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EXCHANGE OF FIRE

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Sexual abuse rampant in Malayalam filmdom: report

S.R. Praveen
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The K. Hema Committee report on the issues faced by women in the Malayalam film industry has revealed horrid tales of sexual exploitation, illegal bans, discrimination, drug and alcohol abuse, wage disparity and in some cases, inhuman working conditions.

The 235-page report, released on Monday without the names of the witnesses and the accused five years after it was submitted to the Kerala government, notes that the industry is in the clutches of certain male producers, directors and actors, whom a prominent actor referred to as "mafia", as they could ban anyone.

The committee confirms the rumoured existence of the practice of "casting couch" in the industry.

Contrary to the other fields, sexual harassment starts even before a woman starts working in the film industry as demands for sexual favours are made by very well-known people in lieu of roles.

Some of the witnesses provided video and audio clips and screenshots of WhatsApp messages as proof of "casting couch" attempts.

Many of the women find it unsafe to stay alone in the accommodation arranged for them during shooting, as men in inebriated condition habitually knock on their doors. Attempts to forcibly enter their room by knocking down doors were also recounted by witnesses, notes the report. One specific case mentions an actor who had to act as the wife of her abuser the very next day of the incident, causing the victim immense trauma. In an attempt to persuade newcomers, some people in the industry actively create the impression that successful women have made it through "compromises".

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Horror script

The panel was formed on a demand by the Women in Cinema Collective to study the issues faced by women in the industry

Major findings in the panel report:

- The industry is in the clutches of certain male producers, directors and actors
- 'Casting couch' is a reality; even famous people in the industry ask for sexual favours in lieu of roles
- Many don't reveal things fearing adverse consequences
- No changing rooms or toilets in the set

HC grants temporary relief to Siddaramaiah

It orders lower court to defer proceedings till August 29 on plaints related to alleged irregularities in MUDA; CM had questioned legality of the sanction granted by the Governor to prosecute him

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In a temporary relief to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the Karnataka High Court on Monday ordered a special court in Bengaluru to defer further proceedings on complaints related to alleged irregularities in the allotment of sites by the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) till August 29.

The special court shall not precipitate a complaint related to the sanctions granted by the Governor against Mr. Siddaramaiah till further orders, the High Court said. Justice M. Nagaprasanna passed the interim order on a petition filed by Mr. Siddaramaiah.

In his petition, the Chief Minister questioned the legality of the sanction granted by the Governor permitting investigation against him under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act and prosecution under Section 218 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023.

The High Court found it necessary to pass an interim order after it was pointed out that the Special Court of Sessions for criminal cases against former and present MPs and MLAs was scheduled to pass an order on August 20 on whether to entertain one of the two complaints filed against Mr. Siddaramaiah.

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot granted sanction on August 17 on the applications filed by two Bengaluru-based social activists Pradeep Kumar S.P. and T.J. Abraham, and Mysuru-based Snehamayi Krishna.

"If the concerned special court passes any order on August 20, it would undoubtedly frustrate the subject proceedings on the petition... Therefore, I deem it appropriate to direct the concerned special court to defer the proceedings and direct no precipitative action be taken pursuant to the sanction, till the next date of hearing," observed Justice Nagaprasanna in his order.

Caught in a controversy: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah addressing presspersons in Bengaluru on Monday. K. BHAGYA PRAKASH

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IN BRIEF

NDA ally Chirag Paswan opposes lateral entry

NEW DELHI
The controversy over the Union government advertising to fill 45 posts at Joint Secretary and other levels in the government via lateral entry on a contract basis became bigger on Monday with NDA partner and Union Minister Chirag Paswan opposing the move. » Page 11

Udaipur stabbing: boy succumbs to his injuries

JAIPUR
A 15-year-old boy, who was allegedly stabbed by his classmate after a fight in a school in Udaipur, died on Monday. The incident on August 16 had sparked communal violence in the city. » Page 3

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BJP attacks govt. over boy's drowning; AAP pins blame on Saxena

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A day after a seven-year-old boy drowned in a drain in the Wazirpur area, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva on Monday said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government's "negligence" was to blame for several such deaths due to waterlogging in the Capital recently.

"The drain in which the boy drowned comes under Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation and its maintenance is the responsibility of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. Both agencies have been negligent in ensuring public safety," he added.

Reacting to the accusation, the ruling AAP held the area's BJP councillor responsible for the death, saying it was his duty to ensure that all drains are covered.

"The BJP should at least not do theatrics over the death of a child," the party said, terming the incident "extremely unfortunate".

It also claimed that the boy slipped into the drain while defecating in the open as the toilets built in the area were "dismantled on the orders" of Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena.

Raj Niwas denied the allegation.

Dirty politics: Raj Niwas

Officials at the L-G office accused AAP of "playing dirty politics instead of owning up to their faults".

A senior Raj Niwas official said, "The L-G did not order for the removal of any toilet block. On the contrary, the L-G has been trying, despite shameless opposition by AAP, to improve things in the Capital. He got toilets constructed at the ISBT and Kamla Nagar Market, to name a few."

L-G, Atishi rap Chief Secy. over civic 'infrastructure collapse', sewage overflow

Saxena, Water Minister write to Naresh Kumar, pull him up for floods in parts of city, choked sewer lines; AAP says L-G is merely repeating what the 'elected govt.' has pointed out several times already

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar on Monday came under severe criticism from Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena and Water Minister Atishi on the issues of overflowing drains and "the complete collapse of civic infrastructure" in Delhi during the monsoon.

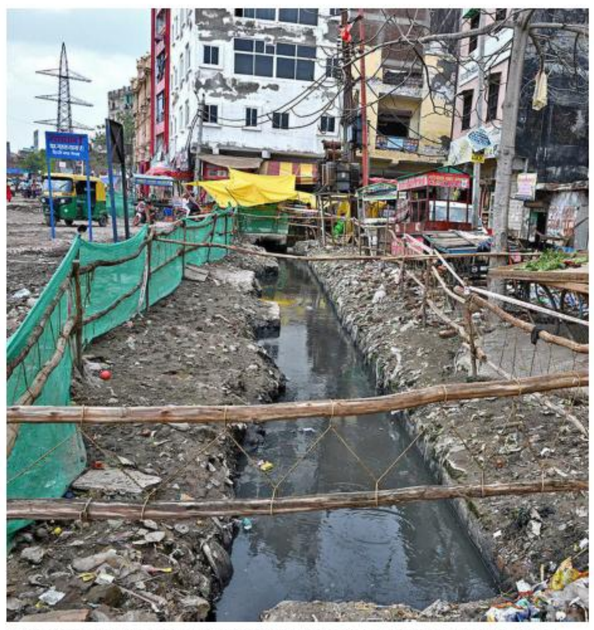
In a letter to Mr. Kumar, Raj Niwas said the "underlying problems (of infrastructural issues) are symptomatic of endemic neglect" and a "complete absence of senior management oversight" in the city.

"Drains have not been de-silted for years; sewer lines are choked, leading to flooding even in planned colonies. Hon'ble L-G believes that this points to a complete absence of senior management oversight," read the letter by Ashish Kundra, Mr. Saxena's Principal Secretary, to Mr. Kumar.

On the other hand, the Minister said she had received complaints about sewage overflow from many parts of the city.

"The problem of sewage overflow is also causing contamination of drinking water, which could lead to a serious public health crisis if not resolved immediately," she said.

Ms. Atishi asked the Chief Secretary to "mobilise the entire government machinery" to prevent a public health crisis.



The drain in Ghazipur where a 23-year-old woman and her son, 3, drowned after a heavy spell of rain. FILE PHOTO SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Mr. Saxena and the Minister asked the Chief Secretary to assign specific responsibilities to senior officials and ask them to conduct periodic ground inspections.

Field inspections

"It would help them obtain a first-hand feel of the core problems being faced by citizens and take corrective policy or regulatory measures. The Chief Secretary shall circulate a uniform format of inspection report to all departments and submit a monthly report on the number of inspections done by each officer," read the letter by Raj Niwas. It added that all the heads of departments (HODs), Secretaries, Principal Secretaries, and Additional Chief Secretaries need to "draw up a schedule of field inspections" and ensure thorough inspections. The L-G also sought monthly inspection reports from Mr. Kumar.

Ms. Atishi asked the Mr. Kumar to deploy 11 senior officials, one for each of the Delhi Jal Board's circles.

"A team of officers to be attached to each senior IAS officer who will remain on the field to find short-term and long-term solutions to sewage overflow and water contamination-related issues," she said. The Minister asked Mr. Kumar to monitor the officials' work personally and sought biweekly progress reports from him.

Nothing new: AAP

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) also took potshots at the L-G over his letter to Mr. Kumar, saying he was merely repeating what the "elected government" had pointed out several times already. "The Urban Development Minister (Saurabh Bharadwaj) had directed the Chief Secretary to submit the timelines for de-silting drains by various agencies. But, instead of ensuring de-silting, the Chief Secretary was busy making excuses for not submitting the timelines," the party said in a statement.

It added, "There is video evidence and written official notes to prove that the favourite officers of the L-G had knowingly contributed to misgovernance and corruption in de-silting contracts. The L-G has not yet taken any action against the Chief Secretary or any of the HODs who failed in their duties."

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva accused the Delhi government of shirking its responsibilities.

When reached for comment, Raj Niwas did not respond.

Protesting medicos offer consultations near Nirman Bhawan

Alisha Dutta
NEW DELHI

Patients lined up outside the Union Ministry of Health office at Nirman Bhawan on Monday as resident doctors offered consultations as part of their protest against the brutal rape and murder of a trainee medico at State-run R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata.

However, the doctors refused to get back to work, saying their demands had not been fulfilled, crippling outpatient departments (OPDs) and elective services at major private and government hospitals in the Capital for the eighth straight day.

The resident doctors are demanding a Central legislation to protect them against violence and exemplary punishment for the accused in the Kolkata rape and murder case.

Sajni Devi, 27, who reached outside Nirman Bhawan with a complaint of a recurring stomachache, said she was asked at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) to visit the doctors' protest site for consultation. She was subsequently treated by a gynaecologist from AIIMS, who participated in the protest.

While many patients came from far and wide for consultation, some flocked to the doctors while passing through the area.

Rajesh Lohiya, a passerby, stopped near the doctors' protest site out of curiosity. He told *The Hindu* that while he knew the trigger behind the protest, he was unaware of the doctors' demands.

Protest outside Union Health Ministry office on Monday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

"I stopped to hear out the doctors and their challenges. When I saw people getting consultations, I underwent a quick blood pressure check," Mr. Lohiya added.

'Issues unresolved'

A 29-year-old doctor from Safdarjung Hospital said the initiative was aimed at helping people while making a statement to the government that they won't stop protesting until the Centre enacts a law for the protection of medical professionals.

"We have been protesting for over a week now, yet no concrete solution has been provided by the government regarding our concerns," she added.

The doctor said they are providing elective OPD services for 36 ailments which do not require immediate medical treatment.

Dhruv Chauhan, a senior doctor at Delhi State Cancer Hospital, said though they don't know how their protest will pan out, they are firm on ensuring that the government fulfils their demands.

30 deaths in rain-related incidents during monsoon: deceased's kin slam 'laxity' on part of civic agencies

Samridhi Tewari
Satvika Mahajan
NEW DELHI

Over the past nearly one and a half months of monsoon, Delhi has seen nearly 30 rain-related deaths.

The fatalities include a cab driver who died after a portion of a canopy at IGI Airport fell on him on June 28 and three Civil Services aspirants who drowned in the basement of a coaching institute on July 27 after it got flooded with rainwater.

From June 28 to August 15, the national capital has seen several deaths from electrocution, building collapse, and drowning on days it received heavy rain.

The victims' families and friends have alleged that these deaths could have been prevented had civic authorities not been negligent in de-silting and covering drains, taking care of exposed electricity wires, and surveying buildings to find which ones were prone to collapsing.

According to the Civil Services aspirants who have been sitting in protest outside the coaching institute at Old Rajinder Nagar, where the three students died last month, most of the redevelopment work is being done "for the camera".

Vishwajeet, a 26-year-old Civil Services aspirant, said, "Civic authorities have taken up the work of re-laying the drains. But these are piecemeal measures. They have dug one portion of the drain even as the rest of it along the main road remains untouched."

Asha, a street vendor in the area, said, "They are working just to paint a good picture of themselves before the media. Once the issue is forgotten, the authorities will not look back at these things."

While the public glare on coaching hubs like Old Rajinder Nagar has forced the authorities to sit up and take note, residents in many other parts of the city have accused the agencies of complete indifference.

Sandeep Kumar, whose friend Rajesh died from electrocution in the Shishmahal Enclave area on June 28 as he came in touch with a pole connected to a bulb, said, "No work has been done on the ground."

"Residents of Shishmahal Enclave have been protesting ever since the incident took place in a bid to force the government to listen to their grievances. However, our issues remain unresolved," he added.

Mr. Sandeep said when it rains, they are scared to leave their houses.

"Residents fear getting drowned or being electrocuted. Roads are waterlogged, and many people, as well as animals, have suffered electric shocks," said Mr. Sandeep.

Residents of Shishmahal Enclave had taken out marches and written to the authorities concerned, but the drains haven't been cleaned.

B.N. Jha, a member of the Mukherjee Nagar Resident Welfare Association (RWA), told *The Hindu*, "There is very little proactive action from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). Our association has approached the court for action against illegal coaching centres but is little change."

Passing the buck

Six persons died in Delhi in a 24-hour period ending at 5.30 p.m. on August 1, during which the city received over 100 mm of rainfall. Two of the fatalities were a 23-year-old woman and her three-year-old son. They drowned in an open drain on a waterlogged road in Ghazipur's Khoda Colony. Since the incident, the MCD and the Delhi Development Authority have traded charges over the incident, with each agency claiming that the responsibility of maintaining the drain lay with the other.

Death spell

Rain-related incidents have claimed the lives of children and adults alike, stoking demand for fixing responsibility of erring officials

JUNE 28

- **Three labourers die** after being trapped under the debris of an under-construction building in Vasant Vihar that collapsed following heavy rain
- **Two children** — aged 8 and 10 — drown in a rainwater-filled ditch in New Usmanpur's Khadar area

Rescuers remove debris from a building-collapse site in south Delhi's Vasant Vihar. FILE PHOTO

JULY 31

- An **18-year-old man** gets electrocuted in Sangam Vihar while crossing an inundated stretch

AUG. 10

- A **13-year-old boy** gets electrocuted while playing cricket in north-west Delhi's Ranhola

SOURCE: DELHI POLICE

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LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE J.M.F.C. (Jr. Dn) MUDDEBIHAL
Cri. Mis. No.276/2023

1) **Sujata (Arati)** W/o Anand Harijan & another
...Petitioners
V/S
1) **Anand** S/o Laxmavva Harijan and others
...Respondents

I. A. NO. XIV NOTICE U/O V RULE 20 (1-A) OF C.P.C.

To,
RESPONDENT NO.1
1) **Anand** S/o Laxmavva Harijan, Age: 33 years Occ: ITBP in Military R/o Bisanal Tq: Bannetti Dist: Bagalkot, Now R/o I.T.B.P. Force Jodhapur, Rajasthan Mandal, Madanalanath-212-213 Umaid I.T.B.P. 42 Battalion Heritage Defence Lab - 342 011, Rajasthan.

Whereas the Petitioners have instituted the Petition of Domestic Violence under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 Sec. 12 and D.V. Act Sec. 18(a)(b) Sub-Clause 20, 22 & 23 against the Respondents in the above said case. You as the Respondent No.1 hereby take notice to appear in this Court in person or by a Pleader on the **18th day of September-2024 at 10:30 a.m.** to answer the same, failing which the Petition will be disposed of exparte.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Court, on this **17th day of August 2024.**

By Order of the Court
Sd/- Sheristedar
Civil Judge Court, Muddebihal
Place: Muddebihal
Date: 14-08-2024
C. R. Joshi,
Advocate for the Plaintiff

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF HON'BLE MOTOR ACCIDENT CLAIMS TRIBUNAL (SDJ-I) AT CUDDALORE

M.C.O.P.No.143/2022
Arulselvi W/o Ramalingam & Others
No.74, Amman Kovil Street, Kilpathi, Cuddalore.
...Petitioners
-Vs-
1. Madhur Kumar Judan S/o R.K.Judan E-6/160, Arera Colony, Bhopal, Madhyapradesh.
...1st Respondent

NOTICE TO RESPONDENT NO: 1

Please take Notice that the above claim Petition filed by the above petitioners in MCOP.NO: 143/2022 for claiming Compensation for the death of the 1st petitioner's husband and the case is posted on 29.08.2024 for your appearance and filing your objection if any and you may appear either in person or your advocate on said day at 10.00 a.m. before this Hon'ble Tribunal failing which remains Exparte and the matter will be decided on merits.

A.S.Chandarasekaran B.A., B.L., Advocate for Petitioner Cuddalore

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE 1st ADDL. DISTRICT JUDGE, KADAPA, A.P. STATE
M.V.O.P.NO.534/2022
Solleti @ Salepati Ramadevi and 2 others
... Petitioners
Vs
1. Jiwan Cargo Carrier Rep. by its Manager, owner of the lorry bearing No.HR-56B-6146, Rohtak Road, By-pass, Opp. Kundan Solvex Plant, Jind, Haryana State-126102.
... Respondent No.1

NOTICE

Petitioners filed M.V.O.P.No.534/2022, for compensation against you and your insurance Company, for the death of my husband in a lorry bearing No.HR-56-B-6146, accident. The said M.V.O.P. is posted to **05-09-2024,** for your appearance in the above Hon'ble Court.

Hence, you are directed by the Hon'ble Court ot appear in the above court on **05-09-2024 at 10.30 a.m.** in person or through Advocate, and file your objections if any, otherwise, matter will be decided exparty.

Sd/- **P.SRIKANTH REDDY**, B.A., B.L., Advocate, Kadapa. A.P.

IN THE COURT OF THE HON'BLE 1st ADDL. DISTRICT JUDGE, KADAPA, A.P. STATE
M.V.O.P.NO.534/2022
Solleti @ Salepati Ramadevi and 2 others
... Petitioners
Vs
1. Anil Kumar, S/o Om Prakash, Aged about 24 years, Hindu, Lorry Driver, C/o Pipliya Rao, Indore, Madhya Pradesh State - 452001.
... Respondent No.1

NOTICE

Petitioners filed M.V.O.P.No.534/2022, for compensation against you and your insurance Company, for the death of my husband in a lorry bearing No.HR-56-B-6146, accident. The said M.V.O.P. is posted to **05-09-2024,** for your appearance in the above Hon'ble Court.

Hence, you are directed by the Hon'ble Court ot appear in the above court on **05-09-2024 at 10.30 a.m.** in person or through Advocate, and file your objections if any, otherwise, matter will be decided exparty.

Sd/- **P.SRIKANTH REDDY**, B.A., B.L., Advocate, Kadapa. A.P.

TENDERS

CHENNAI PORT AUTHORITY
MARINE DEPARTMENT

Notice for e- Tender

Tender No. G1/135/2024/ M

Bids are invited online under Two Cover system for **"Re-Tender for hiring of 1 No 20 knot speed patrol boat for a period of 5 years and extendable by another 2 years in Chennai Port".**

Estimated cost put to tender: **Rs.9,13,00,000 /- (Excluding Applicable GST)**

For details visit websites:
www.chennaiport.gov.in
https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app

Deputy Conservator.

Govt. of Bihar

Board of Revenue
Old Secretariat, Patna - 800 015

Notice for
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
(Through e-procurement mode only over (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in/)
RFP Reference No: BOR/10/RFP/S3/2024

Board of Revenue, invites Request for Proposal (RFP) **For Selection of Agency for Providing Services of IT Professionals for Designing, Implementation and Management of IT/e-governance Initiatives.**

SL No.	Scope of work	Tender processing Fee(Non Refundable) (inclusive of GST @18.00%) to be paid through e-payment mode (i.e. NEFT/RTGS/,Credit Card/Debit card) (in Rupees)
01.	Request for Proposal (RFP) for **"Selection of Agency for Providing Services of IT Professionals for Designing, Implementation and Management of IT/e-governance Initiatives**	**Rs. 3540**

Tender Schedule/Programme:

Start Date & Time for sale of tender document on website	**19/08/2024 at 11:00 AM** onwards **https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in**
Email ID to send Pre-bid queries	Email Id: boardofrevenuebihar@gmail.com
Last date to submit Pre-bid queries (if required)	**28/08/2024 , 05:00 PM**
Date, Time of Pre-bid meeting (if required)	**29/08/2024 , 03:00 PM**
Place for Pre-bid meeting	Board of Revenue, Old Secretariat, Patna, Bihar -15
Last date, time for sale of tender document	**18/09/2024 at 03:00 PM**
Last date and time for bid submission	**18/09/2024 , 06:00 PM https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in**
Date, Time and Place of opening of Pre-Qualification & Technical Qualification	**19/09/2024 , 11:00 AM** Board of Revenue, Old Secretariat, Patna
Date, Time and Place of Technical Presentation	To be intimated later
Date, Time and Place of opening of Commercial Bids	To be intimated later
Tender Processing fee	Rs 3540/- (non-refundable) inclusive of GST 18%, through e-payment mode i.e. NEFT/RTGS/Credit Card/ Debit Card on eproc2.bihar.gov.in
RFP document fee (Non- refundable and Not exempted)	Tender fee of Rs 10000/- (Rupees Ten Thousands only), including Service Tax, in the form of E- payment mode only, to be submitted on or before last date & time of bid submission
Earnest Money Deposit	INR 2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lac only) The EMD in the form of e-payment mode or Bank Guarantee issued by a Nationalized Bank, in favor of "Secretary, Board of Revenue, Patna, Bihar", payable at Patna, with validity period of 6 months from the bid submission due date, to be submitted on or before last date & time of bid submission
Performance Bank Guarantee	10% of total contract value (to be submitted within 15 working days from date of notification of award) in the form of Bank Guarantee from Nationalized Bank
Tender Inviting Authority and Contact Person	Secretary, Board of Revenue, Old Secretariat, Patna, Bihar Tele: 0612-2215676, Fax: 0612-2215677
Eproc2 website Help desk	Toll Free Number: 1800 572 6571 Email Id: eproc2support@bihar.gov.in

1. For support related to e-tendering process, bidders may contact at "e- Procurement HELP BELTRON BHAWAN, Shastri Nagar, Patna (https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

For further details please visit website **state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar**

PR- 006456 (B & C) 2024-25

नशे की मार, बर्बाद करे सुखी परिवार।

Deputy Secretary
Board of Revenue

CM Stalin rejects Palaniswami's claim of 'secret ties' between DMK and BJP

We don't have the necessity for secret ties, says the Chief Minister, adding that Union Minister Rajnath Singh's speech to mark release of coin on Karunanidhi was even better than any speech that could have been given by leaders of the DMK or its alliance partners

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president M.K. Stalin on Monday rejected the claim made by AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami that the DMK and the BJP were having "secret ties".

Speaking at a family function hosted by senior DMK functionary and legislator K.P. Shankar, Mr. Stalin said, "We don't have the necessity for secret ties." He recalled former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's observation about the late DMK leader and former Chief Minister, M. Karunanidhi, that he would either support or oppose, but would not give up on his principles.

Special guest: Chief Minister M.K. Stalin at a family function hosted by senior DMK functionary and legislator K.P. Shankar on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

'Promise on *Anna*'

Even as he took a dig at Mr. Palaniswami over the way he took the reins of the AIADMK, Mr. Stalin said, "I promise on *Anna* [former Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai] that we would never give up on our rights. This has been the path laid down for us by *Anna* and *Kalaignar* [Karunanidhi]."

Speaking about the invitation extended to Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for releasing a commemorative coin to mark the birth centenary of Karunanidhi, Mr. Stalin said that the Union Minister readily accepted the invite. It was Mr. Singh who insisted on visiting the memorial of the late Chief Minister, Mr. Stalin said.

Referring to Mr. Singh's gesture during the release of the coin, calling upon the audience to give a standing ovation to Karunanidhi, Mr. Stalin said that he was overwhelmed with happiness "that cost him his sleep" on Sunday night.

'Special speech'

Mr. Stalin said that the Union Minister's speech was "special" and "far better" than any speech that could have been given by leaders of the DMK and its alliance partners. It was a speech "to be recorded in history", he said.

"There was no compulsion for him to laud *Kalaignar* to that extent. But he spoke the truth, straight from his mind," he said.

As for Mr. Palaniswami questioning why Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was not invited to the function, Mr. Stalin said that the coin was being released by the Union government, and hence, the Union Minister was invited.

Taking a dig at Mr. Palaniswami, he said that no one from the Union government was present when a commemorative coin was released to honour late Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran "because the Union government did not respect him [Mr. Palaniswami] and did not even consider him a Chief Minister".

THE TOP RANKED ENGINEERING INSTITUTIONS IN DELHI NCR

As from the NIRF Rankings 2024 by the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India

UNIVERSITY	NATL. RANK
IIT Delhi	2
Delhi Technological University	27
Amity University	30
NIT Delhi	45
Netaji Subhas Univ. of Tech.	57
IIIT	85
Guru Gobind Singh IP Univ.	89

Detention illegal, says Mumbai hit-and-run accused; moves HC

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The accused in the July hit-and-run accident in Worli, Mumbai, has moved the Bombay High Court seeking immediate release on ground of him being "illegally detained". The court will hear the habeas corpus petition filed by the accused, Mihir Shah (24), on Wednesday.

Police arrested Mr. Shah on July 9, for allegedly hitting a couple riding a two-wheeler, and killing Kaveri Nakhwa (45) in the early hours of July 7. Her husband Pradeep Liladhar Nakhwa was injured in the accident.

According to the police, Mr. Shah has admitted to driving the luxury car and hitting the couple under the influence of alcohol. After the incident the police said he swapped seats with his driver, took an autorickshaw from Kala Nagar area of Bandra East and went to a friend's home in Goregaon. He kept shifting his location before being arrested from a resort in Thane.

In his plea, Mr. Shah has sought quashing of the orders passed by a local court remanding him first in police custody and then judicial custody. He claimed that any further detention would be in "utter violation of the Constitutional mandate" and a failure to comply with Section 50 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

The car involved in the accident kept at the Worli police station. FILE PHOTO

Mr. Shah and his driver Rajrishi Bidawat are in judicial custody. His father, Rajesh Shah, in whose name the car was registered, is party worker of Shiv Sena (Shinde) in Palghar district and is said to be a close aide of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

Mr. Rajesh was granted bail on July 8.

(With PTI inputs)

Schoolboy stabbed by classmate in Udaipur succumbs to injuries

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

A 15-year-old boy, who was allegedly stabbed by his classmate after a fight in a government school in Udaipur, died on Monday. The incident on August 16 had sparked communal violence in the city, where a large number of cars were set on fire and some shops ransacked.

The condition of the victim, Devraj, deteriorated on Monday after he remained admitted for four days in the intensive care unit of Maharana Bhupal Government Hospital. The boy was under the treatment of a team of specialist doctors who had arrived from Jaipur.

The hospital administration shifted his body to the mortuary, while a decision on the timing of cremation was yet to be taken.

The report of Devraj's death led to tension in Udaipur and a restive crowd gathered outside the hospital. Police resorted to lathi charge to disperse the crowd outside the hospital and at several places in the city.

House of the accused boy being bulldozed by the civic body in Udaipur on Saturday. FILE PHOTO

Elaborate security arrangements were made with the deployment of police force at sensitive places, while several battalions of Rajasthan Armed Constabulary were being sent to Udaipur to take care of law and order situation during the night.

The suspension of mobile internet services was extended by another 24 hours. Prohibitory orders banning public gatherings will continue to remain in force in the city.

The police had detained the boy who allegedly stabbed Devraj and arrested his father. The civic body officials demolished the boy's rented house on Saturday after declaring that it was constructed illegally on Forest Department's land.

Key accused in Bihar minor's murder held

Press Trust of India
MUZAFFARPUR (BIHAR)

The prime accused in the murder of a minor girl in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district was arrested by the special investigation team on Monday, officials said. He has been nabbed from Araria district.

Besides, the SIT also apprehended three others in connection with the Dalit girl's murder, taking the total number of arrests to five.

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India's National Newspaper

Timings
DELHI

TUESDAY, AUG. 20		
RISE	05:54	SET 18:56
RISE	19:35	SET 06:11
WEDNESDAY, AUG. 21		
RISE	05:54	SET 18:55
RISE	20:10	SET 07:20
THURSDAY, AUG. 22		
RISE	05:55	SET 18:54
RISE	20:43	SET 08:28

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	36	28
Safdarjang	36	28
Palam	34	27

Delhi Palam Today
36°C Day will be Very warm and uneasy. Night will be comfortable. Spell of light rain and thundershower with gusty winds to occur.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
35°C The weather will be warm and uneasy with cloudy sky. Short spell of light rain and thundershower may occur at few places.

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Two JNU students fall ill during hunger strike, say no to treatment

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Two Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) students participating in an ongoing indefinite hunger strike on the campus were admitted to AIIMS on Monday after falling ill. However, they have refused treatment and decided to continue with their protest, officials said.

The strike entered its eighth day on Monday, with students protesting against the purported unresponsive attitude of the administration over their charter of demands since August 11.

When contacted, V-C Santishree D. Pandit said, "They have taken responsibility, refused treatment and signed the leave against medical advice document. So, the JNU administration has informed their parents that they have refused medical treatment," she said.

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
Tender No. GM/ET/842/Pt- I/1414

Auction Notice

Directorate of Geology & Mining, Assam invites bids under the provisions of Rule 8, 32 , 33, 34, 35, 37 and 38 of the Assam Minor Mineral Concession Rules, 2013 & its amendments for Granite (X-Schedule Minor Mineral) blocks. The bidding document for participation in the online auction will be available on https://www.mstcecommerce.com.

Sale notice will be available on the website from 22-08-2024.

Last Date of Bid Closing: 19-09-2024.

Name of blocks for bidding:

I. Granite, Hatiutha Granite Block -1 , Morigaon for Lease
ll. Granite, Hatiutha Granite Block -2, Morigaon. for Lease
III. Granite, Hatiutha Granite Block -3, Morigaon. for Lease
IV. Granite, Dudhkuri Granite Block -1 , Dudhk:uri for Lease
V. Granite, Dudhkuri Granite Block -2, Dudhkuri for Lease
Vl. Granite, Dudhkuri Granite Block -3, Dudhkuri for Lease

Sd/-
Director,
Directorate of Geology & Mining, Assam.
Government of Assam.

Janasanyog /C/2258/ 24/20-Aug-24

THE HINDU
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INBRIEF

I pay attention to only what key *Mahayuti* leaders say: Ajit

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Monday said he is not bothered about his criticism by others and is only concerned about what key leaders of the ruling *Mahayuti* alliance say. Mr. Pawar's remarks came a day after a group of BJP workers led by the party's Junnar chief Asha Buchake waved black flags at his convoy. "I don't have anything to do with what other people say. I pay attention to the key people, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde of Shiv Sena and Chandrashekhar Bawankule and Devendra Fadnavis of the BJP," Mr. Pawar told reporters during his Jan Sanman Yatra in Mumbai.

O.P. Dhankar to head BJP's Haryana poll manifesto panel

The Haryana BJP on Monday set up a manifesto committee under senior leader O.P. Dhankar for the October 1 State Assembly elections. State party president Mohan Lal Badoli announced the formation of the committee which will have 14 other members, according to a party statement. The fourteen other members include senior leaders Abhimanyu, Ranbir Gangwa, Vipul Goel, Kiran Choudhry, Bhavya Bishnoi and Sunita Duggal. The Election Commission on Friday announced that Assembly polls in Haryana would be held in a single phase on October 1 and the results would be declared on October 4. PTI

Kolkata police arrest college student over 'provocative' comments about Mamata

First arrest related to social media posts on R.G. Kar hospital rape-murder case; 65 others being probed for spreading 'fake' news or revealing victim's identity; 30 arrested in hospital violence case

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Kolkata police have arrested a second-year BCom student for sharing two 'stories' on Instagram which were "against Hon'ble C.M. of West Bengal containing offensive comments and life threat to her". The woman had also shared three 'stories' on the social media platform "disclosing the picture & identity of the [rape-murder] victim lady which is very much offensive in nature".

The police said that her posts were "provocative" in nature and could lead to "social unrest anytime and promote hatred among the community". A case has been registered at the Taltala Thana in Central Kolkata area and investigation is under way. The student was later produced in court.

Defending the arrest, Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MP Sagarika Ghose posted on X, "A college student who put out social media posts calling for the assassination of chief minister Mamata Banerjee has been arrested by the Kolkata Police. The right to free speech does not involve calling for the murder of an elected official. Right to protest is fundamental but incitement to violence is a crime."

Advocate and TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee with High Court lawyers at a march against the rape-murder, in Kolkata on Monday. ANI

Other notices

Kolkata Police has also sent notices to 65 other people in the rape-murder case. Some are being investigated for spreading 'fake' news and some for revealing the victim's identity.

Another social media user who had been very actively posting about the case on X wrote on Sunday, "Deleted all my tweets on the case which didn't have quoted sources. My family is terribly scared. This is not okay."

The same user, a medical student herself, had previously said that police were looking for her as she shared a post without verification. She wrote on X handle, "My mom got a call from my neighbour (from my hometown) at around 7.30 pm that police (3-4 uniformed officers) were searching for my home. They were saying Kolkata police had asked them to summon me about some post and they searching for my home."

The police have also arrested multiple perpetrators for the mob violence that took place at the hospital in the early hours of August 15. "As of now, the number of arrests in relation to the vandalism at R.G. Kar Hospital on the night of August 14 stands at 30," Kolkata Police said.

Former hospital principal Dr. Sandip Kumar Ghosh, currently being questioned by the Central Bureau of Investigation, landed in further trouble on Monday as People for Better Treatment, an organisation which works against malpractices in the medical field, sent an urgent complaint to the West Bengal Medical Council to cancel his medical licence immediately for "moral turpitude".

MORE REPORTS
» PAGE 10

DMA seeks to be made a party in Kolkata case in SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Medical Association (DMA) moved the Supreme Court on Monday for the constitution of a committee headed by a former apex court judge to prepare a module or scheme for protection of doctors and medical service personnel against violence in hospitals and the public healthcare centres in the backdrop of the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital rape and murder case in Kolkata.

The association has filed an application late in the evening in the apex court to implead itself in the *suo motu* case scheduled to be heard by a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud.

Panel representatives

The DMA, represented by senior advocate Vijay Hansaria and advocate Sneha Kalita, said the committee ought to comprise representatives of the Indian Medical Association, National Medical Commission, Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, an officer not below the rank of Inspector General of Police, resident doctors or representatives of the doctors from R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital and members of the civil society.

The application said the apex court should direct the Superintendent of Police of every district across the country to carry out threat perception assessments of government hospitals and healthcare institutions

Distress call alert

It further sought a direction to the Union government to develop a software mechanism by way of distress call alert system in all healthcare institutions, establishments and medical colleges in the country to be made available to doctors and medical staff, especially women, which would have live connectivity with nearby local police stations and security staff.

Among other suggestions, the DMA sought a direction for the mandatory filing of institutional First Information Report (FIR) within 24 hours of incidents happening in the vicinity of hospital and healthcare premises.

Kerala man who was part of Russian military group 'killed' in Ukraine shell attack

The Hindu Bureau
THRISSUR

Sandeep Chandran, a 36-year-old from Nayarangadi at Kallur in Thrissur district of Kerala, has been reportedly killed in a shell attack in Ukraine while serving with a Russian military group. However, official confirmation of his death is yet to be made.

According to information relayed to his family, a 12-member Russian military patrol team, including Sandeep, was killed in a Ukraine shell attack on the Russian border. The bodies have been taken to a hospital, and it has been reported that members of the Russian Malayali Association have identified Sandeep's body.

Sandeep and seven others from Kerala went to Russia via an agency in Chalakudy on April 2, 2024. Initially, the families were informed that they were going to work in a restaurant in Moscow.

According to information relayed to Sandeep Chandran's family, a 12-member Russian military patrol team, including Sandeep, was killed in a Ukraine shell attack on the Russian border. FILE PHOTO: AP

However, Sandeep later informed his family that he was actually working in the canteen of a Russian military camp and was safe. He also mentioned that he had lost his passport and phone.

Russian citizenship

There are reports suggesting that Sandeep joined the Russian military and obtained Russian citizenship. It is said that in Russia, a common practice for acquiring citizenship is to enlist in the military.

The issue of Sandeep's Russian citizenship could complicate the repatriation of his body. However, his relatives remain hopeful that the Indian Embassy will intervene.

The family has reached out to Union Ministers S. Jaishankar, Suresh Gopi, and George Kurian for assistance in resolving the matter.

Yamuna waters to reach Shekhawati soon: Rajasthan CM

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

The Yamuna river water is expected to arrive soon in Rajasthan's Shekhawati region following an agreement signed recently with the Haryana government for ensuring the supply of the State's entire share of water as per the 1994 Yamuna Water Agreement. The availability of water will resolve the issue of shortage of drinking and irrigation water in the four districts of Shekhawati region.

Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma said during his visit to Sikar on Sunday that the agreement signed with Haryana in February this year was one of the major achievements of his government. The Shekhawati region, situated at the edge of Thar desert, has been facing water scarcity since long.

The Chaudhary Kumbharam Lift Canal, built under the Indira Gandhi Canal Project, at present supplies 1,500 cusecs of water to some areas of Shekhawati. The Sikar Sambhag Nahar Lao Sangharsh Samiti has urged the State government to get Rajasthan's full share of water from Tajewala Head and arrange for its supply to Sikar division.

'Water for all'

Addressing a public meeting in Sikar, Mr. Sharma said the Bharatiya Janata Party government was taking decisions to ensure the availability of water and power in all parts of the State.

"No concrete action on these fronts was taken by the [previous] Congress regime. Our decisions on the Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project, Dewas project in Udaipur, strengthening of Indira Gandhi Canal and Yamuna water agreement will bring sufficient quantity of water," he said.

Doctor arrested for kidnapping, harassing dental college student

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

A doctor has been arrested for allegedly kidnapping, harassing and beating up a dental college student at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (PGIMS) Rohtak. The police have so far ruled out sexual harassment and rape in the case.

According to the police, the woman was kidnapped on August 16 by the accused, who took her to Ambala and later Chandigarh and allegedly harassed and beat her up. He teaches Anatomy at the dental college and the duo know each other for the past five-six months, the police said.

He was produced before the court on Monday and sent to two-day police custody. Deputy Superintendent of Police Virender Singh said the complaint was received on Sunday. Following that, a case was registered against the accused, and the victim was counselled in the presence of her parents and lawyer, the officer said.

The police have so far ruled out sexual harassment and rape in the case. The accused was allegedly pressurising the woman to get into a relationship with him

The police said a high-level probe was being carried out in the matter. The accused was allegedly pressurising the woman for the past couple of months to have a relationship with him, and had kidnapped her after she refused. He had also threatened to make sure that she failed in Anatomy. The accused allegedly drove the woman to an unidentified location and tortured her before dropping her back on campus after 12 hours.

BJP has no role in JMM crisis: Marandi

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Jharkhand Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Babulal Marandi on Monday said that there have been no talks yet with former Chief Minister Champai Soren over joining the BJP. Mr. Marandi said the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader is a seasoned politician and he would decide his own path. He also slammed Chief Minister Hemant Soren over the issue.

Mr. Marandi's statement comes amid speculation about a potential switch by Mr. Champai to the BJP following his visit to Delhi on Sunday. In a social media post, Mr. Champai said he was shattered by the manner in which he was asked to resign to make way for Mr. Hemant. Mr. Marandi also clarified that the BJP had no role in the latest episode. "We do not have any desire to break his [Mr. Hemant's] party... His own people are disappointed with him," Mr. Marandi told reporters in Ranchi.

As Urdu Bazaar fades away, bookshop owners mourn its death

Anvee Bhutani
NEW DELHI

Nestled in Chandni Chowk, one of the city's oldest and busiest markets, the Urdu Bazaar seems like a fading relic of Delhi's rich cultural heritage. Dedicated to Urdu literature, the bazaar, which once bustled with scholars, poets, and book lovers, is now in decline, mirroring the waning interest in the language itself.

With food stalls replacing the bookstores here, the customers who now throng the market come looking for a quick bite rather than Urdu books. As a bookshop owner quips, "The place has turned into a *khaana* (food) bazaar."

Sitting behind a wooden counter in the dimly lit Maktaba Jamia bookshop, Ali Khusro Zaidi recalled the golden days of Urdu Bazaar. "This place used to be the pride of Urdu literature. Scholars, poets, and students would seek out our shops. Books would fly off the shelves. But now, it feels like we are fighting a losing battle."

The dusty bookshelves in the bazaar, which once featured a variety of books on poetry, prose, and philosophy, among others, are now stocked mostly with Islamic texts and books on learning Urdu.

Mr. Zaidi said, "We really only sell religious books or those on exams because only such volumes make a profit. There aren't many takers for Urdu literature books."

A bookstore at Delhi's Urdu Bazaar. ANVEE BHUTANI

He showed a collection of rare manuscripts, their leather-bound covers worn out with time. "These are from before the Partition," he said. "But the younger generation is moving away from the language. They prefer to communicate only in English or Hindi." In fact, Maktaba Jamia sells Hindi versions of many texts that were originally written in Urdu to appeal to newer clientele.

"Urdu is not just a language. It's our heritage," Mr. Zaidi said. "As long as there are people who value our culture, there is hope for the language."

Absence of curricula

Arjumand Ara, who is a Professor of Urdu at Delhi University, said, "Urdu has come to be seen as a Muslim language amid the rise in communal politics. Earlier, there used to be Urdu books in every household regardless of one's religion. Now, that sentiment has vanished." Hometaught in the language herself, Ms. Ara believes the lack of children's literature in Urdu and the absence of Urdu curricula in schools has spelled crisis for the language.

'We try to adapt'

A few doors from Mr. Zaidi's shop, Moinuddin, who runs an Urdu bookshop named Kutub Khana Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu, echoed similar sentiments. "We try to adapt," he said, arranging a display of Urdu and Persian calligraphy prints. "But it's not easy. The market is not what it used to be. We rely on a handful of loyal customers and occasional tourists. Without sustained support, I fear we might have to close down soon."

Akali Dal, ruling AAP blame each other for 'ruining' Punjab

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Monday engaged in a sharp exchange of words, blaming each other for 'ruining' Punjab.

Taking a dig at AAP, SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal said the State government has failed to perform on all fronts and Punjab has gone down in all spheres. He also blamed the previous Congress government for ruining the State. Mr. Badal said the Congress and AAP made tall promises but failed to waive the debts of farmers or free the State of drug menace.

The SAD chief said several instances of sacrilege had occurred during AAP's tenure in Punjab but the government had failed to nab the culprits.

Hitting back, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann alleged that SAD never raised Punjab-specific issues in Parliament ever despite seeking votes in the name of Panth (Sikh community). He was presiding over a function to mark the 'Rakhar Puniya' festival at Baba Bakala.

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'Hema panel report warrants special probe'

Women face sexual harassment even from well-known people in Malayalam cinema industry and some witnesses had 'produced video and audio clips' to prove sexual favours are sought, the report says; legal experts say the Kerala government should investigate the allegations

K.S. Sudhi
KOCHI

The publication of the K. Hema Committee report on issues faced by women in Malayalam cinema warrants a special investigation into allegations of sexual harassment, according to legal experts.

The panel, which had stated that it had "avoided recording the names and other details of the witnesses in their statements", concluded that it was "satisfied that women face sexual harassment even from very well-known people in the industry who were named before the committee. Some witnesses even "produced video and audio clips, screenshots of WhatsApp messages, etc., to establish the fact that there is demand for sex for the entry into cinema and certain people in the industry persuade them to make themselves available for sex".

Fight for justice: Women in Cinema Collective members with Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan. FILE PHOTO

Though no FIR could be registered solely based on the committee report, according to a former judge of the Kerala High Court, the government should either accept or reject the report. In the event of it accepting the report, an investigation agency shall register an FIR and investigate the criminal acts, he said. The State government had earlier ordered a CBI probe on the findings of the Justice Sivarajan Commission after accepting the report, he said.

'Constitute SIT'

Asaf Ali, former Director-General of Prosecution, said it was the bounden duty of the State government and the State Police chief to constitute a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the allegations of sexual harassment, which is a cognisable offence. The report itself has confirmed that there have been instances of sexual harassment, which is a serious criminal offence.

Senior lawyer B.G. Harindranath, also a former State Law Secretary, noted that the government shall form an opinion on the report and investigate the criminal acts, including the alleged instance of sexual exploitation of women. The Supreme Court had earlier clarified that no FIR could be registered based on a commission's report. However, the government shall order a criminal investigation into the depositions made before the panel and also initiate steps for bringing in legislation.

The police could register an FIR, pointed out a judicial officer, and probe the alleged outraging of modesty of women. However, the successful prosecution would depend upon the available evidence and the resolve of the women to stand by their depositions, he said.

HC dismisses actor's plea

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

With the Kerala High Court dismissing an appeal by actor Ranjini and a single judge refusing to order a stay, decks were cleared by Monday afternoon for releasing the report on working conditions of women in Malayalam cinema.

Dushyant again dares ex-CM Hooda to field a candidate for Rajya Sabha poll

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

Former Deputy Chief Minister and Jannayak Janta Party (JJP) leader Dushyant Chautala on Monday again took a swipe at former Haryana Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda ahead of the upcoming Assembly poll, accusing the latter of being "hand in glove" with the BJP.

Mr. Chautala dared the former CM to field a candidate from his party in the upcoming election for the lone Rajya Sabha seat in Haryana, which fell vacant after Congress leader Deepender Hooda was elected to Lok Sabha. The polling and counting of votes is scheduled for September 3.

However, Mr. Hooda has maintained on more than one occasion that the Congress, with 29 MLAs, does not have the requisite number of legislators to win the election in the 90-member House.

In a post in Hindi on X, the JJP leader said, "August 21 is the last date for nomination for the Rajya Sabha by-election. Four to five of our MLAs have joined Congress. Now, the Congress candidate is closer to winning the poll. If Bhupinder Singh Hooda is not hand in glove with the BJP, he must field a candidate for Rajya Sabha. We have already promised to vote against the BJP."

The repeated attacks by the former Deputy CM are being seen as attempts to dent the Congress's votes. FILE PHOTO

He accused Mr. Hooda, who is facing an investigation into land deals during his tenure as CM, of acting in the BJP's interest for fear of being sent to jail.

In a similar post on July 4, Mr. Chautala had accused the former chief minister of making contradictory statements over the Rajya Sabha election.

He had said that Mr. Hooda had, on the one hand, claimed that the BJP government in Haryana did not have the majority and, on the other, refused to field a candidate for the poll, claiming that the Opposition did not have the required strength.

With both the Congress and the JJP drawing influence from the same community – Jats – the repeated attacks by the former Deputy CM are being seen as an attempt to make a dent into the Congress's votes by targeting Mr. Hooda, a prominent Jat leader, ahead of the State election.

Singhvi files nomination for RS seat from Telangana

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi filed his nomination papers for the Rajya Sabha seat from Telangana on Monday. Accompanied by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, Deputy CM Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, and AICC in-charge for the State Deepa Das Munshi, the Congress nominee submitted his papers to Returning Officer Upender Reddy.

Abhishek Manu Singhvi

On Sunday, a Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting was held in Hyderabad where Mr. Singhvi was introduced to the MLAs. The election looks a mere formality as the main Opposition party Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) has not fielded its candidate. The BJP too with its meagre strength is unlikely to enter the fray. Mr. Singhvi will likely be declared elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from the State.

The vacancy has been caused following the resignation of BRS member K. Keshava Rao consequent on his joining the Congress party recently.

Man arrested in case of rape of Bengaluru student

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bengaluru Police on Monday said they had arrested a man suspected of raping a 21-year-old final-year degree student within 10 hours of the crime.

Tracking down the suspect using a combination of artificial and human intelligence, the police arrested the 24-year-old Mukeshwaran from his house at S.R. Nagar in Adugodi.

The alleged incident occurred between 1 a.m. and 1.30 a.m. when the 21-year-old woman was heading back to her flat at Chandapura, near Anekal, after dinner in Koramangala. According to the police, Mukeshwaran, who was drunk and returning home in the early hours of Sunday, found the girl on the roadside in distress and offered to drop her, and she agreed. Taking advantage of the situation, he allegedly took her to an isolated place near a truck bay on Hosur Road and assaulted her. The accused overpowered the victim, who was exhausted and shocked, they said.

The police obtained some vital information which was corroborated with technical details. Five teams comprising 50 police personnel were formed, who scoured footage of over 100 CCTV cameras.

The man has been taken into custody for further investigation.

Slow progress

Treading water: A 45-minute downpour threw traffic out of gear near the Hebbal flyover in Bengaluru on Monday. JAHNAVI T.R.

Gramin Bank to credit deducted EMIs to accounts of landslide survivors

The Hindu Bureau
KALPETTA

Members of various youth groups took out separate marches and laid siege to the regional office of the Kerala Gramin Bank in Wayanad on Monday, protesting against the decision of the bank's Chooralmala branch authorities to deduct monthly instalments of loans from the accounts of landslide survivors.

The protest was staged by members of the Youth Congress, Muslim Youth League, All India Youth Federation, and Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI). The demonstrators raised slogans condemning the bank's move as 'insensitive'. They demanded that the bank write off the survivors' loans, stop deductions from their accounts, credit the deducted amounts back and express regret at their action.

The protesters holding discussions with officials of the Kerala Gramin Bank in Wayanad on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Later, bank officials held discussions with the protesters, expressed regret, and promised to credit the deducted amounts to the survivors' accounts within three days. They added that recommendations would be made to the State Level Bankers' Committee to waive the loans of landslide survivors and victims.

Banks may decide on full loan waiver for all victims

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The State Level Bankers Committee (SLBC) on Monday urged banks to take up with their respective boards a proposal to fully write off loans taken by the victims and survivors of Wayanad landslides.

Banks will also declare moratoriums ranging from six months to one year on loan repayment, and urgently halt recovery proceeding in the regions.

Sri Lankan Minister meets KTR in Hyderabad

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Sri Lankan Minister of State for Trade and Environment Sathasivam Viyalanderan has made a courtesy call on the working president of the BRS, K.T. Rama Rao, at the latter's residence in Hyderabad on Monday.

During their brief meeting, Mr. Viyalanderan told Mr. Rama Rao that he had mentioned in Sri Lankan Parliament how Telangana had made progress in just 10 years. BRS leader Vaddiraju Ravi Chandra (MP), senior leader Dasoju Sravan, former MLA J. Surender and others were present.

Schoolgirl sexually assaulted at fake NCC camp in Tamil Nadu, accused 'trainer' arrested

P. V. Srividya
KRISHNAGIRI

A fake NCC camp, failure in due diligence by school, and hush medals have come to script the sexual assault on a 12-year-old girl and its aftermath in a private school in Bargur in Tamil Nadu's Krishnagiri district. The girl was sexually assaulted by a man, who claimed to be an NCC trainer at the camp.

On Monday, as details of the case emerged, the NCC clarified that those involved in the alleged incident have no connection with NCC. "Also, no NCC camp was conducted in Krishnagiri district," it said.

The All Women's Police Station in Bargur had on Saturday booked a case under POCSO Act after the girl was admitted to Krishnagiri Government Medical College Hospital with pelvic pain on August 16. The survivor was among the 17 students, who had participated in a purported NCC camp from August 5 to August 9 in the private school of which they were students.

Survivor's account

According to the FIR that detailed the survivor's account, the girl and the others were sleeping in the auditorium in the intervening night of August 8 and 9.

The girl was woken up by a senior around 3 a.m. and was told that she was being summoned by the 'NCC coach' - the main accused, Siva, alias Sivakumar. The girl was accosted and raped by the accused.

The victim was among the 17 students, who had participated in a purported NCC camp

She narrated the incident to her colleagues and seniors, who took it up with the school principal. The girl had also told a senior, whose mother is a teacher in the same school, about the incident. However, the principal allegedly asked the students to hush up the matter. On the concluding day of the 'camp', the survivor alone was given three additional medals, while the others were given only shields by the principal. On developing pelvic pain on August 16, the girl narrated the incident to her mother, who then took her to the Government Medical College Hospital.

On Monday, Siva was arrested by the police. The man reportedly suffered a fracture in the leg while trying to escape capture, according to the police.

On Sunday, the police arrested the school correspondent, principal, two teachers and four other staff. Speaking to *The Hindu*, Collector K.M. Sarayu said that there were three big violations. "First, the school had no permission to organise a camp. Neither did it check the bona fides of the person, nor did it have any authorisation letter from the NCC. Second, it did not have any teacher present with the students at the camp. Third, even after knowing about the crime, they hushed it up," the Collector said.

"For now, we are focusing on the girls and giving them counselling," she said. The school has all other valid permits till 2026. According to Ms. Sarayu, Siva had conducted similar 'NCC coaching' in other schools, and he had shown photographs of such coaching while approaching schools.

Revanth extends support to orphaned girl in Nirmal district

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has extended support to 11-year-old Durga, who resorted to begging to fund her mother's funeral, of Nirmal district.

Durga was orphaned after her 36-year-old single mother Mera Gangamani ended her life on Saturday.

Upon learning of the situation, the Chief Minister directed Nirmal Collector Abhilasha Abhinav to provide comprehensive support to Durga, including education and healthcare. The District Collector confirmed that Durga would be enrolled in a Gurukul school and provided with necessary medical care and other services.

A. Revanth Reddy

Additionally, Minister for Women and Child Welfare Dansari Anasuya (Seethakka), who is Congress's Adilabad district in-charge, contributed ₹50,000 to support Durga.

To abide or not

Corruption charges need credible probe, not actions tainted by politics

The decision of Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot to grant approval to a private complainant to open an investigation and prosecute Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on corruption charges raises familiar politico-legal questions. Foremost is the constitutional question whether a Governor can use his role as a sanctioning authority for prosecution against a serving Chief Minister in a manner contrary to the advice of the Council of Ministers. And in political terms, one may ask whether the Governor's action against a Chief Minister is desirable in a time of increasing conflict between the two offices. In his writ petition challenging the order, Mr. Siddaramaiah has sought to highlight that the Governor was bound to abide by the advice given to him – to refuse sanction in this case. Some judicial precedents say a Governor may arrive at an independent conclusion if the Council demonstrates bias or fails to consider relevant material. However, political realities would suggest the possibility of Governors being selective in pursuing this course of action. Amidst the Opposition's demands for Mr. Siddaramaiah's resignation, the Karnataka High Court has asked the trial court to defer any precipitate action until it hears his challenge to the Governor's order. The allotment of sites by the Mysore Urban Development Authority to landowners who had lost their land in the course of acquisition may or may not involve corruption, and allegations in this regard will require a thorough investigation.

The State government believes that the judicial inquiry it has ordered is enough for now, a step the Governor thinks is inadequate. The Chief Minister's wife was given 38,284 square feet of land in lieu of an extent of 1,48,104 sq.ft she had lost. However, whether it amounts to any illegality would depend on whether Mr. Siddaramaiah had anything to do with the decision. He vehemently denies being involved in any way and has repeatedly said that the sites were sanctioned when the BJP was in power in the State. Private complainants have obtained sanction for prosecution of public servants in the past, but whether it can be given to them after the Prevention of Corruption Act was amended in 2018 has to be considered. Section 17A was introduced then as a filtering mechanism to deter vexatious complaints. It bars police officers from opening a probe without approval from the appropriate authority, making it reasonable to suggest that private parties cannot be given such approval. Public discourse on corruption in the last few decades has hovered between a hankering for punishing political leaders involved in it and deep suspicion over the motives of regimes and agencies that seek to prosecute them. Any criminal process will have to be credible and independent, but contemporary events, politically tainted as they are, contain little evidence of independence or credibility.

Good, not ugly

Film awards regained some prestige by sticking with good cinema

The National Film Awards appeared to be facing a credibility crisis in recent years following some questionable choices and glaring omissions. For instance, last year, the award for 'Best Feature Film on National Integration', for *The Kashmir Files*, encapsulated the general political thrust of the awards, where, during the screenings, cinema theatres became platforms for communal sloganeering. Thus, the 70th National Film Awards, declared earlier this week, came as a sort of surprise, somewhat redeeming the prestige associated with the highest cinematic honours. Malayalam film *Aattam*, directed by debutant Anand Ekarshi, became an interesting choice for the Best Feature Film, Best Screenplay and Best Editing winner, especially in the era of the #MeToo movement. Without ever slipping into preachiness, the film-maker uses the subtle chamber drama to analyse male behaviour after a woman raises an allegation of sexual abuse within a theatre group. The award also comes at a time when protests and debates are roiling the country after the rape and murder of a doctor in Kolkata. Kannada film *Kantara*, which won Best Popular Film, and also fetched its director Rishab Shetty the Best Actor Award, taps into folk traditions to raise contemporary environmental concerns. *Bhoota Kola*, a tribal ritualistic performance from coastal Karnataka, is the centrepiece, with Shetty's frenzied interpretation in the climax going a long way towards the film's success as well as getting him the national award.

One commonality between these films is the lack of a formula, especially the kind dictated by corporate studios. *Aattam*, in fact, originated from a theatre group, giving its working-class members a chance at cinema; they play themselves in the film. Nithya Menen's Best Actress award is also an unconventional choice – as the effervescent Shobhana in *Thiruchitrambalam*, hers is not a typical award-bait role. Yet, within the film's scheme, it was a stunning performance which raised its overall effect by several notches. The awards reinforce the recent trend of South Indian cinema surpassing Bollywood, which, despite its humongous budgets, has been finding it hard to match the consistent quality of content from regional industries. It is also heartening that the juries and the larger public have started discovering more meaningful content from the southern industries. The National Awards in the 70th edition seem to have fulfilled, to an extent, the purpose for which they were instituted: to celebrate good cinema.

The 'livery of India's freedom' is under threat

Sonia Gandhi

Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), is Chairperson of the Congress Parliamentary Party

The Prime Minister's renewed call for a '*Har Ghar Tiranga*' campaign in the week leading up to our Independence Day (August 9-15) offers us an opportunity to collectively introspect on our national flag and its significance to the country. His moral duplicity in paying deference to the national flag while pledging allegiance to an organisation that has remained, indifferent to it, is one matter. The rampant adoption of machine-manufactured polyester flags, with raw materials often imported from China and elsewhere, is another.

An attack on the khadi industry

The Flag Code of India has historically required the national flag to be made of "hand spun and hand-woven wool/cotton/silk khadi bunting". Khadi, that coarse but versatile and sturdy fabric which the Mahatma himself spun and wove in his leadership of the national movement, is imbued with a special meaning in our historical and cultural memory. Khadi is at once a symbol of our storied past, and an icon of Indian modernity and economic vitality.

When India was under foreign rule, khadi was an instrument to locate sovereignty and self-sufficiency in the individual. In sovereign India, khadi has been a commitment to the ongoing journey of national integration and revitalisation. It was in deference to this eternal symbolism that the tricolour once bore the Mahatma's *charkha* as its centrepiece, and that the modern-day Indian flag used to insist on khadi as its sole fabric.

In 2022, on the auspicious occasion of the 75th anniversary of our Independence, the Government amended the code ("*vide* its order dated 30.12.2021") to include "machine made...polyester ... bunting" and simultaneously exempted polyester flags from the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Thereby, it put them on the same tax footing as khadi flags. At a time when it would have been appropriate to bind ourselves afresh to the service of our country's national symbols, the Government chose to set them aside and pursue mass-market, machine-made polyester fabric. The Karnataka Khadi Gramodyoga Samyukta Sangha (KKGSS) in Karnataka's Hubballi district, the country's sole national flag manufacturing unit accredited by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), had to resort to an indefinite strike to call attention to the state-sponsored murder of India's khadi industry.

> The Government has failed to build a global audience for Indian handlooms; what is worse, even the Mahatma's khadi is being denied its identity

This decision came at a time when India, far from its glory days as a global hub for polyester manufacturing, became a net importer of polyester yarn in 2023 and 2024. We thus have the real misfortune of importing polyester yarn, primarily from China, and then weaving this imported yarn to produce cloth for our national flag. This shameful inversion of our national pride occurred at the time of grave encroachments by the Chinese armed forces on our borders, and at the peak of the Prime Minister's '*Aatmanirbhar Bharat*' spectacle. The hollowness and inadequacy of the Government's vision has had direct and calamitous consequences for the Mahatma's foremost legatees – our khadi spinners and weavers.

The GST burden

The case of our national flag is not an exception. Rather, it is a vividly poignant illustration of this Government's general disinterest in cultivating India's storied handloom and handicraft traditions – khadi or otherwise. Since 2014, the Government has led a consistent effort to support big corporate interests and oligopolisation, and structurally dismantle our nation's micro, small and medium enterprises sector, home to our handloom industries. Demonetisation, a punitive GST, and the unplanned COVID-19 lockdown saw thousands of our handloom workers quit their professions. Our handloom traditions, a material testament to our shared history as a society and polity, have been unravelled by the high-handedness of this uncaring government.

GST continues to be a burden on our handloom workers, with tax having been introduced on the final product as well as on raw materials (yarns, dyes, and chemicals). Our workers' consistent demands to exempt handlooms from GST have fallen on unsympathetic ears, even as surging costs, particularly of electricity and cotton fibre, squeeze them out.

The recently launched *Vishwakarma Yojana*, itself deficient on multiple accounts, fully excludes handloom spinners and weavers from its ambit. Meanwhile, in a perversion of the Mahatma's vision, the Government has taken no effort to empower our khadi spinners and weavers to form their own cooperatives outside of existing khadi Institutions to market and sell their products.

Khadi procurement has fallen

Government procurement of khadi has fallen as departments choose to ignore or overrule mandates that require them to do so. More worryingly, the Government has failed to build a global audience for Indian handlooms. At a time when consumers across the world are beginning to prize sustainable sourcing and fair trade, the fabric on which Gandhiji's *satyagraha* was founded should have been globally treasured. Instead, even in his very own nation, *Bapu*'s khadi is being denied its identity. The Government has failed to regulate the market, and khadi spun from semi-mechanised *charkhas* is being sold indiscriminately, and under the same tag as traditional hand-spun khadi. This is to the detriment of our khadi spinners, whose wages do not exceed ₹200-₹250 a day despite their back-breaking manual labour.

The path forward is long, and it requires a reimagination of the place that India's handloom traditions hold in our society and economy. But the first step is also unequivocally clear: it must begin with a restoration of khadi as the only fabric with the distinction of bearing our national flag. The fabric which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru so evocatively described as "the livery of India's freedom", must find its rightful place as an embodiment of our national pride. We owe it to our history, and to our workers.

Protecting Indian capital in Bangladesh

Prabhash Ranjan

Professor at the Jindal Global Law School, O.P. Jindal Global University

The dramatic developments in Bangladesh that led to the resignation and fleeing of its former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have created a political vacuum and, thus, uncertainty in India's eastern neighbour. Besides the political and diplomatic fallout of this crisis for India, another significant aspect is how this will impact Indian companies operating in Bangladesh. Indian companies have invested in Bangladesh in sectors such as edible oil, power, infrastructure, fast-moving consumer goods, automobiles, and pharmaceuticals. Despite political opposition, the Sheikh Hasina government rolled out the red carpet for Indian investors and adopted several measures to invite them, such as starting designated special economic zones. Unhappy with India's alleged support of Ms. Hasina's regime, her opponents launched an "India out" boycott movement targeting Indian goods. Since Ms. Hasina is no longer in power, the interim or the new government may adopt a hostile attitude towards Indian companies. It might change the existing laws or adopt new regulatory measures that may adversely impact Indian capital. What options do Indian businesses have in such an eventuality?

Legal protection for Indian investors

As Jeswald Salacuse argues, three basic legal frameworks broadly apply to foreign investment. First, the domestic laws of the country where the investment is made. Second, contracts may have been signed between the foreign investor and the government of the host state, or among foreign investors and companies of the host state. Third, the international law contained in applicable treaties, customs, and general legal principles that have attained the status of international law. The Indian companies that have invested in Bangladesh can use the first two legal frameworks to protect their investments from regulatory risks. For instance, Indian companies can rely on Bangladesh's Foreign Private Investment (Promotion and Protection) Act. However, there are limitations to relying on the domestic law of the host state because it can be changed unilaterally by the state to the investor's detriment at any time. Likewise, contracts may be of limited value when it comes to challenging the sovereign actions of the state that adversely affect foreign investment. Therefore, the third legal framework, international law, assumes importance.

> The issue acquires significance with the Joint Interpretative Notes under the India-Bangladesh bilateral investment treaty, diluting investment protection features

The India-Bangladesh BIT

International law cannot be changed unilaterally and can be used to hold states accountable for their sovereign actions. When protecting foreign investment, the most crucial instrument in international law is a bilateral investment treaty (BIT). A BIT is a treaty between two countries aimed at protecting investments made by investors of both countries. BITs protect investments by imposing conditions on the regulatory behaviour of the host state, thus preventing undue interference with the foreign investor's rights. These conditions include restricting host states from unlawfully expropriating investments, imposing obligations on host states to accord fair and equitable treatment (FET) to foreign investment and not to discriminate against foreign investment. BITs also empower foreign investors to directly sue the host state before an international tribunal if the investor believes that the host state has breached its treaty obligations. This is known as investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS). According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), by the end of 2023, the total number of known ISDS claims that have been brought stands at 1,332.

In case of adverse sovereign regulation, Indian companies can rely on the India-Bangladesh BIT signed in 2009. While India has unilaterally terminated almost all its BITs, the one with Bangladesh continues to exist. The India-Bangladesh BIT contains broad substantive investment protection features, such as an unqualified FET provision that can come in handy for Indian companies challenging Bangladeshi sovereign regulatory conduct.

However, the twist in the tale is the Joint Interpretative Notes (JIN) that India and Bangladesh adopted in 2017 to clarify the meaning of various terms in the 2009 treaty. This JIN, now a part of the BIT, was adopted at India's insistence. As part of overhauling its investment treaty practice to safeguard its regulatory power, India proposed such JINs to several countries. This was done without considering whether India has an offensive or defensive interest vis-à-vis a specific country. This JIN has diluted the investment protection features of the BIT. For instance, taxation measures are excluded from the ambit of the BIT.

Likewise, the FET provision is linked to customary international law that would require a higher threshold to show a violation of the treaty. The JIN has been designed from the perspective of the capital-importing country to safeguard its regulatory conduct from ISDS claims. Between India and Bangladesh, New Delhi is the capital exporter, and Dhaka is the importer. Ironically, the JIN that India developed might work to the advantage of Bangladesh, and not the Indian capital operating there.

The larger question

While Bangladesh provides the immediate reference point, the issue is not restricted to India's eastern neighbour. India's outbound investments have grown manifold. According to UNCTAD, outward foreign direct investment from India in 2023 stood at about $13.5 billion. India is among the top 20 capital-exporting countries. Thus, the issue of legal protection for Indian companies abroad assumes salience. India should, therefore, evolve its investment treaty practice, keeping both its host and home status in mind and not just the former.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unkindest cut of all

Can there be anything more unpardonable and inhumane than the decision of the Kerala Gramin Bank (Inside pages, August 19) to deduct the monthly instalment of loans from the accounts of the Chooralmala landslide survivors in Wayanad? When lakhs of rupees of loans taken by crony capitalists and corporates are written off as non performing assets, it is a tragedy that the Kerala bank was so stone-hearted. It may have tried to make amends now, but the initial move was distressing.

Tharcius S. Fernando,
Chennai

Court and Kolkata case

That the Supreme Court of India has taken "*suo motu* cognisance of the rape and the murder of a doctor" at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital (Page 1, August 19), indicates the grave and horrifying extent of the crime. Medical aspirants first first slog to crack the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate). The successful ones then work strenuously for hours on end. Then, duty doctors do not have any designated restrooms in a hospital. One hopes that the Court will issue instructions to all health-care institutes to ensure a safe and conducive working environment for all medical staff, particularly women.

A. Jainulabdeen,
Chennai

Political developments

The report, "Champai Soren likely to quit JMM, join BJP" (August 19) is not surprising. The reason, that he was 'humiliated', does not hold water. When he took over the mantle in February, upon the arrest of Hemant Soren, the message was clear — that it was only a temporary arrangement. This shows the extent to which our political leaders can stoop in their quest for power. The ruling party at the Centre, as usual, seems ready to welcome the 'defector'.

S.V. Venkatakrishnan,
San Jose, California, U.S.

Graft and probity

As a nonagenarian reader, I find it distressing that the integrity of State Ministers is on the decline. Not a day passes without some Minister or the other being enmeshed in glaring corruption and neck deep in clandestine dealings. The developments in Karnataka come as no surprise. One only wishes that the truth is unearthed.

Mani Nataraajan,
Chennai

Tall leader

Late DMK patriarch and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi did much for the cause of social justice and the uplift of the oppressed sections of society. His approach to infrastructure development in Chennai was visionary. And, his service to the cause of Tamil is outstanding. The release of a commemorative ₹100 coin is a proud moment.

V.S. Kannan,
Chennai

A shrewd politician, an able administrator, a brilliant orator, and a man of letters 'Kalaignar' strode the political arena like a colossus. His hallmark was his ability to maintain a close rapport with the party cadre and masses. Adore or admonish him, his charisma was one that none could ignore.

B. Suresh Kumar,
Coimbatore

Corrections & Clarifications

The fifth paragraph of a report, "Malaysian PM arriving today; trade, people-to-people links on agenda" (August 19, 2024) said: "In 2021, Mr. Modi raised Mr. Naik's extradition with the then Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohammad..." The year should have been 2019.

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Ground reports

The surfeit of migrant workers in almost all spheres of society in the southern States has been felt for a long time. They are prepared to work tirelessly without a murmur when local labourers are inflexible and demanding. More importantly, they are prepared to do any type of work at all times. Simply put, migrant workers are all over the place and have come to stay. The day is not far off when they could outnumber the local workforce (Editorial and Opinion pages, August 19).

V. Lakshmanan,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

The tyranny of inequality

Nidhi Kaicker
Assistant Professor of Public Policy, B.R. Ambedkar University, Delhi

Veena S. Kulkarni
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Raghav Gaiha
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Honore De Balzac, a French novelist, wrote, "Behind every great fortune there is a crime." This is at best a half-truth as it overlooks that income/wealth accumulation also breeds serious offences/crimes. As we argue, based on an analysis of the Gallup World Poll (GWP) Survey for India (2019-23) and the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)'s Consumer Pyramid Household Survey, income inequality breeds corruption in the intersection of government and business – for example, in the approval of contracts by public officials of mega infrastructure projects (highways, bridges, ports) to be built by rich and influential private investors. Once rich, the greed for more wealth negates moral qualms in pursuing corrupt strategies. Indeed, wealth accumulation becomes easier too – for example, through share market manipulation, political lobbying to secure contracts for big infrastructure projects, and investments in off-shore funds.

In a recent study, Thomas Piketty et al have drawn attention to an astounding escalation of wealth and income inequality in India over the last few decades, especially between 2014 and 2022. The top 1% control more than 40% of total wealth in India today, up from 12.5% in 1980. The top 1% of income earners made 22.6% of the total pre-tax income, up from 7.3% in 1980. India is now among the most unequal countries in the world, yet few studies in recent times analyse the perverse effects of rising economic inequality.

The methodology

Our objective is to explore the relationship between income inequality and corruption. Specifically, we investigate whether higher income inequality fed corruption between government and business in the 2014-22 period. Since the two recent National Sample Survey (NSS) rounds of household expenditure for 2018 and 2022 are not directly comparable to the NSS round for 2012, GWP and CMIE data are the fallback options. As the GWP has a small sample, its representativeness of a country as large and diverse as India cannot be taken at face value. But it has several merits, including data on variables such as corruption which are not easy to measure.

We have used the Piketty measure of income inequality, which is defined as the ratio of the share of top 1% to that of the bottom 50% of the population in total income. Although inequality in consumption expenditure distribution is usually lower than that of income distribution, we have preferred the former because of its greater reliability. Corruption is generally defined as the use of public office for private gain and thus leaves out corruption within businesses (for example, insider trading). So, a broader and more comprehensive definition is the use of public resources by executives in both public and private sectors for private gain without, of course, overlooking the role of politicians. The GWP asks the question whether corruption is widespread and if the answer is yes, it is taken as 1. By adding these up, we obtain a measure of corruption. Thus the measure of corruption is based on individual perception. There are three manifestations of corruption: in government, businesses, and the intersection between government and businesses. We focus on the relationship between inequality and corruption in this intersection – for example, whether award of contracts by the government to build ports is influenced by bribes offered by rich investors.

Corruption has risen following globalisation as natural resources have become more valuable, and regulatory agencies licensing their allocation are more subservient to powerful business interests and corrupt public officials. Besides, success of the 'Make in India' scheme has been elusive so far as none of the macro-economic indicators such as manufacturing, FDI, exports, and employment have registered an increase. Worse, as argued in a Carnegie India essay (2023), hike in import tariffs and tax cuts have been distortionary.

Findings

This means that there is a possibility of greater rent-seeking by rich and influential investors. Rent-seeking is defined as the use of resources to capture an unwarranted monetary gain from external elements, such as government/public agencies, be it directly or indirectly, without giving anything in return to them or society. An economic rent causes dissipation of resources that is potentially more serious than the waste associated with the rent itself. Groups struggling for the rents invest time and money in the transfer of wealth rather than in the creation of wealth. Since corruption in the intersection of government and business remained high between 2014 and 2022, it is not unlikely that rent-seeking persisted at a high level too. Without going into the merit of the allegations by Hindenburg of the involvement of the SEBI chair and her husband in the Adani Group off-shore fund, and the slowing of the SEBI probe, it may well be symptomatic of a larger and growing malaise.

We find that income inequality was fuelled largely by speculative investments (such as mutual funds), while savings in FDs and post offices curbed it. Trust in the judiciary was driven by the conviction rate and moderated by its square, implying that trust rose but at a diminishing rate. We find that higher income inequality causes widespread corruption, while greater confidence in the judiciary curbs it.

While the Budget missed the opportunity to tax the rich at a higher rate, greater transparency and accountability of regulatory agencies remains a chimera. Both a more competitive political system and private businesses are daunting challenges but their potential for a more prosperous India is hard to dispute.

> Higher income inequality causes more widespread corruption, while greater confidence in the judiciary curbs it

A testing time for Revanth Reddy

He will have to handle Cabinet expansion and the BRS's relentless criticisms

STATE OF PLAY

R. Ravikanth Reddy
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After a successful 12-day business tour of the U.S. and South Korea, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has returned to Telangana to face numerous challenges.

Despite the Telangana delegation attracting impressive investments and assurances from top Information Technology, manufacturing, and service sector companies in the two countries, it has not returned to applause. This is because the Opposition party, the Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS), has launched a negative campaign against the government on social media, which the Chief Minister's PR team has failed to counter effectively. Senior ministers did not respond to the BRS's criticism, particularly the political attack on the Chief Minister's brother, Jagadeeshwar Reddy, whose company signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the State government for investments. The BRS also claims that K.T. Rama Rao, who was the IT and Industries Minister during the previous regime, secured investments and got assurances from global tech leaders more successfully than the present Congress government. Citing facts and figures, the Congress government has denied this.

Apart from the external challenges, the Chief Minister also faces internal ones. Several leaders are eagerly waiting to be chosen for the Cabinet, which the government is expanding. A few members from the dominant Backward Classes are putting pressure on the government to give them posts. There are six vacancies; the present Cabinet consists of 12 Ministers, including Mr. Revanth Reddy.

Accommodating all these requests is impossible. For instance, Munugode MLA Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy from Nalgonda, who quit the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and rejoined the Congress in 2023, claims that he returned only because he was promised a ministerial position if the Congress was voted to power.

When Mr. Rajagopal Reddy and Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, who is now Revenue Minister, both changed their loyalties before the election, the people of Telangana became convinced that the Congress was coming to power. This galvanised the party cadre and also stopped leaders from migrating to the BJP, which was confident of defeating the BRS.

Mr. Rajagopal Reddy's inclusion in the Cabinet will be tough as his elder brother, Komatireddy Venkata Reddy, already holds a key portfolio. Known for his frequent outbursts, Mr. Rajagopal Reddy could prove to be a thorn in the party's smooth functioning.

Another Minister, N. Uttam Kumar Reddy, is also from Nalgonda district and belongs to the Reddy community. This will further complicate the regional and caste balance if Mr. Rajagopal Reddy is taken in.

Mr. Revanth Reddy will also have to choose between two MLAs who are brothers – Gaddam Vivek (Chennur) and Gaddam Vinod (Bellampally) – from the Mala community of the Scheduled Castes (SCs). The Madigas, who are numerically stronger SCs, are seeking a bigger share in the pie. Moreover, Mr. Vivek's son, Vamsi Krishna, is already an MP from Peddapally.

Caste equations and familial politics aside, the Chief Minister will also have to be mindful of ensuring a regional balance. Greater Hyderabad city consists of three districts and 24 MLAs; it does not have any representation in the Cabinet. There is no Congress MLA within the city limits. Mr. Revanth Reddy may prefer to choose one of the MLAs who defected to the Congress from the BRS in recent times, but the party high command may not be comfortable with this.

Some Congress leaders also believe that defections to the party are not taking place on the expected scale. So far, only 12 MLAs from the BRS have moved to the Congress. Luring another 15 MLAs will be an uphill task for the party. The BRS has been saying that its leaders will fight instead of meekly accepting defeat. Meanwhile, former president of the Congress, Rahul Gandhi, has taken a firm stand against defections.

Mr. Revanth Reddy is a seasoned politician. With the party high command backing him and no senior leaders looking to challenge him as of now, he may gain total control over the party. But from a governance point of view, countering the BRS and the BJP while also keeping all his party members happy will be a test of his leadership. The government is already under pressure to fulfil its six election promises. The much-touted ₹2 lakh farm loan waiver has not brought much cheer as the Opposition has been relentlessly highlighting the lacunae in the scheme. This is a testing time for the Chief Minister.

NIRF: is quantity trumping quality?

The fact that private universities are performing much better than public ones in the NIRF raises questions about whether the rankings are being gamed

DATA POINT

Achal Agrawal
Moumita Koley

The 2024 rankings of the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) show some interesting trends in the standing of Indian universities compared to 2023. This article explores the factors contributing to these shifts in the rankings.

Chart 1 shows the universities which have experienced more than a 20% change in their 2024 rankings compared to 2023. Institutions that seen a significant drop in their ranking are shown on the left; those that have shown a striking improvement are depicted on the right. In general, many more private universities have seen improvements in rankings, while many prominent public institutions, such as the IISERs and NITs, have experienced significant setbacks.

Of the 29 private universities that have seen changes in their rankings, 22 (76%) have seen an improvement, while only seven (24%) have experienced a decline. In contrast, among the 70 public universities with changes in ranking, 43 (61%) have seen a decline, and only 27 (39%) have shown improvement. At least on paper, private universities seem to be outperforming their public counterparts.

This raises questions about the underlying factors driving these changes. Are private institutions genuinely improving, or have they some found a way of gaming the research metrics? While we delve deeper into this question, one clear trend is the considerable drop in rankings for IISERs. On the other hand, the universities that have seen improvements in rankings include a mix of private and public institutions. We examine parameter-wise data to identify which factors contributed most to these changes.

Charts 2 and 3 provides insights into the factors driving changes in the NIRF 2024 rankings and unveils a clear divide between private and public universities. Private universities that have improved their rankings have excelled in research metrics, particularly in the number of publications and citations. However, this success possibly comes at the expense of reputation, with several institutions accused of gaming citations – a concern highlighted by reports published in international journals such as *Nature* and *Science*. Public institutions such as IISERs, NIT Trichy, and IIT Ropar have seen their rankings decline, primarily due to poor performance in these same research metrics. Despite their status as Institutes of National Importance, these universities have struggled to compete, possibly because they prioritise research quality over quantity. This focus on quality, while commendable, may be costing them in the rankings. The decline in citation counts and modest gains in publications have impacted their positions, highlighting a broader issue in how research output is evaluated.

Chart 4 highlights the phenomenal growth in the number of publications by private universities, which is quite perplexing compared to the modest increase seen at premier institutions such as IIT Bombay or IISc.

Overall, the NIRF 2024 rankings point to a troubling trend: some universities are possibly gaming the NIRF rankings by manipulating the research metrics, which potentially have long-term harmful effects on India's scientific research landscape. As research misconduct becomes increasingly rampant, the emphasis on ranking parameters may be driving institutions to prioritise quantity and manipulation of metrics over quality. In any case, there is little doubt that some universities have cracked the code to better rankings, which is to publish en masse, whether by hook or by crook.

Publishing to flourish

The data for the charts were sourced from the National Institutional Ranking Framework

Chart 1: Universities that saw 20% change in their 2024 ranking compared to 2023 are highlighted. ●: declined, ●: increased

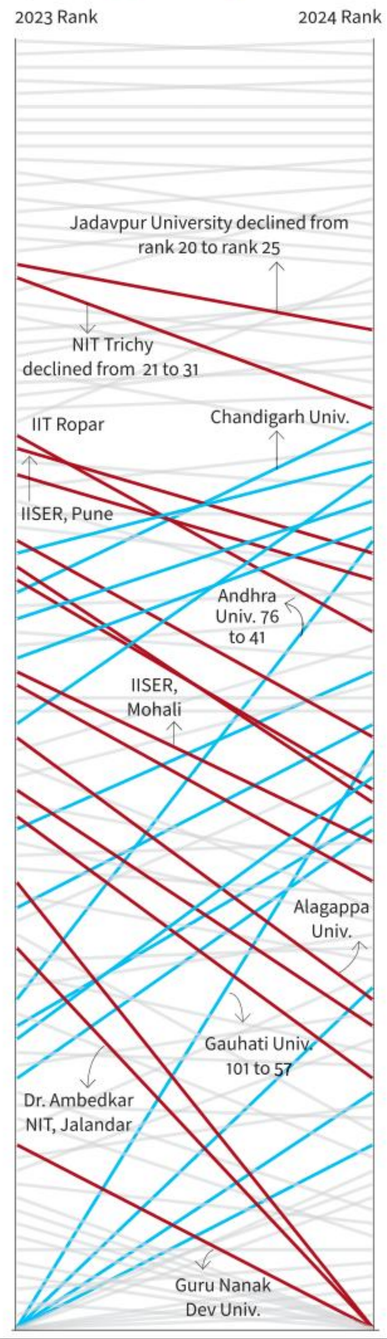


Chart 2: The scores of select universities whose ranks declined in different parameters in 2024

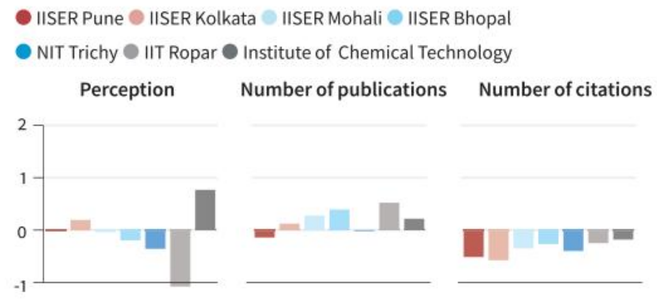


Chart 3: The scores of select universities whose ranks improved in different parameters in 2024

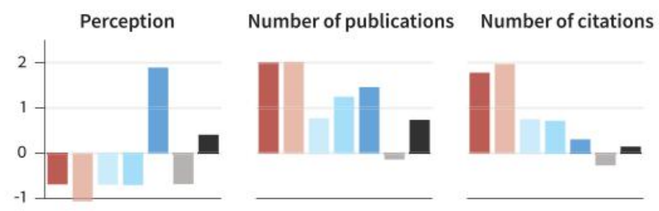
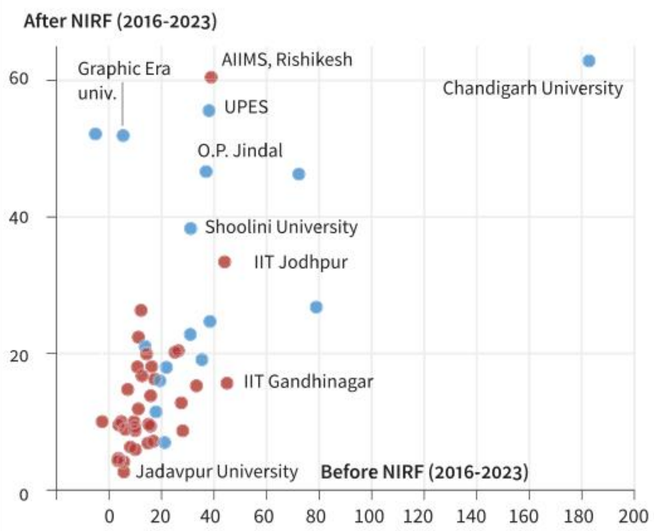


Chart 4: The chart plots the ranked universities on the basis of the number of publications put out before and after the NIRF rankings were regularly released. ●: Public university, ●: Private university



Dr. Agral Agrawal is the founder of the India Research Watch.
Dr. Moumita Koley is a Senior Research Analyst at DST-CPR, IISc, Bangalore

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 20, 1974

Seamless Steel tube unit to be set up in Tiruchi

Madras, Aug. 19: Seamless Steel tubes would be manufactured in India and a plant for this purpose would be set up in Tiruchi shortly. The manufacture of seamless steel tubes would save the country's foreign exchange to the tune of Rs. 13 crores annually said Mr. T.A. Pai, Union Minister for Heavy Industry, to-day. Mr. Pai told newsmen that the total cost of the captive seamless steel plant would be about Rs. 25 crores and scrap iron from various BHEL units in the country would be siphoned to the factory in Tiruchi. The scrap available from the local Southern Railway Workshop would also be utilised by the plant. Referring to the export of railway wagons Mr. Pai said that he had asked wagon manufacturers to explore markets in Australia which was importing its entire requirement. There were enquiries from Iran also. He said the wagon industry expected orders for only 10,000 carriages out of a capacity of 30,000. He was afraid that recession might set in leading to considerable unemployment. The Government was taking note of the situation and was studying the effects of credit squeeze, so that production might not be affected. The Union Minister said that Yugoslavia has agreed to pay higher prices for wagons ordered from India. As a result of the negotiations carried on with Yugoslavia it had been agreed tentatively that the order must be reduced to 1,300 from 3,600 wagons and the escalated prices must be given even to the carriages already delivered.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 20, 1924

Young men's miscellany

This student's magazine edited by C.T. Parthasarathi Mudaliar, I.E.S. (Retd) is the latest addition to the ranks of journalism in Madras. The Magazine aims to be "a channel of information and instruction which will not only bear directly upon the students' preparation for the S.S.L.O. public examination, but will also constitute an instrument for training the young mind and forming the youthful character." The first number contains a short story of student life, a brief description of the Empire Exhibition, notes about answering examination papers, tips for Boy Scouts and a lot of other useful reading matter for young men.

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Quantum of additional electricity Nepal will export to India

251 in MW. This is the first time that Nepal will supply power to Bihar under a medium-term sales agreement. India approved 39 MW of electricity exports from Nepal for the first time in October 2021. PTI

The number of British think tank experts Russia banned

32 Russia said it was banning 32 experts at British think tanks whom it accused of pushing an anti-Russia line in Western policy circles and of publishing disinformation designed to discredit Moscow. REUTERS

The death toll from floods in war-torn Yemen since July

60 Flooding caused by torrential rainfall in Yemen has affected a total of 2,68,000 people. Yemen, grappling with an almost decade-long war, suffers from severe floods on a near-annual basis. AFP

The increase in security for all Union government hospitals

25 In per cent. The Health Ministry approved the enhancement of security deployment in all union government hospitals, amid protests by doctors following the rape and murder of a doctor at a Kolkata hospital. PTI

The worth of fake notes sold across the European region

8 in a million euros. A forger suspected of printing fake bank notes was arrested. He is believed to be responsible for over 27% of all fake euro banknotes in 2023 alone. REUTERS

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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A change in India's power export rules

When did India's first transnational power project that supplies all the power generated to another nation come into being? Why did the Bangladesh Power Development Board request a revision of the power purchase agreement? What does the latest amendment mandate?

EXPLAINER

Saptaparno Ghosh

The story so far:

On August 14, *Reuters* reported on the introduction of an amendment to India's power export rules. Purported to hedge against political risks in Bangladesh, it allows Indian power exporters to reroute their output to Indian grids if there is a delay in payments from partner countries. Adani Power's plant in Godda (Jharkhand) supplies its entire generated power to Bangladesh. In a statement, a spokesperson of Adani Power emphasised their commitment of supplying electricity to Bangladesh, stating that the amendment does not affect its existing contract.

What is the Godda project?

The Jharkhand-subsidiary of Adani Power supplies 1,496-megawatt net capacity power to Bangladesh from the ultra super-critical thermal power plant in Godda. This is facilitated under a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) entered with the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) in November 2017 for a period of 25 years.

The Godda plant is India's first transnational power project that supplies all the power generated to another nation. In a statement on July 15 last year, Adani Power stated that the electricity supplied from Godda will have a positive impact on the neighbour's power situation by replacing costly power generated using liquid fuel. It elaborated that the transition would help reduce the average cost of power purchased. As per the Bangladesh Power Development Board's (BPDB) annual report for 2022-23, the total installed generation capacity of the country was 24,911 MW in June 2023. Of this, 2,656 MW was imported from India (more than 10% of overall) with the Godda plant contributing 1,496 MW (about 6% of overall). On the policy prerogative for power export, India's Ministry of Power illustrating the guidelines for power export in 2016 said the exchange of electricity across South Asia would promote "economic growth and improve the quality of life for all the nations".

GETTY IMAGES

Why was the project criticised?

The criticisms emanated from the use of coal imported from the Carmichael mine in Australia into India to produce power for Bangladesh. Thermal plants utilise coal as a primary fuel. The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), analysing the PPA back in April 2018 held that it allowed Adani Power to "push the high cost of importing and transporting coal into India, plus the cost of transmitting the electricity across the border onto Bangladesh." *United News of Bangladesh* had reported in February 2023 about the BPDB writing to Adani Power for a revision in the PPA. The publication, quoting an official with anonymity, reported that in BPDB's view the coal price quoted at $400/MT was "excessive", adding, "it should be less than $250/MT, which is what we are paying for the imported coal at our other thermal plants". The other concern, as stated in the Bangladesh-based *Daily Star* in February last year, entailed the high capacity and maintenance charges regardless of whether it generates any electricity. The reportage held it was "very high" by industry standards.

Why does Bangladesh need imports?

The answer is underutilisation. In a separate context, Soumya Bhowmick, public policy analyst and economist, explained to *The Hindu* that Bangladesh has made notable progress in expanding electricity access, especially in rural areas. However, notwithstanding the increase in electricity generation, India's South Asian neighbour continues to experience fuel and gas supply constraints, thus, contributing to the underutilisation of its power plants. In fact, in July 2022, Bangladesh had sought support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to cushion itself against a financial shock originating from volatile energy prices after Russian actions in Ukraine. This was after the country experienced blackouts, sometimes up to 13 hours a day, as utilities struggled to source enough diesel and gas to meet demand, *AFP* had reported.

Separately, Hasan Mehedi, Bangladesh-based activist specialising in matters relating to power and climate change, also pointed to "serious levels of overcapacity in Bangladesh". Quoting official figures, Mr. Mehedi pointed to total power generation capacity as on June 30 this year being 28,098 MW, of which the highest power generation was scaled at 16,477 MW – an unutilised idle capacity of about 11,621 MW.

Where do we stand now?

Mr. Bhowmick states that the regulatory change endows greater flexibility to power exporters by permitting them access to the domestic market and reducing the dependency on external markets. He explains that it mitigates risks associated with instability or economic challenges in neighbouring countries.

Further, Mr. Mehedi explained to *The Hindu* that delay in payments have been a standard phenomenon. "There is an entire internal vetting mechanism that follows after a bill is presented to the BPDB," he stated, elaborating, "The BPDB would then evaluate the prices of coal in the open market and that of other expenditures as stated in the bill. It would then send it back to the company for any corrections as necessitated."

On the potential impact to Bangladesh from the latest development, Mr. Mehedi said, "Even if the supply is stopped totally, the impact would last for 2 to 3 days because of the sudden nature, but not in the long-term."

THE GIST

- On August 14, *Reuters* reported on the introduction of an amendment to India's power export rules. Purported to hedge against political risks in Bangladesh, it allows Indian power exporters to reroute their output to Indian grids if there is a delay in payments from partner countries.
- The Jharkhand-subsidiary of Adani Power supplies 1,496-megawatt net capacity power to Bangladesh from the ultra super-critical thermal power plant in Godda.
- The criticisms emanated from the use of coal imported from the Carmichael mine in Australia into India to produce power for Bangladesh.

What inflamed the far-right riots in Britain?

What role did social media play? Has there been a change in the demography of the rioters?

Amir Ali

The story so far:

The recent far right riots in Britain are a continuation of the phenomenon of urban rioting that the country regularly experiences, especially in the summer months such as the 1981 violence in Brixton in London and Toxteth in Liverpool; or in northern deindustrialised towns such as Burnley and Oldham in 2001. While previous rounds of violence witnessed youngsters from black and ethnic minority backgrounds in pitched battles with the police who were accused of being racially motivated and discriminatory, this year's summer violence involved men from white working-class backgrounds attacking, in some cases a mosque and hotels where immigrants were staying.

What led to the riots?

In this round of race riots, social media played an almost incendiary role, exponentially spreading misinformation. The immediate spark to the violence was the rumour that the perpetrator of the knife attack in the town of Southport, which killed three young girls, was Muslim and an immigrant who had recently arrived on a boat. Controversial far-right figures like the English Defence League co-founder, Tommy Robinson, took to social media on the issue, resulting in many of his followers violently taking to the streets.

The riots are a culmination of decades of dehumanising immigrants. Former U.K. Prime Minister, Theresa May, when she was Home Secretary in the David Cameron government, created what was called a 'hostile environment' in order to bully illegal immigrants into leaving. This reached even more extreme levels under Home Secretaries Priti Patel and Suella Braverman. Indian origin Prime Minister Rishi Sunak contributed his share with his pull-up-the-drawbridges mentality and stop-the-boats-from-arriving sloganeering.

Signals from the highest levels of the British political establishment reinforce the unfounded belief that immigrants are harmful for British economy and society. The highlighting and headlining of immigration also serves to obfuscate the manner in which unemployment has arisen through a deliberate deindustrialisation, rather than immigrants snatching jobs; how there has been a shortfall in building social housing; and a general stretching, to breaking point, of public services such as the National Health Service (NHS) through systematic under-investment.

How has right-wing media reacted?

A curious phenomenon of these riots has been the concern towards the English working class by the right-wing media and commentariat. This plight was itself created through the declaration of a veritable class war when Margaret Thatcher during the miners' strike, called the National Union of Miners (NUM) as the 'enemy within', drawing a parallel to the 'enemy without' in the form of the Argentine junta that had been defeated in the 1982 Falklands War. Historically, working class unrest in Britain such as the 1819 Peterloo massacre, or the 1984 miners' strike has had the potential to challenge and change the British establishment on more equitable and socially just grounds. The right wing commentariat does not visualise their working class framing of the current riots in this transformative manner. They have not been worried about the aggravation of working-class conditions owing to 14 years of austerity measures imposed by Conservative governments since 2010.

The current riots must also be understood as a far-right reaction to pro-Palestine protests across British cities that have called for a ceasefire in the face of Israeli military actions in Gaza. These protests were labelled as hate marches and anti-Semitic by the right-wing media. The possibility of further far-right violence was thwarted by anti-race protesters on the streets that the Labour government tended to be frigid towards. The Keir Starmer led government is unlikely to challenge the far-right, fearing a shift of support towards the immigration obsessed Reform U.K. Party, that received four million votes in the July elections. The Starmer government's ability to handle the violence is undermined by the prolonged austerity measures that have generally compromised the capabilities of the British state.

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THE GIST

- The immediate spark to the violence was the rumour that the perpetrator of the knife attack in the town of Southport, which killed three young girls, was Muslim and an immigrant who had recently arrived on a boat.
- In this round of race riots, social media played an almost incendiary role, exponentially spreading misinformation.
- A curious phenomenon of these riots has been the concern towards the English working class by the right-wing media and commentariat.

ABSTRACT

Greener future: A camel drinks water from a small pond in Banni near the Great Rann of Kutch in 2018. FILE PHOTO

How the Banni grasslands of Kachchh, Gujarat can be restored

The Kachchh district in Gujarat houses one of the largest tracts of grasslands in the country. In a new study, researchers have assessed the suitability of different areas of Banni for sustainable grassland restoration, considering ecological value to be the primary criterion

P. Sunderarajan

Dey, R., Sharma, S.B. & Thakkar, M.G, 'Maximising ecological value and assessing land suitability for sustainable grassland management in Asia's largest tropical grassland, Western India', *Sci Rep* 14, 13658 (2024). doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-62775-9

Grasslands are one of the largest ecosystems in the world. They are distributed mainly in semiarid and arid areas, and include savannahs, grassy shrublands, and open grasslands. They harbour a large number of unique and iconic species and offer a variety of material and intangible advantages to people, including several ecosystem services such as carbon storage, climate mitigation, and pollination. Like other types of biodiversity, they face the problem of degradation due to deforestation, overgrazing, agriculture, urbanisation, and other natural and human-made reasons. As much as 49% of grassland areas worldwide are estimated to be experiencing degradation.

In India, grasslands account for approximately eight lakh sq. km, or about 24% of the country's total land area (32.8 lakh sq. km). They are increasingly threatened by agricultural conversion, tree-based plantation projects, invasive species, and mega-development projects. The issue is exacerbated by the strong bias of government and non-profit organisations for the conservation and protection of forests.

The Kachchh district in Gujarat, in the western part of the country, houses one of the largest tracts of grasslands in the country. Popularly known as 'Banni', it once covered an area of approximately 3,800 sq. km but it has now decreased to about 2,600 sq. km. In a new study, researchers at the Department of Earth and Environmental Science in Krantiguru Shyamji Krishna Verma (KSKV) Kachchh University, in Bhuj, have assessed the suitability of different areas of Banni for sustainable grassland restoration, considering ecological value to be the primary criterion.

Findings of the study

They grouped the prospective restoration zones of the Banni grassland into five categories depending on how suitable each zone was for restoration. They have found that as much as 937 sq. km (or 36%) of the existing grassland area was "highly suitable", 728 sq. km (28 %) was "suitable", 714 sq. km (27%) was "moderately suitable", 182 sq. km. (7%) was "marginally suitable", and 61 sq. km (2%) was "not suitable" for restoration.

Speaking to this correspondent, assistant professor and leader of the study team Seema Bhargav Sharma said the first two categories of "highly suitable" and "suitable" zones – which accounted for nearly two-thirds of the complete Banni grasslands – can be restored easily by simply providing them with adequate water sources, either through irrigation or rainwater harvesting.

Grassland expansion should also not be much difficult in the third "moderately suitable" zone. Further, the "marginally suitable" and "not suitable" zones can also be managed through interventions such as terracing; with supplementary inputs like fertilizers; and by protecting from high water run-off and erosion, and salt intrusion, the researchers said.

The study could provide the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and policymakers a robust foundation for crafting policies aimed at protecting and rehabilitating degraded grasslands. "The detailed assessment of land suitability can inform legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure sustainable land use and conservation practices," Dr. Sharma added. A key feature of the new study, she said, is that it provides a holistic assessment. The majority of research on grassland degradation has so far been performed only at the scale of sample plots. Some studies have been conducted at the regional scale but they also mainly used single vegetation indicators, such as net primary productivity (NPP) and the normalised difference vegetation index (NDVI), without accounting for the characteristics of the soil. This compromised the accuracy of suitability analysis and grassland degradation assessment, she said.

"Our study fills the gap and also covers more aspects to get as comprehensive a picture as possible. We have analysed multiple characteristics of soil also, such as the availability of the three important nutrients, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, and four essential micronutrients, iron, manganese, zinc, and copper, ... soil acidity, soil texture, soil organic carbon, salinity, the water holding capacity, cation exchange capacity, bulk density, and infiltration rate," Dr. Sharma added. She also noted that the team used satellite data to check aspects such as land use and land cover, geomorphology, and land slope. "In all, 20 parameters were analysed," she said. "The study aimed at not only assisting identification of lands suitable for grassland development but also to help manage them in a sustainable manner."

Methodology and impact

The study was conducted across the area of the Banni grassland. The researchers collected soil samples from 45 locations, and data for geomorphological analyses. The satellites in question that provided data on slope, land use, and land cover were the U.S. Sentinel 2 satellite and the Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer (or ASTER).

Research scientist Rupak Dey, whose doctoral work resulted in the study, said, "Our research can help generate evidence-based recommendations for sustainable grassland management, including biodiversity conservation and the enhancement of livelihoods for local communities dependent on grasses for their livestock."

The researchers' findings were published in the journal *Scientific Reports* in June. Apart from Dr. Sharma and Dr. Dey, the study team consisted of Mahesh G.Thakkar, the director of the Lucknow-based Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences.

Himender Bharti, a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Commission on Ecosystem Management South Asia Regional Network, said the study was appropriate as it could help provide action plans to conserve grasslands, which have a vital role to play particularly in the context of climate change as they are a great source for sequestration of carbon dioxide. Dr. Bharti wasn't involved in the research.

He also said that many bird species – such as the great Indian bustard and the Bengal florican – prefer to breed in grasslands, but grassland areas are shrinking constantly due to anthropogenic activities, threatening biodiversity as well as the ecosystem services they provide.

"There is an urgent need for government agencies and other stakeholders to make efforts to conserve them for the future generations," he said.

P. Sunderarajan is a Delhi-based freelance science correspondent.

THE DAILY QUIZ

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

A quiz on the life and times of the former Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi who would have turned 80 on August 20, 2024

V. V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
Born into the famous Nehru family, which famous school did Rajiv Gandhi attend in India and to which prestigious colleges did he go but without completing a degree?

QUESTION 2
What was his profession when he decided to join mainstream politics?

QUESTION 3
From which constituency did he contest the Lok Sabha polls in 1981 and how is the constituency connected to his family?

QUESTION 4
What record did Rajiv set when he took over as the PM on the assassination of Indira Gandhi in October 1984?

QUESTION 5
During his regime, Operations codenamed 'Flowers are Blooming' and 'Cactus' were undertaken to thwart coups in which two countries?

QUESTION 6
What did the 61st amendment to the Constitution introduced under Rajiv Gandhi's leadership in 1988 bring about?

QUESTION 7
In which place in Tamil Nadu was Rajiv Gandhi assassinated on May 21, 1991?

QUESTION 8
What is the 'Sadhbhavana Diwas' observed on August 20?

Visual question:
Name the memorial to Rajiv Gandhi where his family is paying its respects. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The six clubs to have played in all 32 seasons. **Ans: Arsenal, Chelsea, Everton, Liverpool, Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur**
2. The three clubs promoted for the 2024-25 season. **Ans: Leicester City, Ipswich Town and Southampton**
3. The first non-English club to play in the Premier League. **Ans: Swansea City, from Wales**
4. The only non-European manager of the 20 clubs playing in the 2024-25 season. **Ans: Ange Postecoglou, former Australian Footballer for Tottenham Hotspur**
5. The player of the 2024-25 season who has played in more than 600 games in the Premier league. **Ans: James Milner of Brighton and Hove Albion**
6. This player has won the Golden Boot award the most number of times. **Ans: Thierry Henry, four times**
7. This man has scored the most number of hat-tricks in Premier league history. A**ns: Sergio Aguero scored 12 hat-tricks for Manchester City**
Visual: Identify this manager and his distinction. **Ans: Arsene Wenger, longest serving manager in Premier League history.**
Early Birds: J.A.N Corera| Jithin Mathew

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Hello."
"Hi."
"It was an exciting match last night, wasn't it?"
"I don't know. I didn't watch it."
"Why?"
"You see my grandfather had the remote control to the T.V. last night. He kept changing channels every ten seconds. He wanted to know what was happening on Star Plus, BBC and what have you."
"So you have a zapper in your family."
"Zapper? What are you talking about?"
"Your grandfather, he's a zapper."
"What do you mean?"
"Well, any person who frequently switches from one channel to another is a zapper."
"By the way, is this word related to zap? In comics, whenever someone gets hit, the word 'zap' is written right across the page."
"Yes, that's right. 'Zap' is an informal word and one of its meanings is 'to make somebody unconscious with a hit, blow, etc'.
The robber zapped the old lady with an iron rod.
If, on the other hand, you say the robber zapped the old lady, you mean that he shot her."
"All that is fine. But what has shooting to do with switching channels?"
"Another meaning of 'zap' is 'to move very quickly or go through something very quickly'. *Yesterday I saw Harish zapping around the university on his new scooter.*"
"Shall we zap into town for some idlis and vadas?"
"Sorry, I can't. I have to finish reading a book."
"Well, you'd better zap through it then. We'll leave in an hour."
"O.K."
"Where are you going? Your house is in the other direction."
"I have to buy three big bars of chocolates."
"Expecting guests?"
"They are for my grandfather. He eats chocolates while watching T.V."
"So your grandfather is not only a zapper but also a chocoholic."
"Chocoholic?"
"Yes, a person with a compulsive desire to eat chocolates is a chocoholic."
"I've heard of workaholics and alcoholics but never of a chocoholic."
''You've heard of it now. And what's more, you have one at home. By the way, chocoholic is a recent coinage."
"Well, I'll zap to the stores."
"You seem to be full of zap."
"What does that mean?"
"It means 'vigour'. You are zappy."
"Thanks. I'll zap along."
Published in The Hindu on February 2, 1993.

Word of the day

Extemporaneous: with little or no preparation or forethought

Synonyms: impromptu, offhand, unrehearsed

Usage: *He made some extemporaneous remarks before the ceremony.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/extemporaneouspro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ɛkstɛm.pɜː(ɹ)ˈeɪn.i.əs/

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

From Page One

HC grants temporary relief to Siddaramaiah

Earlier, appearing for Mr. Siddaramaiah, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi argued that the Governor's decision was arbitrary and suffered from non-application of mind as he did not provide any reason for not following or differing with the view of the Cabinet, which had advised him to reject the application seeking grant of sanction.

Mr. Siddaramaiah's petition said that the Governor had failed to consider the detailed and comprehensive response submitted by the Chief Secretary on July 27, and by the Cabinet, on August 1, which highlighted numerous factual and legal infirmities in the application of sanction filed by Mr. Abraham.

Claiming that the Governor acted in a tearing hurry, Mr. Singhvi contended that the Governor's selective urgency in entertaining Mr. Abraham's application reflected clear bias as several other applications for grant of sanction, including those involving high-profile individuals like Janardhan Reddy, Shahikala Jolle and Basavaraj Bommai [all from the BJP], were pending before the Governor for a long period.

However, appearing for the Governor, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, in a brief submission, made it clear to the High Court that "no application is pending, as of today, on the table of the Governor, awaiting such sanction". Mr. Mehta also said the Governor only granted permission to investigate the offence and requested the court not to pass any order interdicting the grant of sanction to investigate or prosecute at this stage.

While contending that sanction under Section 17A of the PC Act can be given only to the police officer for investigation, Mr. Singhvi argued that the Governor ought not to have granted sanction based entirely on an application made by a private person with vested interests. Further hearing of the petition has been adjourned till August 29.

'Sexual abuse rampant in Malayalam filmdom'

Many who were examined by the committee were afraid to reveal things which they experienced fearing adverse consequences. The fear is well-founded. The committee notes that it is concerned about their safety and that of their family.

They also rarely approach the police fearing the consequences from powerful forces in the industry as well as cyberattacks due to their public profiles. When the Hema Committee formed a WhatsApp group with dancers in the industry, most of them left the group one after the other, after hearing the committee's intention. Similar was the case with junior artists, one of the most exploited lot in the industry.

Producers are warned by the industry's "power group" not to cast actors who fall out of favour with them. Even the release of movies can be prevented as the Film Chamber of Commerce has to issue NOC. Production controllers have a major role in getting people banned from cinema. Members of the Women in Cinema Collective (WCC), following whose demand the Hema Committee was set up, were banned from cinema.

The report highlights the lack of changing rooms or toilets in the set leading to urinary infection for many women. The committee also notes that some of the men, including a prominent actor who deposed before it, said that the issue need not be taken seriously.

Junior artists are in some cases "treated worse than slaves" with work extending up to 19 hours. Intermediaries misappropriate a good part of their payments, which are not given on time.

The Hema Committee notes that an Internal Complaints Committee can be ineffective as powerful persons can threaten or coerce the ICC members to deal with the complaint in a manner they demand.

The committee recommends the government enact an appropriate statute and constitute a Tribunal to address all these issues.

Govt. rules out Central law for safety of doctors

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The Union government has ruled out the need to bring in a Central protection Act for a uniform framework across the country for protecting healthcare workers, stating that almost all States have laws in place to ensure their safety.

Considering the Kolkata rape and murder case and the continued agitation by doctors demanding a safe workplace, the Centre on Monday issued an order to increase security by 25% in all hospitals of the Union government. Deployment of marshals would also be increased depending on the need in hospitals.

Health Ministry officials said the deployment of marshals, besides the standard security protocol, would be approved based on demand from Union government hospitals after they assess security.

"Several States and UTs have passed legislation to protect healthcare service personnel. These States include Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, W.B., and T.N. In these States, the offence is cognisable and non-bailable. Most State Acts define healthcare service personnel to include doctors, nurses, medical and nursing students, and paramedical staff," said a senior Health Ministry official.

Police face wrath over notice to two doctors

Protesters in Kolkata say summons issued to the physicians was an attempt to intimidate them; CBI seeks permission for polygraph test on accused; Trinamool calls for a speedy investigation

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Hundreds of doctors marched to Lalbazar, the headquarters of the Kolkata Police, on Monday, along with two senior physicians Kunal Sarkar and Subarna Goswami, who were summoned by the police for allegedly revealing the identity of the victim of the gruesome rape and murder at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital.

In a show of strength and solidarity, doctors marched from the Calcutta Medical College and Hospital to the police headquarters. They alleged that the notice was an attempt to intimidate them.

"The police could have held discussions with us, instead they are trying to intimidate us. Let us find a solution to this. Police force is also part of society," Dr. Sarkar said. The doctors denied claims that they revealed the victim's identity, adding that they had made no attempt to divert attention from the investigation.

Trinamool Congress leader Sukhendu Sekhar Roy moved the Calcutta High Court, challenging the notice issued to him over a social media post on the issue. In his post, Mr. Roy had called for custodial interrogation of the Kolkata Police Commissioner and questioned the use of sniffer dogs at the scene three days after the crime. The police called the post misleading, denying the allegations about the dog squad.

Doctors Kunal Sarkar (left) and Subarna Goswami light candles in front of a symbolic statue of the R.G. Kar Hospital victim. PTI

The Central Bureau of Investigation, which has taken over the investigation, on Monday sought permission from a Kolkata court to conduct a polygraph test on the accused, Sanjay Roy. The CBI also questioned Sandip Kumar Ghosh, former Principal of R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, who was accused of reporting the doctor's death as a suicide to her family, and making renovations near the crime scene.

Prohibitory orders

Earlier in the day, a CBI team visited the victim's residence and spoke to her parents. The family questioned the imposition of prohibitory orders near the R.G. Kar Hospital. Why was Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee imposing such orders when she too was joining the protests, they asked.

The orders by the Kolkata Police, however, have not been able to dampen the spirit of the protesters who continued to take to the streets. Advocates of the Calcutta High Court organised a protest march seeking justice for the woman doctor. A few lawyers with allegiance to the CPI (M) also got into a scuffle with lawyer and Trinamool MP Kalyan Banerjee during the demonstration.

Meanwhile, the Trinamool Congress leadership urged the CBI to expedite its investigation, with party leader Kunal Ghosh meeting agency officials at the Central government officers' complex.

Leaders from Opposition parties, particularly the BJP and the CPI(M), have been demanding the resignation of the Chief Minister over the crime that has sent shockwaves across the country.

With anger not only spilling onto the streets but also surfacing on social media, the police arrested a college student for posts allegedly "containing offensive threats" against the Chief Minister.

Meanwhile, Governor C.V. Ananda Bose is likely to meet President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday. The Governor said women were not safe in West Bengal as the government had failed them.

BJP accuses Mamata of destroying evidence

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday demanded the resignation of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, alleging that crucial evidence in the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata was destroyed at her behest in an alleged attempt to provide cover-up to the culprits in the case.

"Mamata Banerjee has shown *nirmamata* (ruthlessness). By her misdeeds, she destroyed the dignity of a woman, a doctor who was serving the society. Mamata Banerjee is the destroyer of the rule of law and the Constitution," BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said at a press conference here.

Mr. Bhatia also strongly criticised leaders of the Opposition INDIA bloc and called them "political vultures", alleging that they "generalised" the trainee doctor's rape and murder by expressing a general concern over such cases reported in different parts of the country, including those in BJP-ruled States.

He alleged that while Ms. Banerjee did not ensure swift investigation into the "possibility" of gang-rape, she got crucial evidence of the heinous crime destroyed.

In SC, Centre defends 2019 law criminalising triple talaq

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Union government in the Supreme Court has justified the law criminalising triple talaq, saying the "practice legitimised and institutionalised abandonment of wives by their husbands" and was "neither Islamic nor legal".

A 433-page counter affidavit filed by the Centre in the court reminded the court of its own Constitution Bench judgment of 2017 in the *Shayara Bano* case, which had held triple or instant talaq (*talaq-e-biddat*) manifestly arbitrary.

The government said all it did with the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 was make a practice, called "manifestly arbitrary" by the Supreme Court, a non-bailable criminal offence punishable with imprisonment for three years. "Triple talaq was not a private wrong done to one woman. It was a public wrong which militates against the rights of women and the social institution of marriage itself," it said.

The Centre said the concept of crime keeps on

The practice was made a crime as it legitimised abandonment of Muslim women, says Centre.

changing with changes in the political, economic and social set-up of the country. The 2019 law seeks to criminalise a practice which had neither legal nor religious sanction and is discriminatory towards married Muslim women.

"There is no basis to the claim that marriages come under the personal law, and are exempt from the application of the general criminal law... Marriages are a social institution which the state has a special interest in protecting. It is beyond doubt that the state can protect the stability of marriages by resort to the devices of criminal law. Examples are Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961," the Centre argued.

The government said criminal sanction was necessary though the act of pronouncing triple talaq by a man to his wife was declared void by the Supreme Court in 2017. "But if the sanctions of the 2019 Act do not exist, the prohibition on criminal conduct [triple talaq] itself would become a dead letter to be freely disregarded," the affidavit reasoned.

The government said the 2019 Act was required as Muslim men continued the practice of triple talaq despite the 2017 verdict.

The counter by the government was in response to petitions filed in the top court by organisations, including Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, which have challenged the 2019 Act. They argued that while a Muslim would suffer imprisonment for pronouncing triple talaq, a man from another faith could desert his wife without fearing punishment. Desertion was at best a ground for divorce. The organisation said the law has made the declaration of triple talaq an offence graver than other crimes like rioting, kidnapping, and death by negligence.

Ties with Russia, Ukraine stand on their own: Centre

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

India has "substantive and independent" relations with Russia and Ukraine that "stand on their own", Tanmaya Lal, Secretary (West), External Affairs Ministry, said on Monday while announcing the "landmark" visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Poland and Ukraine later this week.

"This is not a zero-sum game. The PM had also travelled to Russia. Many ideas were discussed. The PM has also met [Ukraine] President [Volodymyr] Zelenskyy on a couple of occasions in the last one year or so, and they will now be meeting again in Ukraine... The ongoing conflict will form part of the discussions...," Mr. Lal told the media.

Mr. Lal was responding to questions if the Prime Minister's visit to Kyiv was in response to the West's criticism of his visit to Russia in July. The Russian itinerary coincided with a major missile attack on Ukrainian targets, including a children's hospital in Kyiv, and a special NATO Summit in Washington.

Narendra Modi and Volodymyr Zelenskyy during a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G-7 Summit in June. PTI

Senior U.S. officials, including National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and State Department official Donald Lu, called the visit a "disappointment" in terms of "symbolism and timing".

Mr. Zelenskyy was particularly strong in his reproach, calling Mr. Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin's embrace, when they met, a "devastating blow to peace efforts".

Mr. Modi will visit Poland on August 21 and 22 and Ukraine on August 23. This will be the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Poland in 45 years and the first to Ukraine in more than 30 years.

"India has maintained a very clear and consistent position that diplomacy and dialogue can resolve this conflict [between Russia and Ukraine] and which can lead to enduring peace, so dialogue is absolutely essential. Lasting peace can only be achieved through options that are acceptable to both parties, and it can only be a negotiated settlement. On our part, India continues to engage with all stakeholders," Mr. Lal said on any likelihood of India proposing a peace initiative.

The meeting between Mr. Modi and Mr. Zelenskyy "will provide an opportunity to review the entire gamut of relations including agriculture, economy, defence, pharmaceutical and people-to-people ties", Mr. Lal said.

CRPF officer killed in clash with terrorists in Udhampur

The Hindu Bureau
JAMMU

A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) officer was killed in a brief exchange of fire between terrorists and a patrol team in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir on Monday.

A police spokesperson said it was during an area domination patrol at Chill that an exchange of fire took place between terrorists and joint parties of the J&K Police and the CRPF.

"In the encounter, one inspector of CRPF suffered bullet injuries and has attained martyrdom. The operation continues," the spokesperson said.

The deceased CRPF officer was identified as Kuldeep Singh. His mortal remains were being brought to the district headquarters for post-mortem examination.

The terrorists fled the scene after a strong retaliation by the joint patrolling party, the police said, adding that reinforcements have been rushed to the area and a search operation has been launched to track down the militants.

On August 14, an Army Captain and a militant were killed during a gunfight in nearby Doda district. The Jammu region has witnessed multiple militant attacks this year.
(With PTI inputs)

Yaks from China stray into eastern Ladakh

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

Nearly 40 yaks from Chinese have ventured into Indian territory in the Demchok area of eastern Ladakh and are in the control of the villagers there, says Demchok councillor Konchok Stanzin.

"As per villagers' sources, 40 Chinese yaks are found in the Indian territory valley called Dzomo-Lung Demchok. They are under Demchok villager's control. There should be a proper mechanism to return; we also lost our yaks to the Chinese side a few years back and didn't get back," he said on X.

The news was also confirmed by sources in the security establishment. Commenting on the incident, they said the yaks had been seized by the villagers and there had been no involvement by any security forces present in the area.

Grazing rights for Indian nomads to traditional grounds under Chinese control has been an issue of friction as Chinese soldiers have denied them access. "Our nomads of Demchok lost access to their

People of Demchok said there should be a system to return animals that stray across either side of the border to their owners. FILE PHOTO

grazing area Lungkar Valley in 2022 and Nilung Valley in 2017. Losing traditional grazing areas gradually affects the livelihood of border residents. What would be the alternative source of livelihood without livestock? Govt. must think," Mr. Stanzin had said in the past.

Such incidents are commonplace on both sides of the border whenever graziers stray across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on account of differing perceptions of it, sources had stated earlier.

Demchok is one of the two mutually agreed disputed areas in eastern Ladakh with each side having varying claims in the Charding La area. China set up tents on the Indian side of Charding nala couple of years before the 2020 stand-off and the presence expanded since.

BJP leader raises spectre of 'civil war' in next 30 years

The Hindu Bureau
BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Minister and BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya has said India could face a "civil war" in 30 years, asking the public to think about the way the "demography is changing". He made the remarks at an event in Indore on Sunday, during a discussion on Hindu society and its festivals.

Reforms panel mooted lateral entry only of specialists: Moily

As Opposition continues to criticise the recruitment plan, Congress leader who chaired the second Administrative Reforms Commission says its lateral-entry suggestion was not meant to bypass the usual government appointment process

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

Former Union Law Minister M. Veerappa Moily on Monday acknowledged that the second Administrative Reforms Commission chaired by him in 2005 did recommend lateral entry into government service to perform specialised roles that were not "easily available within traditional civil services".

"It [lateral entry] was meant to be a value addition to the government's appointment process. We had suggested a very transparent process for lateral induction," Mr. Moily told *The Hindu* over phone from Bengaluru.

"The lateral-entry suggestion was not meant to bypass the usual government recruitment process or for any political reason. We didn't deal with the reservation aspect at all," the Congress leader said.

> It was meant to be a value addition to the govt.'s appointment process. We had suggested a very transparent process for lateral induction
> **M. VEERAPPA MOILY**
> Congress leader

Mr. Moily's comment comes after the Narendra Modi government accused the Congress of "hypocrisy" following the allegation by Rahul Gandhi, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, that lateral entry was "openly snatching away" reservations from the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. The Union Public Service Commission on Saturday notified the recruitment of 45 specialists, including those from the private sector, as Joint Secretaries, Directors and Deputy Secretaries in government departments.

Continuing his criticism, Mr. Gandhi, in a post on X, said, "Lateral entry is an attack on Dalits, OBCs and Adivasis. BJP's distorted version of Ram Rajya seeks to destroy the Constitution and snatch reservations from Bahujans."

In an X post, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge addressed the BJP's charge that lateral entry was introduced by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government.

"We had brought lateral entry to appoint select specialists and experts in some sector-specific posts as per their utility. But the Modi government has made provision of lateral entry not to appoint experts in the government but to snatch the rights of Dalits, tribals and Backward Classes," he said.

Calling the lateral-entry policy "an attack on the Constitution", Mr. Kharge said the BJP had eliminated 5.1 lakh posts in the past 10 years by selling the shares of the government in public sector undertakings, instead of filling vacancies.

He said casual and contractual recruitment had increased by 91% and posts for Scheduled communities and Other Backward Classes decreased by 1.3 lakh by 2022-23. "The SC, ST, OBC, EWS posts will now be given to people of the RSS," he alleged.

Communist Party of India general secretary D. Raja told *The Hindu* that after lifting the ban on government employees from participating in RSS activities, lateral entry into civil services was "the next step to fill higher administration with RSS men".

Concept of lateral entry was developed during UPA rule, says Ashwini Vaishnaw

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

He says NDA govt. has created a transparent method to implement the recommendation

The Centre dismissed allegations made by Opposition parties that lateral entry sidesteps reservation policies, stating that such recruitments were made under the previous Congress governments as well.

On Monday, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal told presspersons that Rahul Gandhi held the constitutional post of Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, but was speaking without paying any attention to the facts.

"He says that RSS people are being recruited through lateral entry. The fact is that Dr. Manmohan Singh was also a part of lateral entry. In 1976, how was he appointed Financial Secretary directly? Then, through the same route, Montek Singh Ahluwalia was brought in and he served as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission (2004 to 2014)," he said.

Mr. Meghwal said there had been many such examples during the previous Congress rule. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power, the process was organised and such entries of experts in the relevant fields were being made on contract through the Union Public Service Commission.

Through a post on X late on Sunday, Information & Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw accused the Congress of hypocrisy.

"It was the UPA government which developed the concept of lateral entry. The second Admin Reforms Commission was established in 2005 under UPA government," he said.

"The NDA government has created a transparent method to implement this recommendation. Recruitment will be done through UPSC in a transparent and fair manner. This reform will improve governance," he added.

He told presspersons that lateral-entry posts were three-year contractual jobs extendable by two more years, if necessary. They did not cut into the roster of any service and did not affect regular recruitments, and therefore the reservation system remained intact.

J&K polls: PDP releases list of constituencies in-charge

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Iltija Mufti, daughter of Peoples Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti, was among the eight party leaders nominated on Monday as in-charge of eight Assembly constituencies of south Kashmir.

The nomination has paved the way for Ms. Iltija to join the electoral fray for the first time as a candidate.

"It's an honour for me. People of Jammu and Kashmir have been facing a grind due to policies implemented by the Centre. If the party wants me to step up, I will," she said.

Waheed Rehman Parra, a youth president of the PDP who had been detained under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for 19 months in 2020, has been named as the in-charge of Pulwama. .

The other leaders include Abdul Rehman Veeri for Anantnag East, Sartaj Madani for Devsar, Mehboob Beg for Anantnag, G.N. Lone Hanjura for Charar-e-Shareef, Ghulam Mohiuddin Wani for Wachi and Rafiq Ahmad Naik for Tral.

NC manifesto promises restoration of J&K's Statehood, release of prisoners

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The J&K National Conference manifesto released on Monday pledged to push for India-Pakistan dialogue on Kashmir, introduce laws to protect jobs and land, seek release of political prisoners, and review the cases of employees terminated over the past five years.

NC vice-president Omar Abdullah, who was accompanied by party leaders, released the manifesto for the Assembly election. Polling will be held in three phases on September 18, 25 and October 1. Election is being held after 10 years and follows the Centre's decision to end special status of J&K in 2019.

Mr. Abdullah said his party would continue the struggle to restore "Articles 370 and 35A." "We will continue to fight politically for Article 370. The manifesto is an assurance that we will not stay silent on these issues. The Supreme Court has in the past upheld Article 370 three times. Can't we expect a situation where the SC will change its recent decision? The BJP did not accept defeat despite three orders by the SC in favour of Article 370, why should we?" Mr. Abdullah said.

Poll promises: Omar Abdullah releasing the NC's manifesto along with other party leaders in Srinagar on Monday. IMRAN NISSAR

He reiterated the party's goal to introduce a resolution on restoration of Statehood and legal status of J&K and to express its dissatisfaction over revocation of J&K's special status in the Assembly.

"We are determined to have Statehood restored. The Government of India has already made this promise to the SC. If it does not restore Statehood willingly, we will pursue justice through the court. With Statehood, the government of J&K will have the powers required to fulfil promises," Mr. Abdullah said.

Pledging to "encourage dialogue between India and Pakistan" over the Kashmir issue, the manifesto promised to seek release of all political prisoners, especially youth, and work towards restoration of normalcy.

"It's sad that the government did not lift the ban on Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), whose leaders openly advocated to contest the upcoming election. The J&K Lieutenant-Governor should have worked towards lifting the ban," Mr. Abdullah said.

Other issues

The manifesto seeks to redraw the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019, which defines laws pertaining to domiciles, land and jobs. The party also promised to repeal the Public Safety Act (PSA), a law that deals with preventive detention. It called for dignified return and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits.

The NC vowed to streamline and simplify police verification for jobs and passports, which has left many without passports. "Without reason, several employees were terminated. We will redress, rectify, ensure fair treatment and job security to government employees," the manifesto said. It promised to restore the old pension scheme.

The NC promised 12 free gas cylinders, 200 units of free electricity, free education up to university level, insurance cover for terminally ill and one lakh jobs for unemployed. It called for a revamp of the public distribution system, which will increase rice quota per person and to make sugar and kerosene available at depots.

"The manifesto is not just an election document. It's the agenda of governance and a road map for the next five years to bring in a change. We are making promises that are achievable," Mr. Abdullah said.

Incontrovertibly opposed to lateral entry, says Chirag

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The controversy over the Centre advertising to fill 45 posts at Joint Secretary and other levels via lateral entry became bigger on Monday with NDA partner and Union Minister Chirag Paswan opposing the move.

"Reservation provisions must be there in any government appointment. There are no ifs and buts in this. No reservation exists in the private sector and if it is not implemented in government positions as well... The information came up before me on Sunday and it is a matter of concern for me," Mr. Paswan said, declaring that his party was incontrovertibly opposed to lateral entry.

Union Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi, who heads the Hindustani Awam Morcha, said that while he does not see any "grand design", "if there is any talk of taking away reservations, then I am in the Cabinet and we can talk to them in the Cabinet too...".

Cong. leaders hold talks on candidate selection

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Monday met members of the screening committees of poll-bound States such as Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Haryana, and Jammu and Kashmir.

Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal said poll preparedness and guidelines for candidate selection had been discussed.

KANNUR International Airport
KANNUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LIMITED
Tender No. 2024_KIAL_684920_1
Tenders are invited by Managing Director, KIAL for the following work :
Developing, Operating and Managing Duty Paid Supermarket at Kannur International Airport.
Last date of bid submission: 10 September 2024, 15:00 hrs
For more details please visit:
www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED
TENDER NOTICE
The APTRANSCO invites on-line bids for Spec No.PMM21-e-30/2024 for "Supply of 8 Nos.160MVA 220/132kV PTRs for Augmentation and new Substations. Date and time of availability of tender **20-08-2024 by 17:00 Hrs.** Further details can be seen in website(s): **www.eprocurement.gov.in**
For further details Contact Nos: 0866-2429230.
DIPR 3124PP/CL, Dt.19/08/2024 Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER / TRANSMISSION

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Government of Kerala
TENDER
FOREST & WILD LIFE DEPARTMENT
Window No : iprd 24/e 135 • Tender No: KFDDO/30499/2022/R • Divisional Forest Officer, Timber Sales Division, Kozhikode, vanasree, Mathottam, Arakinar P.O-673028, Phone-0495-2414702 • E-auction sales of timber at Chaliyam, Parappa, Kannoth, Kuppadi and Bavali Govt Timber Depots of Kozhikode Timber Sales Division on 03/09,11/09,23/09/2024 • PAC: 7 Crore.
Window No : iprd 24/e 136 • Tender No: KFDDO/26982/2023-DFOTSPBVR/A2 • Divisional Forest Officer, Timber Sales Division, Perumbavoor, Mudikkal P.O-683547, Phone-0484-2522219 • E-auction of timber on 07/10,15/10,22/10,30/10/2024, 07/11,15/11,22/11,30/11/2024 from Chalakudy, veettoor, Mudickal, Chettikulam & Varapuzha depots of Timber sales division, Perumbavoor • PAC : 4 Crore.
Full details on Tender Advertisement appeared above are exhibited before the Office from which the tender originates.For Details on all Tenders above please visit notice board.kerala.gov.in/tender.Please put in search the Window No for getting the advertisement of your choice. R.O. 120/G4/2024/PRD.

MAHATRANSCO Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.
NOTICE INVITING TENDER CPD/40 -2024-25
The due Date and Time of submission and opening of following SRM e-tender is extended as follows:

Tender No. & Description of Material	Estimated Amount (in Rs. Lakhs) / Tender Fee (in Rs.)	Due Date & Time (Hrs.) for Submission & Opening of Tender
SP/T-0628/0824 [2 ND call] [RFX No. 7000032817] (Two Bid System) SITC of capacitor banks of voltage ratings of 100kV & 220kV---325 MVAR in Phase-VI [6.6] at various EHV substations under Vashi zone.	2868.05 / 25000.00	02.09.2024 02.09.2024 Up to 17:00 Hrs. at 17:15Hrs

Contact Person: Office of the Executive Engineer (P&C)
Tel. No.022-26474211/022-26472131 Extn.2491/2493.
Email: eegrp6@mahatransco.in, eepc@mahatransco.in
For further details visit our website **http://www.srmetender.mahatransco.in**
Any further amendments will be published on the MSETCL website www.mahatransco.in. So bidders are requested to check the website.
Sd/-
Executive Engineer (P&C)

MAHATRANSCO Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.
NOTICE INVITING TENDER CPD/39 -2024-25
The due Date and Time of submission and opening of following SRM e-tender is extended as follows:

Tender No. & Description of Material	Estimated Amount (in Rs. Lakhs) / Tender Fee (in Rs.)	Due Date & Time (Hrs.) for Submission & Opening of Tender
SP/T-0626/0824 [2ND call] [RFX No. 7000032815] (Two Bid System) SITC of capacitor banks of voltage ratings of 11kV, 22kV& 33kv—305 MVAR in Phase-VI [6.4] at various EHV substations under Pune zone in MSETCL.	2082.20 / 25000.00	26.08.2024 26.08.2024 Up to 17:00 Hrs. at 17:15Hrs

Contact Person: Office of the Executive Engineer (P&C)
Tel. No.022-26474211/022-26472131 Extn.2491/2493.
Email: eegrp6@mahatransco.in, eepc@mahatransco.in
For further details visit our website **http://www.srmetender.mahatransco.in**
Any further amendments will be published on the MSETCL website www.mahatransco.in. So bidders are requested to check the website.
Sd/-
Executive Engineer (P&C)

General S. Padmanabhan, who led the Army during Operation Parakram, passes away

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The former Chief of the Army Staff General S. Padmanabhan passed away at his residence here on Sunday. The funeral is scheduled for Tuesday.

General Padmanabhan, 83, who had been the Army chief between September 2000 and December 2002, is survived by his wife, daughter and son.

The current Chief of the Army Staff, General Upendra Dwivedi, and all ranks of the Army offered their tributes and heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, a statement from the Army said. Known affectionately as Paddy among his peers, General Padmanabhan leaves behind a legacy marked by his commitment to the welfare of soldiers, modernisation of the Army and strategic vision, it said.

General Padmanabhan led the Army during the crucial period of Operation Parakram.

Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi paid floral tributes to the officer on Monday. Health Minister Ma. Subramanian paid floral tributes on behalf of the Tamil Nadu government.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said he was deeply saddened by the passing of General Padmanabhan. "His exemplary leadership and unwavering dedication to our nation's security will always be remembered. My heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones during this difficult time," Mr. Stalin said.

Lieutenant-General Karanbir Singh Brar, General Officer Commanding in Chief, Dakshin Bharat Area, placed a wreath on the mortal remains.

General S. Padmanabhan

General Padmanabhan was born in Thiruvananthapuram on December 5, 1940. He was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery after graduating from the Indian Military Academy on December 13, 1959.

He commanded an Independent Light Battery from August 1975 to July 1976 and later on commanded the Gazala Mountain Regiment from September 1977 to March 1980.

He served as Instructor, Gunnery at the School of Artillery in Deolali, and he had been a Brigade Major of an infantry brigade on its raising and served as the Colonel General Staff of a Mountain Division from January 1983 to May 1985. He commanded an Independent Artillery Brigade and a Mountain Brigade.

Infantry Brigade

He commanded an Infantry Brigade from December 1988 to February 1991 at Ranchi, Bihar and Punjab and was then appointed General Officer Commanding of an Infantry Division in Punjab from March 1991 to August 1992. He served as Chief of Staff, 3 Corps from September 1992 to June 1993.

After his promotion as Lieutenant-General, he was commander of the 15 Corps in the Kashmir valley from July 1993 to February 1995. It was during his tenure as the 15 Corps Commander that the Army made gains over the militants in Kashmir and could scale down its operations.

General Padmanabhan held the post of Director-General Military Intelligence after the culmination of which, he took over as the GOC of the Northern Command at Udhampur in September 1996. Before being appointed Chief of the Army Staff, he was the GOC of Southern Command. He retired on December 31, 2002, after more than 43 years of military service.

General Padmanabhan was an alumnus of the Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun, and the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla.

INBRIEF

High Court seeks NIA's reply to Sachin Waze's petition

Former Mumbai Police officer Sachin Waze has moved the Bombay High Court seeking his immediate release in the Antilia bomb scare case. Appearing for Mr. Waze on Monday, senior advocates Aabad Ponda and Rounak Naik submitted to the court that the invocation of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act [UAPA] was not warranted in the case, as it was merely a case of gelatin recovery. There was no "threat" or "terror" in the case and the UAPA was invoked in a hasty and haphazard manner, the advocates said. A Division Bench of Justices Bharati Dangre and Manjusha Deshpande directed the NIA to file its affidavit in response to Mr. Waze's petition. The matter will be heard on September 23.

India allows Nepal to export additional 251 MW of power

India has allowed Nepal to export an additional 251 MW of electricity to the country, marking the first time the Himalayan nation will supply power to Bihar under a medium-term sales agreement, an official statement said on Monday. "India's Designated Authority for Cross-Border Trade has approved an additional 251 MW of power exports from 12 hydropower projects in Nepal," the Indian Embassy in Nepal said in a statement. With this, Nepal would be exporting 941 MW of hydropower from 28 projects. Earlier, Nepal was exporting 690 MW of electricity from 16 projects, it added. PTI

TISS issues order to ban student body, calls it 'illegal'

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

The management of the Mumbai-based Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) issued an office order on Monday instructing an immediate ban on the Progressive Students' Forum (PSF-TISS), calling it "unauthorised and illegal".

PSF-TISS is a student body that in June had opposed an announcement from TISS discontinuing the services of nearly 100 teaching and non-teaching staff, a decision that was later reversed.

The office order issued by TISS Registrar Anil Sutar states, "This notice addresses a critical issue concerning the presence of an unauthorised and illegal forum on our campuses, reportedly Progressive Students' Forum. This group has been engaging in activities that obstruct the institute's functions, defame the institute, demean members of our community, and create divisions among students and faculty."

A faculty member, seeking anonymity, said, "The management is trying to create a narrative that PSF-TISS is a disturbance, which is actually very untrue. It is a false narrative."

Broadcasting Bill only after wider consultation: Minister

The hold on the draft Bill comes following criticism about its expansive provisions for online content creators, and the secretive way in which one of its versions was floated for consultation

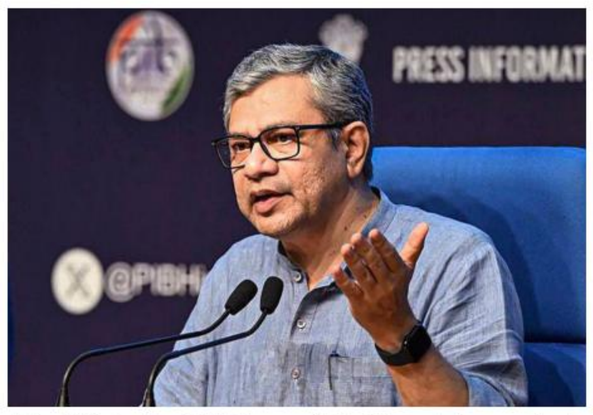
The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry has put the draft Broadcasting Bill, 2023 on hold, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw indicated here on Monday, saying there would be a wider consultation with creators and other stakeholders.

"We are open-minded, very flexible, and want to make sure that whatever we do, we do after taking all the diverse views into consultation," Mr. Vaishnaw told presspersons, indicating that at the most, a new law for broadcasting – whether online or offline – will be readied only after a much larger consultation process.

'To give opportunities'

Mr. Vaishnaw said the Bill was being conceived for encouraging content creators, and that it should not be construed otherwise. "Our intent is that this is giving more opportunities to express, share, and create new intellectual property," Mr. Vaishnaw said. "That's the way we look at it. So if that's the thought process, we have to look at a much, much wider consultation process."



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the Bill was being conceived for encouraging content creators. PTI

If the consultation leads to a conclusion within the government that there is no need for a law, then one will not be proposed, a senior official added. The 2023 version of the Bill – the only one that is currently in the public domain – has a deadline of October 15 for further comments, but a senior official source said that further consultations will be done, and that the Bill will not be introduced in Parliament this year.

The move to set the law aside comes as a significant development, following criticism from civil society on the potentially wide scope of the Bill, which would have added regulatory burdens to news content creators on sites such as YouTube, while also increasing compliance requirements on streaming platforms, which already have to self-regulate in accordance with the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

The official said the Bill was partly intended to fill an anticipated regulatory gap after the Telegraph Act, 1885 was repealed and the Telecommunications Act, 2023 was passed. However, as it turned out, the official said, the latter Act did not leave much regulatory gap, rendering the Broadcasting Bill that much less urgent to pursue.

The Bill had also drawn criticism for the way a small group of stakeholders was given confidential and individually watermarked copies of a subsequent version, and warned not to circulate this version further. The Ministry last week withdrew that version, recalling copies from the stakeholders it had given them to, and said that it would accept responses based on the previous draft going forward.

'Rules for data Act to be released in one month'

The rules for the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 will be released within a month, Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Monday. There will be a consultation period for the rules before they were officially notified, Mr. Vaishnaw said.

Vigyan Puraskar to be distributed on August 22

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Backtracking from its plan to present the maiden Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar on August 23, which has been declared as National Space Day, the Union government has advanced the award distribution to August 22. The prizes are expected to be given by President Droupadi Murmu, as originally planned.

Earlier this month, the government announced the first set of Rashtriya Vigyan Puraskar, or national awards for scientists. This is also the first time that National Space Day, intended to mark the Chandrayaan-3 moon landing last year, is being celebrated.

The function as well as the award ceremony was scheduled at the Bharat Mandapam. However for reasons that are not yet clear or made public, the National Space Day programme will proceed as scheduled at the venue with the President in attendance. "The Puraskar Award ceremony will likely take place at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on the 22nd," an official told *The Hindu*. There has been no official communication on the change of venue and date.

Clean Ganga mission head flags slow pace of projects

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The head of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), the Centre's marquee project to clean the Ganga and its tributaries, in a recent meeting, expressed concern over the tardiness of river-cleaning projects being executed in various States under the mission.

A variety of projects have been commissioned since 2015 as part of the Namami Gange mission, the costliest and the most critical in the development of sewage-management infrastructure. In all, nearly ₹37,550 crore has been sanctioned under various Namami Gange projects but only ₹18,033 crore has been spent as of June 2024, records show. Sewage infrastructure projects alone make up ₹15,039 crore of the latter.

This mission is the most critical project in the development of sewage-management infrastructure. RANJEET KUMAR

"DG, NMCG (Rajeev Mittal) observed that the pace of expenditure so far is extremely slow," say records of a meeting conducted on July 12 to review projects. He asked authorities in Uttar Pradesh, which has the bulk of the projects, why expenditure was low. In response, the representative said that ₹15.16 crore have been spent on six projects in Jaunpur, Kasganj, Varanasi, Bareilly, Salori, and Agra. He said funds that have come in April, or in the beginning of the quarter, were received in mid-June. "Payment amounting to ₹25 crore are under process," the official said.

In response to a request for clarification from *The Hindu*, the NMCG said that the observation was made in context of all States and not specifically for Uttar Pradesh. The expenditure in the first quarter was normally "sluggish" and tended to accelerate in subsequent quarters. "The focus of the review by DG (NMCG) was to ensure that the pace of expenditure picks up in the remaining quarters of the financial year," the note added.

Normally, the NMCG executed 15 or 16 projects in a year and has completed 112 projects in the past seven years, therefore, four projects in a quarter are a normal trend, the response added.

Risk of large outbreak of mpox low in India for now, says official

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Monday said the strain of monkeypox virus currently in circulation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and more than a dozen African countries is virulent and has a death rate of 3% as opposed to 0.1% from the less virulent strain.

"As per our assessment the chances of its spread into India from Africa are moderate. We are also not putting in any country-wise alert as there is no cause for alarm as of now. Hospitals and doctors, however, have been alerted that any patient coming in with symptoms must be reported immediately. India is also looking at large-scale testing provisions should the need arise," said a senior Health Ministry official on Monday, adding that there are no reported cases of mpox in India as of date.

He added that although the possibility of a few imported cases being detected in the coming weeks cannot be ruled out, it has been assessed that the risk of a large outbreak with sustained transmission is presently low for India.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared mpox a public health emergency of international concern for the second time on August 14, warning that the viral disease could spread quickly to new countries.

The announcement was made after an emergency committee of independent experts reviewed the rapidly rising number of infections in the DRC and the spread of the disease to new African nations.

Manipur govt. slams CM's 'doctored' audio clips

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Hours after a news website reported a story about audio clips allegedly of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh admitting to complicity in the ethnic conflict being submitted as evidence to the Inquiry Commission constituted by the Centre, the Manipur government issued a statement doubling down on its claim that the clips were "doctored".

Responding to a news report, the government, in a press release said, "The State government views such acts of spreading misinformation/disinformation through such doctored clips as anti-national activities..." "Further, anybody without exception shall be prosecuted if found involved in spreading such unfounded contents," it added.

Girish Sahni, former Director-General of CSIR, passes away

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Former Director-General of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Girish Sahni, passed away on Monday at the age of 68.

Multiple sources told *The Hindu* that he died of a heart attack.

The CSIR in a post on X said it "mourns the sudden loss".

Dr. Sahni joined the Institute of Microbial Technology (IMTECH), a CSIR laboratory in Chandigarh, in 1991. He became its Director in 2005, a position he held until he was appointed the CSIR Director-General in 2015. He continued to be associated with IMTECH, sources said.

As a scientist, Dr. Sahni was known for his research on the formation and alleviation of blood clots and 'clot buster' drugs. Among others, he developed clot-specific streptokinase, a drug whose licensing rights were sold to Nostrum Pharmaceuticals in New Jersey, the U.S., in 2006 for $5 million.

Girish Sahni

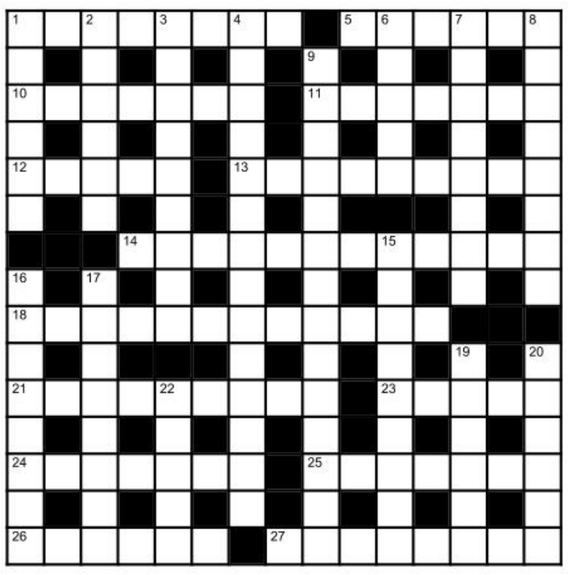
He also led teams that developed the country's first indigenous clot-buster drug later, marketed under the name 'STPase' by Cadila Pharmaceuticals Ltd., and another drug, recombinant streptokinase, subsequently marketed under the names 'Klotbuster' and 'LupiFlo'.

TH CROSSWORD + 14258

(set by Dr. X)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Excellent not to urinate as much after drinking beer finally (8)
5 Having emptied cask, drunkards returned for supplies (6)
10 Bit of rash in spot giving itch (7)
11 Wants a fancy manicure of the digits (7)
12 Really craving to obtain brand of spandex (5)
13 Want to cuddle - remove your clothes and suit (9)
14 Try drinking a peg of rum as variation in routine (6,2,4)
18 Try a futile remedy initially to treat medical condition (5,7)
21 Aim to entertain one boy with good liturgical chant (9)
23 Pawn captured by a genius quickly (5)
24 Slight loss of fat finally with popular hormone (7)
25 Rescue from trouble in time (4,3)
26 Starting to get drizzly and unclear (6)
27 Blue-eyed boy receives hundred on viva relating to the chest (8)

Down

1 Pimple is whitish, having endless discharge (6)
2 Show in Venice, fantastic (6)
3 Doctor hikes a lot eagerly (4,1,4)
4 Swirl outside shelter, tripping on a drug, engaging in sex promiscuously (8,6)
6 Entice maiden in favourite retro bar (5)
7 Cold day in Agra - perhaps wear this? (8)
8 Warns about keeping ecstasy and cocaine concealed (8)
9 Enigmatic nationalist in assembly, suitable to win polls essentially (14)
15 Purist's advice to shopper (9)
16 Huge group hosting dance party at launch (8)
17 Country's revolutionary plan to install atomic plants (8)
19 Spirit with nutty flavour, not strong (6)
20 Merry fellow, not very chaste (6)
22 New lecturer wearing that synthetic fabric (5)

SUDOKU

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

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Human traits are God's gift

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna explained to Arjuna through two verses (Chapter 10 sloka 4 *Buddhir jnanam*) and sloka 5 (*Ahimsa samatha*) how people are bestowed with different attributes. Valayapettai Sri Ramachariar said in a discourse that all the functions (either in action or inaction) are from Him alone. The various traits are: *Buddhi* – intelligence – the power of the mind to determine. *Jnana* – knowledge – the ability to differentiate between sentient and non-sentient. *Asammatha* – non-delusion – the capacity to perceive a thing as such instead of wrongly identifying it as something else. *Kshama* – patience – when provoked by others to become angry, restraining ourselves is called patience. *Sathyam* – speaking about things as they are seen and speaking good to others. *Damaha* – restraint – controlling the faculties.

Samaha – self-control – bringing the mind under control. *Sukham* – pleasure – experience of what is agreeable. Dukham – pain – experience of what is adverse. *Bhava* – exaltation. *Abhava* – depression – state of mind caused by adversities. Bhayam – fear – perception to suffer in future. These traits are granted to people according to their past deeds (*karma*) based on His volition. People who develop devotion to God are destined to obtain more good qualities.

INBRIEF

Adani Group portfolio's Q1 PAT surges 50% to ₹10,279 cr.

Adani Group said its portfolio of companies reported first-quarter adjusted net profit surged 50.1% to ₹10,279 crore from the year-earlier period. EBITDA for the quarter ended June 30 grew 32.9% year-on-year to ₹22,570 crore. "Growth [was] powered by Adani Enterprises' emerging businesses – solar and wind manufacturing (part of green hydrogen production chain), airports and roads," the group said in a statement.

LIC pares stake in Hindustan Copper to 6.09%, from 8.17%

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has decreased its shareholding in the state-owned Hindustan Copper to 6.09%, from 8.17%. The reduction in the stake, as part of an investment function, took place from September 27, 2023, to August 16, 2024. It was through open market sales at an average cost of ₹221.64 per share, LIC said in a filing on Monday. In terms of number of shares, the holding has come down from 7,90,11,485 to 5,88,48,803.

Murugappa Group posts 15.2% growth in FY24 net at ₹7,885 cr.

Murugappa Group has posted a 15.2% growth in net profit for FY24 from the year-earlier period to ₹7,885 crore. The group's turnover increased by 4.9% to ₹77,881 crore. Earnings before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation rose 10.8% to ₹11,554 crore, the business conglomerate said in a statement. Manufacturing entities generated a free cash flow of ₹1,229 crore, which was 31% of the net profit. The group incurred a total capex of ₹3,129 crore (₹1,592 crore).

'Price pressures continue to build up'

RBI officials flag the fact that the 'downward statistical pull of large base effects' in July concealed the strong price build-up in the food category; note in a bulletin article that vegetable price shocks that started in June continued unabated in July

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The momentum of food prices at 2.5% in July, over and above the momentum of 2.7% recorded in June, indicates continuing build-up of underlying price pressures within the food group, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) officials led by Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra wrote on the 'State of the Economy' in the RBI Bulletin for August.

Observing that the moderation in headline consumer price index (CPI) inflation in July to a level below the RBI's target of 4% "was primarily due to the downward statistical pull of large base effects", the officials said this had concealed the strong price build-up in the food category.

Burning pockets: The price momentum in the food category in July CPI was much higher than long period averages. FILE PHOTO

"The price momentum in the food category in the CPI in July was much higher than long period averages. This has also propelled CPI headline momentum above trend. The vegetable price shocks that started in June 2024 continued unabated in July," they wrote.

"Core inflation registered an uptick after registering a period of sustained sequential softening between June 2023 to May 2024, primarily reflecting the impact of mobile tariff revisions. These developments impart an upside to the overall inflation outlook," they emphasised.

"Persistent food inflation is spilling over through general inflation expectations to costs, services charges and output prices, although this fuller impact is offset by monetary policy," the RBI said in its synopsis of the article, adding that monetary policy vigil was warranted so as to prevent the generalisation of inflationary pressure and help "preserve and strengthen the foundations of a high growth trajectory".

Asserting that aggregate demand conditions were gathering momentum with a revival in rural consumption, they said this stimulus to demand would reinvigorate the hitherto subdued participation of the private sector in total investment.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	MONDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	80,425	-0.01
US Dollar	83.87	0.09
Brent oil	77.35	-

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3102.55	-6.25
Adani Ports	1496.45	3.00
Apollo Hosp	6724.90	38.00
Asian Paints	3076.30	28.15
Axis Bank	1153.25	-13.60
Bajaj Auto	9770.65	-117.50
Bajaj Finserv	1551.10	1.20
Bajaj Finance	6616.35	25.45
Bharti Airtel	1469.65	-13.90
BPCL	343.80	11.30
Britannia Ind	5732.50	2.85
Cipla	1575.50	-0.60
Coal India	522.00	9.70
Divis Lab	4669.90	36.00
Dr Reddys Lab	6911.35	117.75
Eicher Motors	4813.30	-4.70
Grasim Ind	2598.40	-1.95
HCL Tech	1678.50	10.25
HDFC Bank	1631.55	-0.55
HDFC Life	685.70	-3.70
Hero MotoCorp	5188.90	60.80
Hindalco	658.85	24.70
Hind Unilever	2742.55	-5.70
ICICI Bank	1175.90	-11.35
IndusInd Bank	1347.60	-16.55
Infosys	1864.80	5.85
ITC	501.45	-1.20
JSW Steel	917.75	9.30
Kotak Bank	1781.35	4.05
L&T	3555.05	-13.30
LTIMindtree Ltd.	5676.10	112.35
M&M	2765.15	-75.30
Maruti Suzuki	12149.80	-63.50
NestleIndia	2503.15	-22.30
NTPC	403.10	5.05
ONGC	335.30	5.70
PowerGrid Corp	340.30	1.70
Reliance Ind	2976.80	20.40
SBI Life	1671.55	-17.35
State Bank	813.70	1.60
Shriram Finance Ltd.	3075.60	94.10
Sun Pharma	1747.80	5.05
TataConsumerProduct	1177.40	-10.35
Tata Motors	1087.70	-10.65
Tata Steel	153.96	4.44
TCS	4490.00	73.95
Tech Mahindra	1594.65	9.35
Titan	3464.85	20.10
UltraTech Cement	11315.35	19.65
Wipro	519.75	3.50

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on August 19

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.67	83.99
Euro	92.37	92.72
British Pound	108.38	108.80
Japanese Yen (100)	57.27	57.49
Chinese Yuan	11.71	11.76
Swiss Franc	96.78	97.16
Singapore Dollar	63.86	64.11
Canadian Dollar	61.17	61.41
Malaysian Ringitt	19.08	19.17
Australian Dollar	56.03	56.25

Source:Indian Bank

'Optimise recovery of loans, chase deposits'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman acknowledged public sector banks' efforts to improve asset quality, with net non-performing assets dipping to 0.76% in 2023-24, but advised them to optimise resolution and recovery proceedings, and make 'concerted efforts' to spruce up deposits that are lagging credit growth.

The Centre and the RBI have been nudging banks to mobilise deposits that have been growing at a 3% to 4% slower pace than credit in the recent months..

During the performance review of public sector banks, she said deposit mobilisation could be improved to 'fund credit growth sustainably' and asked banks to make concerted efforts to garner deposits by conducting special drives. Banks were also asked to expeditiously implement the Union Budget announcements.

Nirmala Sitharaman (centre)

RBI draws plan for financial market SRO recognition

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a framework for recognition of Self-Regulatory Organisations (SROs) in financial markets for strengthening compliance among SRO members and providing a consultative platform for policy making.

The framework specifies broad parameters such as objectives, responsibilities, eligibility criteria, membership, governance standards and application process for the recognition of these SROs.

SEBI allows Category I, II AIFs to borrow

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

AIFs should maintain a cooling off period of 30 days between two borrowings, the regulator said

Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) in Category I and II can now borrow for operational flexibility, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said in a circular on Monday (August 19, 2024).

"The regulator has capped borrowings to 10% of investible funds, or 20% of drawdown value, which is the amount called from investors for making investments in investee companies," SEBI said in the circular and mandated that the information about leveraging be disclosed to investors. Further, AIFs should maintain a cooling off period of 30 days between two borrowings, the regulator added.

Borrowings should be the last resort for AIFs and the cost of such borrowings should be borne by investors who failed to provide for the drawdown amount, the regulator said.

The market watchdog also allowed the tenure of Large Value Funds (LVFs) to be extended to five years, as per its circular.

Amid despair, a rush for government jobs in U.P.

JOB SCENARIO

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

On July 29, the office of Uttar Pradesh Secondary Education Service Selection Board in Prayagraj had some unexpected visitors. They were sit-in protestors – holders of degrees like Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed) and Bachelor's in Education (B.Ed), eligible to teach in government schools. Among hundreds of them was Rajat Singh, who led the protest demanding immediate recruitment for primary level faculties in U.P.'s government schools.

"Our age is passing. In the last five years, no recruitment was initiated by the government. Even the recruitment undertaken faces legal challenges," said Mr. Singh, who heads the DELED Morcha, a group of D.El.Ed degree holders seeking jobs.

Second-lowest income

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said U.P. had the second-lowest per capita income of all States at ₹70,792 in 2021-22 (measured in terms of Net State Domestic Product at 2011-12 constant prices). Hence, any government job is viewed by those from poor, lower-middle and middle-class families as the best option for upward social mobility with millions taking the recruitment tests.

Among the millions is Kshitiz Sharma, 24, who holds a Masters in Economics apart from D.El.Ed.

"These degrees are worthless. I am willing to do any job. I even coached for the constable examination, which was later canceled over the paper leak allegations," he said.

U.P. constable recruitment examination notified in December 2023, for 60,244 posts in the lowest category of the police workforce, highlighted the seriousness of unemployment in India's most populous State. As many as 48.17 lakh aspirants filled the form to write the test at 2,385 centres across 75 districts, despite the eligibility criteria to appear in the test being only a higher secondary graduate. Mr. Sharma was one of the aspirants. Of the total registered candidates, roughly 43 lakh hailed from U.P.

When asked what led to so many of the State's youth to apply for a constable's job, Mr. Sharma replied, "hope of a stable income and a better social status; I will get low-paying jobs without social security in the private sector." The 24-year-old's father is a farmer with five acres of land.

U.P. contributes just 8% to the nation's manufacturing output, despite having 18% of its population.

Paper leaks

The police constable recruitment exam held on February 17 and 18, was canceled over paper leak allegations. The State government in the last six months has canceled two major recruitment examinations after conducting them. The Review Officer/Assistant Review Officer (RO/ARO) examination conducted by the U.P. Public Service Commission (UPPSC) on February 11, was canceled two weeks after 10,76,004 candidates took it to fill only 411 jobs. U.P. will hold the constable re-examination in August.

Weeks after the 2024 poll outcome, in which the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) tally witnessed a sharp decline, the U.P. government's focus turned toward 'youth' with the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath holding meetings with chairpersons of State recruitment commissions and announcing plans to implement a new law that would 'stop' paper leaks. He also issued directions to speed up the appointment process for vacant posts across departments and to send immediate requests where posts were vacant.

New laws

"The government is dedicated to safeguarding youths interests, valuing their hard work and talent. It's imperative to enact laws to address such criminal activities," Mr. Adityanath said at a meeting with chairpersons of various selection commissions.

Experts points to the lack of industrialisation as the main factor behind the race for government jobs.

"This rush for government jobs in a low income and rural economy like U.P. is because youths view this as the best option for a stable income," said Kesana Srinivasa Rao, an economist based at the Giri Institute of Developmnent Studies in Lucknow.

Tech firms again oppose telcos' call for OTT licensing

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Industry associations representing technology firms once again warned against the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI)'s advocacy to bring OTT communication apps such as WhatsApp under a licensing framework.

In response to TRAI consultation, the Internet & Mobile Association of India (IMAI), Asia Internet Coalition, NASSCOM, Broadband India Forum and U.S. India Strategic Partnership Forum opposed the push.

For years, telecom operators bristled at, what they describe, a regulatory gap between firms such as WhatsApp and their own highly scrutinised businesses. Civil society and business groups representing the tech firms, however, pointed out unlike them, telecos had control over 'carriage' or the infrastructure to carry data over the Internet.

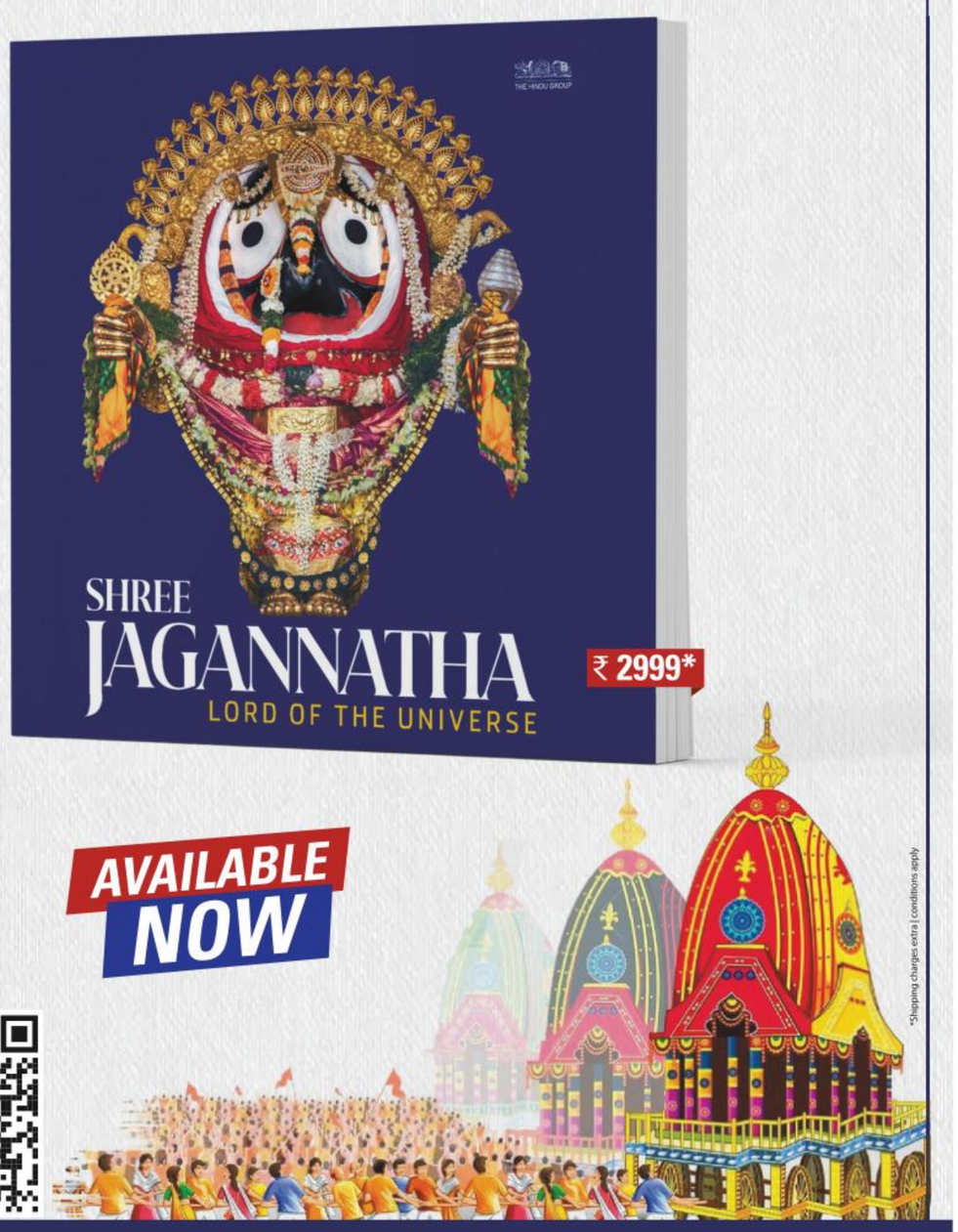
The counter-submissions in question were made in response to a consultation on service authorisation under the Telecommunications Act, 2023. COAI, which represents the telecom industry, has for years argued OTT communication apps need to be subject to licensing conditions like they are.

In a press note, the IAMAI said "there is a clear distinction in the operational and technical nature of OTT service providers and TSPs," and OTT platforms do not get a "free ride" as they are greatly driving the revenue generated by TSPs." "OTTs are not covered under Telecommunications Act, 2023," Nasscom said.

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP
THE HINDU GROUP

Shree Jagannatha- Lord of the Universe is a picture-rich coffee-table book on the fascinating Lord Jagannatha temple in Puri, Odisha.

The book is a collection of pictures and articles by well-known writers from Odisha on culture and religion. It covers the temple's history, the unique rituals that characterise Jagannatha-worship and, of course, the famous Ratha Yatra.



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PALERMO

One dead, six missing after violent storm sinks luxury yacht off Sicily

REUTERS

One man died and six people were missing after a luxury yacht struck by an unexpectedly violent storm sank off the Sicilian capital Palermo on Monday, the Italian coast guard said. Among those missing was the British tech entrepreneur Mike Lynch, a person familiar with the rescue operation said. REUTERS

MANILA

Philippines reports first mpox case this year, yet to determine variant

AFP

The Philippines on Monday reported its first case of mpox this year, but the health department was still determining whether it was the new and dangerous variant sparking global alarm. The 33-year-old Filipino man who contracted the virus had not travelled outside the country, the health department said in a statement. AFP

BEIJING

Premier Li Qiang to visit Russia and Belarus this week, says China

REUTERS

Chinese Premier Li Qiang will visit Russia and Belarus this week, Beijing's Foreign Ministry said on Monday. Mr. Li's visit comes as China and Russia ramp up economic cooperation and diplomatic contacts. Russia and China's strategic partnership has grown closer since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. AFP

TOKYO

Japan's controversial Yasukuni war shrine vandalised again

AFP

Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine, which honours Japan's war dead, including convicted Second World War war criminals, was vandalised again overnight Monday. "It is deplorable that an act seeking to denigrate the shrine's dignity has happened again," the shrine said in a statement.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad claim bombing in Tel Aviv

The militant groups say they intended to launch more; threaten to continue attacking 'as long as occupation's massacres, displacement of civilians, continuation of assassination policy continue'

Associated Press
JERUSALEM

Hamas and another Palestinian militant group claimed responsibility on Monday for what appeared to be a failed bombing attack in Tel Aviv that killed the man carrying the bomb and wounded a bystander.

The blast, which came as mediators were working on a ceasefire agreement in the devastating Israel-Hamas war, was a stark reminder of the rash of Palestinian suicide bombings that killed hundreds of Israelis during the second intifada two decades ago.

The militant groups claiming the blast said they intended to launch more.

Stark warning: Israeli security and emergency personnel cordon off the site of an explosion in Tel Aviv. AFP

In the explosion on Sunday night, the bomb appeared to go off before it was intended. The presumed attacker was shown in security footage walking down the street wearing a large backpack just before the explosion.

Israeli media quoted police officials as saying the intended target might have been a nearby synagogue.

In a statement on Monday, Hamas's militant wing said it and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's militant wing were responsible for the blast and threatened to continue attacking "as long as the occupation's massacres, displacement of civilians, and the continuation of the assassination policy continues."

Israeli police and its Shin Bet security agency said in a joint statement the blast was a terror attack that involved "a powerful explosive." They did not identify the attacker or give a motive.

"We know that the mutilated body is not that of an innocent bystander but the one who carried the bomb," Tel Aviv's district police commander, Deputy Commissioner Peretz Amar, said.

Hezbollah says two dead, claims attacks on north Israel

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Lebanese group Hezbollah said Monday two of its fighters were killed and claimed attacks on northern Israel, including with drones, the latest cross-border violence amid fears of full-blown war.

The powerful Iran-backed group has exchanged regular cross-border fire with the Israeli army in support of ally Hamas since the Palestinian militant group's October 7 attack on Israel sparked the Gaza war.

Lebanon's official National News Agency (NNA) reported Israeli shelling and raids on several southern areas, and said "enemy warplanes broke the sound barrier twice over Beirut and its suburbs... at low altitude".

Chinese, Philippine ships collide in South China sea

Associated Press
TAIPEI

Chinese and Philippine coast guard ships collided at sea, damaging at least two vessels, in an encounter early on Monday near a new flashpoint in their increasingly alarming confrontations in the disputed South China Sea.

Each blamed the other for the collision near Sabina Shoal, a disputed atoll in the Spratly Islands, where Vietnam and Taiwan also have overlapping claims. There were no reports of injuries.

China's coast guard accused the Philippines of deliberately crashing one of its ships into a Chinese vessel. It said in a statement on its website that two Philippine coast guard ships entered waters near the shoal, ignored a warning from the Chinese coast guard and intentionally collided with one of the Chinese boats at 3.24 a.m.

Both sides blamed each other for the collision near Sabina Shoal. At least two vessels were damaged

"The Philippine side is entirely responsible for the collision," spokesperson Gan Yu said. "We warn the Philippine side to immediately stop its infringement and provocation, otherwise it will bear all the consequences arising from that."

Jonathan Malaya, assistant director-general of the Philippine government's National Security Council, accused the Chinese coast guard of falsely saying the Philippine coast guard ships had rammed its vessels.

Video and photographs, including ones taken by journalists from a U.S. TV network who were on board one of the Philippine coast guard ships, showed that the Chinese ships caused the collisions, Mr. Malaya said.

The Philippines' National Task Force on the West Philippine Sea said two of the coast guard ships, BRP Bagacay and BRP Cape Engaño, "encountered unlawful and aggressive manoeuvres" from Chinese coast guard vessels while en route to Patag and Lawak islands.

"These dangerous manoeuvres resulted in collisions, causing structural damage to both Philippine Coast Guard vessels," the statement said.

Sabina Shoal, lies about 140 km west of the Philippines' western island province of Palawan.

Pak. ex-PM Imran Khan in the race to be Oxford chancellor

Agence France-Presse
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan has applied to become the next chancellor of Britain's prestigious University of Oxford, his party said.

Mr. Khan, Prime Minister from 2018 to 2022, has just marked one year in prison on various charges from corruption to inciting violence that he said are politically motivated and designed to keep him from power.

Imran Khan

"Imran Khan had given instructions that he would like to submit his application and now the application scrutiny will take place," Sayed Zulfikar Bukhari, the London-based spokesman for Mr. Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party said.

"It's a ceremonial post but one with utmost prestige and importance and Imran Khan, being one of the larger or more popular names coming out of Oxford, it would be brilliant to see him as chancellor," he said.

Conservative peer Chris Patten, the last British governor of Hong Kong, announced in February he was stepping down as Oxford chancellor.

Russia captures 'major' settlement in Donetsk

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW

Russia on Monday said its troops captured a "major" settlement in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, where Moscow's forces are advancing even as Ukraine mounts its own armed incursion into Russian territory.

Russia's Defence Ministry said it had "liberated" the town of Artemovo, which is called Zalizne in Ukraine, describing it as one of the area's "major population centres".

Zalizne had a population of around 5,000 at the start of 2022 – making it one of the largest places captured by Russian troops in recent weeks.

Urgent concern: Volunteers move a man on a stretcher during evacuation in Pokrovsk, Donetsk region, Ukraine, on Monday. AP

Moscow says it has captured a string of smaller settlements – some no more than a single street and a handful of destroyed buildings – in a grinding advance in the eastern Donetsk region.

It was one of four Ukrainian regions that Moscow claimed to have annexed in 2022, despite not having full control over any of them. The region has seen the most intense combat of the two-and-a-half year conflict.

Kyiv orders evacuation

Meanwhile, Ukraine on Monday ordered the evacuation of families with children from Pokrovsk, as Russian forces have been inching towards the eastern city for months.

"We are starting the forced evacuation of families with children from the Pokrovsk community," Donetsk governor Vadym Filashkin said, ordering the "compulsory" evacuation from Pokrovsk and about a dozen surrounding villages. He said more than 53,000 people including almost 4,000 children live in the area.

Mr. Filashkin called the decision to evacuate "necessary and inevitable."

Pokrovsk lies on the intersection of a key road that supplies Ukrainian troops and towns across the eastern front and has long been a target for the Russian army.

Russia's Defence Ministry said on Sunday its forces had captured Svyrydonivka, a frontline settlement some 15 km away from Pokrovsk.

Sport

Tiafoe reaches Cincinnati Open final, will take on Sinner

Reuters
CINCINNATI

Italian World No. 1 Jannik Sinner played through a nagging hip issue to beat Germany's Alexander Zverev 7-6(9), 5-7, 7-6(4) on Sunday and reach the final of the Cincinnati Open where he will face Frances Tiafoe.

Australian Open champion Sinner, who leads the ATP Tour with four titles this season, was limping at times and also favoured his right hip but dug deep to dispatch the 2021 Cincinnati champion in three hours and seven minutes.

"It means a lot to me. It's a very different moment, what I'm going through, so I'm very happy about this result," Sinner said in an on-court interview.

Foe time! Unseeded Tiafoe beat Danish 15th seed Rune from a set down to reach the biggest final of his career. GETTY IMAGES

In the other semifinal, unseeded Tiafoe beat Danish 15th seed Holger Rune 4-6, 6-1, 7-6(4) to reach the biggest final of his career.

Rune got the only break of the first set to go 5-4 up and then served out the frame before Tiafoe stormed through the second stanza in 25 minutes to force a decider.

The Dane raced out to a 5-2 lead but Tiafoe then followed a routine service hold with a break to love and then saved two match points on his serve to get to 5-5.

The players went on to a tiebreak that ended when Rune sent a shot long.

With the win, Tiafoe becomes the first American to reach the final since John Isner in 2013.

The results: Semifinals: Men: Sinner bt Zverev 7-6(9), 5-7, 7-6(4); Tiafoe bt Rune 4-6, 6-1, 7-6(4).
Women: Sabalenka bt Swiatek 6-3, 6-3; Pegula bt Badosa 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

Lawrence and Potts named in England team

Reuters
LONDON

Dan Lawrence will open the batting for England in place of the injured Zak Crawley in the first Test against Sri Lanka and seamer Matthew Potts will replace Ben Stokes, the England and Wales Cricket Board said on Monday.

All-rounder Stokes was ruled out for the rest of the English summer after the 33-year-old picked up a hamstring injury last week.

The team: Dan Lawrence, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope (captain), Joe Root, Harry Brook (vice-captain), Jamie Smith (wicket-keeper), Chris Woakes, Gus Atkinson, Matthew Potts, Mark Wood and Shoaib Bashir.

RACING

Gretsy takes the honours in the first division of the Salar Jung Cup

HYDERABAD: Trainer Donald Netto's filly Gretsy, ridden by Kuldeep Singh Sr., won the Salar Jung Cup (Div. I), the main event of Monday's (Aug. 19) races. The winner is owned by Mr. S. Pathy.

1. RED RUM PLATE: SECRET SAINT (Suraj Narredu) 1, Amigo (Mukesh) 2, Mountain Touch (Neeraj) 3 and Desert Hero (Kuldeep Sr.) 4. 3-1/4, 1-1/2 and 2. 1m, 27.77s. ₹11 (w), 11, 23 and 12 (p). SHP: 83, THP: 37, SHW: 12 and 85, FP: 95, Q: 88, Tanala: 215. Favourite: Secret Saint. Owners: Mrs. Anasuya Gupta, Ms. Ameeta Mehra, Mr. Shantanu Sharma & Mr. Abhiroop Gupta. Trainer: Bharat Singh.

2. FAIR HAVEN PLATE: OLIVER'S MOUNT (Md. Ekram Alam) 1, Star Forever (P. Sai K) 2, First Class (Mohit) 3 and Burgundy Black (Surya Prakash) 4. 4, 1-1/4 and 1. 1m, 27.92s. ₹26 (w), 10,11 and 16 (p). SHP: 28, THP: 37, SHW: 14 and 14, FP: 61, Q: 27, Tanala: 167. Favourite: Star Forever. Owners: Mr. Vazhaparmbil John Joseph, Mr. Bharat Venkat Epur & Mr. Ayyadevara Srinivas. Trainer: L. D'Silva.

3. SALAR JUNG CUP (DIV. II): NUCLEUS (Mohit Singh) 1, Lashka (Akshay K) 2, Divine Connection (Md. Ekram) 3 and Shadow Fax (Kuldeep Sr.) 4. 1-1/4, 2-1/4 and Neck. 1m, 07.73s. ₹64 (w), 17, 10 and 13 (p). SHP: 43, THP: 38, SHW: 33 and 11, FP: 203, Q: 52, Tanala: 893. Favourite: Lashka. Owner: Mr. C.S. Kaushik. Trainer: Jasbir Singh.

4. KARIMNAGAR PLATE: GET LUCKY (Md. Ekram Alam) 1, Sugar (Akshay K) 2, Crimson Rose (Shivansh) 3 and Exclusive Spark (Mohit) 4. 3-1/2, 4-1/4 and 2-1/4. 1m, 42.19s. ₹19 (w), 10, 12 and 12 (p). SHP: 24, THP: 25, SHW: 14 and 13, FP: 32, Q: 18, Tanala: 60. Favourite: Sugar. Owner: M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar Of Chettinad Charitable Trust. Trainer: K. Satheesh.

5. SALAR JUNG CUP (DIV. I): GRETSY (Kuldeep Singh Sr.) 1, Blissful (R.S. Jodha) 2, Adbhut (Akshay K) 3 and Pontefract (Afroz Khan) 4. Neck, 1/2 and 4-1/4. 1m, 7.45s. ₹32 (w), 17, 19 and 10 (p). SHP: 94, THP: 74, SHW: 26 and 77, FP: 727, Q: 459, Tanala: 1,000. Favourite: Adbhut. Owner: Mr. S. Pathy. Trainer: D. Netto.

6. GRAND PARADE PLATE: IF YOU LIKE IT (Mukesh Kumar) 1, Reining Queen (P. Ajeeth K) 2, Bien Pensant (Surya Prakash) 3 and Rochelle (Ajay K) 4. 2-1/4, 1/2 and 2. 1m, 16.65s. ₹60 (w), 13, 26 and 17 (p). SHP: 51, THP: 47, SHW: 27 and 26, FP: 567, Q: 247, Tanala: 1,419. Favourite: Rochelle. Owners: Mr. Rohit Gupta rep. Rolli Stud Dairy & Agri. Farm & Mr. Srinivas Rao Thota. Trainer: Magan Singh.

Jackpot: 70%: ₹27,350 (10 tkts.) & 30%: 922 (127 tkts.).

Mini Jackpot: 7,622 (7 tkts.).

Treble: (i) 542 (49 tkts.), (ii) 613 (117 tkts.).

IN THE FRAY

Harmanpreet among overseas stars confirmed for WBBL draft

PTI

Indian skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, and England stars Sophie Ecclestone and Heather Knight were among those announced to be part of the first batch of nominees for the upcoming Big Bash League (BBL) overseas drafts. The 10th edition of the Women's BBL will start a week after the T20 World Cup final, which will take place on Oct. 20.

ALL-ROUND SHOW

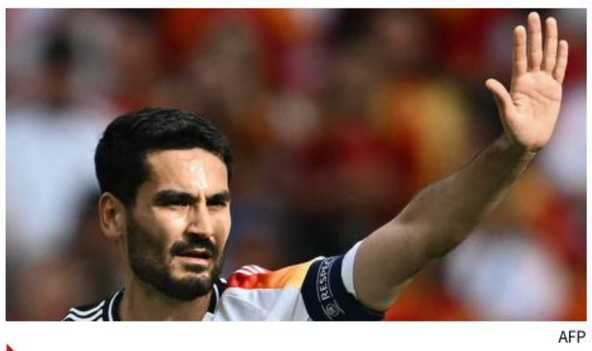
Deepti shines as London Spirit lifts maiden women's Hundred title

REUTERS

India all-rounder Deepti Sharma played a crucial role with both bat and ball as London Spirit lifted its maiden Women's Hundred title, beating Welsh Fire by four wickets in the final at Lord's. Deepti took a wicket giving away 23 runs and smashed a run-a-ball 16, including the winning six off Hayley Matthews.

CALLING IT QUITS

Germany captain Gundogan retires from international football



AFP

German midfielder and National team skipper Ilkay Gundogan has retired from international football, the 33-year-old said on Monday. Gundogan, who joined Barcelona from Manchester City last year, made his debut for Germany in 2011 and scored 19 goals in 82 appearances for the National side.

STEPPING DOWN

Henry cites personal reasons, quits as France Under-21 coach

AFP

Thierry Henry has stepped down as coach of the French Under-21 football team, the country's football federation said on Monday, days after his team lost to Spain in the Olympic final. The Federation Francaise de Football said that Henry had cited personal reasons for his decision to end his contract which was till June 2025.

Sumit Antil primed to better his world record

Javelin thrower aims to hit the 75m mark in Paris, is confident that the process to achieve his goal will yield the desired results and believes he can handle the pressure at the showpiece event

PARALYMPICS 2024

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Tokyo Paralympics gold medallist Indian javelin thrower Sumit Antil wants to improve upon his world record in his bid to defend his title in the Men's F64 category at the Paris Paralympics Games.

Sumit, along with Bhagyashree Jadhav (shot put, F34 category) will be Indian flag bearer at the opening ceremony of the Paralympics Games to be held from August 28 to September 8, 2024.

He had set a world record thrice in the Tokyo Paralympics and won the gold medal with the best throw of 68.55 metres.

"My long-term goal is to achieve a distance of 80 meters but in the Paris Paralympics, I will try to win the gold medal with an effort of 75 meters," the 26-year-old said in an exclusive interview.

"My throws during practice have been quite consistent. I have worked hard on increasing strength without changing my technique. I will try to improve my previous record." When asked about the pressure of being defending champion and being the Indian flag bearer, he said, "There is no pressure right now but things will be known after reaching Paris.

"Once you reach the Games village or at competition venue, things become a little different. I will try to do my best without taking pressure."

Raising the bar: Sumit wants to go the extra mile in his pursuit to defend gold. GETTY IMAGES

CAS: onus of weight cut on Vinesh, no rule change

Sports Bureau

The CAS's ad-hoc committee in Paris for the Olympics has released a 24-page document detailing its verdict in Vinesh Phogat's appeal.

1. The verdict claimed that Vinesh's appeal treated events of August 6 and 7 as two separate competitions. CAS called this argument 'unpersuasive' and against the rules. The document said: Elimination from the competition cannot be limited to elimination from the final round of the competition

2. The CAS verdict said that Vinesh was asking for accommodations to be made for her personal circumstances on the day. It noted that there is no basis in the United World Wrestling's rules for such accommodation. Rules are clear that the 50kg weight limit is just that, a limit.

3. The document said that the Sole Arbitrator does not have the power to award medals. Only the IOC can, which awards medals according to ranking. Vinesh's disqualification meant she wasn't ranked

4. The verdict clears Vinesh of any wrongdoing

5. The document emphasised that it is clearly up to an athlete to ensure that they remain below that limit.

The Indian experience with cases at CAS

Aditya Padinjat
CHENNAI

India as an appellant

Football: 2021: East Bengal vs Omid Singh: East Bengal appealed a decision by FIFA's Dispute Resolution Chamber, asking it to pay the Iranian midfielder outstanding payment after ending his contract. **Dismissed.**
2021: East Bengal vs Jaime Santos Colado: EB appealed a decision by the DRC which had directed it to clear the dues of the Spanish midfielder after ending his contract. **Dismissed.**
2021: Hyderabad FC vs Nestor Jesus Gordillo Benitez: The club appealed DRC's decision which asked it to compensate the Spaniard for a breach of contract. **Partially upheld.**
2016: Club Royal Wahingdoh FC vs Othello Banei: Also a case of breach of contract, the DRC ruled that Royal Wahingdoh had to pay the Liberian. **Dismissed**
Athletics: 2015: Dutee Chand vs AFI and IAAF: Getting dropped from National selection after claims of hyperandrogenism, rendering her ineligible to compete in women's events, Dutee approached CAS. **It removed her suspension** and gave the AFI and IAAF two years to provide evidence that hyperandrogenism gave a significant advantage.
Aquatics: 2015: Amar Muralidharan vs NADA, and Indian Sports Ministry: His appeal after testing positive for a banned substance and getting suspended for two years on the grounds that the sample was not processed correctly, was **dismissed.**
Squash: 2014: Rahul Kumar and Saket Wali vs Asian Squash Federation, Olympic Council of Asia, and World Squash Federation: The former players **unsuccessfully appealed** to CAS for redoing the 2014 Incheon Asian Games draw.

Vinesh Phogat. PTI

India as a respondent

Wrestling:
2015: WADA vs Amit and NADA: WADA challenged NADA's decision to give the wrestler a reduced one-year suspension for missing a dope test. He claimed he had been advised that he would fail as he had drunk Red Bull. **Upheld**, two-year suspension imposed.
2016: WADA vs NADA and Geeta Rani: After the athlete was suspended by NADA for two years for testing positive for a banned substance, WADA moved CAS. **Upheld**, increased suspension to four years
2016: WADA vs NADA and Mhaskar Meghali: Meghali tested positive for a banned substance, and was given a reduced one year suspension by NADA on grounds that she had been prescribed medication with the substance by a doctor for knee pain. **Upheld**, four-year ban imposed.
2016: WADA vs Narsingh Yadav and NADA: WADA challenged NADA's decision that the wrestler had been a victim of sabotage for the positive test prior to the 2016 Rio Games. Suspended for four years.
Judo: 2013: WADA vs Nirupama Devi Laishram and NADA: Laishram had tested positive for a banned substance, but was reprimanded without suspension. WADA appealed the decision to CAS. Upheld, two-year suspension imposed.
Football:
2017: WADA vs NADA and Dane Pereira: Pereira tested positive for a banned substance and received a reduced suspension on grounds that a doctor had prescribed Pereira a medicine with a banned substance for a knee injury. **Upheld**. Four-year suspension imposed.
Athletics:
2012: IAAF vs AFI, Akkunji Ashwini, Priyanka Panwar, Tiana Mary Thomas, and Sini Jose: All the athletes were given reduced suspensions of one year for doping on the grounds that they had taken the banned substance under advice from their coach. **Upheld**, two-year suspension
2012: IAAF vs AFI, Mandeep Kaur, and Jauna Murmu: Kaur and Murmu received reduced sentences of one year for doping claiming they had taken the banned substance under advice from their coach. **Upheld**. Two-year suspension.
India as both:
2015: Indian Hockey Federation vs FIH and Hockey India: IHF appealed to CAS seeking to be recognised as Indian representative in FIH. **Dismissed.**

Shubi and Kiran put up a gallant fight; Siddhant draws with Abhijeet

P.K. Ajith Kumar
GURUGRAM

Gender may be a hot topic in sport now, but chess knows no gender.

Two of the top three boards in the third round of the 61st National championship featured a female player at the RPS International School on Monday. Shubhi Gupta and Kiran Manisha Mohanty fought hard against top seed Surya Shekhar Ganguly and defending champion S.P. Sethuraman, respectively, but both had to drop the point.

Siddhant Gawai, however, managed to take half-a-point off the second seed Abhijeet Gupta. The 17-year-old from Nagpur was understandably elated after his draw with his far more experienced rival.

"This is my best result in chess," he said after their game ended in 67 moves, with Abhijeet, who played English Opening, giving perpetual checks. Gawai's Elo rating of 2057 points 526 less than his rival.

Abhijieet wasn't the only Grandmaster to draw, though. Brothers N.R. Vignesh and N.R. Visakh were held by Arshpreet Singh and Sai Santosh Gyana, respectively. Pratyaksh Goel and Soumick Bandopadhyay signed peace with their Grandmaster opponents J. Deepan Chakravarthy and Sriram Jha, respectively.

With eight rounds remaining, 24 players are sharing the lead on three points.

Happy: Siddhant was elated with his draw against second seed Abhijeet. P.K. AJITH KUMAR

Important results (third round): Shubhi Gupta (UP) 2 lost to Surya Shekhar Ganguly (PSPB) 3; Abhijeet Gupta (PSPB) 2.5 drew with Siddhant Gawai (Mah) 2.5; Kiran Manisha Mohanty (LIC) 2 lost to S.P. Sethuraman (PSPB); Diptayan Ghosh (RSPB) 3 bt Madhvendra Sharma (MP); Alluri Bhaskara Reddy (AP) 2 lost to Karthik Venkataraman (AP) 3; P. Iniyan (TN) 3 bt Jval Patel (Guj) 2; Harshit Sahu (Odi) 2 lost to Sankalp Gupta (Mah) 3; Mitrabha Guha (RSPB) 3 bt Jyotshnav Talukdar (Odi) 2; Aadik Lenin (Ker) 2 lost to Aronyak Ghosh (RSPB) 3; N.R. Vignesh (RSPB) 2.5 drew with Arshpreet Singh (Har) 2.5; Sai Santosh Gyana (AP) 2.5 drew with N.R. Visakh (RSPB) 2.5; Deep Sengupta (PSPB) 3 bt Kheerthi Ganta (Tel) 2; M.R. Lalith Babu (AP) 3 bt Tanmay Rajbongshi (Asm) 2; Prathamesh Sharla (Mah) 2 lost to Sayantan Das (RSPB) 3; Neelash Saha (RSPB) 3 bt Roshan Sivan (TN) 2.

'Find it hard to fathom playing T20 WC in Bangladesh'

Unfair: Australia skipper Alyssa Healy said the event would mean 'taking resources away from a country that is really struggling'. AFP

Press Trust of India
SYDNEY

Australia skipper Alyssa Healy has said it might not be right to go ahead with the women's T20 World Cup in Bangladesh in October as it would put a lot of pressure on the country which is still recovering from the large-scale violence and protests that left hundreds dead.

The country's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled to India with Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus being made the chief of the interim government.

The women's T20 World Cup is scheduled in Bangladesh from October 3-19 with 10 teams, including defending champions Australia, competing.

"I'd find it hard to fathom playing there at the moment, as a human being, I feel like it might be the wrong thing to do," Healy was quoted as saying by AAP on Cricket Australia.

"(That would be) taking resources away from a country that is really struggling. They're needing everyone they can possibly get in there helping people that are dying." Healy, however, said that the final call rests with the International Cricket Council, which is expected to make a decision this week.

Lacklustre Real Madrid held by Mallorca in opener

EURO LEAGUES

Reuters
MALLORCA

Real Madrid got its LaLiga title defence off to a limp start as it was held to a 1-1 draw at Mallorca, with Vedat Muriqi's second-half header cancelling out Rodrygo's early strike and spoiling Kylian Mbappe's eagerly-awaited debut on Sunday.

Real's so-called "New Galacticos" with Mbappe, Jude Bellingham, Vinicius Jr. headlining a stellar squad came crashing back to earth with a dreary performance at a raucous Son Moix.

Real Madrid started well and took the lead thanks to a fine curling strike by Brazilian forward Rodrygo assisted by a back-heeled pass from his countryman Vinicius in the 13th minute.

However, Mallorca started to create some chances in counter-attacks as a toothless Real grew frustrated, dominating possession but lacking ideas up front.

With Mbappe and Bellingham nowhere to be found, Vinicius was arguably Real's only weapon against a disciplined Mallorca defence. But the Brazilian ended up losing his cool and was taunted by the local fans every time he touched the ball.

The Son Moix stadium has been a tough place for Vinicius, who in February 2023 was racially abused by the local supporters there.

On Sunday, he had several heated exchanges with rivals and was reprimanded by the referee after staring into the stands as if daring fans to shout at him.

Real goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois made three fine saves to keep the visitor's lead, but there was nothing he could do to Muriqi powerful header from a corner in the 53rd minute that level for the locals.

Real ended the match with 10-men after defender Ferland Mendy was shown a red for a sliding tackle deep into added time.

Opening salvo: Rodrygo celebrates after striking early for Real. GETTY IMAGES

The results: La Liga: Real Sociedad 1 (Zubimendi 90+8) lost to Rayo Vallecano 2 (De Frutos 67, Camello 84); Real Mallorca 1 (Muriqi 53) drew with Real Madrid 1 (Rodrygo 13).

Serie A: Bologna 1 (Orsolini 57-pen) drew with Udinese 1 (Giannetti 68); Cagliari 0 drew with Roma 0; Lazio 3 (Castellanos 11, Zaccagni 44-pen, Altare 81-og) bt Venezia 1 (Andersen 3); Verona 3 (Livramento 50, Mosquera 75, 90+4) bt Napoli 0.

INBRIEF

Advani wins senior snooker title after an intense final

Ace cueist Pankaj Advani (ONGC) won the Senior snooker title in the C.R. Realty-Western India Billiards and Snooker Championships 2024 held on Sunday. Advani defeated Kamal Chawla (Railways) 6-4 in a long-drawn close final that lasted nearly seven hours. Advani sealed his win with the frame scores reading 11-72, 31-58, 95-40, 52-42, 69-43, 43-74, 22-59, 75-62, 84-58, and 58-10 in his favour.

Koepka beats Rahm to win LIV Golf Greenbrier title

Brooks Koepka beat Jon Rahm in a playoff to win the LIV Golf Greenbrier title on Sunday for his record fifth career crown on the Saudi-backed series. Five-time Major champion Koepka, made par on the first playoff hole while Rahm made bogey. Koepka's earlier LIV titles came at Jeddah in 2022 and 2023, Orlando in 2023 and Singapore. "This is probably my favourite one," Koepka said. "It's always good when you have to battle good players.

LIVE TELECAST

KSCA Maharaja T20 Trophy: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & FanCode, 6.30 p.m.

Djokovic blasts 'embarrassing' lack of video replays

Rues the absence of a rule that would allow chair umpires to change original call based on a review that happens off the court

TENNIS

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Novak Djokovic blasted the absence of video technology as "embarrassing" on Sunday as the Olympic champion and 24-time Grand Slam title winner weighed in on an umpiring row at the Cincinnati Masters.

Jack Draper defeated Felix Auger-Aliassime at the US Open warm-up event despite a suspicion the ball hit the Briton's racquet and then the floor before it popped over the net to secure the match-winning point.

Despite the Canadian's protests, the point was ruled legitimate by the chair umpire and Draper was declared the winner.

"It's embarrassing that we don't have video replay of these kind of situations on the court," Djokovic, who is not playing at the tournament, wrote on social media.

Calling out: Djokovic is very vocal about bringing changes to judge calls. AFP

No rule in place

"What's even more ridiculous is that we don't have the rule in place that would allow chair umpires to change the original call based on the video review that happens off the court!

"Everyone who watches TV sees what happened on the replay, yet the players on the court are kept in the 'dark' not knowing what's the outcome."

The Serb star added: "We have Hawkeye for line calls, we live in the technologically advanced 21st century! Please respective Tours, make sure this nonsense never happens again!"

The US Open, the last Grand Slam event of the season, uses video replay but it is widely absent from tour events.

Gauff's lament

American star Coco Gauff also demanded the introduction of video replays after being dumped out of the Olympic Games at Roland Garros in Paris last month

US Open champion and World No. 2 Gauff became embroiled in a tearful, bitter dispute with the chair umpire over a line call during her loss to Donna Vekic.

She had also argued with the umpire during her semifinal defeat to Iga Swiatek at the French Open on the same courts in June.

Again, the dispute centred on a line call.

"I'm getting cheated in this game. You guys are not fair to me," Gauff told the chair umpire at the Olympics.

"I feel like in tennis, we should have a VR (video review) system because these points are big deals. And, yeah, usually afterwards, they apologise, so it's kind of frustrating when the sorry doesn't help you once the match is over," she said.

Vaibhav and Yash orchestrate North Delhi Strikers' first victory

DPL

Sports Bureau
NEW DELHI

An 81-run partnership between Vaibhav Kandpal and Yash Dabas for the 2nd wicket saw North Delhi Strikers register its first win in the Delhi Premier League on Tuesday, defeating Central Delhi Kings by seven wickets at the Arun Jaitley Stadium.

Kandpal and Dabas both got their half centuries as CDK collapsed to its second win in as many days, its bowlers coming up short yet again. Despite a decent 175-run total after being put in to bat and an early success in Sarthak Ranjan's wicket, CDK was unable to put any pressure on the opposition batsmen who rotated at ease and struck boundaries and sixes at will.

Dabas finally fell with NDS still requiring 71 runs but with almost 10 overs to go, NDS had enough time to not take any risks.

Yash Bhatia joined Kandpal in the middle and added 43 runs in four wickets before Kandpal, the top-scorer with 60 runs in just 35 deliveries, was dismissed by Money Grewal. By then, though, the target was well within reach as NDS cantered to an easy win.

Quick start

Earlier, Dhruv Kaushik gave CDK a quick start and Jonty Sidhu tried to accelerate in the middle but regular wickets meant there were few partnerships of note, leaving them at least 20 runs short.

The scores: Central Delhi Kings 175/5 in 20 overs (Dhruv Kaushik 63, Jonty Sidhu 42, Hiten Dalal 27, Suyash Sharma 2/35) lost to North Delhi Strikers 177/3 in 18.1 overs (Vaibhav Kandpal 60, Yash Dabas 56, Yash Bhatia 34 n.o.).

Our focus will be to work together with stakeholders: Anilkumar

FOOTBALL

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

All India Football Federation's (AIFF) newly appointed secretary-general Anilkumar on Monday said his top priority is to "improve the quality" of football in the country while involving each and every stakeholder, such as FIFA, clubs, State associations and governments.

An experienced sports administrator, Anilkumar was welcomed at the Football House by the AIFF treasurer Kipa Ajay in the presence of deputy secretary general M. Satyanarayan.

"The priority will be the improvement of quality of football," Anilkumar, who took charge on Monday, told the AIFF website.

Welcome! Anilkumar, centre, being greeted by AIFF treasurer Kipa Ajay and deputy secretary-general M. Satyanarayan. AIFF

"I don't know how long we will take to make it at that level.

"But still we are starting with the hope that we can do something better. We will not give up until we succeed.

"And along with you, all Indian football fans, we will continue to work across India with those who love football, who support Indian football," he added.

Anilkumar felt when the quality improves, the spectator turnout and viewership will improve, and the money will come to all areas of football.

A ND-NDE

Variety the spice of Dabang as it chases UTT history

Sathiyan, the Delhi captain, says his team has paddlers with various playing styles who can rattle any opponent, and believes that a good start will work wonders; feels that the presence of coaches Sachin and Ojstersek will energise the side in its quest to become the first to win two titles in the competitive league

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

K. Keerthivasan

Not being part of the three-member Indian table tennis men's team at the Paris Olympics was a huge disappointment, no doubt, for G. Sathiyan. Though he was the lone substitute, the 31-year-old didn't get to play a match at the venue – Paris Expo Porte de Versaille.

Nevertheless, he has taken the setback in his stride and is working on his game relentlessly as he has always done.

Now with the fifth season of the Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) League set to begin on August 22 at the Nehru Indoor Stadium in Chennai, Sathiyan is all geared up to play for Dabang Delhi TTC. "I have accepted that I have to make lots of improvement in quite a few areas," said the former National champion, who was ranked World No. 24 as early as in 2019, on missing out on a berth at the Olympics

Having slipped to 63 in the world, Sathiyan is more than eager to make the best use of the remaining time and is keen to be in the top 50 in the next six months.

Balanced team

As captain of Dabang, Sathiyan said the key for his squad will be to start well and look for a spot in the playoffs.

The six-member Delhi-based team is a mix of young and old. Sathiyan is the oldest member of the team at 31 and his Austrian counterpart Andreas Levenko of Austria is just 22, the rest are young. The two Delhi-born players, Lakshita Narang and Yashansh Malik are 19 and 21 years old respectively. The remaining two women paddlers, Diya Chitale and Thailand's Orawan Paranang, are 21 and 26, and will compete as the second and third players.

"Ours is a quite a balanced team. Orawan is a very strong player and is especially quite good against Indians. She is equally good in mixed doubles and is left-handed to boot. To win the title in Chennai will be an icing on the cake," said Sathiyan while insisting that this time that his team would not be short on energy and enthusiasm.

Sathiyan said having paddlers with a variety of playing styles will be Dabang's strength. "I think it will be good to have variations in the team. Lakshita has a long pimpled rubber on backhand. We have left-handed Levenko, who has a 'hurricane rubber' on the forehand. And one another main reason is I know the management. Trust in the team is very high," he said.

The Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games medallist is thrilled that the Indian-Slovenian coaching duo of Sachin Shetty and Vesna Ojstersek is back with Dabang. Interestingly, the two coaches were with the team when it last won the title in 2018.

"The winning combination is back and it feels great to have them again as they are very good in strategy and are motivating and positive," he said.

With two more teams (a total of eight now) included in UTT, Sathiyan knows that it would be more competitive. "Every team is strong and now with two more teams, it will be difficult. Obviously, the competition is stiff. Players are stronger than last time," he observed.

No burden

Being Dabang's captain for fourth successive time is no burden on his shoulders, he said.

"I always said that the team has taken the load from me. The coaches will help the team strategise better and they know me well. They are good in planning and know how to prepare for matches," he said.

Sathiyan still remembers vividly the third season in 2019 (his team lost in the final to Chennai Lions) when he was given the 'Most Valuable Player' (MVP) award.

"MVP award in 2019 – that was my best year. I am the only Indian (man or woman) to win it so far. I won the maximum number of games, remained unbeaten. It was a fantastic season. It was the best season in my professional circuit as well. I reached the World ranking of 24 in men's singles. I was more mature and experienced. That showed in the league, too," he said.

But it doesn't mean that the title-win in 2018 was any less, according to Sathiyan. Recalling the reasons for the victory, he said: "In 2018 when we won against Falcons TT in the final, we had Manika Batra who was at her best. I was there and I remained unbeaten but lost the MVP award to Liam Pitchford of England. The best part about 2018 was everyone played his/her part. Everybody chipped in for each other. As a team we performed well."

He singled out the mixed doubles match, the third one after the women's and men's singles as crucial in UTT and that was where Dabang scored in 2018. "The mixed doubles match is crucial. We have always been quite good in mixed doubles. That year, I played with Sakura Mori of Japan. Manika was playing really well. I remember it was after her exploits in the CWG 2018. She was in good shape," said Sathiyan.

Different format

In UTT, there is always pressure initially as the format is different from other tournaments organised by International Table Tennis Federation or World Table Tennis. "It is only three games in a match and best of five matches in a tie including women's singles, men's singles. mixed doubles followed by men's and women's singles. And it's not best of seven games or five games like in other bigger International tournaments. You should get used to the format. If you get a bad start, it becomes difficult. The start is important," he said.

Though he didn't compete in Paris Olympics, Sathiyan said staying in the Olympics village and training with the team was a memorable experience which he will cherish for a long time.

"It was definitely a great experience. I stayed with the team at the Village thanks to the efforts of the team coach Max (Massimo Costantini). We were in the Village and I could soak in the Olympics atmosphere," he said.

Assessing the Indian teams' performance at Paris, the Tokyo Olympian remarked: "Our men's team had a very tough draw against China in the pre-quarterfinals. Our women did a great job pulling off some notable wins, especially the way Manika and Sreeja Akula performed in singles."

Sathiyan is not unduly worried about the slip in his world rankings. He said it is a measure of expectations from people and how much the sport has grown in the last decade or so. "I was in the 20s (world rankings) for a long time. I know now how to plan a calender, how to prepare and choose tournaments. Reliance Foundation is supporting me with the best of sports science facilities. Definitely, I am looking forward to the next Asian Games and the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics."

Injuries, said Sathiyan pulled him down and that was one of the reasons for him not being able to put his best foot forward in the run-up to Paris Olympics. "I was feeling down with injuries and hence not able to play my A-game. I was lucky that I didn't have the injury in the last six years. Expectations have risen now. However, it was a good learning curve. More than winning, I've learnt how to handle defeats. I hope I can be in the best of shape for upcoming major tournaments."

At the moment, it's UTT that is on Sathiyan's mind even as he gets ready to practice with his teammates. Having lost in the semifinals of the previous edition in 2023 to Goa Challengers, Sathiyan is more than eager to go the extra mile. Recalling the team's performance last time, Sathiyan said: "Last season was a heartbreak. I didn't start welI, but recovered to play quite well in the second half of UTT. But full credit to Goa who played exceptionally well. Goa's Reeth Rishya was the super star, who won quite a few big matches," he said.

Sathiyan wants Dabang to do what no team in UTT history has done before: to be the first side to win the UTT title twice.

THE GIST

- The six-member Delhi team is a mix of young and old, with Sathiyan the oldest at 31 and Lakshita the youngest at 19
- Dabang, crowned champion in 2018, looks to regain the crown
- According to Sathiyan, every team is strong and with two more sides in the fray this time, the competition will be stiff
- The fifth edition of the UTT will be staged in Chennai from August 22

Mandyam Srinivasan of bee studies fame faces misconduct allegations

Dr. Srinivasan said the scientists 'pointed out minor typographical errors'; he also asserted 'deliberate fabrication or manipulation of data definitely did not occur in any of our studies' and that the reasoning underlying the allegations 'is illogical or flawed'

T.V. Padma

Two scientists have flagged what they have called evidence of "problematic behaviour" in multiple scientific papers co-authored by Mandyam Srinivasan, emeritus professor of visual neuroscience at Queensland University, Brisbane. The papers are concerned with the honeybee waggle dance, a mode of communication between bees that plays a crucial role in pollination.

Based on his work on bees, Dr. Srinivasan received Australia's Prime Minister's Prize for Science in 2006, a Distinguished Alumni Award of the Indian Institute of Science in 2009, and a membership in the Order of Australia in 2012, among other honours.

The waggle dance

Bees use two kinds of dances to communicate information: the waggle dance – at the heart of the new controversy – and the circle dance. The purpose of either dance is for some honeybees to communicate to others the location of a flower patch with more nectar or pollen. One bee dances while the others watch it to figure out the directions.

During a waggle dance, the bees move in a figure of eight formation, roughly, while in a circle dance, the bees move in a circle. The waggle dance indicates both the distance and the direction to the patch. In this the straight line in the roughly figure of eight formation is called the waggle run. The circle dance indicates only the distance to the hive.

The allegations against Dr. Srinivasan are detailed in a report prepared by Laura Luebbert, a geneticist-turned bioinformatician, and Lior Pachter, the Bren Professor of computational biology, both at the California Institute of Technology.

Papers from 1996 to 2010

The report with the allegations is titled 'The miscalibration of the honeybee odometer'. Drs. Luebbert and Pachter uploaded it to a repository of preprint papers on the internet called arXiv (pronounced 'archive') in May 2024. But it wasn't until Dr. Pachter published a post on his personal blog about their findings and then a series of posts on X in July, including one calling the implicated papers "junk", that the allegations made headlines.

The two scientists have alleged in their report that multiple papers published between 1996 and 2010, and co-authored by Dr. Srinivasan, contain "erroneous information" and that "many of them contain duplicated and manipulated data," as Dr. Pachter wrote on his blog.

To quote from the report: "We examine a series of articles on honeybee odometry and navigation published between 1996 and 2010, and find inconsistencies in results, duplicated figures, indications of data manipulation, and incorrect calculations. This suggests that redoing the experiments in question is warranted."They have published "the code to reproduce the figures and analyses" in their report on GitHub (https://github.com/pachterlab/LP_2024).

'Purely typos'

Neither Dr. Luebbert nor Dr. Pachter responded to requests for comment. Dr. Srinivasan however disagreed with their conclusions. The two scientists "have pointed out minor typographical errors, which I regret," he told this reporter. "But these errors are purely typos: they have not played a role in the analysis of any of the data."

Dr. Srinivasan had left a similar comment on Dr. Pachter's blog post to which the latter replied: "The issues raised in our arXiv paper cover 10 of your papers, and do not constitute 'typographical errors and minor oversights'."

Dr. Srinivasan also asserted "deliberate fabrication or manipulation of data definitely did not occur in any of our studies" and that the reasoning underlying the allegations "is illogical or flawed."

"The issues raised by Luebbert and Pachter definitely do not affect the conclusions of the studies, which have been repeated several times, not only in our laboratory but also independently in other laboratories."

In all, Drs. Luebbert and Pachter flagged 10 papers published by Dr. Srinivasan's lab, then in Australia.

'Expression of concern'

The journals that published them include *Science* and the *Journal of Experimental Biology* (JEB).

After investigating the complaints, JEB published an "expression of concern for two papers to alert readers to issues with the data" on June 25.

Craig Franklin, editor-in-chief of JEB and a professor at the School of Environment at Queensland University, Australia, said, "We were made aware of a number of potential issues regarding a series of papers authored by Professor Mandyam V. Srinivasan in *Journal of Experimental Biology*. Our publication integrity team contacted the authors of the papers highlighted and investigated, together with an expert, in accordance with the guidelines of the Committee on Publication Ethics."

> Dr. Pachter published a post on his blog and then a series of posts on X in July, including one calling the implicated papers 'junk'

"As a result of our investigation, we published an expression of concern for two papers to alert readers to issues with the data," with details in the journal's publisher's note, Dr. Franklin added. "Our key objective always is to maintain the integrity of the scientific record and, if additional concerns are raised we will investigate."

Drs. Luebbert and Pachter also flagged a paper published in 2005 in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* for containing an improbable number. The journalis investigating.

Sample size in question

Opinion is divided on data discrepancies. Microbiologist and data integrity consultant Elisabeth Bik said, "My short answer would be that it appeared that graphs were duplicated, but labels were changed, suggesting an intention to mislead."

But not all ecologists harbour such a strong view.

"The issue is that Luebbert and Pachter allege that Srinivasan et al. have implausible data in multiple instances," Robert Schuerch, a behavioural ecologist in the Department of Entomology at Virginia Tech in the U.S., said. "For one of the instances, they say that the calibration data for how bees translate distance travelled to waggle run duration is unlikely, and they use our [team's] studies to bolster their claim."

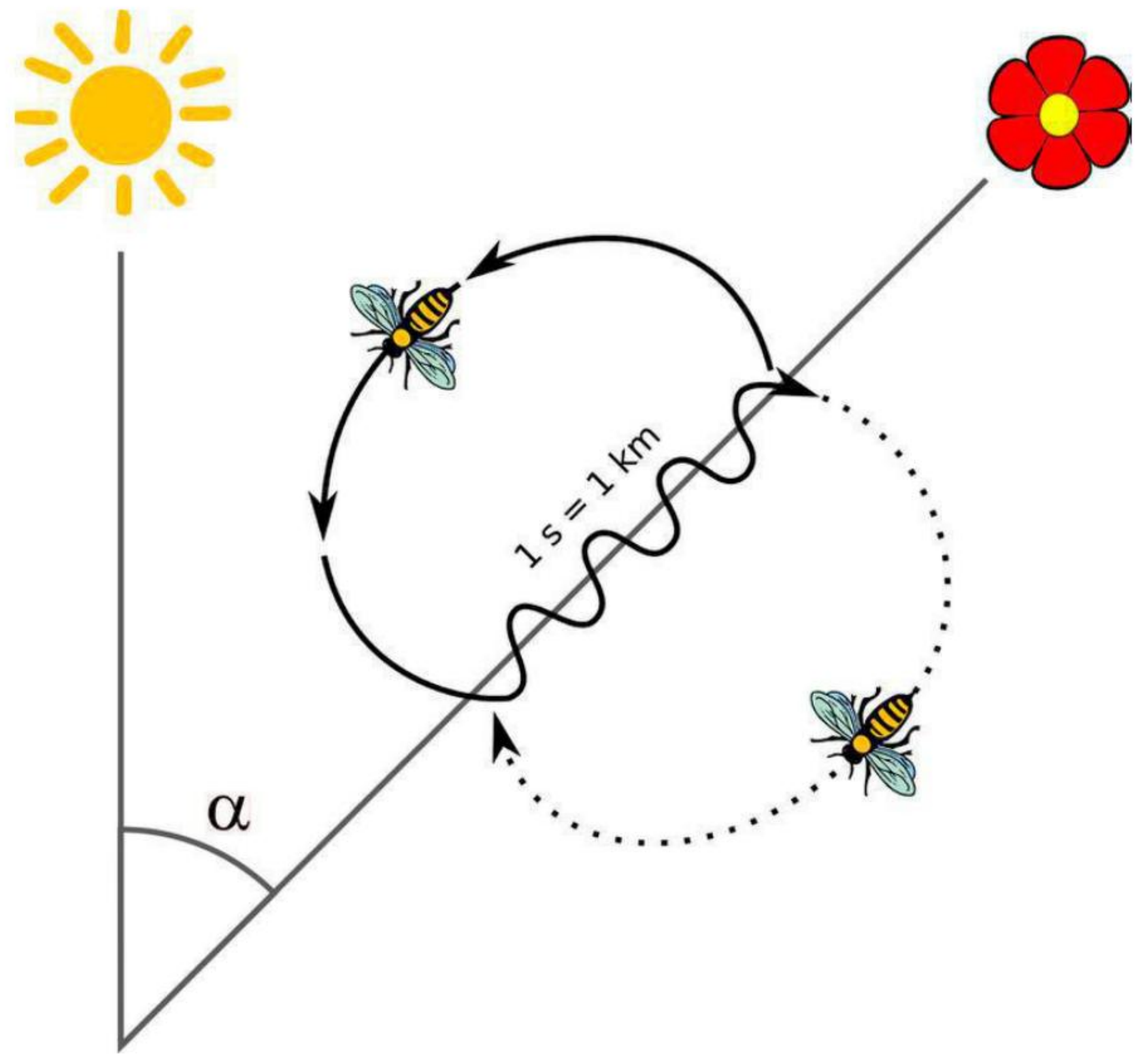
"The data Srinivasan et al. present are extreme in comparison to our data, but they do not look impossible to me," he added. "Given the small sample size they used, it is conceivable that they would end up with these results." "The methodologies in the *Science* paper are very terse, and I think that a more detailed description of the methods used would clear things up, but after more than a quarter century that seems unlikely to happen."

Odometer unchanged

"I think the same is true for the 'data duplications' [allegation]," Dr. Schuerch added. "The fact that graphs were used in multiple publications is odd in hindsight, but it seems that the authors cited their earlier work at the time and declared that they were reusing data. Again, the description of the methods for how this reuse happened are short and seem to omit detail, so it is hard to say what exactly happened."

On whether the conclusions of Dr. Srinivasan's papers could change, Dr. Schuerch said, "at least in the case of the odometer, the conclusions would be the same, as others have replicated these findings."

(T.V. Padma is a science journalist in New Delhi. tvpadma_10@yahoo.co.in)



During a waggle dance, the bees move in a figure of eight formation, while in a circle dance, they move in a circle. The waggle dance indicates distance and the direction to the patch. In this the straight line in the roughly figure of eight formation is called the waggle run.. AUDRIUSA, EMMANUEL BOUTET, KILOM691

The threat of polio is rising fast in the Gaza Strip, prompting aid groups to call for an urgent pause in the war. REUTERS

Polio vaccine drive in Gaza hampered by violence

Associated Press

The threat of polio is rising fast in the Gaza Strip, prompting aid groups to call for an urgent pause in the war so they can ramp up vaccinations and head off a full-blown outbreak.

Polio was eradicated in Gaza 25 years ago, but vaccinations plunged after the war began 10 months ago, and the territory has become a breeding ground for the virus, aid groups say. Hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians are crowded into tent camps lacking clean water or proper disposal of sewage and garbage. At least 225 informal waste disposal sites and landfills have cropped up around Gaza.

To avert a widespread outbreak, aid workers are preparing to vaccinate more than 600,000 children in the coming weeks. The World Health Organization and UNICEF said in a joint statement on August 16 that at least seven days' pause is needed to carry out a mass vaccination plan.

The U.N. aims to bring 1.6 million doses of the polio vaccine into Gaza, where sanitation and water systems have been destroyed, leaving open pits of human waste in crowded tent camps. Families living in the camps have little clean water or even soap to maintain hygiene and sometimes use wastewater to drink or clean clothes and dishes.

> **To avert an outbreak, workers are preparing to vaccinate more than 600,000 children. The WHO and UNICEF said that at least seven days' pause is needed to carry out mass vaccination**

Polio, which is highly contagious and transmits mainly through contact with contaminated faeces, water, or food, can cause difficulty breathing and irreversible paralysis, usually in the legs. It strikes young children in particular and is sometimes fatal.

WHO and UNICEF said that three children are suspected of being infected and that their stool samples were being tested by a laboratory in Jordan. The Ministry of Health in Ramallah in the West Bank said on August 16 that tests conducted in Jordan confirmed one case in a 10-month-old child in Gaza.

A mass vaccination campaign beginning in late August plans to immunise 640,000 children under the age of 10 over two rounds of vaccinations, according to the WHO.

The alarm over polio was first raised when the WHO announced in July that sewage samples collected from six locations in south and central Gaza tested positive for a variant of the virus used in vaccines.

While more than 440,000 doses of polio vaccine, were brought into Gaza in December, that supply has diminished to just over 86,000, according to Hamid Jafari, director of polio eradication for the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region. The 1.6 million oral doses being brought into Gaza will be a more advanced version of the vaccine less prone to mutating into an outbreak, the WHO said.

Vaccines must also be kept refrigerated, which has become difficult in Gaza, where electricity is scarce. About 20 refrigerated trucks serve all of it, and they also must be used to transport food and other medical supplies, a senior Israeli army official said.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

The spice of science and vice versa

Siva Shakthi A.

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

QUESTION 1

Eating chillies activates a certain receptor in the mucosal membrane of the digestive tract called TRPV1, making us feel the spice. What is another trigger to which the TRPV1 molecule responds?

QUESTION 2

When eating something spicy, we often sweat. Which part of the brain does the body activate to cool itself in response by, among other actions, triggering the sweat glands?

QUESTION 3

Water can't provide instant relief from the burning sensation that comes from eating spicy food. This is because water and TRPV1 molecules _____ each other. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 4

Thanks to a single mutation in the gene that produces the TRPV1 receptor, _____ are the only mammals other than humans that can withstand high levels of capsaicin, the active compound in chilli peppers that, when it comes in contact with tissue, gives rise to the perception of a burning sensation. They are believed to have acquired this mutation in order to eat the naturally spicy foods in their habitats. Fill in the blanks.

QUESTION 5

Which American pharmacist devised the first scale in 1912 to rank the pungency of chilli peppers? The scale does so based on the concentration of capsaicinoids in a given substance.

(Siva Shakthi is a science communicator in Pondicherry and runs the 'No Nonsense Science Club' through which she debunks myths and misinformation using science.)

Answers to the August 15 quiz:

1. Chemist who published 'A History of Hindu Chemistry' – **Ans: Prafulla Chandra Ray**
2. Scientist who published 'Applied Nutrition' in 1969 – **Ans: R. Rajalakshmi**
3. Jamsetji Tata's interlocutor who inspired the foundation of IISc – **Ans: Swami Vivekananda**
4. Scientist whom C.V. Raman declined to admit to IISc in 1933 – **Ans: Kamala Sohonie (née Bhagvat)**
5. Public health activist who cofounded the Bombay Sanitary Association – **Ans: Nasarwanji Hormusji Choksy**

Visual: **Savitribai Phule**

First contact: Anmol Agrawal | Vaibhanshi Chaudhary | Harshita Meena | Shreya Arora

Visual: Name this Nobel laureate who helped understand how birds can comfortably eat chilli peppers while mammals can't, even though both have TRPV1 receptors. He also elucidated the genes responsible for the sense of touch. PUBLIC DOMAIN