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हिंदी माध्यम

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RAM TEMPLE ALLEGATIONS

Construction panel chief supports SIT call

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TRINAMOOL TUSSLE

20 MPs meet LS Speaker, to merge with NCPI

NEWS » PAGE 13



MARINERS' DEATH

Cong. questions PM, slams Rubio's remarks

NEWS » PAGE 13

Modi, Macron bilateral talk stresses economic security

India, France adopt 'Innovation Roadmap 2030', establish 'Economic Security Dialogue' as the two leaders meet in French city of Nice; meet calls for fast adoption of India-EU FTA, AI cooperation

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

India and France adopted an 'Innovation Roadmap 2030' and established a Dialogue on Economic Security during bilateral talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron held in Nice on Sunday.

A press release from the government outlined a number of themes – including calling for the fast adoption of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Earlier this year, the two countries had renamed their partnership a 'Special Global Strategic Partnership' to reflect an enhanced level of cooperation.

No traditional 'joint statement' had emerged

Eyeing the sky: PM Narendra Modi takes in the sea with French President Emmanuel Macron ahead of talks in Nice on Sunday. AP

from the meeting as of this writing.

"Recognising the key role of innovation and technology in the bilateral relationship, both sides adopted an 'Innovation Roadmap 2030' to give the partnership a long-term direction," the press release said, with the two leaders

agreeing to create a Joint India-France AI Working Group to expand cooperation in AI. They also noted the signing of 19 agreements between entities in the innovation ecosystems of the two countries.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Modi, Macron open Bharat Innovates 2026

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday co-inaugurated the Bharat Innovates 2026 in Nice where the leaders focused on trust and cooperation in technology. Mr. Modi invited investors to "design and develop in India" to "create solutions for the world", while Mr. Macron said India brings the reliability that the world seeks at moments of upheaval in geopolitics.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 12

Iran questions U.S. push for truce after Israel hits Beirut

Associated Press Reuters
DUBAI/WASHINGTON

Iran's top negotiator on Sunday questioned the U.S.'s commitment to peace efforts after Israel carried out new attacks on Lebanon, dimming prospects of Tehran and Washington signing a framework agreement on ending their war during the day as claimed by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Qatari negotiators flew to Tehran on Sunday morning as part of an effort to finalise the agreement, according to sources. But Iranian negotiator and Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf said on Sunday that Israel's attack showed the U.S. lacked the will or ability to fulfil its commitments.

"If you lack the will and ability to fulfil your commitments, speaking of con-

tinuing the path is not possible," Mr. Ghalibaf wrote on X, in an apparent reference to peace moves.

Following Israel's attack, Mr. Trump on Sunday said the strikes on Lebanese capital, Beirut, "should not have happened" as he vowed a peace deal was at hand, though he did not confirm his earlier claim it would be signed during the day.

Mr. Trump, who, in a phone call to the Axios news outlet, said the deal was still on track to be signed within hours, fumed at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the attack on Beirut.

He said, "it is so bad – I couldn't believe it. An hour before we are supposed to sign the deal."

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12
THREE KILLED IN BEIRUT
» PAGE 16

IN BRIEF

Tughlakabad fire: police nab 4 for arson

NEW DELHI
Four persons have been held for their role in setting afire a building in Tughlakabad Extension, which killed three persons. The police termed the incident a "deliberate act of arson". » Page 3

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EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 2 & 7

Recruitment rush

Packed to capacity: Security personnel at the Patna Junction railway station try to regulate the crowd as aspirants for the excise constable recruitment exam rush to board trains on Sunday. PTI (REPORT ON PAGE 5)

Indian-flagged sailing vessel sinks off Oman; crew rescued

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

All 14 crew members of an Indian-flagged mechanised sailing vessel, *MSV Virat 1*, were rescued on Sunday after it experienced engine failure and sank off the coast of Oman.

The crew members are "safe and in good health", the Indian Embassy in Oman said in a post on X, adding that they were moved to a vessel which is heading to Mumbai. The Mumbai-bound vessel, *MV Jabal Ali*, is learnt to be a cargo ship.

"Rescue operation involving Indian-flagged *MSV Virat 1* has been successfully completed. All 14 crew members have been rescued and are presently on-

A photo shared by the Indian Embassy in Oman on X on Sunday shows the crew members rescued off Oman. X/@INDEMB_MUSCAT

board *Jabal Ali 9* heading to Mumbai," the mission said. The incident comes amid heightened tensions in the region where three Indian seafarers were killed last week amid repeated U.S. attacks on vessels with Indian links.

Often based in Mumbai and Mandvi, Indian mechanised sailing vessels are smaller crafts that carry li-

mited supplies, typically perishable food items, to the Persian Gulf countries.

The *MSV Virat 1*, reported to be 50 metres in length and 12 metres in breadth, was sailing off the coast of Oman when its engine failed, prompting the crew members to transfer to a life-raft before being rescued.

(With PTI inputs)

Seven nabbed over lynching of Kerala man in West Bengal

Senjuti Sengupta
KOLKATA

Five persons were arrested and two minors detained at Kultali in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal on Sunday after a 30-year-old man from Kerala was allegedly lynched on suspicion of being a thief on June 9.

Suspected to be thief
"Prima facie, the villagers beat him to death over suspicion of being a thief. However, some villagers alleged that he had harassed a pregnant woman, which enraged the local people. Further investigation is under way," a senior police officer from the Baruipur sub-division said.

The man arrived in Kultali two weeks ago with his

A section of the residents said the victim could not clearly explain his identity because of the language barrier

SENIOR OFFICER
Kolkata Police

friends, who had been working in Kerala, the police said. They added that the incident took place at a market in the village's Sankijahan area, where he had gone alone on the morning of June 9.

Lost his way
Local media reports said the victim had lost his way. "The villagers tied him with a rope and assaulted him. A

section of locals said the victim could not clearly explain his identity because of the language barrier," said the officer.

A team from the Kultali police station reached the spot, rescued the injured man, and rushed him to Joynagar-Kultali Rural Hospital, where doctors declared him dead.

FIR registered

"We have registered an FIR *suo motu* and started the investigation. The cause of death is not yet clear. The body has been sent for an autopsy. His name is not yet known," said the officer.

The officer added, "We are speaking to the locals and are trying to trace his friends."

A case has been lodged under Section 103 (murder) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.



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A ND-NDE

CM Gupta leads riverbank cleanliness drive

Keeping the river clean is a shared responsibility that requires the government and society to work together, she said, adding that her government has already approved river rejuvenation projects worth more than ₹1,000 crore.



SAGAR MALA

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Sd/-
SECRETARY



INBRIEF



Bihar families mourn IAF personnel killed in crash

The last memories are now frozen on mobile phone screens. One mother recalls her son smiling during a brief video call; another treasures a photo he sent from inside an aircraft before an IAF plane crash in Assam killed five personnel, including their sons. Flight Lieutenant Shubham Kumar from Bihar’s Jehanabad and Agniveervayu Danish Alam of Bhojpur were among those killed in the Antonov aircraft crash on Saturday. “Kumar looked cheerful and normal. He said that he would speak at length later,” his mother recalled. Alam’s family is clinging to another final memory – a photograph he sent from inside an aircraft on Saturday. “He seemed very happy,” said his mother Akhtari Begum. PTI

BJP worker beaten to death; accused’s properties razed

A 44-year-old local BJP functionary was allegedly beaten to death and three members of his family were critically injured in a clash in Bairagiwala village in Dehradun, the police said on Sunday. The deceased, Vinod, was allegedly killed on Saturday in a dispute over irrigation, they said. In the wake of the killing, authorities razed “illegal” structures belonging to the accused amid cries of “Jai Shri Ram” by the crowd. According to the police, Vinod got into an altercation over watering an adjacent field belonging to Imtiaz of the same village. After the row, a group of more than 40 people, armed with lathis, wooden planks, hammers, and shovels, stormed Vinod’s house and launched an assault on the family. PTI

3 held for killing Dalit man over refusal to massage feet

A 33-year-old Dalit man was allegedly beaten to death by three men in U.P.’s Lalitpur district after he refused to massage their feet while they were consuming alcohol together, the police said on Sunday. Police said they arrested all three accused, who allegedly dumped the victim’s body on a road to make the incident appear as an accident. The man was identified as Rajkumar alias Chhannu, 33, who belonged to a Scheduled Caste community. Police registered a case of murder and relevant provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act based on the complaint of the victim’s mother. PTI

SPOTLIGHT

Shrabana Chatterjee
Shiv Sahay Singh

Almost 2,000 years ago in ancient Rome, after an emperor was removed unceremoniously, busts, statues, and portraits of the ruler were destroyed. Called *damnatio memoriae* (condemnation of memory), it was the ancient Roman equivalent of cancel culture. The practice of *damnatio memoriae* was used by the Senate to officially erase a disgraced or deposed emperor from history.

On June 1, 2026, as 35 Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLAs were being administered the oath of office as Ministers at Lok Bhavan in Kolkata, a 70-foot statue of footballer Lionel Messi was removed from a prominent intersection in the city. It signified the collapse of the Trinamool Congress’s 15-year tenure in West Bengal. Along with it, hoardings and posters of leaders of the previous regime disappeared overnight.

Kolkata began to look different. Messi’s statue had become one of the city’s most iconic landmarks. It was installed in December 2025 during the football legend’s “GOAT India Tour”. The Eastern Metropolitan Bypass, where the statue stood, hosts one of Kolkata’s most iconic Durga Pujas.

Former State Fire Minister Sujit Bose, patron of the Durga Puja celebration, was the key figure behind the statue installation. The collapse of the Trinamool Congress regime led to the downfall of several party leaders, including Mr. Bose. A week after losing the election to the BJP’s Sharadwat Mukherjee, Mr. Bose was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on May 11 for his alleged involvement in a municipal recruitment scam.

Messi’s statue is not the only casualty. Not far away stood another giant football-themed sculpture outside Kolkata’s Salt Lake Stadium. The installation, featuring giant muscular legs in football boots topped by a football, had been conceived by former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. The structure was removed on May 23. “Such an ugly-looking statue does not make sense. We will not keep such a grotesque structure, and it will be taken down,” Sports Minister and BJP leader Nisith Pramanik said.

In the weeks following the change of government in West Bengal, several symbols associated with Trinamool Congress rule were removed. Some, such as the Messi statue and the Salt Lake Stadium installation, which Ms. Banerjee had conceived with considerable fanfare, were dismantled. Others simply disappeared under the cover of darkness.

Before May 4, large cut-

IUML, UDF on sticky wicket over non-Muslim members’ nomination to Waqf Board

As BJP leader moves HC challenging non-inclusion of non-Muslims in the board, onus on IUML and UDF to take call on communally sensitive issue; Minister says govt. will take a stand within a week

K S Sudhi
KOCHI

The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) have found themselves in a precarious position over the nomination of two non-Muslim members to the State Waqf Board.

Section 14(1)(f) of the Waqf (Amendment) Act 2025 provides that two members of the board, excluding the *ex officio* members, shall be non-Muslim.

The previous Left Democratic Front (LDF) government, which reconstituted the board during the fag end of its tenure, had appointed nine people from the Muslim community to the board while leaving the two slots vacant, in an apparent bid not to rattle the community’s sentiments. Besides the Kerala government, the previous DMK-led Tamil Nadu government also took the same route, leading to litigation.

The onus is now on the IUML and the UDF to take a



The previous LDF government, which reconstituted the board during the fag end of its tenure, had appointed nine persons from the Muslim community to the board while leaving the two slots vacant . FILE PHOTO

call on the communally sensitive issue as Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Shone George has moved the Kerala High Court challenging the non-inclusion of non-Muslims in the board.

In his petition challenging the “unconstitutional functioning of the Kerala State Waqf Board,” Mr. George contended that the State government deliberately flouted the statutory provisions of the Act by nominating only Muslims.

The State, which appointed only nine Muslim members, had tactically

promised that the “remaining two members would be appointed shortly,” he argued.

Mr. George also argued that the State Waqf Board “lacked jurisdiction, rendering all its administrative, supervisory, and quasi-judicial decisions null and void” *ab initio*. He also sought to declare the board’s functioning as illegal besides seeking a direction to immediately nominate non-Muslims and to restrain it from functioning until it is lawfully constituted.

The High Court has asked

Indira would have banned BJP: Gehlot

Press Trust of India
JAIPUR

Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday accused the BJP of practising politics in the name of religion and claimed that if former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi were in power today, she would have banned such a party.

Speaking at an award programme in Jaipur, Mr. Gehlot said the Constitution does not permit politics

based on religion and alleged that the BJP was mobilising people in the name of Hindutva for electoral gains.

‘Not a political tool’

“The Constitution gives equal rights to all religions. Religion should not be used as a political tool,” he said.

The senior Congress leader also targeted the Election Commission, alleging that it was functioning as an agent of the BJP.

AIADMK rebel leader hits out at Palaniswami, accuses him of suppressing dissent in party

The Hindu Bureau
VILLUPURAM

AIADMK rebel leader C. Ve. Shanmugam on Sunday accused party general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami of refusing to correct errors and suppressing dissent in the party.

Speaking to reporters at Tindivanam, Mr. Shanmugam said the AIADMK was founded on the principle that any of its workers could become the Chief Mi-



C.Ve. Shanmugam

nister, a Minister, or a Member of Parliament, and this principle attracted lakhs of people to the party. He claimed that 31 of the 47 constituencies won by the

Uddhav holds meet of party MPs amid switchover buzz

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Amid intense speculation that some Shiv Sena (UBT) MPs might switch sides, party chief Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday held a meeting of his faction’s Lok Sabha MPs, which all nine lawmakers attended either virtually or in person.

After the meeting, party’s lone Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut said all MPs were firmly with the party.

Four MPs attended the meeting in person while four others marked their presence virtually, and one MP spoke to Mr. Thackeray over phone, he said.

The meeting was held at Mr. Thackeray’s residence ‘Matoshree’ in Bandra East area here in the afternoon.

The development assumed significance amid the buzz that some MPs might cross over to the ruling Shiv Sena, led by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, under ‘Operation Tiger’.

In a social media post, Mr. Raut said four MPs, including three from Mumbai – Anil Desai, Arvind Sawant and Sanjay Patil – along with Nashik MP Rajabhau Waje, attended the meeting in person.



Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray

Four other MPs – Omprakash Raje Nimbalkar (Dharrashiv), Bhausaheb Wakchaure (Shirdi), Nagesh Bapurao Patil Ashtikar (Hingoli) and Sanjay Deshmukh (Yavatmal-Washim) – attended the meeting virtually, he said, adding that MP Sanjay Jadhav (Parbhani) spoke to Mr. Thackeray over phone.

Mr. Raut said party MLA Aaditya Thackeray also attended the meeting.

‘Firmly with party’

“All MPs are firmly standing united and are loyally behind the Shiv Sena (UBT). Now, at least, we hope the rumour mill will stop!” he said.

An MP who was part of the meeting said Mr. Nimbalkar attended the meeting online as his son has been admitted to a hospital.

Kolkata’s *damnatio memoriae* moment

From pulling down statues erected by the previous Trinamool Congress government and removing symbols of the past that were dear to Mamata Banerjee, the month-old BJP government in West Bengal is changing the city’s colourscape from white and blue to saffron



PWD workers shifting the statue of Lionel Messi on a trailer in Kolkata on June 1. PTI

outs and hoardings of former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee could be seen along almost every major thoroughfare in Kolkata. These disappeared overnight. What particularly pained the former Chief Minister, however, was the removal of the Biswa Bangla logo she had designed from intersections across Kolkata and elsewhere in the State.

Ms. Banerjee, who has also pursued painting, designed a logo featuring the

Bengali letter “B” on a globe, symbolising “Biswa Bangla”, which roughly translates as “Where the World Meets Bengal”. Launched in September 2013, the Biswa Bangla brand was conceived as a symbol of Bengal’s distinct cultural identity.

Painting town saffron

Amid the removal of symbols and statues, Kolkata’s colourscape is changing. From the Trinamool Congress’s signature blue-and-

white scheme that dominated government offices and party establishments, the colours of public buildings are increasingly turning saffron. Soon after the BJP’s victory, the West Bengal Assembly and Nabanna, State Secretariat, began adopting saffron hues.

Several such instances of white-and-blue Trinamool Congress party offices being repainted saffron have been reported from different parts of the State, including Asansol, Kanksa

and Falta.

During the 2026 West Bengal Assembly election campaign, BJP leaders, including Suwendu Adhikari and Dilip Ghosh, promised to replicate the governance model introduced in Uttar Pradesh under Yogi Adityanath. They cited the use of bulldozers in Uttar Pradesh to demolish illegal structures as an example of decisive governance.

Bulldozer action

Within days of assuming office, bulldozers began rolling through Kolkata. From stalls outside New Market to buildings in the predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods of Topsia and Tiljala that had allegedly been constructed without sanctioned plans, demolition drives became a near-daily occurrence. Ministers in the newly elected government visited demolition sites and spoke to the media about the need for such action.

Soon, the anti-encroachment drive extended to railway stations, which serve as a lifeline for lakhs of commuters. Hundreds of people selling tea, *phuchka* and other fast food items watched as their small establishments were demolished.

At Dum Dum station, a large contingent of the Railway Protection Force, the Government Railway Police and the West Bengal police was deployed on the night of May 30. Hawkers and leaders of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions,

the trade union wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), resisted the drive. However, they were no match for the large security presence. “We have all voted for them [the BJP] to come to power. We plead with folded hands not to push us to the ground. How will our families survive without this shop?” said a tea stall owner at Dum Dum station.

In some cases, eviction drives at Brace Bridge railway station and Hastings have been stayed by the Calcutta High Court.

“The latest threat is in Nimtala near the railway line, where around 800 people are affected. The Calcutta High Court is hearing the matter, but threats of eviction continue every day,” said Srabanti Sarkari, a State committee member of MuktoKantha Mahila Samity, a collective of homeless working women in Kolkata.

Ms. Sarkari said in Hastings, where around 700 people live under a flyover, the police had attempted to evict residents despite a stay order granted by the Calcutta High Court in September 2025. The order remained in force as of June 2026.

Amid the evictions, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw met Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on June 6. At a joint press conference, the two leaders announced an investment of ₹1 lakh crore to upgrade railway infrastructure in the State. The funds will be

used for the modernisation of 102 Amrit Bharat stations and the construction of 538 flyovers and underpasses. A day after the meeting between the BJP leaders, several bulldozers arrived on Jadavpur Station Road and began razing shanties, makeshift shops and hawkers’ stalls on the night of June 7.

The eviction drive was met with resistance as CPI (M) leaders Srijan Bhattacharya, Ushasie Chakraborty and Sujan Chakraborty reached the site and demanded rehabilitation for hawkers before the stalls and shanties were demolished.

Mr. Bhattacharya said when the Trinamool Congress came to power after defeating the Left Front, it had acted similarly.

“The Trinamool Congress is getting a taste of its own medicine,” he said.

BJP leaders argue that the State cannot progress as long as hawkers occupy footpaths and areas around railway lines.

“If the footpaths are occupied and the stations are occupied, public life comes to a standstill for the sake of a few people. How will West Bengal move forward?” Minister and senior BJP leader Dilip Ghosh said.

Book sellers, college students and those who cherish Kolkata’s intellectual culture fear that the books may be next.

shrabana.chatterjee@thehindu.co.in, shivsa-hays@thehindu.co.in

Bihar excise constable aspirants pelt stones over ‘shortage of trains’

Police fire in air, lob tear gas shells to disperse a mob of over 200 young men demanding special train; ‘anti-social elements with ulterior motives’ behind early morning ruckus at station: officials; security personnel, railway officials injured; six held

Press Trust of India
PATNA

Police fired in the air, lobbed tear gas shells and took recourse to lathi charge after more than 200 people resorted to stone pelting and vandalism at Patna’s Patliputra railway station over alleged shortage of trains for aspirants appearing for the excise constable recruitment examination, officials said Sunday.

Officials, however, maintained that appropriate arrangements of train services were ensured for students, alleging that “anti-social elements” with ulterior motives might be behind the “ruckus” created at the station.

Six persons have been arrested, and a search is on to track down others involved in the early morn-



People running across tracks to board a train, in Patna on Sunday. PTI

ing mayhem at Patliputra station, where security personnel and railway officials were also left injured in stone pelting.

According to Inspector General in-charge of the Railway Protection Force for East Central Zone Amresh Kumar, trouble erupted around midnight when “more than 200 young men turned up at the Pata-

liputra station. Trains had been ferrying students to various parts of the State for the exams of the Excise Department scheduled on Sunday, Mr. Kumar said.

“The troublemakers alleged that arrangements were inadequate and squatted on the tracks, demanding a special train that could help them reach their destination in time,”

he said.

The IG, who had reached the spot along with a contingent of RPF and GRP, said that the police informed the railway authorities about the sudden rush and around 2 a.m., a special train arrived. However, those squatting on the tracks refused to budge, and when police personnel tried to disperse them, they indulged in stone throwing, he said.

Normalcy restored

“Normalcy was restored at the station, where tight security arrangements are in place, by 3 a.m. Though, as a last resort, we had to order lathi charge and firing of tear gas shells,” he added.

According to a statement issued by the office of SP, Railway, Patna, eight rounds were also fired in

the air to disperse the mob, and though an unspecified number of security personnel and other officials were injured in the stone pelting, no hurt to passengers or damage to railway property was reported.

Train services hit

The IG said, “It appears that many of the young men at the station were anti-social elements who actually wanted to foment trouble so that the exams would get cancelled. Their antics affected traffic at the station where two passenger and a goods train remained stranded for hours. Other trains which had to pass through Patliputra station were run on alternative routes till normalcy was restored.”

Patna Zone IG Jitendra Rana said that an FIR will be lodged in connection with the incident.

CPI(M) targeting Rahul after getting votes by ‘holding up his posters’: K.C. Venugopal

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



K.C. Venugopal

Accusing the Communist Party of India (Marxist) of targeting Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to hide its own failures, All India Congress Committee general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said that outside Kerala, the party managed to maintain its Parliament representation only with the support of the Congress and its allies.

On Saturday, former Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had accused Mr. Gandhi of taking political positions that will help the BJP, instead of strengthening the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc.

Mr. Venugopal said in a Facebook post on Sunday that the CPI(M)’s reactions revealed its “political inferiority complex”, which has reduced it to the Opposition. “Whether in Rajasthan or Tamil Nadu, those

who won after attracting votes by holding up Mr. Gandhi’s posters are now trying to insult him by calling him an ED agent... Anyone who understands politics will understand that the CPI(M)’s miserable failure in Kerala is the real reason behind such reactions,” he said.

Defending the alliance with the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) in Tamil Nadu, he said the Congress had collaborated with the TVK not out of greed for power, but to avoid President’s Rule.

“The CPI(M) conveniently forgets that it also later followed the same political stance taken by the Congress. While the Congress has always worked with the wider interests of the country in mind, the CPI(M) is guided by its own narrow interests. The INDIA bloc is a broad platform formed by the Congress to protect the country’s democracy and Constitution from the BJP’s dictatorship. The alliance was formed with the aim of ousting the BJP from power. Sitaram Yechury, who was the then CPI(M) general secretary, was clearly aware of the objectives of forming the alliance,” he said.

He said Mr. Gandhi is leading an uncompromising fight against the BJP, which uses investigative agencies to eliminate political opponents. “Mr. Gandhi himself is a victim of this personally,” said Mr. Venugopal

3 children, man drown in A.P.

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA



People gather to witness rescue operations in Palnadu district on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Four persons, three of them children, drowned in the Krishna river when the boat in which they were travelling capsized near Konuru village in Palnadu district of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday. Six passengers were rescued.

The deceased were identified as Battula Karthik, 12, Konatha Chaitanya, 26, Gandham Saini,

10, and Gandham Sandhya, 8.

The deceased were from the Marrichettupala

lem and Chilakaluripet areas.

They had come to Konuru to attend a function at the house of K. Gangaiah and went on a boat ride after the function. “Local people jumped into the water, rescued six persons, and brought them to the bund,” said Ramana, a resident.

There were no life jackets or other safety material in the boat, the villagers alleged.

Keep close watch on SIR: Meenakshi Natarajan

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Telangana Congress conducted a series of virtual meetings to train party leaders on voter mapping and the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, with senior leaders urging cadres to remain vigilant and safeguard every ge-

nuine vote.

The meetings were led by AICC Telangana in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan and TPCC president Mahesh Kumar Goud.

Ms. Natarajan alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Election Commission were facilitating large-scale voter deletions in many parts of India.

Haryana to begin SIR from today

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Electoral Officer A. Sreenivas on Sunday said the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls will begin across the State on June 15 in accordance with the directions of the Election Commission of India.

Under the exercise, booth-level officers (BLOs) will conduct door-to-door

verification of voters and collect enumeration forms between June 15 and July 14, he said.

Haryana currently has 2,06,55,929 registered voters and 20,629 polling stations. BLOs have been deployed at all polling stations and will visit every household to verify voter details, he said.

Mr. Sreenivas said BLOs will make at least three attempts to contact each

household. “If family members are unavailable, the BLO will place the enumeration form under the door and leave a notice containing their name and mobile number,” he said.

The ECI has specified 11 categories of documents for verification, including identity cards or pension payment orders issued to employees and pensioners of the Central government, State government, or PSUs.

സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാർ ഇനിര ഗ്യാരണ്ടി പ്രകാരമുള്ള പ്രിയദർശിനി സ്ത്രീ സൗജന്യ യാത്രാ പദ്ധതി

സംസ്ഥാനതല ഉദ്ഘാടനം ശ്രീ.വി.ഡി.സതീശൻ (ബഹു.കേരള മുഖ്യമന്ത്രി)

സ്ത്രീ ശാക്തീകരണ പുതുയുഗയാത്രയ്ക്ക് കെഎസ്ആർടിസിയിലൂടെ തുടങ്ങണം

പ്രിയദർശിനി സൗജന്യ യാത്ര

ജൂൺ 15 തീയതി രാവിലെ 08.30 ന് തിരുവനന്തപുരം സെൻട്രൽ ബസ് സ്റ്റേഷനിൽ

INBRIEF

Govt. is lacking coordination in managing Nipah: Pinarayi

Alleging a lack of coordination in the Kerala government's handling of the situation after a Nipah virus infection was reported in Kozhikode, Leader of the Opposition Pinarayi Vijayan has said that the government should take immediate steps to prevent the spread of the virus and to ensure necessary treatment to the patient. "...The Health Minister is attempting to wash his hands of all the responsibilities by blaming the officials," Mr. Vijayan alleged.

Mild tremors felt in Bhadradri Kothagudem of Telangana

Mild tremors lasting for a few seconds were felt in some parts of Bhadradri Kothagudem district in Telangana in the early hours of Sunday. According to sources, residents in some parts of Kothagudem and Palvancha experienced light tremors. An earthquake of 3.8-magnitude on the Richter scale of 10 km depth was recorded at 2.26 a.m. on Sunday, officials said, quoting data from the National Centre for Seismology.

UDF endorses demand for bifurcation of Malappuram

The long-standing demand to bifurcate Kerala's Malappuram district gained fresh momentum on Sunday after the ruling United Democratic Front (UDF) endorsed it. A district-level UDF meeting discussed the matter and decided to seek the appointment of a special officer to examine its feasibility. UDF district chairman K.P. Abdul Majeed said bifurcation had become a necessity, citing "inequitable distribution of government resources" across the district.

Activists seek accountability from Centre at CJP protests

Protests were held in Hyderabad and Bengaluru as part of a nationwide campaign pressing for Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation; in Bengaluru, Sonam Wangchuk says country has 'trust deficit'

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD/BENGALURU

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Sunday held protests in Hyderabad and Bengaluru as part of a nationwide campaign seeking the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over exam irregularities. The protests were held at Dharna Chowk in Hyderabad and Freedom Park in Bengaluru, with climate activist Sonam Wangchuk joining protesters in both places.

Dharna Chowk witnessed an unusual blend of satire and dissent, apart from "Cockroach is the New Tiger" posters and chants demanding accountability. The protest also gradually evolved into a wider conversation on educational inequality, democratic freedom and political accountability, with speakers repeatedly questioning the state of India's education system and the responsibility of those in power.

People started arriving from around 9 a.m., carrying placards demanding



Founder of CJP Abhijeet Dipke, actor Prakash Raj, and environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk during a protest at Bengaluru's Freedom Park on Sunday; (right) CJP activists stage a protest at Dharna Chowk near Indira Park in Hyderabad on Sunday. ANI & G. RAMAKRISHNA



Mr. Pradhan's resignation. Posters reading 'Dharmendra Pradhan Resign' competed for attention while volunteers and supporters slowly filled the tent erected at the venue.

As the morning progressed, the crowd continued to swell. By noon, the tent had reached capacity, forcing many participants to stand outside.

The loudest cheers of the day erupted shortly after 11 a.m. when Mr. Wangchuk arrived. Mr. Wangchuk said education and environmental protection should remain the twin pil-

lars of India's aspirations to become a developed nation. The four-hour-long protest concluded around 2 p.m.

Bengaluru protest

In Bengaluru, amid tight security and heavy rain, students, unions and supporters who called themselves "cockroaches" gathered in large numbers as the CJP held its first protest in the city. While many said they were there to demand the Union Education Minister's resignation, others said they saw the CJP as a movement reflecting public an-

ger against the government's agenda, be it politics over religion, corruption or a lack of accountability on multiple issues.

Among those who joined the protest were actor Prakash Raj, actor Kiran Srinivas, and filmmakers Senani Hegde and Krupakar B.S.

Abhijeet Dipke, founder of the CJP, said there were lakhs of students who could have become doctors in the future and gone on to save lives, but ended up losing their own.

CJP members said they would continue protesting until the Minister resigned.

Amid re-evaluations, retests, students opt for backup colleges over DU dream

Ashna Butani
NEW DELHI

Delays in the admission process for undergraduate seats in Central universities in Delhi amid disruptions in the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) and alleged irregularities in the CBSE's On-Screen Marking system, have left aspirants anxious about their future. Many such students told The Hindu that they have taken admissions in private colleges and State universities, where the process has already begun.

Meanwhile, teachers' associations in Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) have criticised centralised testing systems such as CUET for delaying academic calendars.

Garima (name changed on request), a private school student in Delhi who has been a topper throughout, was disappointed on seeing her CBSE Class 12 results. Now awaiting her re-evaluated marks, she said, "I had dreams of studying economics at a top Delhi University college. But I will only know whether I can make it after I see the re-evaluated marks."

To secure her future, she has taken admission at a private university in Maharashtra, even as her dream of studying at DU remains alive. However, opting for Plan B comes at a price.

"I have already paid the fees. It is refundable, but after deductions. For instance, if I cancel my admission before July 15, they will deduct 10% of the fees

DU teachers said since 2022 they have noted delays in admission process after CUET was made mandatory

paid, amounting to ₹22,000. After that, the deductions will increase," said Ms. Garima.

However, this option is not open to all students. Many said that despite doing well in internal examinations, they had failed in some subjects, which has made them ineligible for many colleges.

A student from Bhubaneswar said she dreamt of pursuing graduation from DU. "However, I scored quite low in several subjects, even as I tallied my responses with the answer key and found many answers to be the same."

She has now decided to attend a State university, saying not all colleges will wait for the CBSE to issue revised score sheets.

Impact on academics

DU teachers said that since 2022, when CUET was made mandatory for admissions, they have noted delays in the admission process, which in turn push back the academic calendar and increase the workload for teachers and students.

Abha Dev Habib, a professor at Miranda House, said that in the past, admissions would be over by July for students on the first, second, and third lists.

(With inputs by Anisha Jyotirmayee)

FM reviews progress of Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway work

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday inspected the ongoing construction and development works of the Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway at Devanahalli in Karnataka as part of the 'Pragati Path Yatree Darshan' programme.

During the visit, Ms. Sitharaman reviewed the progress of road construction, traffic management measures, and infrastructure development associated with the Greenfield expressway project, which is being developed under the Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I scheme to provide high-speed connectivity between Bengaluru and Chennai.

Ms. Sitharaman said that projects such as the Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway reflected the commitment of the Narendra Modi government to building quality infrastruc-

ture that accelerated economic growth and improved the ease of living for citizens.

She noted that the expressway would strengthen connectivity to major industrial and logistics hubs, including Hoskote, Malur, Bangarpet, the Narasapura Industrial Area, and the Aerospace and Defence Parks. "The project is also expected to improve access to the proposed Multimodal Logistics Park at Dobbsspet," she said.

The Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway has been identified as a priority corridor under the Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor. The project originates at Hoskote near the junction of NH-4 and NH-207 in Karnataka.

While the Karnataka portion was completed and became informally accessible to motorists in December 2024, sections in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu remain under construction.

Timings DELHI			
MONDAY, JUN. 15			
RISE	05:23	SET	19:21
RISE	05:05	SET	19:58
TUESDAY, JUN. 16			
RISE	05:23	SET	19:21
RISE	06:15	SET	20:59
WEDNESDAY, JUN. 17			
RISE	05:24	SET	19:21
RISE	07:28	SET	21:50

Delhi Weather		
Delhi City	max	min
Safdarjang	38	26
Palam	38	26

Delhi Palam Today
39°C The weather will be hot and uneasy. Night will be comfortable. Spell of duststorm and thundershower with strong winds may occur.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
37°C Morning will be comfortable The weather will be very warm. Night also will be comfortable. Chances of duststorm and thundershower.

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Notification No. 5484/OSMCL/2026 Date: 11.06.2026

NOTICE INVITING Re-Tender for Selection of Service Provider for Biomedical Equipment Maintenance Service in the State of Odisha

Online Bids through e-Tender portal (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>) are invited from eligible Service Providers for Biomedical Equipment Maintenance Service in the State of Odisha as per the particulars mentioned below :

Sl.	Bid Reference No.	Item Name	Bid Document Cost inclusive of GST (Rs.)
1.	OSMCL/2026-27/Re-tender_BEMP/01	Re-tender for Selection of Service Provider for Biomedical Equipment Maintenance Service in the State of Odisha	Rs.5,900/-

Sl. No.	Particulars	Date and time
1.	Date & time of release of bid	11/06/2026, 10.30 AM
2.	Date & time of Pre-bid Meeting	18/06/2026, 11.30 AM Venue : Conference Hall, Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd., In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar
3.	Date & time of Online bid submission	Start Date & Time End Date & Time 25/06/2026, 3.00 PM 15/07/2026, 5.00 PM
4.	Date & time of online Technical Bid Opening	20/07/2026, 3.00 PM
5.	Date of opening of Price Bid	To be informed to the qualified bidders

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites : <https://osmcl.odisha.gov.in> and <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> . The Authority reserves the right to accept / reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

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IN THE COURT OF Dr. Ambika Sharma
Civil Judge Jr. Div., Chandigarh
SAMRAT PLYWOOD LTD
Vs.
JASUJA PLYWOOD STUDIO
CNR No. CHCH02-002946-2025
Next Date:- 02-09-2026
SUIT FOR RECOVERY
PUBLICATION ISSUED TO:
JASUJA PLYWOOD STUDIO:-
THROUGH ITS PARTNER SH HARISH
JASUJA C 11 INDUSTRIAL AREA
POLICE LINE SRI GANGANAGAR
RAJASTHAN 335001
I/ND ADD SHOP NO 82 LAKKAR MANDI
SRI GANGANAGAR RAJASTHAN 335001
I/ND ADD SHOP NO 82 LAKKAR MANDI
SRI GANGANAGAR RAJASTHAN 335001
In above titled case, the defendant(s) / respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s) / respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 02-09-2026 at 10:00am
For details login to <https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs=distrcourt&district=Chandigarh>
Dated this day of 02-15-2026
Civil Judge Jr Div, Chandigarh

In the Court of the Principal Senior Civil Judge : Nellore, A.P. State.
S.O.P.No. 13 / 2026
Vutukuru Venkata Prasanna Kumar,
S/o Late Vutukuru Venkata Subba Rao
- Petitioner
Vs
1. Vutukuru Venkata Nagendra Kumar,
and 5 others
- Respondents
To,
5. The Manager, O/o The Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF), Ground Floor, Jeevan Vihar Building, 3, Parliament Street, New Delhi - 110001.
Please Take Notice that the above S.O.P. is filed against you and the same is Posted on 24-06-2026 for your appearance.
Therefore, you are hereby directed to appear on 24-06-2026 at 10-30 A.M. either in person or through your advocate before the Honorable court and in default the matter will be decided ex parte.
Manne Koteswara Rao, M.Com., B.L.,
D. Surendra, M.Sc., L.L.B.,
Advocates for the Petitioners, Nellore.

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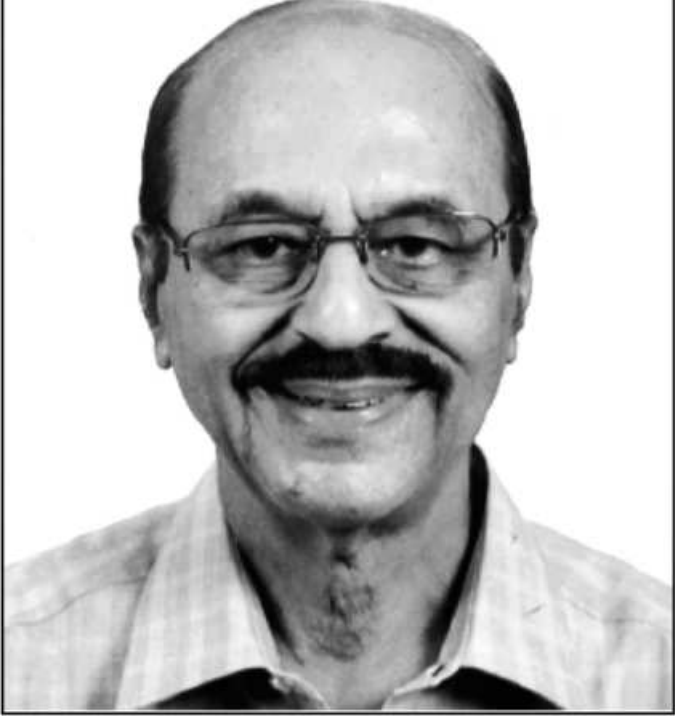
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1. Mr. Raj Nandan,
Director, M/s. Classic Display System Pvt. Ltd, Plot No. 109, 110, 119, 120, Sector-6, IMT, Manesar, Gurugram, Haryana. Email: raj@classicrodisplay.in
2. Mr. Nishant,
M/s. Classic Display System Pvt. Ltd, Plot No. 109, 110, 119, 120, Sector-6, IMT, Manesar, Gurugram, Haryana.
WHEREAS the above named Petitioner has filed a Petition to this Council against the Respondents for the payment due against the materials supplied to the respondent and interest thereon the PETITIONER as well as the RESPONDANT are hereby summoned to appear in this court in person or by a pleader duly authorized (Vakalat) shall be produced by the Counsel who appears before the Council meeting) and able to answer all material questions relating to this suit or shall who accompanied by some person able to answer all such questions on the date of next hearing at Mini Conference Hall, Office Of The Industries Commissioner And Director Of Industries And Commerce, First Floor, SIDCO Corporate Building, Gundy Chemical, -600032. To answer the claim and you are directed to produce on that day all the document upon which you intend to rely in support of your defence.
Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before mentioned, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence as ex parte.
Given under my hand and seal of the Council on this 08 June 2026.
Yours Truly,
M/s. N. Devi
Associate, Chennai

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE
DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

11th ANNIVERSARY

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Biju Dharmapalan

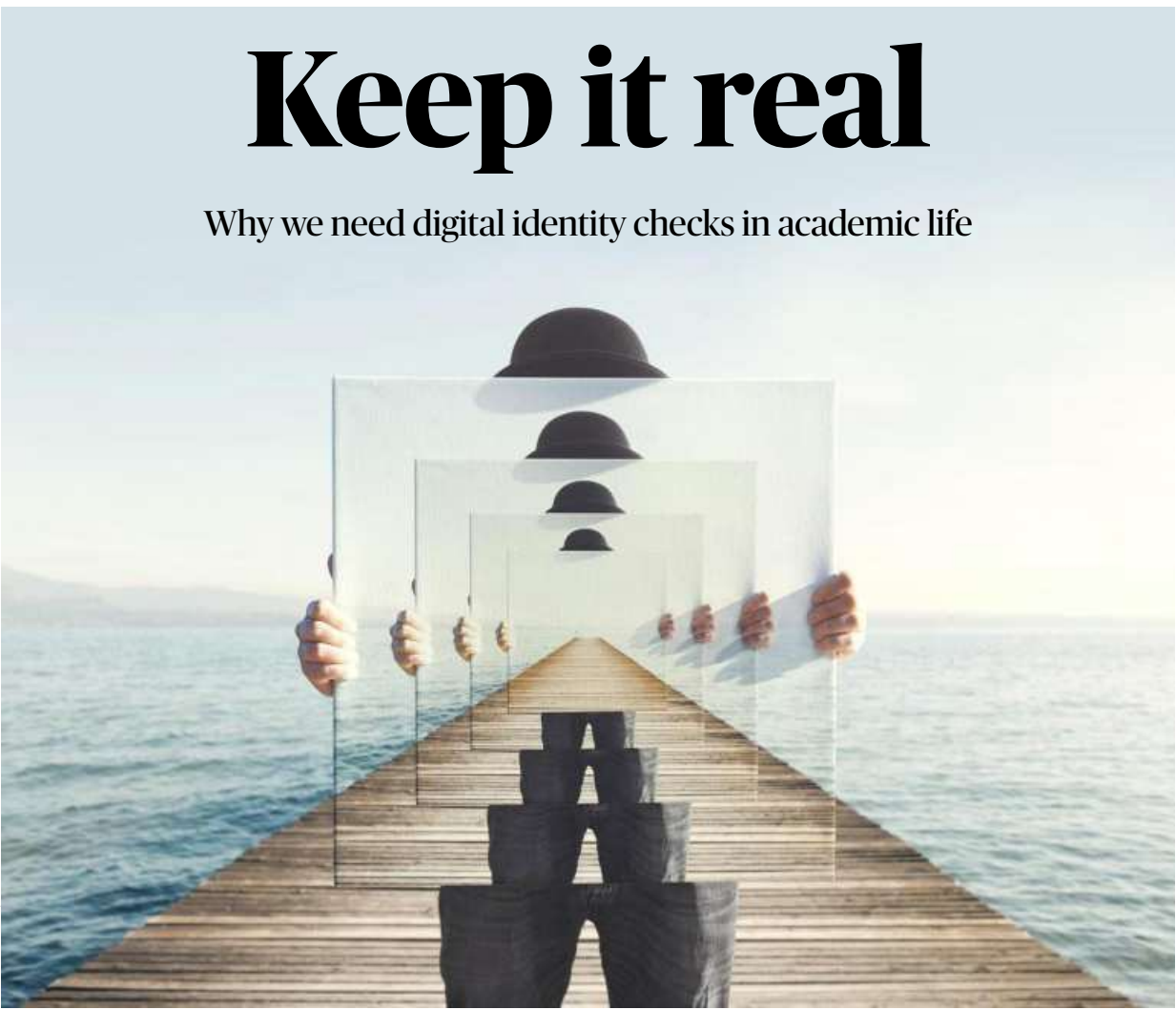
In an age where a researcher's reputation is often built – and judged – online before a single conversation takes place, the integrity of one's digital academic identity has become as critical as the research itself. Before a paper is read or a conversation begins, a quick online search often defines first impressions. Yet, the systems designed to track scholarly output are increasingly failing to present a coherent and accurate picture of researchers.

This raises an urgent question: Do we need systematic digital identity checks to prevent private digital mismatching of academic profiles? The answer is an unequivocal yes.

Academic databases and professional platforms like ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID), Scopus, LinkedIn, and others were designed to clarify scholarly contributions. Instead, they frequently generate a labyrinth of redundant profiles, misattributed publications, and incongruous affiliations. What was intended to improve visibility is, paradoxically, compromising accuracy.

Digital mismatch

Digital identity ambiguity often begins innocuously. While platforms such as ORCID, LinkedIn, and indexing databases and pre-print servers all go to some lengths to distinguish between researchers who share the same name, they update according to their own schedules and have a variety of rules for their us-



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Keep it real

Why we need digital identity checks in academic life

ers. Even on a single platform, some details are captured more reliably than others. Scopus, for instance, receives information from the journals that it indexes but the author profiles it produces do not always reflect a complete affiliation history.

Occasionally, when a researcher changes their institution or affiliation, they neglect to update their profile. Over time, these distortions emerge as major issues in the profiling of researchers. In today's academic environment, dri-

ven by metrics, discrepancies are not merely technical errors; they shape how researchers are perceived.

There is a common perception that digital technologies facilitate easy verification. But a simple name search can yield numerous profiles and, in the absence of a standardised identity or coherent metadata, differentiating one individual from another is a challenge.

Even seasoned evaluators may find it difficult to ascertain which profile ac-

curately reflects the "authentic" researcher. Thus, an increase in data does not inherently lead to enhanced comprehension.

Identity checks

Digital identity verification guarantees that the online version of a researcher's academic trajectory is accurately represented. Moreover, it reinstates the individual's autonomy within a system that frequently operates outside their immediate supervision. Three pragmatic measures can markedly

enhance digital coherence:

An updated ORCID profile: Most researchers have a unique ORCID throughout their lifetime. Even when a researcher changes affiliation, this remains the same. The profile should be linked to PURE and Scopus. Keeping affiliations and research output up to date makes one's ORCID page a stable reference point. Moreover, including the ORCID identifier when submitting papers allows publishers to add work to your record once it is published.

Institutional profile: Linking ORCID with institutional systems like PURE or the Indian Research Information Network System (IRINS) allows verified data such as publications and affiliations to be synchronised automatically.

Audit external platforms: Regularly checking profiles in databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar helps identify duplicates, correct misattributions, and merge fragmented records.

Although personal attention is crucial, academic institutions, publishers, and database providers must collaborate to develop interoperable systems that mitigate fragmentation.

Standardised IDs, enhanced integration across platforms, and proactive error-detection methods ought to be standard practice rather than anomalies.

A researcher's digital identity influences visibili-

ty, credibility, and opportunity. In contrast to a conventional CV, which is meticulously crafted and fixed, a digital profile is fluid, broadly available, and frequently outside direct oversight. This also serves as a lasting documentation of a career, referenced by future partners, institutions, and historians of science.

Ensuring its truth transcends personal advantage; it pertains to academic honesty. As the quantity of academic data proliferates, the likelihood of misrepresentation concurrently increases. The resolution resides in awareness, regular maintenance, and structural reform, as your profile speaks for you, not just your study.

The writer is the Dean - Academic Affairs, Garden City University, Bengaluru, and an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru. bjudharmapalan@gmail.com

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Sd/- Registrar



OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

I graduated in 2023. I have been preparing for the SSC-CGL from 2021 but have not cleared it. My English and Maths are weak. I am from a rural area in Rajasthan and my family depends on me. What can I do? Raju

Dear Raju,

Struggling with SSC CGL doesn't mean you lack ability. It may be that the exam format does not play to your strengths.

First, register for the Mukhyamantri Yuva Sambal Yojana (Rajasthan), which provides an unemployment allowance for up to two years along with a four-hour internship in a government department.

Your graduation and SSC preparation make you suitable for Operations Executive, Data Entry, or Customer Support roles that offer decent pay and can provide immediate financial support.

Also consider easier exams with lower Maths requirements such as SSC Stenographer or the RRB NTPC Group D exams.

If you continue with CGL, focus on Percentage, Ratio, and Average, as nearly 60% of questions can be tackled through these areas. Find teachers who explain the concepts in Hindi and in a way that you can understand.

For English, read newspapers or watch English news with subtitles. If your foundation is weak, use *Neetu Singh Volume 1*, a trusted guide for Hindi-medium students. If government exams do not work out by the year end, consider a technical course through ITI or RSLDC that offers free or subsidised

Manage time wisely

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help

training in solar panel installation, electrical work, and digital literacy.

I am in the third year of the five-year Law course. I want to be a company secretary but am afraid of failure. I am wondering if I should do an LLM. But I want to work in the corporate sector. What should I do next? Bhumi

Dear Bhumi,

Both LLM and CS are valuable for corporate law but serve different roles.

A Company Secretary focuses on compliance and governance and ensures that companies follow the Companies Act, SEBI norms, and Board procedures. The demand is high, as every listed company requires a CS.

An LLM focuses on deep legal research, complex litigation, or niche areas like IP and Taxation. It adds prestige and specialisation, especially from a top global university. However, companies often value law firm experience more than a domestic LLM.

The CS pass rate is low but, as a Law student, you can skip CSEET and enter the Executive Level. Around 60–70% of the CS syllabus is law-based, with tax and financial management being the main challenges. Enrol for CS Executive now. You can make significant progress by graduation, and having CS (Executive) or CS (Finalist) on your CV can strengthen your placement prospects.

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Pursue an LLM only from a top global university or a leading NLU for Corporate Law. Focus on internships in in-house legal departments of MNCs or top corporate law firms and highlight your CS journey.

I am in Class 12 and want to prepare for CLAT. I am struggling with time management and not sure about the right approach. Kanika

Dear Kanika,

CLAT preparation during Class 12 is a balancing act, but your board exams and entrance preparation can complement each other. Follow the 60–40 rule. On weekdays, spend two to three hours on CLAT, read the newspaper, and practise a specific section. On weekends, spend five to six hours on mock tests and two hours analysing mistakes. Use English and History/ Polity classes to improve reading comprehension and GK. Take active breaks and switch to CLAT puzzles when tired of Board preparation. Give CLAT complete focus till December, then shift entirely to Board revisions from January to March.

CLAT tests reading speed and critical thinking. Don't memorise laws; learn to apply principles to facts. Read editorials, understand events, improve reading speed, and strengthen Class 10 Maths. Start taking a mock every 15 days to understand the exam pattern and your baseline. Analyse your mistakes carefully.

Since CLAT has a -0.25 penalty, focus on improving

accuracy and then speed.

I am preparing for the Civil Services along with a Master's. The preparation for CSE is overwhelming and I also have arrears. Please help me. Sriya

Dear Sriya,

Feeling overwhelmed is common among UPSC aspirants. Shift your focus to taking small, actionable steps. First print out the UPSC syllabus and mark off completed topics. This can motivate you to be consistent.

Use one standard book per subject, one monthly magazine, and one newspaper. Avoid collecting too much material. Spend 70% of your daily study time on current topics to prevent new backlogs and 30% on old ones. Use the first half of Sunday to clear the most important backlog and keep it a no-new-topic day.

For backlogs, read class handouts first and watch videos only for difficult sections. Be consistent, even on difficult days. When your Master's workload is high, commit to reading the newspaper and solving five MCQs to keep your UPSC preparation active.

Understand that your day has to be divided between sleep, studies, and personal life. If your Master's takes five hours, you may have three hours for UPSC. Accept this and use it wisely. If your Master's subject matches your UPSC Optional (such as History, Geography, or Sociology), use university resources to reduce your UPSC workload and improve your writing for Mains.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge



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Fuller expression

A rapid decline in inflation appears unlikely even if the war ends

India’s May retail inflation at 3.93%, the highest in the current CPI series and roughly a 15-month high if compared with the previous series, has begun to reflect the pass-through effects of surging food and fuel costs more clearly than in previous months. However, last month’s wholesale inflation numbers, the first under the new WPI series and due later this month alongside India’s first Producer Price Index (PPI), should reveal how much of the price shock producers and wholesalers continue to absorb. May’s food inflation rose at a faster clip to 4.78% from 4.20% in April. While transport inflation rose by 1.75% after a marginal contraction in April, a subdivision within the sector – transport services for goods – surged by 7.63%, signalling growing price pass-through. This was largely driven by the four tranches of petrol and diesel price increases beginning in mid-May. Significantly, the sharp rise in commercial LPG prices – by about ₹1,300 per 19-kg cylinder, representing an increase of over 75% since February – appears to be reflected in inflation in the restaurants and accommodation services category, which stood at 5.75%, the second-highest division after personal care and miscellaneous goods and services. Inflation in the latter category reached 18.46%, reflecting soaring precious metals prices. Domestic LPG’s second price revision by ₹29 earlier this month will likely find a fuller expression in June’s consumer food price inflation.

Although May’s inflation remains below the RBI’s 4% target and within its 2%-6% tolerance band, the RBI retained its neutral stance at its latest monetary policy review, signalling concern over the possibility of further price pressures. Its intervention in the foreign exchange market through dollar sales has meanwhile helped shore up the rupee, Asia’s worst-performing currency since the U.S.-Israeli conflict with Iran escalated. The currency, which briefly approached ₹97 to the dollar in May, is now trading closer to ₹95-₹96. The Centre may nevertheless draw some comfort from the fact that core inflation, which excludes food and fuel, remained relatively contained at around 3.8%-3.9% in May, largely unchanged from recent months. This coincides with signs of a U.S.-Iran rapprochement and uninterrupted shipping through the Hormuz. Yet, uncertainty persists over whether Iran may impose fees or restrictions on transit through the waterway, which could keep fuel prices elevated for energy-importing nations such as India. Even if crude prices soften, oil marketing companies are unlikely to immediately reverse retail price increases as they seek to recover losses. LPG prices, too, may remain sticky. Thus, while the prospects for a durable peace may have improved, a rapid decline in inflation appears unlikely.

Series of gaps

Distrust of police has led to underreporting of child sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse in India remains persistently under-reported and the state response to it has shown up trenchant systemic inefficiencies. In over 90% of cases, including the recent Sular case in Coimbatore in which a charge sheet was filed last week, the threat to a child is from within the family’s trusted circles. Public imagination often fixates on predatory strangers, which is not conducive to helping families and communities identify a risk in time. Migrant and working-class communities are especially at risk as they are less integrated in local protective social networks. Second, abandoned industrial sites and poorly maintained common land tend to become crime scenes. But despite the ‘Safe City’ project and the recognition of child-friendly urban development paradigms, urban redesign still focuses on core areas of major metros. The social safety dimensions of urban wetland restoration, like that of the Noyyal river, are often overlooked as well. Next, while POCSO trials are required to conclude within a year of the special court taking cognisance, POCSO courts face an 89% pendency rate and conviction rates have historically ranged between 3% and 30%, undermining confidence in the police and judiciary. The Sular case prompted promises of swift action, but this is only one case; systemic reforms to protect vulnerable children remain elusive. In 2024, the NCRB recorded 69,191 POCSO cases involving more than 70,000 child victims.

Public distrust discourages residents from reporting suspicions and encourages families fearing police apathy to search for missing children themselves, potentially allowing the perpetrators to hide evidence or flee. Ultimately, when the state fails to deliver due punishment, the people perceive the police to be a bureaucratic hurdle, leaving children more vulnerable. Repeatedly strengthening penalties merely suppresses reporting in most cases where the offender is familiar. Even the 2018 and 2019 amendments to the POCSO Act reacted to public outrage rather than considered evidence and focused on harsher punishments. Both comprehensive longitudinal data on recidivism and analyses of whether harsher legal penalties are effective deterrents remain scarce. While data collection has improved, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has noted that qualitative analyses of acquittals rarely inform policy changes. Finally, survivors and families face secondary victimisation from insensitive administrative responses and media reports. Together with the lack of policing informed by trauma response and stigma, true safety continues to evade thousands of children leaving them vulnerable to a cycle of unreported and unpunished violence.

Today, June 15, marks the 84th anniversary of a historic meeting we have allowed ourselves to forget, which led to the birth of the Indian National Army (INA). I learned about it on a visit to the Thai-Bharat Cultural Lodge (TBCL) in Bangkok, discovering a remarkable, overlooked chapter of history that reveals Thailand’s vital role as a neutral, strategic beacon for Indian revolutionaries seeking refuge from British colonial rule. From its humble beginnings as a hub for cultural and intellectual exchange, the organisation evolved into a cornerstone of the Indian independence movement, providing the essential infrastructure for the formation of the INA.

From culture to cause

The roots of this alliance were sown in 1927 during a historic visit to Siam, now Thailand, by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, who met with King Prajadhipok (Rama VII). Their dialogue centred on the deep, enduring connections between India and Thailand – ancient ties rooted in religion, philosophy, and shared cultural narratives such as the Ramayana and the Thai Ramakien. Inspired by his vision, Prafulla Kumar Sen, a Bengali scholar who became known as Swami Satyananda Puri, arrived in Bangkok in 1932.

A brilliant intellectual who had taught at the University of Calcutta and Visva-Bharati University, the Swami immersed himself in the Thai language and culture, mastering it in six months and becoming an esteemed professor at Chulalongkorn University. In 1939, he established the Dharam Ashram, a sanctuary for spiritual and cultural exchange, which served as a focal point for the growing Indian diaspora in Bangkok.

In December 1940, this ashram was transformed into the TBCL. A defining moment in the organisation’s history occurred shortly after, when the Indian Tricolour was hoisted at the Lodge – a bold, defiant gesture that signalled the arrival of the Indian independence movement in Thailand and drew strong protests from the British Ambassador. As the Second World War descended upon Southeast Asia, the TBCL shifted from a cultural institution to an active political base. By late 1941, as Japanese forces advanced, the Lodge became a nexus for Indian nationalists and independence activists.

One of the most instrumental figures in this era was Sardar Giani Pritam Singh, a Sikh missionary and Ghadar Party veteran who had been preaching revolutionary ideals among the Indian diaspora in Bangkok. Operating from gurdwaras and working closely with the TBCL, Pritam Singh established vital covert links with Major Iwaichi Fujiwara, the chief of the Japanese intelligence



Shashi Tharoor

Fourth-term Member of Parliament, Congress party (Lok Sabha) for Thiruvananthapuram, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs and the Sahitya Akademi Award-winning author of 29 books, including, most recently, ‘The Sage Who Reimagined Hinduism: The Life, Lessons and Legacy of Sree Narayana Guru’

An enduring Thailand-India bond that played a pivotal role in India’s independence movement

unit, F-Kikan. In December 1941, the Indian National Council (INC) was founded at the Silpakorn Theatre in Bangkok by a group of nationalists associated with the TBCL, with Swami Satyananda Puri as its president and Debnath Das as its secretary. This organisation played a crucial role in coordinating the efforts of the Indian independence movement, bridging the gap between civilian aspirations and the military mobilisation led by the Indian Independence League (IIL).

Toward organised resistance

The cooperation between these groups culminated in the historic Bangkok Conference, which took place between June 15 and June 23, 1942, at the Silpakorn Theatre. This gathering represented a turning point in the struggle, bringing together more than a hundred representatives of Indian communities and freedom fighters from across Southeast Asia, including Burma, Malaya, and Singapore.

The conference served three primary functions. It brought together diverse nationalist factions under a coherent political and military framework, effectively establishing the IIL as the central body for Indians residing outside of India. It adopted a comprehensive 34-point resolution, which provided the official blueprint for the INA, stipulating that it would be composed of volunteers and former prisoners of war and supervised by the IIL rather than the Japanese military. The delegates urged Japan to formally recognise India as an independent nation and acknowledge the IIL as its sole legitimate representative, reflecting a strategic effort to ensure that the independence movement maintained its own agency despite its reliance on Japanese support.

The struggle began with a tragedy that shook the movement to its core. In March 1942, a plane carrying the Swami and the Sardar, who were en route to a high-level meeting in Tokyo to secure further commitments for the movement, crashed, resulting in their deaths. Their loss was a devastating blow, yet their sacrifice served to deepen the resolve of those who remained and who conferred in June with the Japanese to set up the INA. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose’s arrival in 1943 provided the centralised, charismatic, and revolutionary military leadership needed. He took command of the IIL and the INA, shifting the focus from decentralised regional council discussions toward a unified, disciplined military and political front designed to launch an armed struggle for Indian independence.

While the TBCL’s roots were in intellectual and cultural exchange, Netaji’s arrival accelerated the transition to a mass-mobilisation effort, drawing in thousands of civilian volunteers and former

prisoners of war who were inspired by his call for “Total Mobilization”. Under Bose, the collaboration with the Japanese military was elevated to a high-stakes diplomatic partnership aimed at securing full recognition for the Provisional Government of Free India.

Despite the shift toward a more militarised and centralised command under Netaji, the TBCL continued to serve as a vital institutional bridge. It provided the necessary civilian and cultural cover for many activities that supported the broader independence movement. As the war progressed, the TBCL remained a steadfast centre for the Indian diaspora, even as the focus of the struggle moved to the front lines of the INA’s march toward the Indian border. The Lodge maintained its role as a sanctuary for those committed to the ideals of independence, preserving the vision that had been articulated during the early days of Swami Satyananda Puri’s tenure – that India’s freedom was inextricably linked to the broader cause of Asian liberation from colonial rule.

Keeping history alive

Following the conclusion of the war in 1945, the TBCL was banned by Allied forces and its leaders imprisoned. Even after the conclusion of the war and the dissolution of the INA, the legacy of this era persisted. Thanks to the tireless efforts of figures such as Pandit Raghunath Sharma, the Lodge was successfully re-established in 1946. The Lodge’s survival serves as a testament to the fact that the political and military efforts of the Bose era were supported by the deep-rooted cultural and social networks fostered in the years prior. These networks allowed the movement to survive the vacuum of leadership following the war and continue to inform the historic relationship between India and Thailand.

Today, the TBCL remains the only surviving institution from this era, functioning as a living archive, housing a precious collection of rare texts, historical photographs, and documents that provide an intimate window into the lives of the Indian families who contributed to the fight for freedom.

During my visit I was treated to a passionate tour of the premises by Pandeyji, a descendant of Indian rajpurohiths who had migrated to Thailand three centuries ago. As he evoked the stories behind each grainy photograph and historic document, it became clear that the TBCL stands not just as a library or a museum, but as a monument to the enduring friendship between the people of Thailand and the Indian diaspora – a symbol of the shared courage and determination that defined one of the most critical, yet often forgotten, chapters of the global anti-colonial movement.

The ‘seven-point IQ opportunity’ for Indian children

What if we could increase the IQ of India’s future generations by seven points with a pivot in the understanding of early childhood development under the Anganwadi system?

For decades, India’s early childhood agenda has focused on ensuring that children survive early childhood, reducing under-five mortality from 43 in 2012 to 32 in 2020 (UNICEF and World Bank data) with sufficient inputs invested toward their health, nutrition, immunisation and sanitation conditions. The Anganwadi system reflects these priorities at scale: approximately eight crore children (ages 0-6 years) receive supplementary nutrition, growth monitoring and health services, alongside counselling and home visits for their parents. However, body and brain development in the early years do not proceed on separate tracks.

Early childhood development is an ecological process in which nutrition, health, and early learning interact dynamically with each other through the body, brain, and environment. The developing brain is highly energy-intensive, consuming nearly one-fifth of the body’s energy at rest. In the first year alone, grey matter volume increases by 149% and the cerebellum by 240% as millions of synapses form in regions associated with movement, language, and planning.

Middle-income evidence is clear

Paediatric research in Jamaica in the 1980s provided hard academic evidence to an idea that many cultures already understood. Researchers working with stunted children found that nutritional supplementation improved physical health alone, but adding regular psychosocial stimulation (love-talk-play and responsive interaction) resulted in stronger cognitive gains.

Similar findings emerged in India from a birth cohort study in Vellore (250 children followed from birth to age 9) where children stunted early in life performed worst on later cognitive assessments, but those who recovered physically also showed better cognitive outcomes.



Beena Koshy

Senior Professor, Developmental Paediatrics, Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore, Tamil Nadu



Riday Chokshi

Senior Associate – National Initiatives and Policy, Rocket Learning

Anganwadis can help boost cognitive development through holistic early intervention

International research on enteric dysfunction and poor sanitation has shown that nutritional inputs are mediated by the child’s environment. A child’s body may receive food, but infection, inflammation, toxic exposure and deprivation of stimulation can adversely influence this very nutrition. In studies in Vellore, children with iron deficiency or high lead exposure in early life, score lower on developmental and cognitive assessments, even when their height and weight appear normal. It is not simply what children eat that matters, but whether their bodies can absorb and use it. Yet, numbers on a growth chart never tell the full story. The quality of the home environment – how much they are talked to, read to, played with and emotionally supported, keeps emerging as a stronger predictor of cognitive outcomes than diet alone.

Most encouragingly, exposure to structured preschool and early stimulation has the potential to transform a generation. Children in the Vellore cohort who attend preschool regularly for 18 to 24 months, including in Anganwadi centres, are scoring seven IQ units higher on cognitive tests than those not attending preschool, even after accounting for poverty, maternal education and early stunting. In a similar Brazilian birth cohort, children who received structured preschool had higher cognition scores by eight units at age five. This is powerful evidence that stimulation and nutrition have strong, independent effects and amplify each other when both are fulfilled.

A role for Anganwadis

Indian policymakers are responding to new evidence quickly. The Anganwadi system has started to incorporate this broader understanding of holistic early childhood development into its core design. This shift is most visible in the rollout of national frameworks such as Aadharshila and Navchetana and programmes such as Poshan Bhi Padhai Bhi. They are critical inputs in redefining neighbourhood Anganwadis as vibrant early childhood education centres that nourish both mind and body. Aadharshila

strengthens play-based preschool education within centres, while Navchetana extends early stimulation into the home, equipping caregivers with simple, science-based ways to support development through everyday interactions.

In clinical practice, we offer these frameworks to parents everyday, helping to turn routine moments into opportunities for learning. We encourage the integration of Navchetana’s “loving, talking and playing” into daily life while feeding, cooking or playing with children. The home lays the foundation of early language, cognition and socio-emotional skills in the first three years, and Anganwadis deepen it through structured play-based activities, storytelling and peer learning from ages three to six.

Systemic community mobilisation initiatives, such as Poshan Pakhwada conducted in April 2026 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development focus on promoting early stimulation for brain development, play-based education in the early years, and the role of parents and communities in reducing screen exposure and strengthening engagement with Anganwadis. The campaign signals that early childhood development is not confined to centres or programmes, but depends on what happens within households and neighbourhoods.

Building futures

An “ecological” approach uplifts families as much as it strengthens children. Reliable childcare gives mothers the time, the confidence and the opportunity to work, study or contribute economically. In Vellore, we have seen women trained as childcare workers gain both dignity and livelihood, creating a virtuous circle of care. When the kitchen, classroom and crèche align, children flourish, women work and communities thrive.

For a Viksit Bharat, progress cannot rest on calories alone. The physical and interactive learning and playing environments in homes, Anganwadis and communities must be as enriching as the meals they receive.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Safeguarding shipping

While the protection of maritime routes and the enforcement of sanctions are matters of international policy, the use of lethal force against merchant ships – especially those with documented connections to neutral nations – is a dangerous escalation. It is imperative that all parties prioritise

diplomatic channels over confrontation to ensure that the lives of merchant sailors are protected and that international maritime commerce is not treated as collateral damage in geopolitical disputes.
Ram Kumar Viswanathan,
Bengaluru

Surface appearances
The ‘Open Page’ article,

“The demands of beauty” (June 14), made for realistic and engaging reading. Today, gyms and spas have become ubiquitous. Sadly, even fruits and vegetables are not spared in the pursuit of appearance. They may look attractive on the outside, but are often tasteless within, their natural fragrance diminished by the excessive

use of chemicals and pesticides, both harmful to health. In a world obsessed with appearances, physical beauty is frequently

prioritised over inner well-being. The finest cosmetics and make-up offer only temporary enhancement. Our ancestors lived in an era

Corrections & Clarifications

In the Data Point, “A World Cup like no other” (Opinion page, June 9, 2026), the photograph of Cristiano Ronaldo was used instead of Ronaldo Nazário.

The Readers’ Editor’s office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28576347/28576300; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

when gyms, spas and beauty products were largely unknown. Yet, they were often healthier and, arguably, looked better than we do today. Nothing can truly replace the original.

Balasubramaniam Pavani,
Secunderabad

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

Towards a fair, efficient insolvency regime

The outline of India's Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) has long been demarcated by an innate stiffness between the inevitability to preserve distraught companies and the necessity to safeguard the interests of creditors. This contradiction is often cited as the 'Chakravyuha Challenge' – a structural paradox by which the economy eases a company's entry into the system but forms formidable formal fences when it wishes to exit.

From the Sick Industrial Companies Act, which demonstrated a debtor-in-possession model and had been plagued by promoter misuse, to the creditor-in-control model of the IBC, the historical flight of such laws reflects an incessant effort to improve the balance. Though the IBC aimed at providing time-bound resolutions, it has fallen short due to protracted litigation and procedural lapses. In light of this, the 2026 Amendment to the IBC presents the Creditor-Initiated Insolvency Resolution Process (CIIRP), a hybrid apparatus attempting to espouse debtor-in-possession topographies with the creditor-in-control model. Nevertheless, the amendment's restrictive framework bounds initiation rights to only a fine class of financial creditors belonging to "notified financial institutions", thereby inviting constitutional contests and economic ineptitude.

Swift yet stringent alternative

The CIIRP is a clever attempt to address financial crisis without the value-destroying disruption of typical liquidation proceedings by allowing the current management to maintain control over activities under the supervision of a resolution specialist. In order to reduce judicial intervention and procedural delays, the IBC established the CIIRP procedure by adding Sections 54C to 54P.

Significantly, the change is a legislative response to the ruling in



Vinay Juneja
Course Director, PG MBA and Assistant Professor (Law) at Maharashtra National Law University Mumbai



Shweta Bhuyan
Research Assistant (Law) and PhD Scholar, Maharashtra National Law University Mumbai

India can make an efficient insolvency system that benefits everyone by using a universal CIIRP model based on financial interest instead of institutional identity

Vidarbha Industries. The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) was formerly given discretionary authority via the interpretation of "may" in Section 7(5)(a), which permitted it to postpone or reject admission even in cases where debt and default were proven. This has now been replaced by the required "shall" via the 2026 amendment, thereby compelling the NCLT to accept cases based on information utility records. As a less disruptive restructuring instrument, the CIIRP is an appealing, if exclusive, resort for creditors because corporate debtors experiencing transitory liquidity crises suddenly lack the breathing room to fight initiation.

However, by limiting the ability to start the CIIRP only for "notified financial institutions," the Act creates an arbitrary hierarchy within the class of financial creditors. Although the distinction between financial and operational creditors was previously maintained in *Swiss Ribbons* via the "intelligible differentia" standard of Article 14, this sub-classification is essentially different. The government's argument that "notified" institutions have special knowledge is out of date; sophisticated investors with the ability to perform in-depth restructuring analysis can be found in today's financial markets. The Act runs the danger of being overturned as arbitrary since it does not explain why these excluded parties are less able to promote resolutions that maximise value.

Operational and smaller financial creditors are significantly disenfranchised under the current arrangement as they are already at the bottom of the repayment priority list. Smaller creditors may be forced to the sidelines of restructuring talks as a result of the CIIRP's propensity to concentrate bargaining power in the hands of notified institutions. It compels non-notified creditors to undertake the more aggressive and disruptive Corporate

Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) just to protect their financial interests. This compromises the equity of the entire insolvency ecosystem.

The way ahead

The Indian method is mysteriously constrictive. The U.S.' Chapter 11 and the U.K.'s Part 26A restructuring plans base their access on objective financial conditions rather than the regulatory identity of the creditor. A wide range of stakeholders can participate in the restructuring process in both the U.S. and the U.K. as long as they meet certain requirements. India's choice to restrict initiation rights to a particular group of creditors is an anomaly that deters foreign investors from participating because they believe that the Indian market is intrinsically skewed against their asset classes. The law gives notified institutions procedural dominance, which makes Inter-Creditor Agreements less clear and informal negotiations less fair. If a lender who hasn't been notified is put on hold, they have to file for formal CIRP to protect their capital.

There must be a "universal CIIRP" with a "default-neutral initiation rule". This proposal does away with regulatory status and replaces it with a threshold based on financial exposure. Any financial creditor could start the process as long as they get the support of creditors holding at least 51% of the total financial debt. This takes care of constitutional issues while keeping a strong protection against one-sided, malicious filings.

By adding debtor-in-possession features, the 2026 amendment shows that the pure creditor-in-control model doesn't keep business value. But the 'notified institution' criteria could hurt these gains. India can make an efficient insolvency system that benefits everyone by using a universal CIIRP model based on financial interest instead of institutional identity.

Pawar struggles: parties in flux

Internal dissent, diminishing power, and leadership crises mar the two NCPs

STATE OF PLAY

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit



In Maharashtra, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) is at a crossroads. The party, which was formed by Sharad Pawar in 1999, has been a strong regional force, being in power for 20 of the 27 years of its existence, in alliance with parties across the ideological spectrum. Its split in 2023 led to a majority of the leaders and cadre turning to Ajit Pawar, who had joined hands with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He claimed ownership of the original party, which the top court eventually ratified. Sharad Pawar was thus left with only a fraction of the party's strength, and had to float a new party named the NCP-SP (Nationalist Congress Party-Sharadchandra Pawar). He now looks to his daughter Supriya Sule to lead the party, as a young and comparatively inexperienced grand-nephew, Rohit Pawar, tries to flex his muscles in Baramati and beyond. Away from power, the cadre and its leaders are in a state of disarray.

After the split in 2023, Ajit Pawar proved his mettle in the State in the 2024 elections, while Sharad Pawar's party dominated in the Lok Sabha polls. But the sudden demise of Ajit Pawar earlier this year dealt a heavy blow to both parties as their leaders admitted that talks of a merger were underway when Ajit Pawar was alive. Today, Ajit Pawar's NCP has been inherited by his politically inexperienced wife, Sunetra Pawar, who continues to be a part of the Mahayuti government led by the BJP. She is Maharashtra's first woman Deputy Chief Minister. A massive sympathy wave got her elected by a national re-

cord during her first Assembly election (by-polls) in April this year from Baramati; none of the major parties fielded any candidate against her. The Baramati constituency is considered to be a bastion of the Pawars, with Ajit Pawar being elected as its legislator for eight consecutive terms.

The possibility of a merger between the two NCPs has now faded, largely due to the interpersonal relations within the Pawar family. During his address on the foundation day last week, Sharad Pawar started his speech by taking a dig at his former party over their full-page advertisements in all the major newspapers.

A new dynamic

In the NCP, the murmurs in the power corridors about Sunetra Pawar being highly influenced by her son, Parth Pawar, who is a political novice, cannot be ignored. Several complaints of his high-handed behaviour, rude nature, and efforts to sideline experienced leaders are being heard within the party. Party leaders also point to the undue influence of its alliance partner – the BJP. If the party continues to be handled this way, disruptions are likely to be seen by the 2029 elections, leaders opine. Meanwhile, Sunetra Pawar warned against 'undue interference' in the party during her foundation day address.

The cadre is also unhappy with opportunities being doled out to 'outsiders'. Re-

cently, Parth Pawar's friend Vikram Kakade was given the Legislative Council seat from Pune, much to the opposition of the local leadership.

However, in the NCP-SP, there is no doubt as to who is in charge – Sharad Pawar. He is a beacon of hope for the disgruntled elements in the NCP. At the party's foundation day celebration in South Mumbai's YB Chavan auditorium, the octogenarian's large cut-outs were prominently displayed. Supriya Sule stayed away from the stage, and did not deliver an address. She did however wait for photo opportunities with the party workers after the event. Rohit Pawar, even though seated on the stage, spoke briefly and left immediately after the event to launch a protest. He appealed to party workers to struggle as an effective opposition, adding that the fruits of power enjoyed by the NCP were transient in nature. He glorified the value of struggle in Maharashtra's history, lauding those who had stayed with Sharad Pawar after the split.

Thereafter, Sharad Pawar went on to praise Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi in his speech, slamming Prime Minister Narendra Modi for comparing himself with Jawaharlal Nehru. This was significant given the consistent speculations about the likelihood of his party merging with the Congress.

Today, the family, which has chartered Maharashtra's electoral landscape for more than four decades, lacks robust leadership, and is also dealing with the raw political ambition of the younger generation which lacks political experience. This, even as their leaders accuse each other of further splits and mergers.

vinaya.deshpande@thehindu.co.in

Making sense of the biggest IPO in history

SpaceX's grand entry has raised concerns over the relaxation of rules enabling wealth concentration in the hands of a few

DATA POINT

Pon Vasanth B.A.
Sambavi Parthasarathy
Nitika Francis

Technopreneur Elon Musk, who was already the planet's richest person, became the world's first trillionaire with his company SpaceX's stock market debut on June 12, 2026. The company saw the biggest-ever initial public offering (IPO) in history.

However, SpaceX's entry has also raised concerns over the company's valuation; the relaxation of rules that enables the company to enter indices like the Nasdaq-100; and the increasing concentration of wealth among a few. New York City's mayor Zohran Mamdani, in a cryptic reaction on X said, "Reason \$1,000,000,000,000 why we should tax the rich".

SpaceX's market capitalisation, now estimated over \$2 trillion is less than the Gross Domestic Product of only 11 countries in the world, an indication of the unequal distribution of wealth (**Chart 1**). Additionally, Mr. Musk had merged his companies Starlink and xAI (which includes X) with SpaceX before he planned the IPO. As of Friday, SpaceX was the sixth largest company in terms of market capitalisation (**Table 1**). However, as the table shows, it is the only loss-making company in the list.

Among the three companies that are part of SpaceX, Starlink is the only company that has reported profits last year, leading many to express concerns that Mr. Musk has managed to sell the potential of his company, which includes building data centres, instead of its actual track record (**Table 2**).

If one were to place SpaceX's IPO in Indian terms, the initial offering of all the top 100 IPOs in India would not match the \$75 billion raised by the U.S. giant on Friday.

Soaring disparity

The data for the charts were sourced from Space Exploration Technologies Corp's Securities and Exchange Commission filings, Nasdaq, Renaissance Capital, World Bank, India Budget and Forbes

CHART 1: SpaceX's market capitalisation is greater than the GDP of 157 of the 168 countries analysed based on available World Bank data

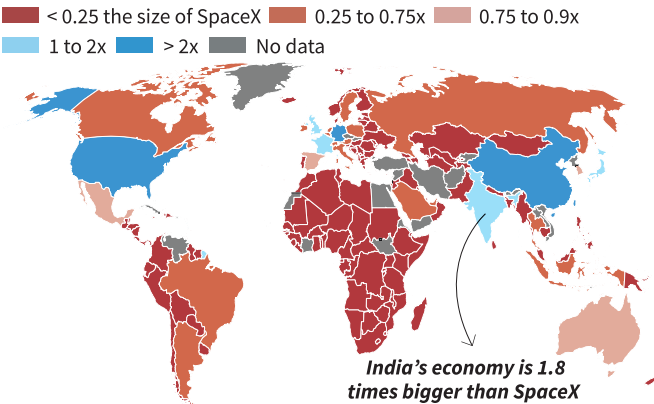


CHART 2: The chart shows the net worth (in \$ billion) of five of the most richest persons in the world

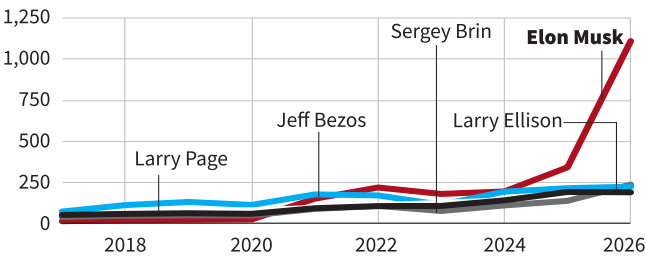


CHART 3: The 25 biggest-ever IPOs in history in terms of values of shares offered (in \$ million). SpaceX is nearly four-times bigger than Aramco

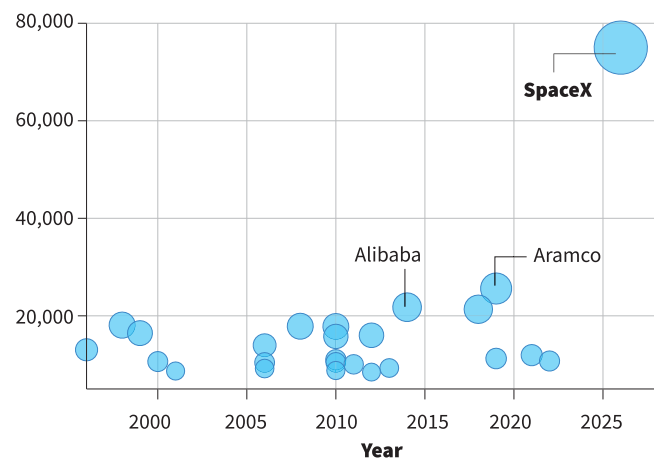


CHART 4: The 10 biggest IPOs from India in terms of the total value of shares offered (in ₹ crore). They do not add to even a tenth of the \$75 billion raised by SpaceX

Hyundai Motor India Limited	27,858.8
Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)	20,557.2
One97 Communications	18,300
Vodafone Idea Ltd	18,000
Tata Capital Ltd	15,511.9
Coal India Ltd	15,199.4
Yes Bank Ltd	15,000
HDB Financial Services Limited	12,500
LG Electronics Ind...	11,607
Swiggy Limited	11,327.4

TABLE 1: The five biggest companies in terms of market capitalisation, along with their revenues, and income

Rank	Company	Market capitalisation (in \$ trillion)	Revenue in 2025 (in \$ billion)	Net income in 2025 (in \$ billion)
1	NVIDIA	4.96	215.93	120.06
2	Alphabet	4.35	402.83	132.17
3	Apple	4.27	416.16	112.01
4	Microsoft	2.90	281.72	101.83
5	Amazon	2.56	716.90	77.60
6	SpaceX	2.10	18.67	-4.94

TABLE 2: Starlink is the only company to have reported profits in the last year

Companies part of SpaceX	Revenue (in \$ billion)	Operating income (in \$ billion)
SpaceX	4.086	-0.657
Starlink	11.387	4.423
xAI	3.201	-6.355

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 15, 1976

U.S. planning arms aid to Kenya, Zaire

Washington, June 14: The United States is on the verge of beginning a military aid programme for Kenya and Zaire under which those two nations would become the first African countries below the Sahara (besides Angola) to receive weapons and military training from the U.S.

Reports reaching here from Brussels said the U.S. Defence Secretary, Mr. Donald Rumsfeld, who was attending meetings at the NATO headquarters was now en route to Nairobi and Kinshasa, to discuss with African leaders there, their military equipment needs.

The Rumsfeld trip to Africa, which comes not long after the Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger's own visit to that continent, apparently has more or less the same purpose – prevent African nations from going the Angola way into the Soviet orbit of influence.

But while Dr. Kissinger sought to do this by diplomatic means and by promising moral and economic support to the Africans' struggle against white oppression in such places as Rhodesia, Namibia and South Africa, Mr. Rumsfeld apparently is trying to achieve the same thing by promising American military aid to selected African countries which perceive a need for them as security against neighbours who have Soviet connections.

There is a Soviet presence in Somalia which is Kenya's north-eastern neighbour. Zaire borders Angola, whose leaders have not forgotten that Zaire backed the pro-Western rebels during the recent civil war. While Zaire is said to be seeking American anti-tank weapons for ground defence, Kenya is said to be interested in U.S. fighter aircraft.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 15, 1926

A new lightship

Rangoon, June 14: A new lightship known as 'China Bakir' lightship is being stationed at the mouth of the Rangoon river is being erected by the Port Commissioners. The vessel which has a candle power of 50,000 is reported to be unique of its kind in the East in respect of up to date arrangements and labour saving devices. Special care has been taken to make the ship's light visible under the most favourable circumstances. The vessel is expected to be completed within the next three months.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

South Lebanon villages issued evacuation order

29 The Israeli military on Sunday issued evacuation warnings for residents of 29 villages in southern Lebanon ahead of planned strikes. The military's Arabic-language spokesman, Colonel Avichay Adraee, issued two successive warnings — first for 13 villages, then for 16 more, with the second targeting communities north of the Zahrani river. AFP

Number of years since last Maharashtra Road Safety Council meet

3 Maharashtra has not convened its statutory State Road Safety Council meeting in over three years, despite reporting over one lakh accidents and more than 50,000 deaths during the period, as per officials. The last meeting was held on April 4, 2023. Since then, over 38 months have passed without a single meeting, even though the rules mandate that it meet at least once in six months. PTI

Wells mobilised to aid local residents in Maharashtra

151 The Latur district administration has deployed three tankers and acquired 151 wells to supply water to residents facing scarcity during the peak summer here in Maharashtra, officials said on Sunday. A private and two government-operated tankers have been making six trips daily to supply water to the affected areas. PTI

Worth of Baghdad airport project cancelled by Iraq

764 in \$ million. Iraqi PM Ali al-Zaidi has decided to cancel the Baghdad International Airport development project after corruption suspicions were raised, Iraqi state media reported. The project involves a \$764 million contract awarded to a consortium of Luxembourg-based Corporacion America Airports and Iraqi real estate firm Amwaj International. REUTERS

Offenders arrested in law enforcement actions in T.N.

1,238 Addressing reporters after inspecting the preparatory work for the government exhibition here, Tamil Nadu Minister for School Education and Tamil Development Rajmohan on Sunday revealed that recent law enforcement actions have led to the arrest of 1,238 offenders in the State. PTI
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Can India protect its seafarers in Gulf?

How many Indian seafarers are working in the Gulf region? What happened to the three vessels attacked by the U.S. Navy? What sanctions were imposed on some ships? Does the foreign-flag status of the vessels limit India's options? Do international maritime laws protect civilian crews?

EXPLAINER

M. Kalyanaraman

The story so far:

In June 12, after India summoned U.S. Embassy representative Jason Meeks and lodged its “strong protest” against U.S. missile attacks on merchant vessels carrying Indian crew members, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio told External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar that violations of the American blockade and “illicit transport of Iranian oil” would not be tolerated. Recalling his discussion with Mr. Rubio, Mr. Jaishankar posted on X: “I reiterated India’s strong protest at the attacks by the U.S. Navy in the Gulf that killed three Indian mariners. Such lethal actions against commercial shipping are not justified.”

How many Indians are working on merchant vessels globally?
There are an estimated 3.5 lakh Indian seafarers manning ships across the world. The Indian government estimates that more than half of them are in active service, mostly in foreign-flagged ships.

This means one in every six seafarers serving on large merchant ships worldwide is Indian. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) estimates that some 20,000 seafarers of all nationalities are stranded on ships in the Persian Gulf region. The DG Shipping of India estimated at the start of the crisis that some 23,000 Indian seafarers are serving in the broader Gulf region in various capacities and facilities, with the UAE accounting for more than half.

What happened to the three vessels targeted by the U.S.?
On June 8, 10, and 11, the U.S. Navy fired precision munitions – Hellfire missiles – on merchant vessels *Marivex*, *Settebello*, and *Jalveer*. The three were tankers carrying Indian crew. While no one was hurt in the case of *Marivex* and *Jalveer*, three Indian seafarers – one chief engineer, one engine fitter, and one deck cadet – died onboard *Settebello*. While *Marivex* was attacked off the coast of Duqm, some 400 nautical miles from the Strait of Hormuz, the others were attacked off the coast of Shinas in Oman, which is closer to the strait.

Videos put out by the United States Central Command (Centcom) show the engine rooms of the ships being hit as well as the steering compartments. These attacks damaged the vessels above the waterline, so water didn’t rush in to sink them. But their ability to move and manoeuvre on their own was lost. In its press releases, the U.S. Centcom has said the crew of *Settebello* and *Marivex* refused to comply with instructions and all of them violated the blockade by attempting to transport Iranian oil. *Marivex* attempted to sail to an Iranian port, it claimed.

While the *Marivex* crew is reported to have informed seafarers’ unions that their ship was at anchor while attacked, *Settebello*’s manager, IOS Marine FZE, a firm registered in Ajman, has flatly contradicted the U.S. The company has said *Settebello* was stationary for nearly 10 days in the region. It said the ship had no communication from the U.S. Navy and had no connection with Iranian oil or ports.

What sanctions were imposed on these ships?
Marivex was sanctioned by the U.S. in



The Palau-flagged tanker *MT Settebello*, carrying 24 Indian seafarers, was attacked by U.S. forces off the coast of Oman near the Strait of Hormuz. Three Indian crew members were killed in the strike. ANI



Kamlawati Devi, mother of one of three Indian seafarers killed aboard the tanker *MT Settebello*, mourns at her home in Deoria, Uttar Pradesh, on June 12. REUTERS

December 2025 for Iranian connections. *Settebello* had been flagged by a U.S. non-profit advocacy organisation, United Against Nuclear Iran, for alleged Iranian links. U.S. sanctions are not binding on any other country besides the U.S., although the U.S. Treasury Department’s sanctions make it difficult for the companies associated with the concerned ship to access the financial system and other business transactions. Quite often, sanctioned ships lose insurance cover, without which ports will not accept calls by the ships, and charterers will refuse to handle cargo through them. There have been reports of non-compliance of these ships with some maritime regulations. Typically, such violations, not uncommon in merchant shipping, relate to safety aspects. And ships are typically given time to remedy them before the consequences of losing insurance cover can kick in.

Does the foreign-flag status of the vessels limit India's options?
They all carried foreign flags of convenience (FOCs) but had deep Indian links, including in ownership and management. In merchant shipping, ships are often registered in little-known nations with no infrastructure to rigorously supervise and monitor ships. Popular FOCs include Panama, Marshall

Islands, Liberia, and Guinea-Bissau. Such FOCs are also popular among ships transporting Russian and Iranian oil. Yes, technically, an Indian flagged ship will provide legal sanction for possible action. The U.S., during the Iran-Iraq war, ordered many ships to change their flag to the U.S. so it could legally escort the ships in and out of the Strait of Hormuz. But the Indian Navy has acted against Houthis and Somali pirates to help Indian seafarers onboard foreign-flagged ships. Further, *Marivex* and *Jalveer* were often serving Indian ports, facilitating India’s enormous oil needs. Soon after the ceasefire was announced in early April, *Marivex* headed out of the Strait of Hormuz to call on Mangalore. *Jalveer* is a bitumen carrier – a special type of ship that carries tar-bitumen, popular in laying Indian roads. **Were other options available for the U.S.?** In the last week of April, the U.S. Navy boarded *Tifani*, a sanctioned very large crude carrier in the Indian Ocean past Sri Lanka. The ship had an Indian crew. This week, U.K. forces boarded *Smyrtos* on the English Channel for its alleged links to drug cartels, Russian oil, and so on. Merchant ships are defenceless. Typically, merchant ships have wireless

channels open for communication with nearby vessels and any instructions from governments and Navies and Coast Guard vessels are immediately complied with. Seafarers are trained to protect crew, cargo and the ship. Somali pirates coming in small craft and carrying firearms could easily board and seize massive oil tankers. The only evasive action ships have against attackers is a high-pressure water jet they can direct at them. **What can India do to protect Indian seafarers in the region?** India did launch Operation Sankalp to protect merchant ships against Houthis attacks. Indian Navy and Coast Guard intervened to protect four merchant ships in 2024. India did take action against Somali pirates. But the belligerents in the Persian Gulf are the U.S. and Iran. Therefore, India’s options are rather limited. **Does international maritime law adequately protect civilian crews?** The nodal agency for regulating global shipping is the IMO, a United Nations agency. Though the IMO has the means to regulate the technical, commercial, environmental and safety aspects of global shipping through consensus and rulemaking, it has often fallen short in protecting ships and seafarers. Quite often, national governments take unilateral action, and typical of an UN agency, the IMO has been unable to act to prevent or take remedial action. The law governing the oceans is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Its acts and mandates are extensive and are an outcome of decades of negotiations and consensus-building. UNCLOS is thorough and considers various situations, including transits across straits such as the Hormuz. But many nations have not signed on to it. The U.S. refused to sign it on the grounds that UNCLOS considers the deep seabed as the commons. Iran has signed the convention but has not ratified it. There really is no overarching body for enforcement. Things are often left to the good sense of governments.

THE GIST

- India has protested U.S. missile attacks on three merchant vessels carrying Indian crew in the Gulf, in which three Indian seafarers aboard *Settebello* were killed.
- The U.S. says the vessels violated its blockade and were involved in transporting Iranian oil, but ship operators have disputed these claims and said some of the vessels were stationary when attacked.
- With about 23,000 Indian seafarers in the Gulf region, India has limited options because the vessels were foreign-flagged, while international maritime bodies and laws have limited enforcement powers in such situations.

CACHE



The success of Amazon, the largest e-commerce retailer in the world, can be credited at least in part to drop shipping practices. REUTERS

What is drop shipping, and what are the risks for online shoppers?

Drop shipping allows online individuals or agents who do not hold any products to take customer orders and pass them on to other makers or sellers, inserting themselves into the transaction as middlemen; while legal in most jurisdictions, the practice can expose customers to several risks

Sahana Venugopal

While scrolling through Instagram Reels, you naturally pause when an attractive product catches your eye: a sleek laptop bag for travel, a cheap set of popular novels, an ultra-fast wireless charger on sale, beautifully embroidered linen shirts, or leather-bound notebooks with custom gold foil inscriptions. Before you know it, you are entering your credit card number or UPI PIN.

Caught up in your shopping spree, you may not have checked the true origin of the product or other customers’ reviews of the seller. What’s more, you may not even realise that the “company” you paid is just a decorated webpage created with AI and owned by a person who does not hold a single product.

This is the economy of drop shipping: the business practice that allows almost anyone with an internet connection to sell products that come from others.

Here is what you should know as a customer.

What is drop shipping?

This is a business practice where an online individual or agent – who does not hold any product – takes orders from customers and passes them on to another maker/seller who actually holds the product. The product is then delivered to the customers, either by the original maker/seller or a third-party delivery service. To put it simply, the drop shipper inserts itself into the transaction as a middleman. One or even multiple drop shippers might stand between buyers and the original makers of the product they want.

The success of Amazon, the largest e-commerce retailer in the world, can be credited at least in part to drop shipping practices. In its earliest days, Amazon did not commandeer giant international warehouses packed with products; rather,

the company was a web-based middleman that fulfilled many customers’ orders by sourcing the books they wanted.

Though Amazon’s product delivery model has drastically evolved, the company allows drop shipping to take place via its platform. Other channels, such as Shopify, also enable drop shipping and help users manage the logistics. Alternatively, drop shipping might take place through channels such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and lesser-known websites.

In essence, if you have ever bought any product online, there’s a chance that you placed your order through a drop shipper rather than the original seller.

How does drop shipping work?

Drop shippers can work with both domestic and international manufacturers and customers. Some try to fill an existing gap in their local market (such as affordable school textbooks), some capitalise on market trends (such as the popularity of iPhone cases), and others build hype around rarer products (such as foreign luxury fashion). Most importantly, the drop shipper does not need to buy or store any of the products they are selling.

Drop shipping has become a popular source of income for both public-facing Instagram creators monetising their virality as well as private marketers looking for discreet revenue streams. What’s more, with AI automating many customer services and harvesting business insights, drop shipping feels like something that almost anyone with an internet connection can try out.

In addition to promoting products and setting up online storefronts, drop shippers may also buy/sell courses that reveal current market trends, customer interests, trusted wholesalers, and useful AI tools, in order to generate further profits.

Drop shipping might look illogical at

first, but it is in vogue for a number of reasons.

Buyers trying to independently source foreign products from a wholesaler might be forced to order more than they need, or contend with complicated customs regulations and fees. They also may not know if the original seller is legitimate, or might be unable to communicate with them due to a language barrier.

However, placing orders through a vetted drop shipper with a user-friendly web page eases some of these worries. What’s more, legitimate drop shippers regularly carry out quality assurance tests of their own, and should ideally become a customer support layer of sorts in order to resolve any complaints.

Is drop shipping legal?

Drop shipping is legal in most jurisdictions, as long as the participants involved ensure transparency and comply with their region’s tax laws.

Instagram’s commerce eligibility requirements state that the users’ Facebook Pages or Instagram professional accounts must contain product listings that are available for direct purchase from the user’s website. In case buyers are being directed to another website, the user must provide the domain through which they sell, and their channels must represent the shop associated with the domain.

But now that it is possible to create entire shopfronts and e-commerce websites in minutes with just some cheap domains and a few AI coding prompts, Instagram drop shippers can easily present themselves as original sellers and offload customer orders to other sellers. Videos of workers sorting through wrapped packages, or Reels of founders happily holding up stacks of paper that they claim are customer orders, can mislead social media shoppers into thinking they are dealing directly with a trusted seller.

Ultimately, the line separating

influencers, marketers, and sellers can blur quickly on social media. Some drop shippers also ask customers to contact them via WhatsApp, to take their communication off the app. Buyers may not know where their products are actually coming from or how their data privacy rights are being eroded. And as supply chain transparency is lost, drop shipping operations can quickly slide into a legal grey area or end up in criminal violations.

Some risks include scams targeting customers, as well as scams targeting drop shippers. Original sellers and drop shippers may both inflate product prices.

Drop shippers might also work with wholesalers sending out defective/rejected products. Furthermore, drop shippers may unknowingly promote pirated/counterfeit products. Hyper-realistic AI product images can mislead both customers and casual drop shippers.

Meanwhile, delivery timelines can be long – if the product even arrives at all. The drop shipper may not be required to take responsible for any safety or hygiene standards that have to be maintained while shipping the products.

Adding to this, multiple drop shipping layers in different countries can inadvertently lead to sanctions violations. In case of complaints, cancellations, or refund requests, customers may have no choice except to cut their losses and move on.

Other dangers include pyramid schemes to recruit more drop shippers, or even cyber-crimes via phishing and hacks, as the customers’ payment information is shared with multiple parties without their informed consent.

So, the next time you spot a book influencer on Instagram promoting a handy new reading light, or stumble across an excited founder surrounded by sacks of customer orders, take a few minutes to do your research and find out who is really selling you the product.



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

The company is trying not to go under

Some people think he has nothing between the ears

S. Upendran

“What are you doing here? I thought you were taking two weeks off, and going to...”

“Got a call from my sister a couple of days ago. Her company isn’t doing too well, and...”

“According to most newspaper reports, the company your sister works for is going under.”

“Does it mean it’s sinking?”

“Exactly! The company is being compared to a sinking ship.”

“I read somewhere that when the Titanic hit the iceberg, the ship went under very quickly.”

“When you use ‘went under’ with a company, it means that it’s going bankrupt. It’s like a sinking ship.”

“In other words, it’s a company that’s failing.”

“Yes! Here’s an example. During the epidemic, several businesses went under.”

“When one company goes under, there’s usually a chain reaction.”

“That’s true. If the bank doesn’t give us a loan, the project is likely to go under.”

“That’s the good news! The company that my sister works for is likely to get a substantial loan from the bank.”

“That should keep the company afloat for a while. Is your sister worried about the downsizing that is likely to happen?”

“What are you talking about? Are you talking about people getting fired?”

“Companies don’t use the term ‘fire’ anymore. They ‘lay off’ people or they talk about ‘downsizing’ the company. In other words, they reduce the number of people working.”

“In other words, you downsize by firing some of your workers.”

“That’s right! People lose their jobs.

But downsizing sounds better, that’s all! It’s the politically correct term. The CEO told the Managers that they should find ways to downsize the workforce by 20%.”

“I don’t think there’ll be any downsizing in my sister’s company.”

“It’s bound to happen. In everyday contexts, downsize is used to mean to move into a smaller accommodation. After retirement, my aunt and uncle downsized and moved into a small flat.”

“That’s what my mother wants to do.

But my father doesn’t believe in downsizing.”

“It’s probably because they aren’t involved in the running of the house.”

“I know what you mean. The good news is the company that my sister is working for is replacing the CEO.”

“Any idea who the replacement is?”

“It’s your friend Ramesh’s cousin - Jagdeep. Know him?”

“No. I hope he’s nothing like Ramesh.”

“Why not? Ramesh is a nice guy.”

“I agree. The problem is, he has nothing between his ears.”

“What are you talking about?”

“The expression is mostly used in informal contexts to talk about one’s intelligence.”

“I see. So, when you say that someone has nothing between the ears, what you mean is that he’s not bright.”

“No real common sense. Why would you go to someone like Jyothi for advice? The girl has nothing between the ears.”

“I find it difficult to have a conversation with my neighbour. The guy has nothing between the ears.”

“But he has a lot of money. That’s good enough.”
upendrankye@gmail.com

THE DAILY QUIZ

Marking the birth anniversary of Mona Lisa, this quiz explores art, history, symbolism, and enduring mysteries surrounding Leonardo da Vinci’s most famous portrait

Prathmesh Kher

QUESTION 1

Who is widely believed to be the woman depicted in the Mona Lisa?

QUESTION 2

Around what year is Leonardo da Vinci believed to have begun painting the Mona Lisa?

QUESTION 3

What is the approximate size of the Mona Lisa?

QUESTION 4

Which artistic

technique, heavily employed in the Mona Lisa, creates the painting’s characteristic soft transitions between light and shadow?

QUESTION 5

Which French king acquired the Mona Lisa for the royal collection?

QUESTION 6

What major event in 1911 dramatically increased the painting’s worldwide fame?



Visual Question:

Which Italian Renaissance master executed this sketch of a young woman before a landscape, believed to have been directly influenced by Leonardo’s Mona Lisa?

Questions and Answers to the previous day’s daily quiz:

1. Which Goalkeeper holds the record for most consecutive clean sheets, as well as most consecutive minutes without conceding a goal in World Cup history? **Ans: Walter Zenga, Italy. 5 matches / 517 minutes during the 1990 edition**

2. Which Manager holds the record of having won the most tournaments in World Cup history? **Ans: Vittorio Pozzo, Italy – 1934 & 1938**

3. Who is the only player to have won 4 medals in the World Cup history? **Ans: Miroslav Klose, Germany – 4 (Silver in 2002, Bronze in 2006 & 2010 & Gold in**

2014)

4. Which player has the distinction of having scored at least one goal in all five tournaments that he played? **Ans: Cristiano Ronaldo, Portugal**

5. Which was the first World Cup to be held outside Europe and the Americas, and who hosted it? **Ans: 1970 with Mexico as host**

Visual: Identify the player and what is the unique record that he possesses in World Cup history? **Ans: Gabriel Batistuta, Argentina, the only player to have scored a hat-trick in two consecutive World Cups – 1994 & 1998 both on June 21 of that year.**

No one got all the answers correct

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

From Page One

PM, Macron talk stresses economic security

Calling for the early implementation of the India-EU FTA, which was signed in February this year, the two sides agreed to set up a High-Level Mechanism to double trade in five years. The discussion also focused on cooperation in the SME, rail, and aviation sectors.

Mr. Modi and Mr. Macron agreed to strengthen supply chain resilience, particularly in critical minerals, as part of the ‘Dialogue on Economic Security’, as per the press release.

On the major crises in the world - in West Asia, including Iran and Gaza, as well as on Ukraine - the press release remained circumspect relative to the February 17, 2026 joint statement from the two countries, saying only that leaders exchanged views “on matters of global importance, including the situation in West Asia and Ukraine”.

The Prime Minister thanked Mr. Macron for the speedy implementation of visa-free transit for Indians in French airports and invited French universities to open campuses in India under the New Education Policy, as per the government statement.

The two leaders discussed private sector collaboration in the space sector and the SHANTI Act’s (legislation governing the nuclear sector) implications in India.

“I think the field is open for French nuclear companies in this case to start looking at direct participation in the Indian nuclear sector, or do so with in participation with Indian private sector companies, whether in conventional nuclear power reactors or in the more advanced small modular reactors,” Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said at a press briefing in Nice.

Mr. Misri also confirmed that discussions between French power giant EDF and the Nuclear Power Cooperation of India Limited for the Jaitapur nuclear power plant - with six reactor units - were still on-going. The project has been under discussion for more than 15 years.

Following the bilateral discussions, Mr. Modi departed France for Vienna from where he travelled to Bratislava, Slovakia, for the second leg of his Europe visit.

Iran questions U.S. deal after Israel hits Beirut

In a sign that a diplomatic off-ramp was still available, Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday that the country’s highest security body supported negotiations despite criticism from hardliners.

“The Supreme National Security Council has concluded that the path of dialogue should be pursued,” the Iranian President said, pointedly adding that the council was in charge of “decisions regarding war and negotiations”.

U.S. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said he did not expect the Israeli attack to “disrupt” the progress towards a deal.

“From all I know, we are on track,” he said. “It is not a matter of if. It is a matter of when.”

The U.S. President and mediator Pakistan said on Saturday they expected the deal would be signed on Sunday, but Tehran had cast doubt over the timing while hardline protesters in Iran voiced opposition. Mr. Trump had said the Strait of Hormuz would open immediately after the signing.

Mohammad Jafar Assadi, deputy commander of Iran’s top joint military command, was quoted by state media as saying Israeli “crimes” in Beirut’s southern suburbs would not go unanswered.

Mr. Trump stressed in a later post that “there should be no more attacks by Israel anywhere in Lebanon, but there should also be no more attacks by any other party, including Hezbollah, against Israel.”

Hezbollah fired missiles into Israel on March 2, two days after the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran and sparked the war in West Asia. Israeli troops have since pushed their invasion of Lebanon deeper than at any point in over a quarter century.

Iran wants a ceasefire deal to include the fighting in Lebanon.

Iran’s government warned that any division at home over the deal weakens its negotiating position, and those criticising negotiators are taking aim at a national decision. Iranians must recognise that no war lasts forever, spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani told the state-run *IRNA news agency*.

Mr. Trump was expected to discuss demining the Strait of Hormuz during the G7 summit in France on Monday.

Man arrested for killing elderly woman in T.N.

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUVANNAMALAI

A 30-year-old man was arrested in Tiruvannamalai on Sunday for allegedly killing an elderly woman who allegedly stopped providing him food. Police said the arrested person was identified as R. Murthy, a daily wage labourer.

Initial inquiry revealed that Yasoda was living with her son, Venu, a mechanic,

in the Ezhuvambadi village. She has been providing food to Murthy, who was abandoned by his family, for the past few years. Murthy often got into arguments with Venu, Yasoda’s son, over petty issues. Police said Venu asked his mother not to provide food to Murthy anymore. An agitated Murthy allegedly stabbed Yasoda while she was returning home on Sunday.

World needs inclusive, human-centric tech: PM

India is emerging as a technology provider, says Modi at France event; India is not a country full of contractors alone but a country of innovation and technological disruption, says French President

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

Inaugurating the Bharat Innovates 2026 event in Nice in France, Prime Minister Narendra Modi pitched India as a destination for innovation and development. Both the Prime Minister and French President Emmanuel Macron focused on themes of trust and cooperation in technology.

“I earnestly invite every investor, every university, every research institution, and every entrepreneur ...come to India... design in India. Develop in India. And create solutions for the world,” he said. Mr. Macron also spoke at the event, which he co-inaugurated with Mr. Modi. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar were also present as was the Mayor of Nice.

India was seen as a technology adopter a decade ago but was now emerging as a technology provider, the Prime Minister said as he batted for India’s innovation ecosystem, citing work in the defence and



While speaking of upheaval of technologies, Mr. Macron at the inauguration mentioned that France is a ‘part of Make in India’. PTI

space sectors. Referring to the recent legislative changes (via the SHANTI Act) permitting private sector participation in the nuclear power sector, Mr. Modi said, “This is creating new possibilities in the fields of clean energy, advanced reactors, and frontier research.”

India and France had a relationship characterised by shared conviction, connection, innovation, and inspiration as well as shared values and vision, Mr. Modi said.

Both the Prime Minister and Mr. Macron referred to trust in technology, with Mr. Modi saying the world was looking for trusted, inclusive and human-centric technologies.

“In recent days we have

seen the temptation to close up the AI models and to make them a power tool and to stop any cooperation,” Mr. Macron said, presumably referring to the U.S. government banning non-U.S. citizens from accessing AI company Anthropic’s state of the art models.

India and France believe in “true partnerships”, in multilateralism, and respect for cooperative AI, Mr. Macron said.

Mr. Goyal had also alluded to trust as an issue in technology in his introductory remarks saying that right now, the upheaval in geopolitics was meeting the upheaval in technology. “At such moments, the world seeks trusted and reliable partners, and that is

what India brings to the table,” he added. Citing India’s Chandrayaan-3 lunar mission of 2023, Mr. Macron said it demonstrated not just innovation but also industrial application.

Make in India

India is not a country full of contractors alone but a country of innovation and technological disruption, Mr. Macron said. The French President also addressed entrepreneurs and investors at the gathering, pitching France as the top destination for AI and tech. Mr. Macron claimed that France was the only country whose development of LLMs (Large Language Models, a type of AI) could compete with that of China and the U.S.

“‘Make in India’ is something we respect and we are a part of it,” Mr. Macron said.

According to French diplomatic sources, France was willing to align its defence cooperation with India, including the proposed sale of I14 Rafale fighter jets to New Delhi with the ‘Make in India’ programme, *The Hindu* had reported last week.

CISF trains 7,120 personnel in counter-drone operations post-Operation Sindoor

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

A year after Operation Sindoor, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has trained over 7,000 personnel in drone and counter-drone operations, a CISF official said.

The training in conjunction with the Indian Air Force (IAF) was initiated amid the growing threat from unauthorised Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).

The official said the CISF had been tasked with auditing the security of critical installations such as nuclear power plants and thermal power plants among others.

“It is imperative that the CISF personnel posted at vital installations are aware about the emerging threat scenario from UAVs. They should know how to identify and disable such flying



The training in conjunction was initiated amid the threat from Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

objects. The training is going on an intensive scale,” said the official.

A barrage of attacks by drones along the Pakistan border were thwarted by security forces in May 2025 after Operation Sindoor. So far, the CISF had trained 7,120 personnel in drone and counter-drone operations, which covered piloting the drones, aerial surveillance, mapping, and neutralisation of hostile

drones. The CISF was also in the process of establishing dedicated Drone Training Schools in Hyderabad, Bhillai and Behror, with advanced academic programmes planned alongside the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur and the Defence Institute of Advanced Technology (DIAT), Pune.

While combating terror and cyberthreats, the CISF continued to be a crucial first responder for industrial disasters, the official said. Its dedicated Fire Wing successfully saving property worth ₹172.55 crore.

Acting on the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) directives, the CISF recently trained 450 State Fire Services personnel from 187 cities in advanced industrial firefighting and disaster management at its Fire Services Training Institute, Hyderabad.

Guwahati students under probe over selling deepfakes

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The Assam Police’s Crime Branch has begun investigating a case involving some students of two Guwahati-based private schools who circulated digitally altered images of 64 schoolgirls and teachers on social media for a price.

The police said a case was registered with the Crime Branch after at least two students allegedly created the explicit content and sold the images of their female classmates and teachers for ₹50 and ₹100. “We have recorded the statements of the principals, counsellors, and the students involved in circulating the explicit content,”

Joint Commissioner of Police Ankur Jain told presspersons.

The accused students created the explicit content and put it up for sale on the Telegram app, according to presspersons.

On Friday, one of the schools suspended the students behind the incident and referred the matter to the Child Abuse Monitoring Committee. In a statement, the school said it has a zero-tolerance policy towards cybermisconduct, bullying, harassment, and misuse of digital platforms.

The school also urged all students and parents to refrain from circulating unverified information or indulging in rumour-mongering.

Army unveils new uniform policy, phases out colonial-era practices

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

In a significant move aimed at modernising military traditions and reinforcing an indigenous identity, the Indian Army has introduced revised dress regulations that progressively remove residual colonial-era practices, terminology, and non-essential accoutrements.

The new policy, elaborated in the Army Uniforms-2026 Pamphlet, reflects the Army’s effort to align its dress regulations with contemporary Indian values while maintaining the service’s rich traditions and professional standards.

A notable feature of the revised regulations is the



The changes are aimed at enhancing uniformity, practicality and ease of implementation across the force. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS

introduction of a common Uniform Numbering Scheme for the Army, Navy, and the Air Force. The initiative is intended to improve clarity, interoperability, and synergy among the three services while simplifying references to various dress categories.

Security forces will retaliate if fired at, warns Manipur DGP

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A week after Central Reserve Police Force Director-General Gyanendra Pratap Singh advised personnel deployed in Manipur to neutralise miscreants moving in civilian areas with weapons, the State’s Director-General of Police Mukesh Singh said that the security forces would retaliate if attacked with guns.

Warning individuals carrying firearms and trying to create unrest, the DGP said that such people who fire at the security forces would face strict action in self-defence. “Anyone with arms who tries to take law into their own hands will be dealt with very strictly. Those with weapons will be arrested, and those who fire at us will be dealt with in self-defence,” he told presspersons in Chura-chandpur after his first visit to the Kuki-Zo-dominated district on Saturday.

The DGP said the security forces have so far recovered about 70% of the weapons looted during the initial days of the ethnic violence in Manipur. He also said the police were monitoring online platforms and taking action

Earlier, CRPF D-G had asked forces to neutralise miscreants moving in civilian areas with weapons

against individuals and groups spreading misinformation that could trigger ethnic tensions. “Our social media monitoring cell is dealing with such cases,” he said.

‘On growth path’

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Yumnann Khemchand Singh told journalists on Sunday that Manipur has been on the path to growth during the tenure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Chief Minister said Manipur benefited through major initiatives in infrastructure, education, healthcare, sports, connectivity, and social welfare during Mr. Modi’s 12 years in office.

He underlined the establishment of the National Sports University, the first of its kind in India, and the implementation of the Inner Line Permit (a temporary travel document for non-residents under a British-era regulation) as examples of the Prime Minister’s focus on Manipur.

Efforts on to bring back sailor’s body from Oman

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Indian Embassy in Muscat on Sunday said it was working to facilitate the earliest repatriation of the body of an Indian national who died due to medical complications aboard a vessel in Oman waters.

In a social media post, the mission said it remained in close touch with the family members of Nishanth Uirthanathan, crew members of the vessel *MT Celestial*, and the authorities concerned. However, it did not provide details of the medical conditions that led to Uirthanathan’s death. It said the vessel is soon expected to berth at Duqm port in Oman.

According to the Forward Seamen’s Union of India, Uirthanathan passed away on June 11 “after falling seriously ill”.

Structural rejig in Trinamool; rebels removed from roles

Senjuti Sengupta
KOLKATA

The rebellion by several Trinamool Congress MPs has forced party supremo Mamata Banerjee to undertake an organisational overhaul.

As part of it, three rebel MPs – Sudip Bandyopadhyay, Mala Roy, and Sayoni Ghosh – were removed from their organisational roles, while new leaders in-charge were appointed for the youth wing, women’s wing, and North Kolkata organisational district.

Hours after Sudip Bandyopadhyay, six-time MP from the North Kolkata constituency, met Union Minister Bhupendra Yadav at the latter’s residence in New Delhi on Saturday morning, Ms. Banerjee called a meeting and removed him as the president of the party’s North Kolkata organisational district. The party’s national spokesperson and Belegkata MLA, Kunal Ghosh, was appointed in his place.

Kolkata South MP Mala Roy was removed as president of the party’s women’s wing and replaced by Alifa Ahmed.

The two-time MP joined the rebel bloc of the 20 MPs led by Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar and attended the group’s first meeting with Mr. Yadav and Chief Minis-

Kunal Ghosh, Alifa Ahmed and Arnab Banerjee get new organisational positions in party

ter Suwendu Adhikari in New Delhi on June 8.

Another rebel MP, Sayoni Ghosh of Jadavpur, who had been retained as the president of the Trinamool Youth Congress during an earlier reshuffle in the party on June 5, was removed. Arnab Banerjee has been appointed in her position.

On Friday, Ms. Ghosh’s signature appeared on the list of rebel MPs who decided to extend support to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

New inductees

The Saturday’s overhaul also saw Dum Dum MP Saugata Roy and former Minister Jyotipriya Mallick inducted into the party’s national working committee.

Mr. Roy announced the rejig. He said, “The main thing is that this meeting condemned ‘atrocities’ on Trinamool Congress workers who are being harassed, beaten up, and whose offices are being burnt. Mahua Moitra, Biman Banerjee and others joined the meeting virtually. It was a full meeting.”

20 rebel Trinamool MPs seek to merge with NCPI

The leaders met Lok Sabha Speaker and requested separate seating arrangements; will seek recognition as the Trinamool in July, when Parliament session begins, says Bandyopadhyay

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

After days of speculation, 20 rebel Trinamool Congress MPs on Sunday met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at his residence in New Delhi and submitted a letter announcing their decision to merge with the National Citizens Party of India (NCPI).

The decision by the rebels to merge with a registered regional political party rather than form a separate bloc within the Trinamool Congress was to avoid any legal complications under the anti-defection law. The law states that when two-thirds of the legislators of a political party decide to merge with another party, neither those who join the new party nor the ones who stay with the original party face disqualification.

“The MPs met the Speaker and requested separate seating arrangements. We are more than two-thirds of MPs (of the Trinamool Congress) and will merge with the Nationalist Citizens Party of India. We will work with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the NDA for the interest of the country,” Kakoli



Big changes: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla receiving a letter from Trinamool Congress MPs in New Delhi. PTI

Ghosh Dastidar, MP, told presspersons after the meeting.

Support of 20 MPs

The office of the Speaker confirmed that 19 MPs attended the meeting. The rebel faction, however, claims the support of 20 MPs, with Sudip Bandyopadhyay joining the group on Saturday.

Mr. Bandyopadhyay, the senior-most MP in the rebel camp, said that while the MPs were merging with the NCPI as of now, in July, when Parliament session begins, they would seek recognition as the Trinamool Congress since they had a

two-thirds majority.

“We will merge with the Nationalist Citizens Party, which is a registered regional party. This is the system. When you leave with two-thirds of the party, you cannot demand the name of that party on the first day itself. In July, we will seek recognition as the Trinamool Congress since we have two-thirds of its MPs. Then the courts will decide,” he said.

The NCPI was launched as National Citizens Party of India in Tripura in 2015 by a Kolkata-based woman Shewly Kundu.

Later, the party registered itself as Nationalist

Abhishek appears before CID again in fake signature case

Senjuti Sengupta
KOLKATA



Abhishek Banerjee at the CID headquarters for questioning on Sunday. ANI

Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Sunday appeared before the West Bengal Police’s Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for the second time in connection with the case pertaining to alleged forgery of signatures of MLAs.

The CID had asked Mr. Banerjee to appear before it at noon. However, he reached the police headquarters at Bhabani Bhowan at 11.43 a.m. Trinamool spokesperson and Belegkata MLA Kunal Ghosh arrived around 3 p.m. for questioning in the same case. Mr. Ghosh left the building after four hours around 7.25 p.m. while Mr. Banerjee left around 8.30 p.m.

Mr. Banerjee made his first appearance before the CID on Thursday after the Calcutta High Court had earlier in the day directed the Trinamool leader to appear before the agency in connection with the West Bengal Assembly signature scandal investigation by 6 p.m.

The court also granted three-week interim protection to Mr. Banerjee, directing that the CID cannot take any coercive action as long as he cooperated with

the investigation.

Mr. Banerjee faces interrogations on Monday and Tuesday. On Monday, he is likely to be questioned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) at its Salt Lake office in the multi-crore cash-for-school job case in West Bengal. The ED served him a notice in the matter on June 3.

On Tuesday, he is again expected at the CID headquarters to face interrogation in a case where he has been accused of inciting violence and threatening Union Home Minister Amit Shah before the recently concluded Assembly election in the State.

It is not clear whether he will appear before the officials in these two cases. Mr. Banerjee does not have protection from the High Court against police action in these cases for now.

Ram Temple panel chief welcomes move to form SIT amid donation issue

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Nripendra Mishra, Chairman of the Ram Mandir Construction Committee, on Sunday welcomed the decision of the Uttar Pradesh government to form a three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the alleged financial irregularities in the donations received by the Ram Temple Trust.

“The most praiseworthy aspect is that the State government acted in less than 24 hours to constitute the SIT and appointed very senior officers to it... we should support the initiative, given the speed at which the State government is acting, setting a time frame of just 15 days. A preliminary report is due in seven days...,” Mr. Mishra told presspersons in



Nripendra Mishra

Ayodhya. He said that the probe panel would make recommendations regarding any pending issues, identify shortcomings, and suggest necessary remedial measures.

The SIT has been formed to probe allegations of disappearance of donations made to the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, following a request from

the Shree Ram Janmabhoomi Temple Trust. It has been directed to submit a final report within 15 days and preliminary report within seven days.

Committee members

The members of the SIT are Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant; Inspector-General Kiran S.; and Special Secretary (Finance) Neel Ratan.

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav, in a cryptic message, reacted to the decision of the State government to form the SIT.

“The origin of this conspiracy is not far away, so there will be no need to go far to take action. If the police are unable to trace the culprit, we can help,” he wrote on the social media platform X.

Former BJP MP terms fund row ‘serious’; SP calls it an ‘insult to Sanatana Dharma’

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

A day after the Uttar Pradesh government formed a three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe alleged irregularities in the donations received by the Ram Temple Trust, former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Vinay Katiyar on Sunday termed the matter “serious”. He said some members involved in running the trust were “thieves”.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav called the episode an “insult to Sanatana Dharma”.

“The investigation is on and it is a very serious matter. People have sacrificed for the temple. Kalyan Singh sacrificed the government, people went to jail, afterwards the temple issue progressed. Some



Akhilesh Yadav

present there are thieves, we will remove them. Either they will run away or we will throw them out,” said Mr. Katiyar, a former MP who represented both the Houses, and a key figure of the Ram Temple agitation.

Reacting to the SIT probe, Mr. Yadav said it was “very unfortunate” that officials will investigate priests. “It is an insult to the Sanatana Dharma

that such a prestigious temple has to be probed.”

The Congress described the allegations as a “question mark” on faith, accountability and trust, and said the BJP cannot “evade responsibility”.

“The alleged misappropriation of devotees’ donations at the Ram Mandir is a question of faith, accountability and trust. When an institution built on the devotion of millions faces such serious allegations, transparency cannot be optional. The BJP, which sought political dividends from the temple, cannot now evade responsibility when questions arise. An independent, credible probe must reveal the truth and fix accountability. Prabhu Ram deserves better than secrecy and silence,” said Abhishek Singhvi, MP.

Congress to organise job fair on Rahul Gandhi’s birthday

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress has announced a job fair, “Maha Rozgar Mela”, at the Talkatora Stadium here, on June 19, marking the birthday of the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi. Over 150 companies and institutions will participate, it said.

Addressing a press conference, Youth Congress president Uday Bhanu Chib accused the Bharatiya Janata Party government of failing to check the rising rate of unemployment. Unemployment and exam paper leaks had reached record levels during the te-

nure of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr. Chib alleged.

More than 90 examination papers had been leaked, he said, criticising Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

While the Congress is not in power at the Centre and therefore cannot provide government jobs, the party is attempting to create employment opportunities for young people through engagement with the private sector, he said.

Job seekers, from Class 10 pass to postgraduate degree holders, can participate, according to the organisers. Registration is free.

Cong. questions PM’s ‘silence’ on death of mariners, slams Rubio’s remarks

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Questioning the government’s “silence” over the death of three Indian mariners in a U.S. attack on a commercial vessel near the Gulf of Oman, and the “threatening” and “unacceptable” language allegedly used by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in his conversation with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in this context, the Congress on Sunday accused the Narendra Modi government of failing to defend India’s sovereignty and dignity.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, accused the government of remaining



silent in the face of what he described as overbearing language from the U.S. He said the absence of any regret or apology from Washington, coupled with directives issued to vessels, undermined India’s standing. “A free country would never tolerate such language. But our Compromised PM? Silent. They listen like an obedient

A free country would never tolerate such language. But our Compromised PM? Silent. They listen like an obedient servant and comply with the orders,” Mr. Gandhi said in a post on X.

“Silence can’t be a substitute for accountability,” Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge said, pointing out that even three days after the incident, there has been no condolence message or public statement from Mr. Modi. He accused the government of treating

Indian lives as an “afterthought” in matters of foreign policy.

Mr. Modi is set to meet U.S. President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the G-7 summit in France next week. Citing the upcoming engagement, Congress general secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh questioned whether Mr. Modi would condemn the incident off the Oman coast, as well as Mr. Rubio’s “threatening” and “really unacceptable” language when he meets his “self-declared good friend” President Trump.

He also called for scrapping the India-U.S. trade deal, arguing that it would endanger the future of crores of Indian farmers.



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CIN : L35921TN1960PLC004175
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Invites offers from interested parties for purchase of Mild Steel scrap items, for the two month period, JUL- AUG 2026.
Details of the items available for disposal and tender terms and conditions can be had from the Company on written request.
Sealed offers can be submitted to the **Sr. Vice President (Supply Chain)**, Wheels India Limited, Padi, Chennai - 600 050 to reach on or before **30th JUNE 2026**.

GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY
PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT - EAP
SUBASH CHANDRA BOSE STREET, 1ST FLOOR P.W.D., PUDUCHERRY

No.94/PW/PMU-ADB/F.No.26/2026-27Puducherry, dated 12.06.2026

Notice Inviting e-Tender

The Project Manager (Executive Engineer Designs), PMU-ADB, PWD, Puducherry, on behalf of the President of India, invites online proposals through a Request for Proposal (RFP) for "Consultancy Services for Carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Environmental Management Plan (EMP) and obtaining Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Clearance for Various Infrastructure Development Projects in the U.T. of Puducherry" proposed under the Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan. For further details, please visit www.pudutenders.gov.in.

No.065/DIP/AD(Press)/2026-27Project Manager (PMU-EAP)



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Notice Inviting Tender

RFP No. 01Date 15-06-2026

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) invites online bids, till 11.00 hrs. on 10-07-2026, for selection of Transaction Advisor cum Merchant Banker/Arranger for mobilization of Rs. 10,000 crore through proposed issuance of NCDs/bonds from all SEBI Registered 'Category-I' Merchant Bankers, whose registration is valid for at least last five financial years i.e., since 1st April 2021. More details on the Services are provided in the RFP document.

Availability of RFP documents	Can be downloaded from website https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 16 th June, 2026 (zero date) onwards
Last date for submission of bids	11.00 hrs. on 10-07-2026
Opening of Technical bid	12.00 hrs. on 10-07-2026
Bid validity period	120 days from the date of opening
Pre-Bid Conference	Bidders interested to participate in the pre-bid meeting are required to get themselves registered by sending an email to Financial Advisor, PSPCL at finance-advisor@pspcl.in with name, designation and mobile numbers of persons interested to participate latest by 23rd June, 2026 Date and time of Pre-Bid Conference shall be intimated by email.

Note: Corrigendum(s) & addendum, if any, shall be published on <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> only.

-sd-
Financial Advisor,
PSPCL, Patiala

1079/12/2026-27/12332C 652/26

CYK 95% A ND-NDE

Indian Naval Ship (INS) *Sharda* departed Colombo on June 13 after a successful port call that further strengthened maritime cooperation and friendship between India and Sri Lanka. The visit featured a range of professional, training and sporting engagements between the two maritime forces. The Indian Navy informed that as part of capacity-building initiatives, Sri Lankan Navy personnel received training in small arms handling, basic firefighting, first-aid and rescue procedures aboard the ship. The engagements were aimed at enhancing operational preparedness and fostering greater interoperability between the two forces.

Eight people, including three women and two boys, were killed in lightning strikes across six districts of Jharkhand, the police said on Sunday. Two people each were killed in Ranchi and Garhwa districts, while the remaining deaths were reported in Chatra, Giridih, Seraikela-Kharsawan, and Jamtara districts. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination. The two deceased from Ranchi district were struck by lightning while working in their fields, sub-inspector Sataydeo Prasad of Pithoria police station said. In Giridih, a 10-year-old boy died from burns sustained from a lightning strike.

Press Trust of India
SOLAPUR

Eight people - four women and four children - were killed and seven injured on Sunday when a pick-up vehicle carrying them plunged into a roadside well in Solapur district of Maharashtra, the police said. Fifteen people were travelling in the vehicle when the accident occurred. The vehicle plunged into the well after the driver lost control, said Atul Kulkarni, Superintendent of Police, Solapur.

The vehicle was being pulled out of the well, and the injured people were being rushed to the hospital, he said.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis expressed grief over the loss of lives in the accident and announced financial assistance of ₹5 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased person.

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

As the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) accelerates the deployment of technologies in Kusunpur, a remote village in Odisha's Kendrapara district, as part of the 'Smart Village' initiative, residents may soon receive alerts whenever crocodiles stray dangerously close to their homes.

The CSIR laboratories are planning to introduce an artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled wild animal detection and alert system. The system is likely to be installed at two key entry points to the village.

Kendrapara has logged one of the worst rates of human-crocodile conflicts in the State, with more than 20 fatalities reported over the past four years.

Kusunpur is set to witness a comprehensive infrastructure upgrade, in-

Three women and a child were killed in incident in Morena district; Jhansi DRM says passengers stopped at curve due to which they may not have seen the approaching train; denies fire incident

The Hindu Bureau
BHOPAL

Four passengers, one a child, who jumped off a train following a rumour of fire, were run over by another train in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday, officials said.

According to officials of the North Central Railway, the incident took place around 4.15 p.m. between the Hetampur and Dholpur sections of Jhansi railway division after a passenger in a general coach pulled the alarm chain of the Khajuraho-Udaipur Intercity Express.

The deceased include three women and a child who were identified as Virma Devi, 60, a resident of Bikaner district in Rajasthan; Shakuntala Devi, 60; Afreen, 35; and her four-year-old son Asad Khan, all residents of Agra district in Uttar Pradesh.

"According to preliminary information, while the train was stopped, some



Police and railway officials recover bodies from the railway tracks in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday. PTI

passengers alighted and moved onto the adjacent railway track,” North Central Railway said in a statement, adding that some passengers who got down were hit by the Firozpur-Seoni Patalkot Express.

“Upon receiving information about the incident, officials from the Railway Administration and local administration immediately rushed to the site,” the statement said.

Nadeem Khan, Afreen’s husband, said that he and



odies from the railway tracks in
on Sunday. PTI

his family jumped off the
train after some people
started a rumour of fire in
the train.

“People started jumping
off the train, so we also
jumped. But, my elder
child got left behind in the
train, so I went to check on
him while my wife and
younger son were outside.
That was when another
train approached and my
wife and son were run over
by it,” he said.

Jhansi Divisional Rail-
way Manager (DRM) Ani-

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Central Information Commission (CIC) has directed the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) to disclose “point-wise categorical” information, permissible under the Right to Information Act, related to expenditure on exams and details of answer books, including the tendering and procurement process, for Class 10 and 12 board examinations.

After setting aside the CBSE’s earlier denial of information under the RTI, the transparency panel asked it to furnish revised replies.

The case arose from an RTI application seeking details of answer books used in Class 10 and 12 Board examinations during the 2023-24 and 2024-25 sessions, including paper quality, number of pages, size, purchase cost, total expenditure, GST payments and details of the tender process for procurement of answer sheets.

In its response, the CBSE disclosed certain specifications of the answer books.



Setting aside the CBSE's earlier denial of information, the CIC asked it to furnish replies.

However, information relating to the purchase cost of answer books, the number purchased and total expenditure incurred on procurement was denied under Section 8(1)(e) of the RTI Act.

The Commission found that the Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) had denied information under multiple exemption clauses “without giving any proper justification”.

“...the Commission, deems it fit, to direct, CPIO to revisit the contents of the RTI application in question and provide a revised point-wise categorical replies along with relevant permissible information that can be provided,” the CIC said.

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

New companies are likely to invest in India to manufacture memory chips while existing investors will scale up production to address the demand-supply gap in the segment, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

Strong demand for memory (data storage) cards and advanced chips has tightened global supplies and supported higher prices in past quarters, and manufacturers have been sprucing up investments and production capacities to meet market requirements worldwide.

The higher memory chip prices have, in turn, led to a rise in production costs for a range of electronic products, including smartphones and laptops.

"Definitely, a lot more

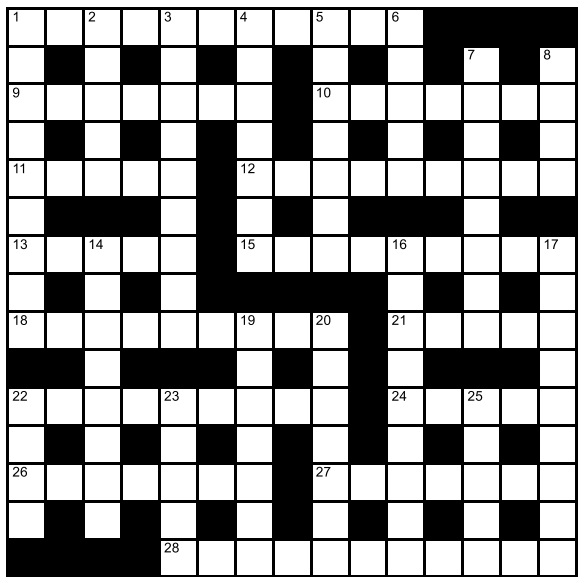


Ashwini Vaishnaw

investment is coming in the memory manufacturing units, and that is because for the first time in the way the semiconductor industry has grown at such a rapid pace, for the first time we are seeing a huge shortage of certain components which are required in the AI data centres, the high bandwidth memory chips,” Mr. Vaishnav said.

Data centre investments in India are expected to cross \$200 billion soon,

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



Across

- 1 Assume that a piano expert's press release is having one worried (11)
- 9 It's tricky to contain West Indies with force on time quickly (7)
- 10 Tails of rhinoceros, cheetah, impala, lizard, kangaroo, cow, hippopotamus are tails (7)
- 11 Man wearing hat is shoddy (5)

- 12 Collected grant? Heard wrongly outside (9)
- 13 One having primarily rugged muscles, horses perhaps (5)
- 15 Report on plight faced by people with temperature (9)
- 18 Old tax I have is too much (9)
- 21 From the time the French seceded, its quiet (5)
- 22 Don angrily poses for reforms first (9)
- 24 Kisses Nora, Erica, Carol, Kate, Susan on the heads (5)
- 26 Stage of surgeon! (7)
- 27 Say, Ivy was 151 metres last year-end (7)
- 28 Country handles rent haphazardly (11)
- Down**
- 1 Partner's a saint, hence spies cantered essentially (9)
- 2 Prince's journey gave satisfaction (5)
- 3 Say, MNCs upset COO terribly on Saturday (9)
- 4 Beats HR myths extraordinarily (7)
- 5 Playing sitar at one university in European country (7)
- 6 Searches area covering from south to north for excise (5)
- 7 Relating to a direction, the Royal Navy follows shogun intermittently (8)
- 8 Second-hand bus Edward secured (4)
- 14 Tied up with a routine overnight and essentially intense day (8)
- 16 Principal with teens sail at sea (9)
- 17 Heartless trader promises to detain apprentice ultimately and release son for money (9)
- 19 Audit in school, physical education coach initially faces tempo (7)
- 20 Painful condition is clear, AC here is suffocating (7)
- 22 First person at say, Pondicherry collecting cess at the end for Lays (4)
- 23 Had hybrid tea (Earl) with some nougats (5)
- 25 Ministers expel stranger out of room (5)

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

A	U	G		D	T	C	
O	V	E	R	T	A	K	E
I	G	M	A	N	E	I	C
G	A	V	E	M	E	A	N
T	A	N	E	A	N	D	E
B	O	S	U	N	S	D	O
R	N		S	A	I		
S	C	R	A	M	S	C	
F	A	L	L	O	E	M	L
C	I	N	R	R	U		
P	A	P	E	R	B	O	A
C	V	E	P	A	O	I	
C	I	N	E	M	A	T	A
A	D	M		U	L	S	

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

Divine blessings of Acharya

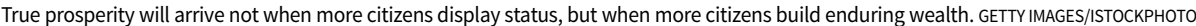
Maha Periyava was truly a walking deity in this age. Referring to the saying “*Vidya dadati vinayam*” (knowledge should lead to humility), Maha Periyava explained that Lord Krishna does not like pride arising from knowledge (*vidya garvam*) or pride arising from wealth (*aiswarya garvam*). Narayana Bhattathuri also emphasises this truth. These qualities create a barrier between the devotees and Lord Krishna. Everyone knows of Lord Krishna’s immense love for Kuchela (Sudama). Mahalakshmi restrained Lord Krishna from giving excessively. Why? Not because she was unwilling to bless Kuchela, but because too much wealth might make him forget his devotion to Krishna. Wealth should never become a cause for forgetting God.

We were fortunate to live during the time of Maha Periyava and receive his darshan, Damal Sri Ramakrishnan said in a discourse. “Without the grace of the Guru, it is impossible to attain the grace of God.”

We call Adi Sankara, the *Jagadguru* (world teacher), yet Adi Sankara himself refers to Lord Krishna as the true *Jagadguru*. He cites the famous verse: “*Vasudeva-sutam devam...Krishnam vandhe jagat gurum.*” Lord Krishna, serving as the divine teacher (guru) in the Bhagavad Gita, declares: “*Yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati...*” Whenever righteousness declines and unrighteousness rises, He incarnates to protect dharma. Acharyas explain another important distinction. We are born in this world due to the accumulated results of our past *karma* – our merits and sins. In this Kali Yuga, with the blessings of the guru and through *Nama Sankirtanam* (chanting the divine names of God), people can gain an effective spiritual path.

When to opt for balance transfer in home loan?

(The writer is CEO, Paisabazaar)



The price of prestige: Is status up for sale?

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

Arbitrage funds demystified

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

CM
YK

A ND-NDE

Bangladesh's former police chief arrested in Dubai, Minister says



Palestinian death toll in Gaza tops 73,000, officials say, despite truce



Obama says Trump-Tehran deal will not improve on his 2015 pact



Taiwan launches new intelligence portal amid tensions with China



U.K. forces intercept sanctioned oil vessel linked to Russia's shadow fleet

Three killed as Israel strikes 'Hezbollah targets' in Beirut

Putin and Zelenskyy speak with Trump as strikes kill 2 in Russia

China's ability to launch direct missile strikes on Australia 'growing': report

Swiss voters poised to reject plan to cap country's population

Sport

Hamilton claims first win with Ferrari

Manpreet equals Turkey's 412-game record, but India loses

The result: Netherlands 3
(Bukkens 3, Bijen 23, Reyenga 40)
bt India 2 (Dilpreet 10, Sukhjeet 33).

WINNING START

Juairiya shines as Bangladesh outplays the Netherlands



AFP Bangladesh rode on a half-century from Juairiya Ferdous to score a six-wicket win over the Netherlands in the Women's T20 World Cup Group A game in Birmingham on Sunday. **The scores:** Netherlands 139/8 in 20 overs (De Leede 50) lost to Bangladesh 141/4 in 19.1 overs (Juairiya 50). **Toss:** Netherlands; **PoM:** Juairiya.

SENSATIONAL STUFF

Campbelle does the star turn as West Indies stuns New Zealand



GETTY IMAGES Shemaine Campbelle's unbeaten 90 helped West Indies stun defending champion New Zealand by seven wickets in a Women's T20 World Cup Group B game in Southampton on Saturday. **The scores:** NZ 162/6 in 20 overs (Alleyne 4/27) lost to WI 163/3 in 19.5 overs (Campbelle 90 n.o.). **Toss:** WI. **PoM:** Campbelle.

MOMENT TO SAVOUR

Qatar strikes in injury time to hold Switzerland, bags first WC point



REUTERS Qatar's Boualem Khokhi stunned Switzerland by playing a major role in the late equaliser (90+4) as the sides drew 1-1 in their World Cup Group B clash in Santa Clara on Saturday. The leveller initially appeared to come via a Khokhi header but it was later determined to be an own goal by Swiss midfielder Miro Muheim.

THE DIFFERENCE

McGinn's first-half goal propels Scotland to victory over Haiti



REUTERS John McGinn's shot deflected off an opposing defender and went past goalkeeper Johny Placide as Scotland defeated Haiti 1-0 in a World Cup Group C encounter in Foxborough on Saturday. Scotland, making its first appearance in the global tournament since 1998, earned its first World Cup victory since 1990.

Smriti, Deepti combine to power India past Pakistan



Game-changing spell: Deepti, right, returned career-best figures of five for 10. GETTY IMAGES

T20 WORLD CUP

P.K. Ajith Kumar
BIRMINGHAM

Richa Ghosh could breathe life into the death overs the way few women do.

Her explosive batting is something India depends heavily on. It is crucial to the team's fortunes in the T20 World Cup.

In front of a big, noisy, colourful, crowd, made up largely of Asian origin, on a sunny afternoon at Edgbaston, Richa came out to bat when India desperately wanted her to fire. She did.

Her magnificent onslaught (34, 17b, 5x4, 1x6) turned India's score from a potentially competitive one into a winning total against Pakistan. The less resourceful of the Asian neighbours was always going to find the target of 171 daunting.

So it proved. The Women in Blue won by 64 runs, to start their campaign on a satisfactory note.

In the Group of Death, in which they have to face Australia and South Africa, they could not have afforded a hiccup in the opening match. But, the innings had wobbled, and the PowerPlay belonged to Pakistan.

It required all the skills and experience of India's most accomplished batters, vice-captain Smriti Mandhana (68, 44b, 9x4, 2x6) and captain Harmanpreet Kaur (36, 35b, 4x4) to steady the ship, and to set the stage for Richa. The innings had begun in rousing fashion though, with Shafali Verma hitting the first ball for six, as she effortlessly lofted Sadia Iqbal over long-off.

The left-arm spinner, however, had her revenge in the same over. Shafali backed away to produce a faint edge, which was smartly taken behind the stumps by Muneeba Ali. Before long, Jemimah Rodrigues played too early against Tasmia Rubab, sky-ing one to extra cover, where Natalia Pervaiz fumbled but completed the catch on her second at-



Smart play: Smriti counterattacked after the early fall of Shafali and Jemimah. GETTY IMAGES

SCOREBOARD

INDIA
Shafali Verma c Muneeba b Sadia 6 (5b, 1x6), Smriti Mandhana c Fatima b Rameen 68 (44b, 9x4, 2x6), Jemimah Rodrigues c Natalia b Tasmia 1 (7b), Harmanpreet Kaur c Natalia b Fatima 36 (35b, 4x4), Bharti Fulmal st. Muneeba b Sadia 1 (3b), Richa Ghosh b Fatima 34 (17b, 5x4, 1x6), Deepti Sharma (not out) 12 (9b, 1x4), Shreyanka Patil (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (nb-1, w-10); 11; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 170.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-6 (Shafali, 0.5 overs), 2-18 (Jemimah, 3.2), 3-109 (Smriti, 13.5), 4-110 (Bharti, 14.2), 5-123 (Harmanpreet, 16.2), 6-168 (Richa, 19.5).

PAKISTAN BOWLING
Sadia 4-0-41-2, Fatima 4-0-33-2, Tasmia 4-0-41-1, Rameen 4-0-30-1, Nashra 4-0-25-0.

PAKISTAN
Muneeba Ali run out 41 (35b, 5x4), Gull Feroza c Bharti b Deepti 12 (9b, 2x4), Ayesha Zafar c Smriti b Deepti 12 (8b, 2x4), Saira

tempt, and threw ball down hard to the ground, as if admonishing it for causing her, and teammates, a few anxious seconds.

The Indian dugout must have now felt a bit worried. But Smriti, who had come to the tournament in not-so great touch, and Harmanpreet calmed those nerves. They knew they needed to bat deep on a surface that wasn't quite a belter, against an attack that was testing.

The duo put on 91 for the third wicket. Smriti, who was dropped on a couple of occasions, may not have been at her very best, though she did play some of those lovely shots

Jabeen c Harmanpreet b Shree Charani 2 (3b), Natalia Pervaiz c Harmanpreet b Shree Charani 7 (13b), Fatima Sana c Smriti b Shafali 0 (3b), Aliya Riaz c Jemimah b Deepti 18 (17b, 1x4), Rameen Shamim c Shreyanka b Shree Charani 4 (6b), Nashra Sandhu c Harmanpreet b Deepti 4 (5b), Tasmia Rubab c Jemimah b Deepti 0 (2b), Sadia Iqbal (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-1, w-4); 5; Total (in 17 overs): 106.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-38 (Feroza, 4.5), 2-53 (Ayesha, 6.3), 3-58 (Saira, 7.4), 4-75 (Muneeba, 10.5), 5-77 (Fatima, 11.3), 6-79 (Natalia, 12.1), 7-91 (Rameen, 14.4), 8-105 (Aliya, 16.2), 9-105 (Tasmia, 16.4).

INDIA BOWLING
Arundhati 2-0-21-0, Shreyanka 3-0-17-0, Kranti 1-0-14-0, Deepti 4-0-10-5, Shree Charani 4-0-21-3, Shafali 3-0-22-1.

Toss: India.
Player-of-the-Match: Deepti. *India won by 64 runs.*
India's next match: June 17 vs. Netherlands, Leeds, 7 p.m. IST.

you have grown accustomed to.

Smriti's dismissal triggered a collapse though, as India slid from 109 for two to 123 for five. At this stage, Pakistan may have sensed an opportunity. But Richa and Deepti Sharma took 23 off Tasmia in the 19th over. In reply, Pakistan began well, with Muneeba (41, 35b, 5x4) and Gull Feroza adding 38 for the opening wicket.

That would prove by far the biggest partnership of the innings as India bowled and fielded with vigour, not even allowing its familiar rival any hope.

Deepti finished with exemplary figures of five for 10.

Brazil, Morocco play out entertaining stalemate

Vinicius' individual brilliance helps the Selecao restore parity after Saibari puts the Atlas Lions ahead; a point against one of the favourites is another sign of the African team's growing stature

FIFA WORLD CUP

Ayon Sengupta
NEW JERSEY

The final sentence of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* reads: "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."

Few football nations understand the struggle of moving forward while being anchored to the past better than Brazil.

Morocco arrived with no such burden, but with the momentum of a generation determined to push beyond the boundaries it has already broken down.

In East Rutherford, history and possibility shared the same pitch, and neither could find a way past the other.

Brazil's last World Cup match on American soil was a famous one – victory in the 1994 final, where the side overcame Italy, which had Selecao's current coach, Carlo Ancelotti, as its assistant manager, on penalties.

Here, in the early evening heat, the sea of canary yellow vastly outnumbered the red of Morocco in the stands as members of the Brazilian diaspora from across the tri-state area turned up in large numbers.

But the Moroccans lost little time in silencing the



Showing the way: Vinicius drills in Brazil's equaliser past the Moroccan defence. GETTY IMAGES

partisan crowd, pushing Brazil back with Achraf Hakimi and Brahim Diaz combining effectively down the right flank.

The breakthrough duly came in the 21st minute as Ismael Saibari nonchalantly lifted the ball over an on-rushing Alisson Becker, having outpaced a chasing Gabriel after Diaz threaded a measured through ball into his stride.

Yet, minutes after the hydration break, a moment of individual brilliance from Vinicius Junior restored parity and brought life back to the Brazilian fans. The Real Madrid attacker played a one-two with Bruno Guimaraes near the left touchline before dropping his shoulder to whip in a curling right-footer into the

top-right corner to make it 1-1.

The equaliser shifted the momentum. In the first minute of stoppage time, Morocco goalkeeper Yassine Bounou had to produce an acrobatic reflex save to keep out Lucas Paqueta's sumptuous side volley that was arrowing towards the bottom corner.

As the second half progressed, Morocco retreated into a considerably deeper defensive block, inviting Brazil forward while looking to strike on the counter.

That approach nearly paid off with 15 minutes remaining as the Atlas Lions carved out two openings in quick succession, first down the left and then from the right. Brazil's de-

fence, however, stood firm on both occasions.

An errant back pass from Noussair Mazraoui then almost gifted Raphinha a clear run on goal, but Bounou was quick to sense the danger and raced off his line to snuff out the chance. At the other end, Neil El Aynaoui forced Alisson into a diving save to his left, and the Liverpool goalkeeper was nimble enough to push away the follow-up from Amaimouni-Echghouyab for a corner-kick.

Neither side could find the decisive breakthrough. But for Morocco, a point against one of the tournament favourites was another sign of the team's growing stature. For Brazil, the search for a future worthy of its past goes on.

Australia's gamble pays off in the win over Turkiye

Agencies
VANCOUVER

Australia recorded a stunning 2-0 victory over Turkiye in its World Cup Group D opener on Saturday as coach Tony Popovic's bold selection gamble paid off.

Nestory Irankunda and Connor Metcalfe scored the goals while rookie goalkeeper Patrick Beach produced a string of crucial saves. Australia head coach Popovic had pulled off a massive shock in his starting line-up, dropping captain Mathew Ryan in favour of Beach, who won only his third cap. Vice-captain Jackson Irvine was dropped in favour of midfielder Paul Okon-Engstler in a starting XI that featured 10 WC debutants.

THE RESULTS

Group B: Qatar 1 (Muheim 90+4-og) drew with Switzerland 1 (Embolo 17-pen). **Group C:** Brazil 1 (Vinicius Jr. 32) drew with Morocco 1 (Saibari 21); Haiti 0 lost to Scotland 1 (McGinn 28). **Group D:** Australia 2 (Irankunda 27, Metcalfe 75) bt Turkiye 0. **Group E:** Germany 7 (Nmecha 6, Schlotterbeck 38, Havertz 45+5-pen, 88, Musiala 47, Brown 68, Undav 78) bt Curacao 1 (Comenencia 21).

Tuesday's Matches

GROUP G
Belgium vs. Egypt, 00.30 a.m.
Iran vs. New Zealand, 6.30 a.m.

GROUP H
Saudi Arabia vs. Uruguay, 3.30 a.m.

The day and time(s) pertain to India

Stat attack

Morocco's winless streak in its opening game of a World Cup continues (four draws and three defeats)

In its fourth World Cup game, Qatar earned its first point

Brazil has drawn its first match for the fourth time. The last three times it did so (1974, 1978 and 2018), it didn't reach the final

Vinicius has scored four times for Brazil in 11 games under Ancelotti. He scored only six in 39 appearances before that

Only Shaqiri (10) has more goals for Switzerland at major tournaments than Embolo

This is the sixth time Brazil has failed to win its opening contest (23 appearances) at the World Cup

Beach has become the goalkeeper with most saves in a World Cup match for Australia

Brazil is now unbeaten in opening matches at 21 editions (since 1934)

McGinn has become the first Scot to score a World Cup goal since Craig Burley (vs. Norway) in 1998

31y 238d McGinn is Scotland's oldest goalscorer in the tournament

36 Scotland has recorded its first win at a World Cup since 1990 (vs. Sweden)

44 The number of fouls in the Scotland-Haiti match, the most in a group stage match after 2010 (45, Chile vs. Switzerland)

93:59 Muheim's own-goal to bring Qatar level is the fourth-latest equaliser in the World Cup

Compiled by ANIRUDH VELAMURI

20y 124d IRANKUNDA is the youngest Australian to score in the football showpiece, and the youngest for a team representing the Asian Football Confederation



In seventh heaven: Havertz provides the finishing touch. REUTERS

Germany puts seven past hapless Curacao

Agencies
HOUSTON

Germany thrashed World Cup debutant Curacao 7-1 in its first Group E contest at the Houston Stadium here on Sunday.

Kai Havertz netted a brace while Felix Nmecha, Nico Schlotterbeck, Jamal Musiala, Nathaniel Brown and Deniz Undav were also on the scoresheet. It was Germany's first opening-match win at a World Cup since its successful 2014 campaign in Brazil.

Livano Comenencia had briefly cancelled out Nmecha's opener for Curacao's

maiden goal at the global tournament.

Comenencia tied the score with his left-footed shot through traffic in the centre of the box.

But Germany regained the lead via Schlotterbeck's header off Brown's corner-kick. Havertz converted a penalty in first-half stoppage time to make it 3-1.

Germany was awarded the spot-kick after Nmecha was tripped by Riechedly Bazoer. A majority of the crowd was rooting for Germany but there was a spirited contingent of fans cheering on Curacao as it tried to battle it out.



Ready for the ‘Counter Strike’

Sindarov is confident about his chances against World champion Gukesh and is guarding against complacency; the 20-year-old is geared up to face the Indian challenge in the upcoming Olympiad

C. Shyam Sundar

Javokhir Sindarov is the quintessential Gen-Z kid and is known to be addicted to ‘Counter Strike’. With an endearing smile, the free-spirited 20-year-old is as casual as one can be as he sits down for an interaction with Indian journalists in Oslo.

The Uzbekistan GM’s love for the video game sets the conversation going as responds to each question with an inimitable accent and a grin. At times, he finds it a task to come up with the right word(s) in English after saying that in his native language, he manages to continue speaking with a smile that is constant and from his heart.

Having earned the right to challenge D. Gukesh for the title of world champion with a stupendous performance in the Candidates tournament held recently, Sindarov is quietly confident of his prospects but isn’t underestimating his opponent by any means.

A prodigy who was taught the game by his grandfather when he was just four-and-a-half, he caught the attention with his impressive play in the age-group categories and titles at the global level, competing against the best.

As questions about his World championship match opponent crop up, especially about the contrasting personalities, Sindarov gets candid about how he would go about it. While Gukesh is as intense as one could get, the young Uzbek GM appears a free-spirited person, so rare for a chess player.

Despite the criticism that the World champion from India has been receiving in recent times, especially from past players, Sindarov isn’t ready to be lulled into any sense of hope that he would go in as the favourite given his sizzling form.

“I feel he is a very smart player and is extremely strong,” he said, expecting a close contest for the championship.

While Gukesh is said to have set the ball rolling with regard to preparations, lining up seconds and cutting down on tournament play to focus on the big match, Sindarov is bracing up and expects to step up in the days to come with his events lined up along the way.

“From next month I’ll start my preparations, but right now I need to focus on the Olympiad. My team is already working on the World Championship,” he said.

The title match will be a different kettle of fish for the Uzbek as he has never featured in a match of such a duration (14 games of classical and tie-break if needed

Sindarov has been in unbelievably good form, first winning the World Cup in Goa in 2025 before running away with the Candidates title earlier this year. But the Uzbek Grandmaster is hungry for more

to decide the winner), but he said he would be ready for it.

“I know I’m very close (to winning it). Gukesh also has the same chance(s). It will be a very good match.”

Sindarov has been in unbelievably good form, first winning the World Cup in Goa in 2025 before running away with the Candidates title earlier this year.

He has set his sights on winning the gold in the Olympiad later this year at home (in Samarkand) and said the biggest challenge would come from India (defending champion in Open and women), the USA and probably China.

He seems to be someone who doesn’t want to be buried under the burden of expectations and said that he’s doing things his way.

“I don’t know about other chess players, I think maybe they’re spending their time... I know Hans (Niemann), he loves to play tennis, puzzle. There are other players who love to play poker. But I really like to play Counter Strike,” he said, explaining his love for the game.

Sindarov said he ended up spending a lot of time playing it even during the World Cup in Goa.

He brushed aside talk that he wasn’t working too hard on his game and said, “I work 10 hours in one day, like probably in one year it should be more than 80-90 days...and we’ve really worked a lot on chess and the results are coming.

“I want to be a very strong chess player, and if I keep working in this system of putting in long hours, I believe I can become one of the strongest players in the world. There is a dream,” he said with loads of optimism and playing down talk that he had lost some motivation after becoming a GM.

He also recalled the camp with his coach (Roman Vidonyak) in Munich some time ago, which proved very beneficial and during which a lot of hard work was put in.

Asked whether more intensive training from a younger age could have already made him the world champion, Sindarov reflected on his development and potential.

“I feel when I was young, if I trained a lot, I would be world champion. I know I

have big potential because, in my opinion, I have very good talent for the game, and even when I didn’t train much,” he said.

“It was very hard to find a good person who can teach me, and when I started working with Roman, I feel I really improved my chess.”

The young Uzbek star said he preferred to work more on the board rather than on the computer like the World No.1 Magnus Carlsen.

For someone who was taught chess by his grandfather to keep him away from sneaking away to play games on the computer, sometimes till 4 or 5 a.m., Sindarov recalled that he showed his talent at a young age and won the Uzbekistan under-10 championship which also saw Nodirbek Abdusattorov, who was by then the World under-8 champion, also compete. He said it was a good game with Abdusattorov, which ended in a draw.

“When I started to play chess, I wanted to become like Magnus Carlsen, the world champion,” he said of his ambitions.

Speaking about Uzbekistan’s rise in global chess which saw the nation win the gold medal in the Olympiad in 2022 at Mamallapuram near Chennai, he said there were strong players including Abdusattorov and himself apart from others.

“We have good talent in Uzbekistan... Absusattorov, me... There are some others too.”

He was amazed with the talent in India and said five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand sparked the chess boom. Gukesh, R. Praggnanandhaa, Arjun Erigaisi and others were huge talents.

“In my opinion, when Vishy became a world champion it probably made chess popular and more players took it up. Gukesh, Pragg, Arjun... they are the new generation and they are amazing talents,” he added.

Did he consider himself the best player in Uzbekistan currently, he said rather modestly that there was Nodirbek (Abdusattorov)...

Sindarov, who would be playing in the Sinquefield Cup in the USA, said he would be following the FIFA World Cup where he would be watching a few of his national team’s games at the venues.

The Olympiad later this year would be a huge tournament for the Uzbekistan players after which he would turn his attention to the world title match, the venue for which hasn’t been decided yet.

He seemed to express a desire to play

in Cyprus, where he cruised to victory in the Candidates in which he didn’t lose a game.

Answering a query on conditions, he noted: “Actually, for me, in general, I want to play in a hot country. Winter is a little bit uncomfortable for me. But I’m not a chess player who needs very comfortable conditions, because I grew up in all kinds of conditions.

“So for me, it doesn’t matter where I play. Just a nice food centre -- that would be the best thing to have in a match. I will be very happy to play somewhere like Cyprus.”

As the conversation veers towards Bibisara Assaubayeva, the Kazakhstan player, who won the women’s event in Norway Chess 2026, with whom he is in a relationship.

“We know each other from our youth, so we grew up together, and we help each other a lot in tournaments. She helps me a lot, and I hope I also help her a lot. We have very good memories...but I don’t like to tell everything,” Sindarov said blushing.

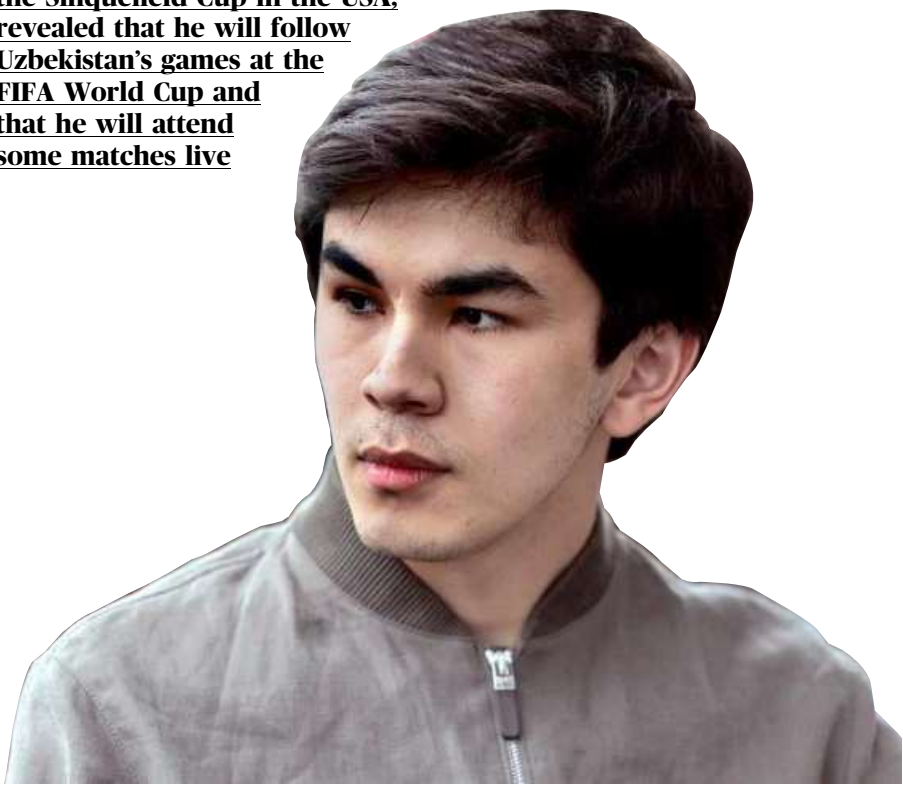
The Uzbek loves ‘Counter Strike’ and his over-the-board counter-strikes could decide which way fortunes would go in the title match against Gukesh, scheduled to begin on November 23.

(The writer was in Oslo at the invitation of Norway Chess).

Sindarov, who will be playing in the Sinquefield Cup in the USA, revealed that he will follow Uzbekistan’s games at the FIFA World Cup and that he will attend some matches live

THE GIST

- ▼ Having been taught to play chess by his grandfather when he was just four-and-a-half, Sindarov caught the attention with his impressive play in age-group categories and titles at the global level
- ▼ Despite the criticism that Gukesh has been receiving in recent times, Sindarov isn’t ready to be lulled into any sense of hope that he would go in as the favourite
- ▼ The Uzbek loves ‘Counter Strike’, and his counter-strikes could decide which way fortunes go in the title match



S. Swaminathan

Vasudevan Mukunth