protect the excess gains you may have in any of your core portfolios

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

Previously in this column, we discussed the benefits of creating and managing a satellite portfolio; you can use the gains from the satellite portfolio to bridge a shortfall in any of core portfolios. What if there is no shortfall and the satellite portfolio is generating handsome gains? Here, we discuss why you should not transfer money from core to satellite portfolio.

Market timing

If you pursue three life goals, you should have three core portfolios. The portfolio with the longest time horizon will be retirement portfolio to accumulate wealth to meet post retirement expenses. When the satellite portfolio is generating handsome gains, you may be tempted to raise trading capital by transferring money from retirement portfolio. The argument could be retirement is far away and you can bridge any shortfall during the last 10 years of working life. There are, however, two factors to be mindful of.

Market timing, skill, luck

One, the satellite portfolio is about market timing involving skill and luck. If you have a period of bad luck, you could lose a huge part of the money transferred from the core to the satellite portfolio. Recovering losses is more difficult than giving-up gains of the same magnitude. For instance, 50% unrealised losses require 100% appreciation in value to recover the loss but 50% unrealised gains requires only 33% dip to wipe-out the gains. Two, if you are tempted to transfer excess returns in any core portfolio to the satellite portfolio, think about this.

Suppose you expect 12% pre-tax return on equity investment in child's education portfolio. If the investment were to experience 14% return, it would be optimal to take out the excess returns of two percentage points and create a fixed deposit.

The deposit can be used as capital when actual return on equity investments in any year is less than 12% during the remaining time horizon for the goal.

Conclusion

You can transfer gains from your satellite to a core portfolio but not the other way around. This constraint is important to protect excess gains you may have in any of your core portfolios. Such gains can be also used as buffer capital to account for inflation risk, as the amount needed to achieve the goal can increase because of inflation.

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

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks				
AU Small Finance Bank	7.40	6.35	7.40	6.75
Equitas Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.10	7.10	7.00
ESAF Small Finance Bank	7.75	6.00	6.00	5.75
Jana Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.00	8.00	7.77
Shivalik Small Finance Bank	8.00	6.00	7.50	6.25
slice Small Finance Bank	7.75	6.25	7.50	7.00
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.10	7.25	7.25	7.90
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	7.80	7.25	7.25	7.20
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.10	6.00	7.50	7.00
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	6.50	6.25	6.50	6.50
Bandhan Bank	7.45	7.00	7.25	5.85
City Union Bank	7.25	6.65	6.50	6.55
CSB Bank	7.35	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	6.85	6.30	6.40	6.25
DCB Bank	7.50	6.90	7.00	7.50
Federal Bank	6.70	6.25	6.40	6.40
HDFC Bank	6.50	6.25	6.45	6.40
ICICI Bank	6.50	6.25	6.45	6.50
IDFC FIRST Bank	7.25	6.50	7.25	6.75
IndusInd Bank	7.00	6.75	7.00	6.65
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	7.05	6.55	6.80	6.85
IDBI Bank	6.50	6.20	6.35	6.25
Karnataka Bank	7.00	6.50	6.15	6.15
Kotak Mahindra Bank	6.80	6.35	6.40	6.25
RBL Bank	7.20	7.00	7.20	6.70
SBM Bank India	7.30	7.10	7.10	7.00
South Indian Bank	6.80	6.25	6.20	5.70
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.25	6.80	6.70	6.70
YES Bank	7.25	6.65	7.00	6.75
Public Sector Banks				
Bank of Baroda	6.75	6.25	6.25	6.30
Bank of India	6.85	6.50	6.70	6.00
Bank of Maharashtra	6.65	6.40	5.25	5.00
Canara Bank	6.60	6.25	6.25	6.25
Central Bank of India	6.70	6.10	6.00	6.00
Indian Bank	6.65	6.10	6.05	6.00
Indian Overseas Bank	6.60	6.50	6.10	6.10
Punjab National Bank	6.60	6.25	6.30	6.35
Punjab & Sind Bank	6.85	5.85	5.85	5.95
State Bank of India	6.45	6.25	6.30	6.05
Union Bank of India	6.55	6.20	6.10	6.00

Home Loan Interest Rates

(In %)

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India	7.25-9.05	7.25-9.05	7.25-9.05
Bank of Baroda	7.20-9.00	7.20-9.00	7.20-9.25
Union Bank of India*	7.15-9.60	7.15-9.60	7.15-9.60
Punjab National Bank	7.30-9.30	7.25-9.20	7.25-9.20
Bank of India	7.10-10.00	7.10-10.00	7.10-10.25
Bank of Maharashtra	7.00-9.90	7.00-9.90	7.00-9.90
Punjab and Sind Bank	7.35-10.75	7.35-10.75	7.35-10.75
Indian Overseas Bank	7.20 #	7.20 #	7.20 #
Indian Bank	7.15-9.55	7.15-9.55	7.15-9.55
Central Bank of India	7.10-9.15	7.10-9.15	7.10-9.15
Private Sector Banks			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.60 #	7.60 #	7.60 #
ICICI Bank	7.50 #	7.50 #	7.50 #
Axis Bank	8.00-11.90	8.00-11.90	8.00 - 9.10
HSBC Bank	7.45 #	7.45 #	7.45 #
South Indian Bank	7.20 #	7.20 #	7.20 #
Karur Vysya Bank	8.50-10.65	8.50-10.65	8.50-10.65
Karnataka Bank	7.48- 11.80	7.48- 11.80	7.48- 11.80
Federal Bank	8.35 - 10.25	7.35 - 10.25	7.35 - 9.25
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.90 - 9.30	7.90 - 9.30	7.90 - 9.30
Bandhan Bank	8.55 - 13.52	8.55 - 13.52	8.55 - 13.52
RBL Bank	8.20 #	8.20 #	8.20 #
CSB Bank	8.30 #	8.30 #	8.30 #
HDFC Bank	7.75 #	7.75 #	7.75 #
City Union Bank	8.25-9.50	8.50-10.00	8.75-10.50
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
LIC Housing Finance	7.15 #	7.15 #	7.15 #
Bajaj Housing Finance	7.25 #	7.25 #	7.25 #
Tata Capital	8.00 #	8.00 #	8.00 #
PNB Housing Finance	7.75-14.50	7.60-14.50	7.50-9.95
GIC Housing Finance	8.20 #	8.20 #	8.20 #
SMFG India Home Finance	9.25 #	9.25 #	9.25 #
Sammaan Capital	8.75 #	8.75 #	8.75 #
Aditya Birla Capital	7.75 #	7.75 #	7.75 #
ICICI Home Finance	7.50 #	7.50 #	7.50 #
Godrej Housing Finance	7.65 #	7.65 #	7.65 #

*Extra interest rate concession of 0.05% to borrowers opting for insurance policy.
Rates as on August 5 #onwards Source:Paisabazaar.com

WASHINGTON

Former U.S. President Joe Biden's cancer has spread further, says son

AP

Former U.S. President Joe Biden's prostate cancer has metastasised further, according to his son Hunter Biden, who shared the update in an interview with the BBC. Mr. Hunter said his father's disease has spread despite the treatment. "It's very painful, and it's very debilitating in many respects, but he's still out there," he said. AFP

ISLAMABAD

Mecca pact with Saudi Arabia and Turkiye 'purely defensive': Pakistan

AP

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said on Sunday the landmark Mecca Joint Defence Agreement his country signed with Saudi Arabia and Turkiye was not directed against any country and remained open to other nations in the region. In a post on X, Mr. Dar said the agreement was "purely defensive in nature". AP

DAMASCUS

Syria reaches understanding with Moscow on future of Russian bases

REUTERS

Syria and Russia have reached a memorandum of understanding on the fate of Russian bases at Tartous and Hmeimim after 18 months of talks. Syria's Foreign Ministry said on Sunday Damascus would take over management of civilian facilities, including Hmeimim airport and the commercial berth at Tartous port. REUTERS

BANGKOK

Thai teen school shooter watched violent content online, police say

REUTERS

The Thai teen behind a deadly school shooting on August 7 outside Bangkok had an air gun confiscated by a teacher last year and had watched violent content online, police said on Sunday, as the government promised new safety protocols for schools. Eight people died in Thailand's worst mass shooting since 2022. REUTERS

Trump says U.S. going 'low key' as Tehran firm on Hormuz demands

U.S. President says his administration is only 'semi-negotiating', will wait and watch economic pressure mount on Iran; Hormuz deal with Oman in final stages, says Araghchi, reiterates U.S. must fulfil conditions for reopening of key waterway

Reuters
DUBAI/WASHINGTON/CAIRO

U.S. President Donald Trump signalled on Sunday he is prepared to let economic pressure mount against Iran, apparently backing away from ordering more military strikes even as Tehran issues tough demands.

"We are low-keying it," Mr. Trump said, according to the news outlet Axios.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Sunday that a deal with Oman defining new shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz was in its "final stages" but repeated comments made on Saturday that it would not reopen the waterway unless other conditions were met. He also denied on Sunday that Iran was negotiating with the U.S., saying they were merely "exchanging messages" via intermediaries.

Silent watch: A banner with an image of Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei at Valiasr Square in Tehran on Saturday. AFP

The strait's blockage by Iran since the war started has sent fuel prices soaring and rattled the world economy, putting pressure on the Trump administration as midterm elections in November grow nearer.

"We are only semi-negotiating with them. We are just watching Iran with its huge inflation and the fact they have no money," Mr. Trump was quoted as saying.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards also reiterated on Sunday that they would not reopen the strait until demands were met, including U.S. compensation for war damage. The strategy was to maintain the closure "until the enemy accepts all our conditions... the strait is now actually a theatre of war for us and not just a waterway", the Guards said.

The conditions listed include ending U.S. threats against Iran, stopping aggression against Iran and its Lebanese, Palestinian, Yemeni and Iraqi allies, lifting a blockade and sanctions on Iran and freeing Iranian assets.

Rare meet

Iranian state media said on Sunday that President Masoud Pezeshkian had met Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei in late July and a paramilitary leader has promised new footage of the Supreme Leader, who has not been seen in public since being reportedly injured in the air strike that killed his father and predecessor on February 28, the first day of U.S.-Israeli air strikes on Iran.

(With inputs from AFP)

7 killed as Russia, Ukraine exchange overnight strikes

Associated Press
KYIV

Russia and Ukraine exchanged strikes overnight that killed civilians and injured many others on both sides, local authorities reported on Sunday.

Ukrainian drones killed five people and injured two dozen others, including a 4-year-old boy, in Russia's border region of Belgorod, according to the regional administration.

In Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, Russian missiles struck a high-rise apartment block in the Saltivskyi district, killing two people and injuring 13, according to regional head Oleh Syniehubov.

Eight people were injured in Ukraine's Black Sea port of Odesa after "dozens of missiles and drones" struck the city, according to local officials. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the seaport had been damaged by the strike.

Aftermath of attack: Burned cars at the site of a Russian air raid in Odesa, Ukraine on Sunday. AFP

Large-scale Russian missile strikes on Ukrainian cities have become almost routine in recent weeks, with Moscow exploiting Ukraine's critical shortage of interceptors for the U.S.-made Patriot systems – the sole air defence weapon in its arsenal able to shoot down ballistic missiles.

Meanwhile, Kyiv has kept up long-range drone strikes against Russian energy infrastructure, as well as the country's largest online retailer, Wildberries, and other targets deep inside Russia, sparking a fuel crisis.

Bombings mark first day in office for new Colombian President

Agence France-Presse
BOGOTA

Two bombing attacks in different parts of Colombia on Saturday marked the first day in office for new President Abelardo de la Espriella, leaving at least one police officer dead and several wounded.

The tough-talking hard-right leader campaigned on confronting "narcoterrorism without truce" and ending peace talks with armed groups following his inauguration on Friday in the city of Cali.

His inauguration comes during the worst wave of violence the country has experienced in the last decade.

Colombia's Army said FARC guerilla dissidents used explosives to destroy a highway tollbooth near Cali in the early hours of Saturday.

Mr. De la Espriella condemned the bombing, saying "attacking the country's infrastructure is attacking progress" in an X post. "To those responsible, I send a clear message: there will be no refuge, no leniency and no impunity," he added.

About 1,000 kilometres away, in the northern department of Cesar, an officer was killed in another bombing when an explosive-equipped drone struck a police station, officials said.

Wildfire in western Canada forces over 20,000 evacuations

Agence France-Presse
VICTORIA

Canadian officials declared a state of emergency on Saturday after a fast-moving wildfire in the western province of British Columbia forced the overnight evacuation of more than 20,000 people.

Winds fanned the Bald Range wildfire to grow rapidly late on Friday, pushing flames into the Summerland area and affecting communities throughout the surrounding valleys.

"We know there have been significant losses of property. We also know that some people became trapped as conditions changed quickly," British Columbia Premier David Eby said in a statement.

"Air evacuations are under way for people who remain isolated behind the fire perimeter," Mr. Eby said.

The Bald Range fire covered an estimated area of 25,552 acres as of early Sunday, according to the BC Wildfire Service website. It reported a total of 102 active wildfires in the province as of early Sunday, with nearly half of them deemed out of control.

Kelly Greene, the province's Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, declared a state of emergency.

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

Pentagon pushes for faster weapons production amid stockpile shortage

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

The Pentagon is pressing the U.S. defence industry to accelerate production of weapons to help replenish its diminished stockpile of munitions, including those depleted in the ongoing war with Iran.

Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said in a statement on Saturday that the department was actively focused on boosting munitions acquisitions to provide "the weapons our warfighters need at the pace the threat demands." He confirmed department efforts in the last week to significantly speed the process but insisted it was part of a broader modernisation effort that predated the five-month-old conflict.

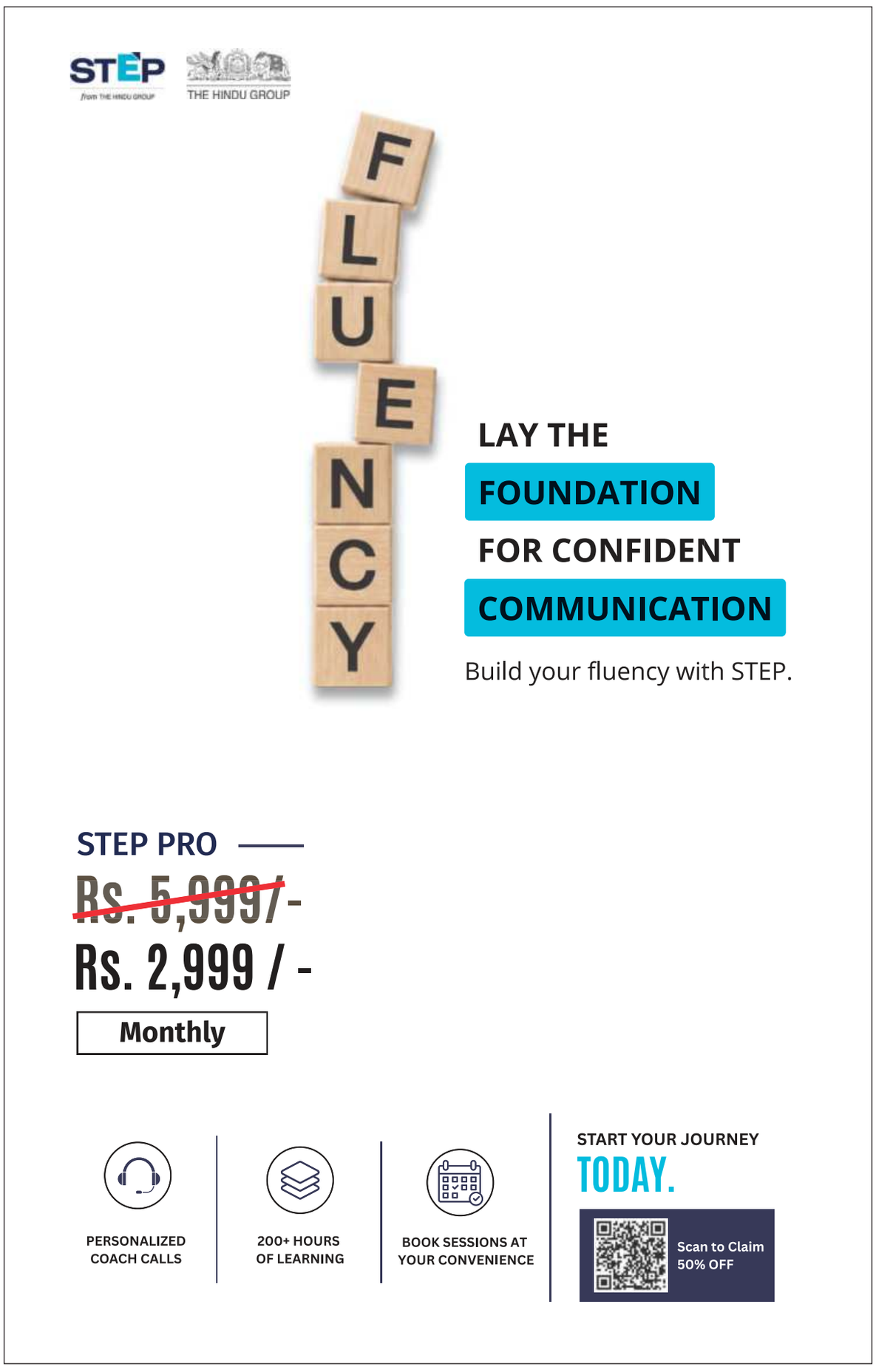
THAAD interceptor inventories fell from 452 before the Iran war to roughly 232-262 in April, according to U.S. think tank CSIS. REUTERS

Deputy Defence Secretary Steve Feinberg wrote to industry leaders on Wednesday, giving them no more than 21 days to submit plans to "drive significantly faster, more aggressive delivery schedules and/or increased production for critical capabilities," according to a memo obtained by *The Washington Post*.

"Years-long development cycles are not acceptable," Mr. Feinberg wrote. "We must dramatically accelerate our program schedules and expand our production capacity now."

The memo comes as recent fighting with Iran used up more of the U.S. military's already diminished stockpiles of advanced missile interceptors, potentially putting American troops at more risk if hostilities resume, according to a new analysis.

However, President Donald Trump has bristled over public reports of a munitions shortage, posting on Truth Social on Thursday that the U.S. has "massive amounts."



BEST IN CLASS

'Kohli an exemplary professional, tries to meet his standards always'

AFP

There is no doubt that Virat Kohli is an exemplary professional. The standards he sets for himself... he tries and goes out every time he plays to meet those standards. And that is why he is a great role model. I think a lot of youngsters or players want to emulate him — V.V.S Laxman, head of BCCI's Centre of Excellence (CoE).

ALL IS WELL

'Kuldeep took a break to assess body, not due to fitness concern'

FILE PHOTO: PTI

Kuldeep Yadav didn't bowl in the second innings of the warm-up game against Sri Lanka Cricket XI as he wanted to assess his body after a heavy workload, India's spin bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule said. "He had a very good outing and just wanted to take a break," Bahutule said.

METICULOUS

Gill takes his preparation very seriously, says Bahutule

X@BCCI

India's spin bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule praised Shubman Gill's meticulous preparation, saying he was preparing specifically for the threat posed by Sri Lanka's spinners. "Gill takes his preparation very seriously. He understands whatever is the demand for that particular series... his preparation is done accordingly," he said.

NO-SHOW

World No. 1 Sinner withdraws from Cincinnati Open with knee injury

AFP

World No. 1 Jannik Sinner will be absent from the Cincinnati Open due to a right knee injury, the tournament announced on Sunday. "After consulting with my doctors and my team, I have to announce that I need to withdraw from the Masters 1000 tournament in Cincinnati," the Italian said in a statement.

Ashmita stuns Han to bag her maiden BWF Tour title

Coach Park, who has now seen two of his wards win Super 300 tournaments in successive weeks, believes the Assam girl always had the tools to succeed, wants her to be more consistent

On a high: Ashmita with Park after her memorable triumph.

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
ASAN (KOREA)

Ashmita Chaliha produced a gritty show to secure her maiden BWF World tour title with a fighting win over fourth seed Han Qian Xi of China in the women's singles final of the Korea Masters Super 300 badminton tournament on Sunday.

Slow start

The 26-year-old from Assam, who had suffered a career-threatening knee injury two years back in Korea, overcame a slow start and a testing decider to complete a memorable victory, recovering from the loss of the opening game to stun world No. 35 Han 14-21, 21-14, 21-14 in the summit clash that lasted 53 minutes.

"I feel really great and unbelievable. But then I am trying to digest it. Now, I am hungry for more," said Ashmita, who trains under Park Tae-Sang at the National Centre of Excellence in Guwahati.

"In the first game, it was a little bit tricky because of the drift conditions, so I was not able to manage it... But in the second, the other side was more comfortable and there was less drift, so I was able to control it," she said. "And in the third, after 11 points, I changed again, so I was on the good side. I'm glad that I could pull it off."

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

Ashmita's win marks back-to-back BWF World Tour finals for Indians, with Tanvi Sharma having won the Taipei Open last Sunday.

Park, who has now seen two of his wards win Super 300 titles in successive weeks, believes Ashmita always had the tools to succeed but needed to become more consistent in her approach.

"Before the injury, Ashmita was already a good player and a very good talent. She has a good smash and nice movement, but unfortunately, at the wrong time, she had to take a break because of the injury," the South Korean told PTI.

"When she joined me, I thought, 'Oh, she is a good player.' But tactically and strategically, and also a little bit mentally, she had some problems."

She enjoyed a strong comeback on the BWF Tour with back-to-back quarterfinals at China Masters and Malaysia Masters and then a semifinal appearance at the Macau Open.

Biggest obstacle

Ahead of Sunday's final, Park and Ashmita analysed Han's game on video, with the coach identifying unforced errors as the biggest obstacle.

"Yesterday, we also did a video analysis of her Chinese opponent. I told Ashmita, 'Your biggest problem is your own mistakes. You are making simple mistakes.

"But if you can reduce those simple mistakes, 100 per cent, I promise you, you can win the title today," Park said.

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

Sarfaraz replaces the injured Sai Sudharsan in Test squad

CRICKET

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Sarfaraz Khan has returned to India's Test squad after 20 months, with the Mumbai batter replacing the injured B. Sai Sudharsan for the two-Test series against Sri Lanka.

The Hindu understands that the selection committee, in consultation with the team management, picked Sarfaraz after Sai Sudharsan did not recover in time from a right big-toe stress injury.

The BCCI announced Sarfaraz's inclusion on Sunday.

He is expected to link up with the Indian team in Colombo before the side travels to Galle on Tuesday.

Comeback: Sarfaraz last played for India in November 2024.
FILE PHOTO: EMMANUAL YOGINI

The 28-year-old had emerged as a primary contender alongside Shaik Rasheed and Ruturaj Gaikwad. Rasheed, who has been knocking on the selectors' door after a prolific domestic run, was considered for his ability to bat in the top-order while Ruturaj's experience and First Class record kept him in the conversation.

Sarfaraz's selection marks the return of a batter whose Test career had appeared to stall after his promising debut in 2024.

He was conspicuously left out of India's squad after not getting an opportunity during the 2024-25 Border-Gavaskar Trophy. All of his six Test appearances came in 2024.

The Mumbai batter has continued to remain a top performer in domestic cricket, keeping himself in the selection frame despite the long hiatus at the international level.

The vacancy at No. 3, created by Sai Sudharsan's absence, may give Sarfaraz a chance to revive his Test career that began with considerable promise.

Jaiswal and Gill find form as India canters to a victory in warm-up game

Press Trust of India
COLOMBO

Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill scored useful runs at the top of the order before Mohammed Siraj's late blitz helped India beat Sri Lanka Cricket XI by six wickets in their three-day warm-up game here on Sunday.

Chasing 207 for victory, India achieved the target in 45 overs, finishing on 214 for four with Siraj smashing 32 off just 15 balls, including three successive sixes, to bring the game to an emphatic finish.

Jaiswal made a quickfire 61 off 46 balls. He and Gill put on 105 for the opening wicket to give India a flying start to their chase. Jaiswal retired after reaching his half-century.

Back in the groove: Gill and Jaiswal provided a flying start. X@BCCI

Gill made a useful 44 before being dismissed by spinner Keshara Nuwantha.

Dhruv Jurel chipped in with 17, while Rishabh Pant made a patient 28 before India was briefly reduced to 155 for three.

But the target was never in serious danger, with the lower-order completing the chase in the final session. Siraj then provided the fireworks, hitting three consecutive sixes to finish the game in style.

Earlier, Sri Lanka Cricket XI declared their second innings at 200 for six in 45 overs, leaving India a target of 207.

The scores: Sri Lanka Cricket XI 363/8 decl. and 200/6 decl. (Nishan Fernando 63, Nipun Dhanjaya 46) lost to India 357/6 decl. and 214/4 in 45 overs (Jaiswal 61 (retired hurt), Gill 44, Siraj 35 n.o).

There is brilliant coordination between CoE and Indian team management, insists Laxman

Straight bat: Laxman, seen here with Saikia and BCCI president Mithun Manhas, defended CoE's injury-management methods. SUDHAKARA JAIN

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

With Indian cricket in the throes of an injury crisis, the latest being Jasprit Bumrah and B. Sai Sudharsan's absence from the upcoming tour to Sri Lanka, V.V.S. Laxman, head of BCCI's Centre of Excellence (CoE), defended the institution's injury-management methods and recovery protocols.

"We don't like to use the word blame, because when you do, you're [trying to] find a scapegoat," Laxman told reporters at the CoE premises on Sunday. "There's brilliant coordination between the CoE, the team management and the SSM (Sports Science & Medicine) staff."

There has been a worrying trend of players being declared fit only to pick up a new injury within a short period of time. Laxman stressed that this was not a cause for concern even as he clarified that the "CoE was not a rehab centre" and that it had a "bigger mandate".

"When someone is playing at the elite level, you're supposed to give more than 100%," Laxman said. "Injuries are bound to happen. If you're thinking about not getting injured, you're not playing to the best of your ability. Monitoring is very, very critical, and I've got no doubt that Adrian Le Roux (S&C coach, Indian team) and others are doing that," the 51-year-old added.

Both Bumrah and Sai Sudharsan were named conditionally in the squad for the two Tests against Sri Lanka before failing to obtain fitness clearances. Asked if it would be prudent to avoid players who are still undergoing rehabilitation, BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia replied in the negative.

"We have our selection meetings at least three to four weeks before the team departs," Saikia said. "We don't reject because by the time the player will have to travel or play, he may be totally fit. It's a human body, not a machine. It may take 14 days or 28 days."

The CoE has been without a Head of Sports Science since Nitin Patel's exit in March 2025. Saikia attributed this to an "acute shortage of right candidates" and Laxman stated that there will be no unseemly haste in the appointment process, for quality was paramount.

Andrew Leipus, who had had successful tenures with the Indian National team and the erstwhile National Cricket Academy, was the BCCI's first choice to replace Nitin, but he pulled out.

"Andrew had almost agreed but then backed out," Laxman said.

"The next interview process was extensive, and the first candidate was from Australia, but he did not join. The second and third candidates are already working at the CoE. It is our responsibility to upskill them while we identify someone of that stature, experience and knowledge."

More Duleep Trophy games to be telecast live: Saikia

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

This time last year, when the 2025-26 Duleep Trophy was held at the BCCI's sprawling Centre of Excellence (CoE) in the city outskirts, supporters were a disappointed lot.

The first-round matches of the domestic cricket season-opener were not broadcast on television and the whole tournament was held behind closed doors. However, in glad tidings for the fans, the 2026-27 edition, which begins on August 23 at the CoE, will see an increased share of matches on television.

And the BCCI even said that it would explore the option of holding at least the final at a proper stadium which can seat an audience. "There are some government restrictions to how we use this land and because of that, we cannot have crowds in this campus," BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said on Sunday while answering a question from *The Hindu*.

"But this year, we have increased the number of matches to be telecast. That way, we are giving fans the chance to watch their favourite players and teams. We definitely appreciate your suggestion to see whether the final can be hosted in a stadium. We still have time and we'll look into that aspect."

> We definitely appreciate your suggestion to see whether the final can be hosted in a stadium

INBRIEF

Sanya Vats finishes runner-up in Ballarat Open squash

Sanya Vats finished runner-up at the Ballarat Open squash, a $3000 PSA Challenger event in Victoria, Australia on Sunday. The second seed Indian went down 6-11, 8-11, 6-11 to top seed and local favourite Sarah Cardwell in the women's final. The Delhi girl earlier beat South Korean Ain Jun 11-5, 11-8, 11-4 in the semifinals after defeating another South Korean Sunghee Oh 6-11, 11-9, 12-10, 11-4 in the quarterfinals.

Raul Fernandez speeds to glory in British MotoGP

Aprilia-Trackhouse's Spanish rider Raul Fernandez won the British MotoGP Grand Prix on Sunday, claiming just the second race victory of his career. Championship leader Jorge Martin started on pole but was outpaced from the flag by his 25-year-old compatriot. Martin finished second with Italian Marco Bezzecchi rounding off the podium.

Modi meets CWG medallists, lauds their performances

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday met members of the Indian contingent that returned with medals from the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. Interacting with the athletes, Modi said: "*Jo khelega, woh khilega. Always cheer for Bharat*." India enjoyed a strong campaign, finishing with 39 medals, including 13 gold. Modi shared a short video clip of his interaction with the medallists on social media, praising the athletes for making the country proud.

Mason Mount injured in friendly against PSG

Manchester United managed a creditable 1-1 draw with European champion Paris Saint-Germain in a Gothenburg friendly on Saturday but the result was overshadowed by an injury to Mason Mount. Mount appeared to suffer a foot injury in Sweden and, following discussions with coaches on the touchline, left the field to be replaced by Tyler Fletcher.

LIVE TELECAST

Ireland vs Afghanistan: Third ODI, FanCode, 3.15 p.m.

Durand Cup: Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 4 & 7 p.m.

TNPL: Sony Sports Ten 4 Tamil & TNPL Official YouTube channel (youtube@tamilnadupremierleague.com), 7.30 p.m.

TRAU weathers Indian Navy barrage to register a consolation victory

Afridi scores twice to eke out the win as the loser peppers the rival goal with 26 attempts; both sides crash out of the tournament

DURAND CUP

Sports Bureau

Afridi Buyamayum scored twice as TRAU FC beat Indian Navy 2-1 in its final Group 'D' match of the Durand Cup at the Khuman Lampak Stadium in Imphal on Sunday.

Even as Navy dominated the proceedings and kept TRAU under pressure with 26 attempts on goal, the local outfit fought with grit, thanks to the inspired performance of its goalkeeper Tajuddin, to gather three points. It finished its group engagements with four points at the second spot, while Navy managed three points to be third.

Raengdai advances

Both sides exited from the tournament, while debutant group-topper FC Raengdai moved into the last-eight.

Navy exerted pressure from the start, while TRAU defended solidly.

Afridi Buyamayum unleashed a stunning right-footer from outside the box to draw first blood in the 16th minute against the run of play.

Navy's aggression, including 12 attempts out of which six were on target, in the first half did not produce the desired result.

However, it levelled the scores within seconds of resumption. Khullakpam Zahir Khan capitalised on a defensive lapse to slot the ball in. TRAU withstood the pressure to restore its lead through a counter-attack as Afridi completed his brace in the 60th minute.

The result: At Imphal:
Group D: TRAU FC 2 (Afridi Buyamayum 16, 60) bt Indian Navy 1 (Khullakpam Zahir Khan 46).

Hero of the day: Afridi celebrates after scoring one of his two goals. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Meghwal lands high jump silver; Shahnavaz wins long jump bronze

ATHLETICS

Press Trust of India
EUGENE

Basant Kumar Meghwal became the first Indian to win the high jump silver medal at the World Athletics U20 Championships, while Shahnavaz Khan added the long jump bronze.

The 19-year-old Meghwal from Anupgarh, a border town in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar district, cleared a personal-best of 2.21m to win silver.

Algeria's Younes Ayachi won the gold, while Great Britain's Otis Poole took the bronze. All three medallists cleared only 2.21m but failed to sail over 2.24m. The positions were decided on countback.

Ayachi cleared 2.21m in his first jump, while Meghwal and Poole did the same in their second and third attempts respectively.

Meghwal with coach Sahana. X@AFIINDIA

Shahnavaz. X@AFIINDIA

Coached by former Indian women's high jump national record holder Sahana Kumari, Meghwal has made a remarkable 10cm improvement this season.

Shahnavaz clinched the long jump bronze with a best effort of 7.84m. The 18-year-old produced his best jump in his third attempt, with his series reading 7.67m, 7.72m, 7.84m, 7.52m, 7.83m and 5.37m.

R.C. Jithin Arjunan was the other Indian in the final, finishing eighth with a best jump of 7.59m that he achieved in his first and fourth attempts. Italy's Daniele Inzoli won the gold medal with a jump of 7.97m, while Australia's Mason McGroder took silver with a personal best of 7.96m.

FIFA warns of effort to undermine Infantino

Reuters
ZURICH

FIFA has warned against what it called a "concerted and ongoing effort" to undermine president Gianni Infantino, saying attempts to challenge his leadership must follow the governing body's statutes and democratic procedures.

The statement came amid an increasingly bitter stand-off over Infantino's leadership following the collapse of his proposal to raise about $4.2 billion by selling a stake in the commercial rights of the World Cup and other tournaments.

The plan triggered criticism from UEFA, national associations and senior FIFA officials, led to calls for Infantino to resign and prompted a crisis meeting in Morocco at which FIFA's leadership reaffirmed its support for the president.

FIFA, however, did not identify those it said were seeking to undermine Infantino or specify which reports or allegations it was referring to. "Those who do not have the support of FIFA's Member Associations should not seek to achieve through allegation, insinuation or misinformation what they cannot achieve through FIFA's established democratic processes." It said recent reports had included "unsubstantiated assertions and demonstrably false claims" concerning FIFA and its president.

Infantino. AFP

Eshanth, the best

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Eshanth Vengatesan (MSPORT) emerged winner in the Senior Max category in the third round of the MECO-FMSCI National karting championship here on Sunday. Eshanth finished on top after several front-runners were involved in a collision.

The results (Provisional):
Senior Max – Finals (18 laps): 1. Eshanth Vengatesan (Chennai, MSPORT) (15:24.827); 2. Arjun Chheda (Pune, Crest Motorsports) (15:25.207); 3. Rohaan Madesh (Bengaluru, Peregrine Racing) (15:26.312). **Best Rookie:** Eshanth Vengatesan (Chennai, MSPORT).
Pre-finals (14 laps): 1. Krish Gupta (Mumbai, Rayo Racing) (11:45.183); 2. Kiaan Shah (Mumbai, Rayo Racing) (11:46.026); 3. Laksh Manish Bafna (Kochi, Rayo Racing) (11:51.598).
Junior Max – Finals (16 laps): 1. Rehan Khan Rasheed (Chennai, Momentum Sports) (14:21.312); 2. Rishik Rohit Reddy (Bengaluru, MSPORT) (14:22.753); 3. Hamza Murtuza Balasinorwala (Mumbai, Crest Motorsports) (14:22.888). **Best Rookie:** Rehan Khan Rasheed (Chennai, Momentum Motorsports). **Pre-Finals (14 laps):** 1. Rehan Khan Rasheed (Chennai, Momentum Sports) (11:59.241); 2. Rivaan Dev Preetham (Chennai, MSPORT) (11:59.569); 3. Hamza Murtuza Balasinorwala (Mumbai, Crest Motorsports) (12:00.083).
Mini Max – Finals (14 laps): 1. Shiv Neel (Coimbatore, MSPORT) (12:19.928); 2. Raghav Krishnaraj (Coimbatore, MSPORT) (12:22.559); 3. Jishnu Seralathan (Bengaluru, Peregrine Racing) (12:22.779). **Best Rookie:** Shiv Neel (Coimbatore, MSPORT).
Pre-Finals (12 laps): 1. Jishnu Seralathan (Bengaluru, Peregrine Racing) (10:35.775); 2. Arshi Gupta (Faridabad, Leap Frog Racing) (10:35.960); 3. Ridhaan Anil Kumarr (Bengaluru, Red Rabbit Racing) (10:36.126).
Micro Max – Finals (12 laps): 1. Rudrapratap Singh Shekhawat (Gurugram, Leap Frog Racing) (11:02.508); 2. Zidaan Arshaan Anees (Bengaluru, Peregrine Racing) (11:04.084); 3. Aarav Sureka (Mumbai, Rayo Racing) (11:05.633).
Best Rookie: Yeshwin Vinay Kishore (Chennai, Peregrine Racing).
Pre-Finals (12 laps): 1. Aarav Sureka (Mumbai, Rayo Racing) (11:03.180); 2. Rudrapratap Singh Shekhawat (Gurugram, Leap Frog Racing) (11:07.875); 3. Ayansh Patil (Kolhapur, MSPORT) (11:09.574).

Sarthak steers Strikers home; Kings chase down 221

DPL

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

Sarthak Ranjan led the way with a knock of 65 as North Delhi Strikers defeated New Delhi Tigers by seven wickets in the Delhi Premier League at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Sunday.

Having chosen to bowl in the afternoon clash, Strikers were in the driving seat after restricting Tigers to 161 for eight in 20 overs.

Vikas Dixit snared three scalps while Akhil Chaudhary, Ajay Yadav, Arjun Rapria and Mayank Dagar claimed a wicket each.

For Tigers, Hrithik Shokeen, who came in at No. 7, was the top-scorer with an unbeaten 35 off 25 deliveries.

Strikers took control of the chase through an opening stand of 102 between Sarthak and Vaibhav Kandpal. While Sarthak's knock consumed just 43 deliveries, Kandpal was willing to play anchor and compile 41 off 36 balls. The target was reached in 19.1 overs.

In the other match, Yugal Saini's 91 helped Central Delhi Kings post a four-wicket win over South Delhi Superstarz.

With Kings set a target of 221, Saini's knock was the difference as his outfit reached home with two balls to spare.

Great start: Sarthak, left, and Kandpal stitched together an opening partnership of 102. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The scores:
New Delhi Tigers 161/8 in 20 overs (Atulya Pandey 32, Hrithik Shokeen 35 n.o., Vikas Dixit 3/28) lost to North Delhi Strikers 165/3 in 19.1 overs (Sarthak Ranjan 65, Vaibhav Kandpal 41, Revant Rakyan 2/26).
South Delhi Superstarz 220/6 in 20 overs (Sanat Sangwan 38, Ayush Badoni 44, Tejasvi Dahiya 69, Money Grewal 2/26, Gavnish Khurana 2/40) lost to Central Delhi Kings 222/6 in 19.4 overs(Yugal Saini 91, Keshav Dabas 39, Rishabh Sharma 2/38, Anshuman Hooda 3/33).

N R I Triple Power obliges in the feature

RACING

Hyderabad: Trainer D. Netto's filly N R I Triple Power, ridden by Shivam, claimed the Telangana And Andhra Sub Area Trophy, the main event of Sunday's (Aug. 9) races.

The winner is owned by Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male. Trainer L.V.R. Deshmukh and jockey P. Ajeeth Kumar scored a treble each.

1. SULTAN PHEROZE PLATE (DIV. I) (1,100M): MATERIALITY (P. Ajeeth Kumar) 1, Ashwa Jaffna (Gaurav) 2, Gacchanmanasvin (Md. Ismail) 3 and Miri (Mohit) 4. Not run: Northern Sky. 3/4, 1-1/2 and 1-1/4. 1m, 7.55s. ₹32 (w), 14, 21 and 11 (p). SHP: 65, THP: 44, FP: 261, Q: 192, Tanala: 581. Favourite: Gacchanmanasvin.
Owner: Mr. Kersi H. Vachha. Trainer: L.V.R. Deshmukh.

2. SULTAN PHEROZE PLATE (DIV. II) (1,100M): N R I CRYPTO POWER (Rafique Sk.) 1, French Lieutenant (Surya Prakash) 2, Queen Dali (Akshay K) 3 and Trend Setter (Abhay Singh) 4. 2, Short Head and 2-1/4. 1m, 5.26s. ₹119 (w), 19, 16 and 11 (p). SHP: 32, THP: 40, FP: 870, Q: 358, Tanala: 1,459. Favourite: Queen Dali.
Owner: Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male. Trainer: R.H. Sequeira.

3. NORTHERN DANCER PLATE (1,200M): MYSTICAL DAWN (P. Ajeeth Kumar) 1, Catch The Worm (B.R. Kumar) 2, Divine Secret (Gaurav) 3 and Tootsie Darling (Kuldeep Jr.) 4. Not run: Greif. 3/4, 2-1/4 and 2. 1m, 14.38s. ₹27 (w), 13, 10 and 11 (p). SHP: 35, THP: 47, FP: 90, Q: 45, Tanala: 185. Favourite: Catch The Worm.
Owner: Mr. Kersi H. Vachha. Trainer: L.V.R. Deshmukh.

4. FAIRWAY PLATE (1,600M): QUINTESSENTIAL (P. Ajeeth Kumar) 1, American Gangster (Kuldeep Sr.) 2, Beech Wood (Gaurav) 3 and Hoping High (Mohit) 4. Not run: Always Special. 4, 2-1/4 and 5. 1m, 42.88s. ₹38 (w), 10, 15 and 21 (p). SHP: 37, THP: 63, FP: 99, Q: 37, Tanala: 728. Favourite: American Gangster.
Owners: M/s. Ramakrishna Reddy Makireddy, Suraj Teja Potlapally, Srinath Reddy Kottam & Ram Bhoopal Poduvu. Trainer: L.V.R. Deshmukh.
NOTE: *Golden Bourbon (Akshay Kumar up) broke down in the last 200m dislodging the rider who escaped unhurt.*

5. TELANGANA AND ANDHRA SUB AREA TROPHY (1,600M): N R I TRIPLE POWER (Shivam) 1, Corte Madera (Ajay K) 2, Silver Act (Akshay K) 3 and Bhairava (P. Ajeeth K) 4. Not run: Ode To Nature. 7-1/2, 4-1/2 and 2-1/4. 1m, 37.99s. ₹23 (w), 10, 16 and 15 (p). SHP: 38, THP: 47, FP: 93, Q: 78, Tanala: 353. Favourite: N R I Triple Power.
Owner: Mr. Ravinder Reddy Male. Trainer: D. Netto.

6. THREE WISHES PLATE (1,800M): SILVER ARROW (A.A. Vikrant) 1, Hoping Star (Mohit) 2, Exclusive Luck (Md. Ekram) 3 and Take A Breath (Rafique Sk.) 4. 1-1/4, 3/4 and 1/2. 1m, 58.57s. ₹75 (w), 29 and 23 (p). SHP: 38, THP: 33, FP: 371, Q: 151, Tanala: 1,007. Favourite: N R I Star.
Owner: Mr. Ashok Kumar Gupta. Trainer: A. Imran Khan.

7. ADLER PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200M): MY HONEY (Shivam) 1, American Affair (P. Ajeeth K) 2, Aditya (Rafique Sk.) 3 and December Caspian (Mohit) 4. Not run: Beverley. 1-1/2, 3-1/4 and Neck. 1m, 14.70s. ₹32 (w), 17, 10 and 22 (p). SHP: 31, THP: 40, FP: 58, Q: 42, Tanala: 278. Favourite: American Affair.
Owner: Mr. Saleem A. Jasdanwalla. Trainer: D. Netto.

Jackpot: 70%: ₹32,647 (16 tkts.) & 30%: 1,929 (116 tkts.).

Mini Jackpot: 47, 936 (c/o).

Treble: (i) 3,354 (10 tkts.), (ii) 1,348 (31 tkts.).

Exclusive Black tipped to deliver in the chief event

HYDERABAD: The five-year-old gelding Exclusive Black may score over his rivals in the upper division of the P.G. Reddy Memorial Trophy, the chief event of Monday's (Aug. 10) races.

1 P.G. REDDY MEMORIAL TROPHY (DIV. III) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat.II), 1.35 p.m.: 1. Glorious Power (1) Neeraj 61, 2. Torchbearer (6) P. Ajeeth K 60, 3. Victoria Doresaani (5) Akshay K 59.5, 4. Rival (3) Ajay K 58, 5. Blue Pantheress (4) Rafique Sk. 54.5, 6. Clefairy (8) A.A. Vikrant 54, 7. Coming Home (2) B. Nikhil 52.5 and 8. Juramento (7) Surya Prakash 50.5.
1. VICTORIA DORESAANI, 2. CLEFAIRY, 3. GLORIOUS POWER

2 ROYAL REVIVE PLATE (1,400m), (Terms) Maiden, 3-y-o only (Cat. II), 2.10: 1. Concordia (5) B.R. Kumar 56, 2. Toshiro (10) Neeraj 56, 3. Weseethesamesun (2) Rafique Sk. 56, 4. Aakarshaka (7) Md. Ismail 54.5, 5. Bayone (3) Kuldeep Sr. 54.5, 6. Digital Empress (4) Akshay K 54.5, 7. Evan Sville (8) P. Sai K 54.5, 8. Khamagani (11) Gaurav 54.5, 9. Love All (6) R.S. Jodha 54.5, 10. Ruby Tuesday (9) Arjun 54.5 and 11. She's A Bomb (1) Shivam 54.5.
1. DIGITAL EMPRESS, 2. TOSHIRO, 3. SHE'S A BOMB

3 ADLER PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200m), 4-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 2.45: 1. Daring Spirit (6) Trevor 60.5, 2. Normui (3) D.S. Deora 60.5, 3. Basilica (1) Akshay K 60, 4. Inderdhanush (4) A.A. Vikrant 58.5, 5. La Quinta (9) Ajay K 57.5, 6. Dream To Fly (5) G. Naresh 57, 7. Ilene (7) B.R. Kumar 55.5, 8. Sadiya (11) P. Ajeeth K 54.5, 9. Bold Indian (2) B. Nikhil 52, 10. Moonlite Rose (8) Surya Prakash 51 and 11. Sugriva (10) Arjun 50.
1. DARING SPIRIT, 2. LA QUINTA, 3. ILENE

4 DEVARAKONDA TROPHY (DIV. I) (1,100m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 3.20: 1. Sweet Dancer (4) P. Ajeeth K 61, 2. Lego (7) Rafique Sk. 57.5, 3. Taaliyah (3) Surya Prakash 54, 4. Quality Warrior (2) Santosh Raj 53, 5. Most Beautiful (5) Md. Ekram 52, 6. Varada (1) D.S. Deora 52, 7. Glimmer Of Hope (9) B. Nikhil 51.5, 8. Faizah (6) Abhay Singh 51 and 9. Screenshot (8) Arjun 50.
1. VARADA, 2. SWEET DANCER, 3. GLIMMER OF HOPE

5 P.G. REDDY MEMORIAL TROPHY (DIV. I) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 3.55: 1. Exclusive Black (5) Trevor 61, 2. Dyanoosh (6) Kuldeep Jr. 60.5, 3. Golden Gazelle (8) Afroz K 59.5, 4. Best Buddy (4) Md. Ekram 58.5, 5. Federer (1) P. Ajeeth K 55, 6. Colt Pistol (3) Rafique Sk. 54, 7. Sangreal (7) Ajay K 54, 8. Shooting Star (2) Gaurav 52 and 9. Top In Class (9) B. Nikhil 51.5.
1. EXCLUSIVE BLACK, 2. DYANOOSH, 3. FEDERER

6 DEVARAKONDA TROPHY (DIV. II) (1,100m), 3-y-o and upward, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 4.30: 1. Feel The Magic (5) D.S. Deora 60, 2. Windsor (7) Surya Prakash 55, 3. Beast Master (4) P. Sai K 54, 4. December Rain (6) Mohit 52.5, 5. Deccan Ranger (2) Rafique Sk. 52, 6. French Lady (3) G. Naresh 52, 7. Golden Unicorn (1) Shivam 52 and 8. Don Cherie (8) Md. Ekram 51.
1. FEEL THE MAGIC, 2. FRENCH LADY, 3. DECEMBER RAIN

7 P.G. REDDY MEMORIAL TROPHY (DIV. II) (1,200m), 5-y-o and upward, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 5.05: 1. Calistoga (1) Md. Ismail 61, 2. Star Forever (6) P. Sai K 60, 3. Leather Back (4) Rafique Sk. 59.5, 4. Warwick (7) P. Ajeeth K 58.5, 5. Arion One (2) B.R. Kumar 54.5, 6. Shadow Baby (–), 7. Arthisha (3) Akshay K 54 and 8. Shah Of Iran (5) Surya Prakash 52.
1. ARTHISHA, 2. LEATHER BACK, 3. CALISTOGA

Day's Best: **DARING SPIRIT**

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Treble: (i) 2, 3 & 4, (ii) 5, 6 & 7.

Tanala: All races.

EDUCATIONPLUS

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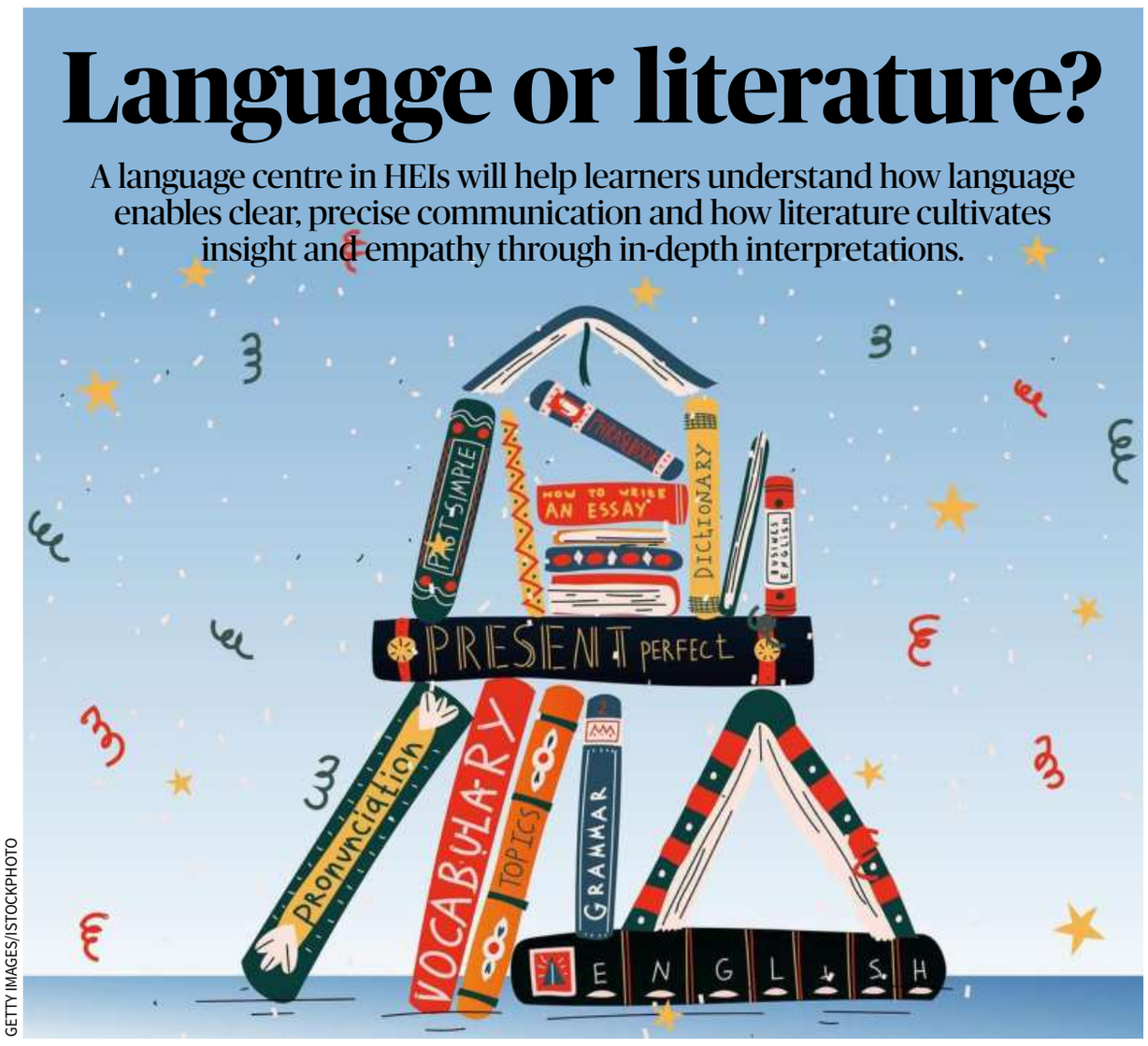
Language or literature?

A language centre in HEIs will help learners understand how language enables clear, precise communication and how literature cultivates insight and empathy through in-depth interpretations.

H. Kalpana Rao

Often, when I am introduced as a professor of English, the immediate response is "Oh, I need to be careful when I speak to you in English." Such comments point to a widespread confusion between language proficiency and the study of literature. This is a misconception that needs clarification.

Literature is more content-driven and deals with ideas and experiences and communicates to the reader through an emotional quotient. On the other hand, language is more about the structural aspects, such as understanding grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, and about knowing the underlying structure.



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Language training

An important need in higher education today is training in language. This is not to say that literature students are unable to use language.

They do but in a different way. They can analyse and deconstruct plots, stories, and narratives, explore cultural nuances, recognise discrimination, ponder social and political backdrops, and identify the plural meanings that a text offers. Yet, they are unable to draft an essay with the nuanced perspective by which they read a text.

We need to, therefore, find a methodology to improve this. One solution is to set up a language centre that can provide training in English language skills and help scholars and students in academic writing. It is not just literature students who lack the skills necessary to author academic articles.

Students and scholars in the sciences and other fields also find it difficult to communicate their research ideas clearly. This lack of language proficiency also has implications for employability, as students and scholars struggle to write clear resumes, articulate confidently in interviews, and communicate well in professional settings. In the case of researchers, inadequate language skills limit their ability to produce well-structured dissertations or critically engaged conference papers. Over time, these issues also erode confidence and make students hesitate to participate boldly and positively in academic forums.

Improved presentation

Another lacuna lies in presentation skills. Too often, scholars, including faculty members, prepare dull slides and speak without preparation, leading to frequent miscommunication and a sense of boredom among listeners. Therefore, a language centre may help by providing support to prepare strong, attractive slides and offering training in seminar presentations and speaking coherently. Additionally, it could also offer structured modules in grammar, vocabulary building, academic writing, and critical reading, along with workshops on citation practices, editing skills and communication.

Such a centre might also collaborate with different departments by designing specific writing sessions such as scientific writing for science students, report writing for social sciences, and research papers for humanities. The centre could be staffed by English language tutors who combine strong language skills with patience and a supportive approach to learners. Many universities abroad run such writing centres and communication labs that function as academic support hubs offering consultations and skill sustenance across the university.

It is significant that higher education institutions recognise that language is not merely a medium of instruction but a tool for thinking, shaping how students organise ideas, construct arguments and engage intellectually at a global level. This does not mean that literature is not necessary. On the other hand, literature nurtures critical consciousness by providing readers to analyse varied perspectives, recognise power structures, and explore the complexities of human experience. Higher education needs both these dimensions to exist side by side so that learners understand how language enables clear, precise communication and how literature cultivates insight and empathy through in-depth interpretations.

The writer is a former professor of English at Pondicherry University and now volunteers as the editor for the literary section of the online journal, Muse India. Email: hkalp.eng@pondiuni.ac.in

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Pant — an enigma at the crossroads

GETTY IMAGES

Having been replaced as India's Test vice-captain, he can focus on his primary disciplines without having to attend lengthy team discussions or the distraction of being pulled in different directions; the team needs the most potent version of the player to come to the fore

R. Kaushik

When we talk one-format India internationals in the current milieu, almost all the focus is on India's two immediate all-format past skippers. Since May 2025, when they bid adieu to Test cricket within weeks of each other, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli play for the country only in One-Day Internationals, having already announced their retirement from T20Is at the conclusion of a triumphant World T20 campaign in Bridgetown in June 2024.

There has been so much talk about whether one, or both, or neither, will be present at next year's 50-over World Cup in southern Africa that most other issues have been relegated to the background. Including the fact that there is another high-profile one-format-only international in recent times, a young man who has completed a decade in India colours but is now at a tenuous crossroads after an eminently forgettable last few months.

As India embarked on a journey of transition, replete with excitement and promise, last summer through a five-Test tour of England, it was expected that the future would be shaped by two of the most luminous gems in the Indian firmament. Shubman Gill's elevation to the Test captaincy was no surprise, even though he didn't have a great deal of leadership experience at the First Class level. Gill had time on his side, he was even then one of the top batters whose place wasn't under threat, and he had shown himself to be a quick learner. Thrust into the role of his deputy was a once-fearless force of nature who had been forced by circumstances to temper his exuberance, both because of extraneous pressure and owing to the fact that, having established himself as one of the seniors within the setup, he had to strike a fine balance between carefree and careless batsmanship.

Rishabh Pant's rise as the vice-captain of the Test side was welcomed with as much breathless anticipation as Gill's to the captaincy. Or Pant's arrival at the batting crease, if you like. With the chunky left-hander, you still don't know what to expect. Or maybe you do, but even so, what he does simply blows your mind. Pant isn't reckless; he isn't someone who doesn't not put a price on his wicket, though from time to time, 'Stupid, stupid, stupid' will surface because that's just who he is. Successive coaches, from Ravi Shastri to Rahul Dravid to now Gautam Gambhir, have given him the licence to be himself with the rider that he should be a little more selective, a little more game-aware, a little more respectful of situations and conditions.

It might have been tough for Gambhir to reconcile, for instance, to Pant's extravagant aerial drive to his fifth delivery, from off-spinner Ramesh Mendis, that nestled in long-off's hands at the NCC ground on Saturday in India's only practice game, against a Sri Lanka Cricket XI. Most other batters would have been happy to play themselves in, get some circulation going, get a feel of the conditions, prepare conservatively for the two-Test series beginning in Galle next Saturday. But Pant isn't most people, and that's precisely what makes him the compelling attraction in front of the stumps that he has been since his Test debut in August 2018.

Pant fell just two balls after attempting a similar stroke that fell just beyond the reach of the backtracking mid-off fielder, compelling Mendis and skipper Sonal Dinusha to push Nishan Madushka back. Perhaps in a show of bravado, or more likely because he backed himself to middle the ball turning away from him and comfortably clear the fielder, Pant went through with the stroke only to put the ball up in the air for Madushka to complete a smart grab. Two runs from five deliveries isn't what Pant, or the leadership group of Gill and Gambhir would have hoped for, but as mentioned earlier, India have been willing to accept the trade-off because when Pant gets going, the destruction he can wreak is beyond parallel.

Pant's dalliance with the vice-captaincy didn't last too long, the decision-makers arriving at the conclusion that he and Indian cricket would be better off without additional responsibilities being thrust on his shoulders. In his first sojourn as Gill's deputy, Pant was a runaway success. His batting in England, on admittedly excellent tracks for batting, was a sight for sore eyes. While Gill was wooing and wowing the connoisseurs with his correctness and his silken stroke-making on his way to 754 extraordinary runs, Pant was at his innovative, unpredictable best without compromising on consistency. In Leeds during the first Test, he became the first Indian stumper to notch up twin hundreds in England, backed it up with 25 and 65 in the series-levelling win in Birmingham, produced efforts of 74 and 9 in the Lord's loss and won himself a few million more fans by coming out to bat with a broken foot in the first innings and making a stirring 54 in the fourth Test in Manchester.

On-field heroism

The manner in which he contracted that injury, and the events that followed as he took on-field heroism to a different level, are archetypal Pant. The 28-year-old attempted a reverse against seamer Chris Woakes and only managed to play the ball on to his foot, carried off the field as that part of his body swelled up dramatically within seconds of the impact. When he came out to bat, hobbling and unable to put any weight on his right foot, he still found enough timing and power to smack fours - and a six - as he brought up his fifty to raucous applause and walked off to warm appreciation and genuine respect from England's fielders.

That broken foot not only ended his England tour but also kept him out of the home series against West Indies in October. By this time, Pant was clearly only in the running for Test matches. His last ODI was in August 2024, his last T20I a week before that, both in Sri Lanka in Gambhir's first assignment as Dravid's successor. Sanju Samson and Ishan Kishan in the shorter white-ball format, and K.L. Rahul and Kishan in the 50-over version, have surged well clear in the wicketkeeper-batter stakes, which means the only canvas available to Pant, apart from the IPL which hasn't been his happiest hunting ground, is the five-day spectacle.

Pant's return to Test cricket, against South Africa in Kolkata in November, was anything but auspicious as India failed to hunt down 124 on an Eden minefield. Gill's batting efforts in that Test were restricted to just three deliveries in the first innings as he retired hurt with a neck injury, an affliction that kept him out of the second Test in Guwahati and thrust Pant into the Test skipper's role for the first time.

Hard times

It was a disastrous initiation; Pant himself played one of the most horrendous strokes of his career, a little after lunch on day three, then oversaw a 408-run hammering - India's heaviest by runs in Test history. A few months later came a campaign of gigantic failure in the IPL when, under Pant, Lucknow Supergiants hurtled from one misadventure to another. Even before the tournament had ended, Pant had stepped down as captain, and a few weeks later, it was confirmed that the IPL's most expensive player would return to his original franchise, Delhi Capitals, after taking a heavy pay cut.

Pant had a reasonably fruitful outing in the one-off Test against Afghanistan in New Chandigarh in June, with a somewhat restrained 81 in his, and India's, only innings of the game that they bossed all the way through. By then, though, he had been replaced as vice-captain by K.L. Rahul, one of the few individuals to have captained the country in all three formats, all in a stand-in capacity. It was the clearest indication that Agarkar's panel, if no one else, believed that Pant himself and the team as a whole would be better off if he was divested of official leadership responsibilities, though given his standing in the international circuit, Pant can't not be a leader in his own right.

Now, Pant can focus on his primary disciplines without having to attend lengthy team discussions or the distraction of being pulled in different directions, an inevitable fallout of additional role thrusts. Behind the stumps, he is unconventional and unorthodox, more Mahendra Singh Dhoni than Syed Kirmani or Nayan Mongia. In front of it, he is evidently in a league of his own. Like he showed on Sunday in Colombo, he can stonewall if so required - though even he will admit that he took it too far - and switch gears around his stonewalling without warning. It is exactly this unpredictability that makes him such an irascible force, a revolving door that can exasperate as much as it can exhilarate.

Impressive numbers

Despite the presence in the squad, and possibly in the playing XI, of Dhruv Jurel, there is not even an artificial threat to Pant's presence in the Test scheme of things. After all, we are talking about someone who averages 43.37 from an even 50 Tests, at a jaw-dropping strike-rate of 74.05 embellished by eight centuries and 19 fifties in 87 innings. These are numbers that would do several specialist batters proud - remember that Mike Atherton and the recently retired Ajinkya Rahane both averaged less than 40 - and yet, there is more to Pant. Such as 162 catches and 16 stumpings, and the very rare ability to change the course of even Test matches with two hours of unadulterated mayhem.

Six of Pant's eight centuries have come away from home - four in England, and one each in Australia and South Africa - though like most of the rest of his colleagues, he hasn't played a Test match in Sri Lanka yet. In some ways, the conditions there will be strikingly similar to India, but in others, they won't be, especially when it comes to pace off the surface. Galle from Saturday, and the SSC ground the week thereafter, will ask questions of Pant that he hasn't been asked too often in the past, but knowing him, he will find the answers. How he uses those answers, however, will make for fun viewing, as much as how much and how freely he is allowed to use them. There is no point asking Pant to bat like Ravindra Jadeja because, well, he wouldn't be Pant then, would he? India need the most potent version of Pant to come to the fore. Only a really brave or stupid individual will bet against that eventuating.

THE GIST

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- In his first sojourn as Gill's deputy, Pant was a runaway success. His batting in England, on admittedly excellent tracks for batting, was a sight for sore eyes
- The Tests in Galle and the SSC ground will ask questions of Pant that he hasn't been asked too often in the past, but knowing him, he will find the answers

If DNA is the instruction manual, we just opened a big second volume

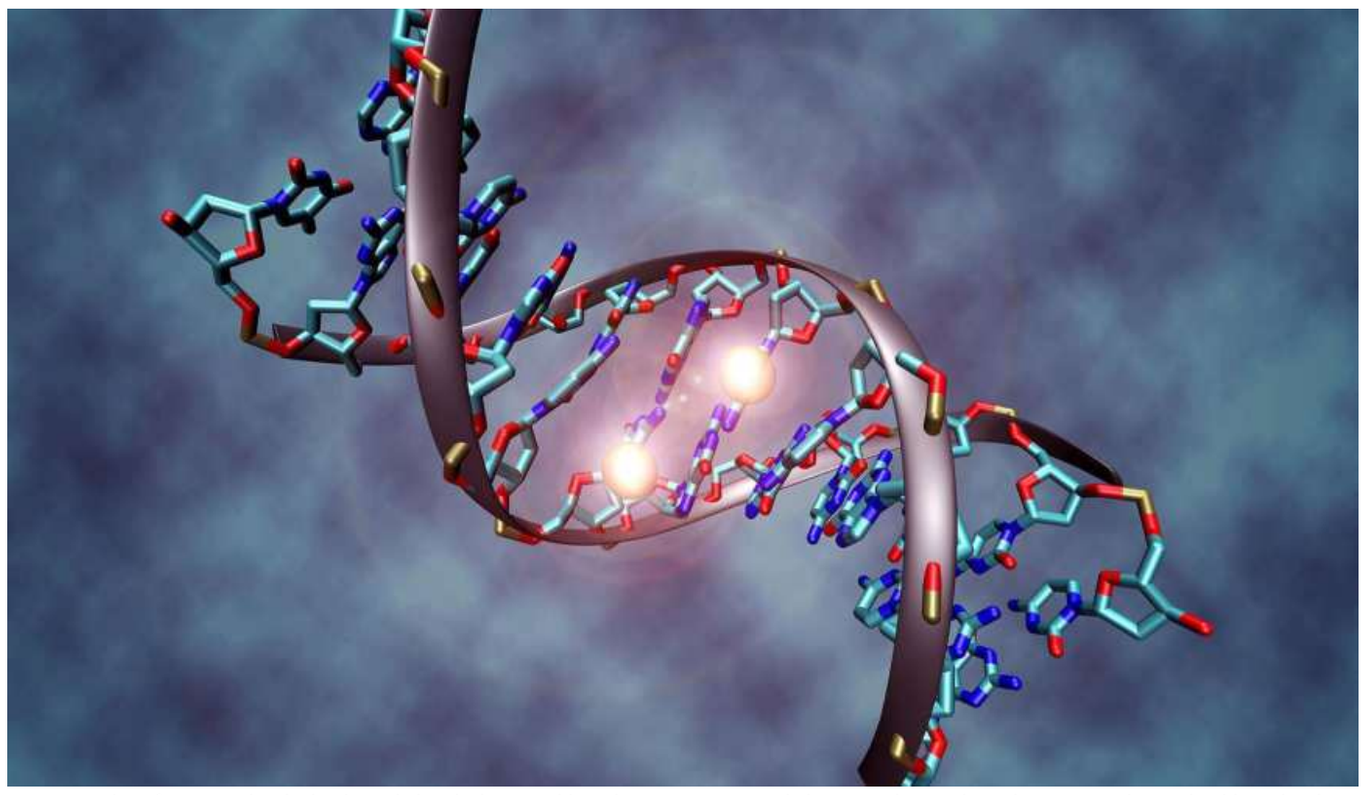
A new study found that several inherited traits occur not because genes mutate but because of chemical modifications of the genome that can jump across generations, change depending on whether an animal is male or female, and even copy themselves from one copy of a gene to another

D.P. Kasbekar

A team led by researchers at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine has found that several inherited traits in the mouse genome break the rules Gregor Mendel laid down in the 19th century about how genes work. This is not because the genes mutate but because of chemical modifications of the genome that can jump across generations, change depending on whether an animal is male or female, and even copy themselves from one copy of a gene to another.

Their findings were reported recently in *Nature Genetics*.

While the study was in mice, the implications go far beyond – as the same mechanisms may also shape human health, and be able to explain conditions that have long resisted genetic analysis.



Representation of a DNA molecule that is methylated. The two white spheres represent methyl groups. They are bound to two cytosine nucleotide molecules that make up the DNA sequence. CHRISTOPH BOCK (CC BY-SA)

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'On' and 'off' genes

Every cell in the body carries two kinds of genetic information. One is the sequence – the order of the four chemical bases, A, T, G, and C, that spells out which proteins a gene produces. This is the genome that geneticists have spent decades mapping. The other is about whether a small chemical compound – called the methyl group ($-CH_3$) – is attached to the DNA at specific locations.

When cytosines are methylated, the gene is usually silenced. When the group is removed, the gene can be expressed again. This process of switching genes 'on' and 'off' without changing the underlying sequence is called epigenetic modification. Epigenetic modifications are not permanent. They can even differ between tissues – e.g. liver cells and muscle cells methylate differently. Many of them are also reversed when the body makes fresh sperm or eggs.

The new study has found this rule to be violated.

Vastly underestimated

The researchers used a technology called nanopore sequencing. A single strand of DNA is threaded through a microscopic hole – the pore. As each base passes through, it produces a distinct blip in the electrical current flowing across the pore. Methylated cytosines produce a different blip from unmethylated ones.

The team sequenced DNA from the liver and muscle tissues of mice belonging to two inbred strains. Their genomes differed at millions of positions.

Of the 7,600 or so locations on the genomes where the methylation patterns differed, around 93% followed Mendel's rules. That is, methylation had passed reliably from parent to offspring. But in the remaining 7% or so, the researchers identified more than 500 instances of non-Mendelian epigenetic inheritance.

To illustrate, in 305 genome regions, all in the liver, the methylation depended on whether the mouse was male or female. Mendel's rules don't allow this. In 304 of these regions, females' genomes were more methylated than males' genomes.

While sex-specific methylation in the liver has been reported before in both mice and humans, the new study found that the scale has been vastly underestimated.

A new first

The researchers also identified at least five new genes displaying genomic imprinting – where the level of methylation depends on whether the gene was inherited from the mother or the father.

The most striking finding had to do with a phenomenon called paramutation. Here, the methylation status of one copy of a gene – say, the one inherited from the father – is also transferred to the other copy, inherited from the mother. The 'rewritten' mother's copy then persists through the next generation.

Again, scientists had observed paramutation in plants and engineered mice before. This is the first time it has been reported to be naturally occurring in a mammal's genome.

In the study, the paramutated gene was *Capn11*, which contains the recipe for a protein that is active in the testes during meiosis. When this protein is not available in sufficient amounts, the effects may include infertility and azoospermia (having no sperm in the semen).

The researchers also identified at least five new genes displaying genomic imprinting – where the level of methylation depends on whether the gene was inherited from the mother or the father

The team also identified two likely instances of paramutation related to the gene *Vps37c* and a downstream stretch of the genome. Both these areas are associated with intracisternal A particles – the genetic remains of ancient viruses that became embedded in the mouse genome.

According to the study's authors, these particles may be central to the paramutation process since they have been known to resist the body's mechanisms to remove epigenetic modifications when producing sperm or eggs.

Genome-wide association studies

The study also offers a new framework to explain heritable traits that researchers have struggled to study using genetics. For instance, a condition called hypertrichosis pinnae auris leads to the growth of coarse, dark hair on the outer ear and is prevalent among South Asian men. It is transmitted from fathers to sons but never to daughters.

According to the study's results, if a father carries a paramutagenic version of the gene that causes this condition and the mother carries a 'normal' version, then in a son the paramutagenic copy would rewrite the maternal copy, leaving the son to have hairy ears. He could then pass the paramutagenic variant of the gene to his own children. But if the paramutagenic variant is demethylated in females – as the new findings suggest can happen – a daughter's own copies of the gene would be unmethylated and her ears would be unaffected.

Even more broadly, the findings imply that genome-wide association studies – an increasingly popular kind of study that looks for the genetic variants linked to diseases – may be missing a significant fraction of heritable variation because that variation is not in the sequence. Instead, the study's authors have argued the work opens the door to a new kind of analysis: allele-specific epigenome-wide association studies, which trace methylation patterns rather than sequence variants, to find parts of the genome associated with diseases that conventional methods miss.

Human genetics has long assumed that if you sequence the genome, you have read the instruction manual. It may be that the manual has a second volume – and we have barely opened it today.

(D.P. Kasbekar is a retired scientist. kasbekardp@yahoo.co.in)

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THE GIST

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The study's authors have argued that the work opens the door to a new kind of analysis: allele-specific epigenome-wide association studies

BIG SHOT

Workers prepare geo bags to prevent erosion of the Brahmaputra river bank at Borakhat village, in Kamrup district of Assam on August 7. ANI

WHAT IS IT?

Glueball: matter of force

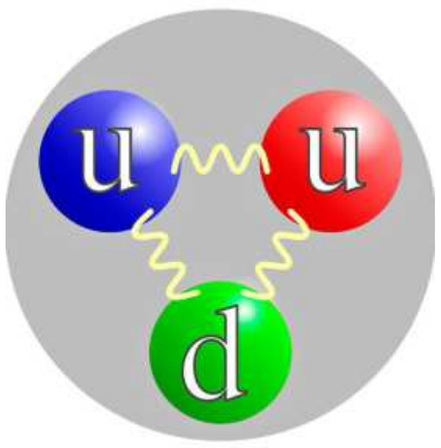
Vasudevan Mukunth

Nature has four fundamental forces: gravity, the weak force (responsible for radioactivity), electromagnetism, and the strong force. The strong force is responsible for keeping the protons and neutrons together in the nuclei of atoms.

The theory describing the strong interaction between two particles is called quantum chromodynamics (QCD). In QCD, the strong force is carried by gluons — just like how the electromagnetic force is carried by photons. But unlike photons, gluons carry a kind of charge that allows gluons to be attracted to each other. And QCD says they can come together to form composite particles called glueballs.

In new research, scientists have taken a big step closer to showing glueballs exist. The team used data from the BESIII experiment in Beijing to uncover them. This is easier said than done because when a glueball appears in a particle physics experiment, it will be very short-lived and quickly decay into lighter particles in a way that is hard to distinguish from some other particles.

Scientists had first observed a candidate glueball called X(2370) in BESIII data in 2011. Its mass seemed consistent with a glueball. They also estimated some of its properties based on the decays of a particle called the J/ψ meson. The new data buttresses the odds that X(2370) is indeed a glueball by revealing more properties glueballs possess.



Protons are made up of three smaller particles called quarks, held together by the strong interaction mediated by particles called gluons. ARPAD HORVATH (CC BY-SA)

Thus, BESIII has assembled the strongest case to date that X(2370) has a dominant glueball component, potentially providing the first evidence for a form of matter made just from the carriers of a fundamental force.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'