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EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

The Divisional Railway Manager (Engg)/E.C.Railway/Samastipur for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open Tender from experienced and financially capable tenderers for the following works in e-Tendering mode of IREPS web portal of Indian Railways :- **(1) Tender Notice No.:** TC-57-2026-SPJ **Name of Work:** 1. SGL-RXL Section- RXL Yd. -CTR(S) in passenger running loops of Rxl Yd (RXL) Line No-05,08 by 60 kg (SH) rail with 60 kg (New) PSC sleeper 1.5 Tkm. 2. Sagauli Narkatiaganj TRR(P) 0.644 Tkm & Narkatiaganj-Paniyahwa-TRR(P) 1.372 Tkm. Total TRR(P) on bridge-2.016 Tkm 3. Kaparpura (KVC)-Sagauli (SGL) Section Renewal of existing 60 Kg 1 in 12 Curved Switch with 60 Kg 1 in 12 Thick Web Switch(TWS) Total 17 Sets 4. Sagauli (SGL)-Raxaul (RXL) Section-RGH Yd.-TTR(FS+TWS+CMSC) with 60 kg sleepers, I in 12 thick web switch & CMS crossing= Total 04 sets. **Tender Value. (In Rs.):** 12834157.73 **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** 256700.00 **Completion period of the work:** 06 Months **(2) Tender Notice No.:** TC-59-2026-SPJ **Name of Work:** Refurbishment of Retiring Room and TTE Rest Room at Saharsa Station **Tender Value. (In Rs.):** 14420603.57 **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** 288400.00 **Completion period of the work:** 06 Months **(3) Tender Notice No.:** TC-60-2026-SPJ **Name of Work:** Repairs to station approach road and circulating area at Jankinagar station. **Tender Value. (In Rs.):** 12523303.55 **Earnest Money (In Rs.):** 250500.00 **Completion period of the work:** 06 Months. **1. Last Date & time for receiving of Tender in E-Tender mode on IREPS web portal:-**10/07/2026 upto 12.00 hours. **2.Opening Date & time for E-Tender:** 10/07/2026 after 12.00 hours. **3.Website particulars where complete details of tender & tender document can be seen on Website: www.ireps.gov.in. Amendments/modifications if any shall not be published in the newspapers but the same shall be uploaded in the website.**

Sr. Divisional Engineer/Co-ord
E.C.Railway/Samastipur

PR/0406/SPJ/ENGG/T/26-27/60

बिहार सरकार

पिछड़ा वर्ग एवं अति पिछड़ा वर्ग कल्याण विभाग

मुख्यमंत्री अत्यत पिछडा वर्ग सिविल सेवा प्रोत्साहन योजना

सिविल सेवा एव अन्य प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओ के अभ्यर्थियों हेतु सुनहरा अवसर ।

विभिन्न प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं यथा–यू.पी.एस.सी., बी.पी.एस.सी, अन्य राज्यों की सिविल सेवा परीक्षाओं, बिहार न्यायिक सेवा, एन.डी.ए., सी.डी.एस., बैंकिंग, रेलवे, एस.एस.सी. आदि की प्रारंभिक परीक्षा में उत्तीर्ण होने पर मुख्य परीक्षा /साक्षात्कार की अग्रेत्तर तैयारी हेतु बिहार सरकार द्वारा प्रोत्साहन राशि प्रदान की जाती है।

इन प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं की प्रारंभिक परीक्षा में उत्तीर्ण होने पर निर्धारित प्रोत्साहन राशि रू0 30,000/– (तीस हजार) से रू. 1,00,000/– (एक लाख) तक प्रदान की जाती है।

बिहार राज्य के अधिसूचित अत्यंत पिछड़ा वर्ग के स्थायी निवासी अभ्यर्थी इस योजना के लाभ हेतु पात्र होंगे।

प्रारंभिक परीक्षाफल प्रकाशित होने के 45 दिनों के अंदर विभागीय पोर्टल पर आवेदन कर सकते है।

आवेदन विभागीय पोर्टल https://bcebconline.bihar.gov.in/पर किया जा सकता है।

विस्तृत जानकारी हेतु विभागीय वेबसाईट https://state.bihar.gov.in/bcebcwelfare/CitizenHome.html *पर जाएं अथवा* QR Code *स्कैन करें* ।

PR. No. 006076 (BC & EBC) D. 2026-27

Office of the Executive Engineer, PMGSY Division Jammu
Near DG(P) Residence Bikram Chowk, Jammu
Phone No.: 0191-2439734

Subject:- Change of critical dates of bids/ Extension of Notice Inviting Tenders.

Ref:- This office e-NIT No. EE/PMGSY/J/15of 2026-27 Dated :- 05.06.2026 issued vide endorsement No. EE/PMGSY/J/119-125 Dated :- 05.06.2026

CORRIGENDUM- 01

Due to technical issue, the critical dates of the works floated at S.No.02 and S.No-10 in the above mentioned e-NIT have been extended given below:-

S.No.	Particular	Original Date	Revised Date
1	Closing date of downloading bidding documents	13.06.2026.	17.06.2026
2	Dead line for submission of bids in electronic format on the website	13.06.2026.	17.06.2026
3	Time and date of opening of received bids on the website website	15.06.2026.	18.06.2026

Rest all the terms and conditions will remain same as already advertised.

Sd/-
(Er.Bhopinder Kumar Banotra)
Executive Engineer
Division Jammu.

DIP/J-3775/26

DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS SAMBA

" LOOK OUT NOTICE"

SHO P/S Bari-Brahmana has intimated vide his letter No.2315/5-1/PSBB Dated 15.06.2026, that one girl namely Maryam Bibi D/o Nur Bashar R/o Myanmar A/P Bari-Brahmana, District Samba has been missing from Bari-Brahmanaarea and her missing report has been registered in case FIR No.160/2026 u/s 137(2) BNS dated 13.06.2026 of P/S Bari-Brahmana. Her search was conducted but not traced out till date. Through the medium of this LOOK OUT NOTICE, it is informed to all the Police Establishments/General Public that any information related to the missing girl may be communicated on following contacts:-

1.PCR Samba :- 01923-246333, 9541649001
2.SSP Samba's email ID :- sspsamba@jkpolice.gov.in

The description roll along with photograph of missing girl is as under:-

Description	
Name	Maryam Bibi
Parentage	Nur Bashar
Address	Myanmar A/P Bari-Brahmana District Samba
Age	15 Years
Height	5 Feet 1 Inch
Complexation	Fair Skin
Face:-	Round
Body Structure	Medium
Language	Hindi
Attire	Salwar Kameez

Photograph

Sd/-
Sr. Superintendent of Police,
Samba

DIP/J-3858/26, Jun 17 2026

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.2, 2/1 and 2/3, Kalidasa Marg, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru - 560 009. Phone No. 080-22265383
website: www.kiadb.in e-Mail: cdoce1@kiadb.in

No.IADB/ENGG/PMC/EPTND-EP-03/1657/2026-27 **Date: 17.06.2026**

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR PROVIDING PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONSULTANCY SERVICES
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB is inviting tender under Quality Based Consultancy System (QCBS) as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Consulting Firms under two cover system for the following works:

Name of the Works : (1) PMC Services for the work of Formation of Industrial Layout in Sira Industrial Area, Phase-2, Sira Taluk, Tumakuru District., **(2)** PMC Services for Construction and Commissioning of 600 KLD CETP with ZLD facilities on Turnkey Basis including O&M of entire system for 05 years at Baikampady Industrial Area, Dakshina Kannada District. (3rd Call), **(3)** PMC Services for the work of "Formation of Industrial Layout at KGF Industrial Area, Bangaradagani Village, KGF Taluk, Kolar District. **(4)** PMC Services for the work of Re-Construction & Strengthening of roads, construction of RCC Cross Drainage, HDPE water supply line at Jigani Industrial Area 1st & 2nd Phase, Bengaluru South District. **(5)** PMC Services for the work of Formation of Road, Construction of RCC Side Drain, RCC Inspection Chamber, RCC Box culvert & providing water supply pipeline in Sira Industrial Area, Phase-1, Sira Taluk, Tumakuru District. **(6)** PMC Services for the work of Formation of Road, Construction of RCC Side drain, spur culvert & box culvert at Dobaspet 5th Phase Industrial Area, Nelamangala Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District. **(7)** PMC Services for the work of Establishment of Knowledge, Wellbeing and Innovative City (KWIN City) at Phase-4 & 5, Doddaballapura and Nelamangala Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District. **(8)** PMC Services for the work of Establishment of Plug & Play infrastructure in EV Block, Harohalli Industrial Area 5th Phase, Ramanagar Taluk, Bengaluru South District.

The last date and time of receipt of tender is : **04.07.2026** upto **04.00 pm.**

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-
Engineer-in-Chief, KIADB Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/1216/Zen/2026-27

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.2, 2/1 and 2/3, Kalidasa Marg, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru - 560009. Phone No. 080-22265383, website: www.kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-DPR-01/0333/2026-27 **Date: 17.06.2026**

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB invites tender from reputed consultants/firms under two cover bid system and proven record of similar nature of work for project mentioned below:-

Name of the work : Providing Consultancy Services for Preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for Scientific Disposal of Industrial Solid Waste by Integrated Material Recovery Facility (MRF) and Alternate Fuel Raw Material Facility (AFR) including survey analysis, qualitative & quantitative study, design of MRF & ARF facility etc., at plot no.311 to 314, Belur Industrial Area, Dharwad Taluk & District. (4th Call).

The last date and time of receipt of tender is : **30.06.2026** upto **4.00 pm.**

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.**

Sd/-
Chief Engineer -2 KIADB, Bengaluru

DIPR/CP/1198/NR/2026-27

U.P POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LTD. Electricity 765/400kV Substation Design Circle, 11th Floor, Shakti Bhawan Ext., Lucknow"E-TENDER NOTICE" For "Construction of 400/220/132kV GIS Substation Sirsira, Raebareli against tender specification No. ESD-236". Tender ID: ESD-8/236, Bid Portal (download & Submission) : www.etender.nic.in, Bidding : Online, EMD : Rs. 80,47,000.00, Bid No : ESD-8/236 dated 16.06.2026, KEYDATES : Online Bid Submission Start : 16.06.2026, 18.55 Hrs, Online Bid Submission Closing: 14.07.2026, 12.00 Hrs, Technical Bid Opening: 15.07.2026, 16:00 hrs. Onwards, Bidders are advised to visit e-tender portel regularly for amendments/corrigendum etc. Email : se400sdc@upptcl.org Mobile No 8004777305 "Save Electricity for Nation"

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice

For and or behalf of the India invited e-open tender (E-Tender Notice No. 40265267) from experienced contractor for the work given below: - **(1) Tender Title:** Set of Spare items for Brake System, Qty. 05 Nos. **(2) Approx. cost of the Tender:** Rs. 89,46,593.5/-(Eighty-nine lakh forty six thousand five hundred ninety three Rupees and Fifty Paise Only) **(3) Earnest Money to be deposited:** Rs.1,78,940/- (Rupees One lakh Seventy-eight thousand Nine hundred Forty only) **(4) Date & time for submission of tender and opening of tender:** Tender submission date & time: Up to 14.00 Hrs. 07/07/2026 Opening date & time: After 14.00 Hrs., 07/07/2026 **(5) Website particulars notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender from can be purchased etc.** Website:-**https://www.ireps.gov.in** Railway administration reserves the right to postponed/modify or to cancel the tender any time without assigning any reasons.

Sr. DMM/STORES/SEE

PR/0403/SEE/STORE/T/26-27/32

ICAR – National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources
Pusa, New Delhi – 110 012, India

A Technology on "Pan-Genome Genic SNP Chip of Wheat" is available at ICAR-NBPGR, New Delhi for licensing to public or private research organizations/ companies/ agencies. The details of the same can be accessed on **https://nbpgr.org.in**

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
PUNJAB WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD
BID NO. ETENDER/EE/PWSSD/ROPAR/22/2026/Date: 17.06.2026

Executive Engineer, Pb. W/S & Sew., Divn. Ropar on the behalf of Chief Executive Officer, Pb. W/S and Sew. Board Chandigarh invites online bids for the following works:-

Sr. No.	Items	Amount & Time Limit
1	Providing & laying of Intercepting and Diversion Sewer, Construction of Manhole Chamber, Construction of IPS, Construction of MPS, Laying of Rising main, and all other works contingent thereto in Dera bassi Town, distt S.A.S. Nagar. (SBM-2.0 Scheme) **Part-A**	Part-A 2397.70 Lacs
	Construction of Sewage Treatment Plants 3.00 MLD, 3.50 MLD & 7.50 MLD including FSTP 9.00 KLD, 10.50 KLD & 22.50 KLD respectively based on any suitable sustainable & Proven Biological technology and all other works contingent thereto in Dera bassi Town, distt. S.A.S. Nagar. (SBM-2.0 Scheme) **(Part B).**	Part-B Rs. L.S.

Closing date & Time → 06.07.2026 upto 3.00 P.M.
Opening date & Time → 07.07.2026 upto 01.00 PM.
Prebid Meeting Date → 24.06.2026 at 09.00 A.M.

For detailed log onto **https://eproc.punjab.gov.in.**

Note: Any Corrigendum(s), to the Tender/RFP Notice shall be published on the above website only.

Executive Engineer,
Pb. W/S & Sew, Divn.,
Ropar.

1796/12/2026-27/12467

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UP Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd.
PARICHHA THERMAL POWER PROJECT - PARICHHA, JHANSI

1. **GEM/2026/B/7640809 Dated 09.06.2026** "Contingency work for handling of sticky wet coal of Unit No#3&4 BTPS Parichha." Estimated Cost Rs. 4,87,458/-, Bid Submission end dt. 24.06.2026 up to 01:00 PM.
2. **GEM/2026/B/7641406 Dated 09.06.2026** "Hire of Agency for Consultancy Services for IMS for all Project of UPRVUNL." Estimated Cost Rs. 23,36,400/-, EMD Rs 20,000/-, Bid Submission end dt. 30.06.2026 up to 12:00 PM.
3. **GEM/2026/B/7635887 Dated 08.06.2026** "Repairing, reconditioning & fabrication of various materials of CHP PTPP, Parichha." Estimated Cost Rs. 46,86,279.14/-, EMD Rs 60,000/-, Bid Submission end dt. 23.06.2026 up to 02:00 PM.
4. **GEM/2026/B/7613560 Dated 02.06.2026** "Biennial contract of Boiler Pressure Parts, HP/LP Valves Servicing Unit#5&6, 2x250 MW, Parichha." Estimated Cost Rs.1,43,10,551/-, EMD Rs 1,60,000/-, Bid Submission end dt. 23.06.2026 up to 01:00 PM.
5. **GEM/2026/B/7608628 Dated 01.06.2026** "Round the Clock Routine Preventive & Breakdown Maintenance of Turbine and auxiliaries CTPS." Estimated Cost Rs. 1,15,11,311/-, EMD Rs 1,10,000/-,Bid Submission end dt. 22.06.2026 up to 04:00 PM.
6. **GEM/2026/B/7591550 Dated 27.05.2026** "Repairing/ Rectification fabrication & machining of miscellaneous items required for BMD-II, TMD & EMD-I BTPS." Estimated Cost Rs. 25,68,490.66/-, EMD Rs 22,000/-,Bid Submission end dt. 26.06.2026 up to 02:00 PM.
7. **GEM/2026/B/7649800 Dated 12.06.2026** "Repairing and Reclamation of spares of AHP and CAMD 210MW BTPS Parichha for two years." Estimated Cost Rs. 38,63,337/-, EMD Rs 64,000/-,Bid Submission end dt. 27.06.2026 up to 05:00 PM.
8. **GEM/2026/B/7648648 Dated 10.06.2026** "Biennial maintenance, testing and issue of statutory test certificate EOT crane, installed in TMD BTPS." Estimated Cost Rs. 11,59,704/-, EMD Rs 10,000/-,Bid Submission end dt. 01.07.2026 up to 04:00 PM.
9. **GEM/2026/B/7661389 Dated 13.06.2026** "Regular upkeeping and cleaning of service building (including bathrooms) and chimney for 2x210MW, BTPS." Estimated Cost Rs. 19,95,654/-, EMD Rs 32,000/-,Bid Submission end dt. 04.07.2026 up to 12:00 PM.

NOTE:- For Information regarding Addendum / Corrigendum/ Rejection of Bids kindly regularly visit website **https://gem.gov.in** & **uprvunl.org.**

सं. 96 / टी.एस.डी.–प्र0 / पीटीपीपी / दिनांक 17.06.2026

"Save Electricity for Nation"

सेन्ट्रल बैंक ऑफ़ इंडिया
Central Bank of India

आइये, एक बेहतर जीवन बनायें। www.centralbankofindia.co.in Build a better life around us.

Regional Office : Naka Chandrawadni Chauraha, Infront of Govt. Polytechnic College, Jhansi Road, Gwalior (M.P.) - 474009 Ph. : 0751-2402020, 2402021, Fax : 0751-2402022

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE/IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
(E-Auction Sale 27-07-2026)

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provison to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property/mortgaged/charged to the Central Bank of India, Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Central Bank of India, Gwalior M.P. will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", and "WHATEVER THERE IS" basis on 27.07.2026 for recovery of amount due to the Central Bank of India.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY, RESERVE PRICE & EARNEST MONEY DEPOSIT

Branch name	Name of the Borrower's	Details of Secured Asset(s) and Name and Address of title/Lessee Holder(s)/Owner of Secured Asset(s) Who create Security interest	Date of Demand Notice/ Possession Notice	Reserve Price	EMD	Bid Increase Amount
Banmore Morena	M/S, S.P. PLASTIC INDUSTRIES Add. Plot No. R-11, situated at industrial area at Banmore, Distt. Morena M.P.-476444 1. Shri Rajesh Dubey S/o Shri Ramnarayan Dubey R/o- Anand Nagar, Near Navgrah Mandir, Bahodapur, Gwalior Distt. Gwalior M.P. - 474008 2. Shri Prakash Gupta S/o Shri Ramkishan Gupta R/o- Gargaj Colony, Bahodapur, Gwalior, Distt. Gwalior, M.P.-474008 3. M/S, MAA RAMSHREE AGRO INFRA Add. Jhansi Road, Dabra, Distt. Gwalior, M.P.-475110 Represented by its partners- A. Shri Mohan Lal Bhutani S/o Shri Ramrang Bhutani (Expired on 19.03.2020) Legal Heirs of Late Mohan Lal Bhutani S/o Shri Ramrang Bhutani i) Shri Ranjan Bhutani S/o Late Mohan Lal Bhutani R/o- B-53, Rishi Nagar, Caption Satish Marg, Rani Bagh, North-West Delhi. 110034 ii) Shri Rakesh Bhutani S/o Late Mohan Lal Bhutani R/o- B-53, Rishi Nagar, Caption Satish Marg, Rani Bagh, North-West Delhi 110034 iii) Shri Sushil Bhutani S/o Late Mohan Lal Bhutani R/o- B-53, Rishi Nagar, Caption Satish Marg, Rani Bagh, North-West Delhi 110034 iv) Smt Kiran W/o Late Mohan Lal Bhutani R/o- B-53, Rishi Nagar, Caption Satish marg, Rani Bagh, North-West Delhi 110034 B. Shri Radheyshyam Gupta S/o Shri Siya Ram Gupta @ Shri Siya Sharan Gupta, R/o- Mahaveer Colony, Balla ka Dera, Dabra, Distt. Gwalior, M.P.-475110 4. Shri Ranjan Bhutani S/o Shri Mohan Lal Bhutani R/o- B-53, Rishi Nagar, Caption Satish Marg, Rani Bagh, North-West Delhi- 110034 R/o- F-219, House No. 211/ 250, Rishi Nagar, Rani Bagh, New Delhi-110034 5. Shri Rakesh Bhutani S/o Shri Mohan Lal Bhutani R/o- B-53, Rishi Nagar, Caption Satish Marg, Rani Bagh, North-West Delhi 110034 6. Mrs. Rachna Gupta W/o Shri Radheshyam Gupta R/o- Mahaveer Colony, Balla ka Dera, Dabra, Distt. Gwalior, M.P. - 475110	Immovable asset : (A) Equitable Mortgage of Commercial Land & Property measuring 0.110 Hectares situated at Village Magrora, Patwari Halka No. 50, Part of Survey No. 553/3, Tehsil Dabra & Distt. Gwalior-475110 in name of Shri Ranjan Bhutani S/o Shri Mohan Lal Bhutani as per Registered Sale Deed Volume no. 5835, Document no. 7984 dated 29.03.2011 Registered with Sub/Joint Registrar Dabra, Madhya Pradesh. bounded as under- EAST- Gwalior Jhansi Road, WEST- Land of Smt. Rachna Gupta, NORTH- Land of Shri Radhey Gupta, SOUTH- 10 feet Way (kaccha rasta) (B) Equitable Mortgage of Commercial Land & Property measuring 0.098 Hectares situated at Village Magrora, Patwari Halka No. 50, Part of Survey No. 553/2 & 553/3, Tehsil Dabra & Distt. Gwalior-475110 in name of Shri Radheyshyam Gupta S/o Shri Siyasaran Gupta @ Shri Siya Sharan Gupta, as per Registered Sale Deed Volume No. 5835 Documents No.7985 dated 29.03.2011 Registered with Sub/Joint Registrar Dabra, Madhya Pradesh, bounded as under- EAST- Gwalior Jhansi Road, WEST- Land of Smt. Rachna Gupta, NORTH- Land of Shri Manoj Gupta, SOUTH- Land of Shri Ranjan Bhutani (C) Equitable Mortgage of Commercial Land & Property measuring 0.840 Hectares situated at Village Magrora, Patwari Halka No. 50, Part of Survey No. 556/min, Tehsil Dabra & Distt. Gwalior-475110 in name of Shri Mohan Lal Bhutani S/o Shri Ramrang Bhutani & Shri Radheyshyam Gupta S/o Shri Siyaram Gupta @ Shri Siyasharan Gupta as per Registered Sale Deed Volume No. 5822 Documents No. 7728 dated 18.03.2011 Registered with Sub/Joint Registrar Dabra, Madhya Pradesh, bounded as under- EAST- Land of Seller Devendra singh, WEST- Land (Khet) Rawat, NORTH- Land of Gajander singh - Pushpendra singh, SOUTH- 10 feet Way (kaccha rasta); (D) Equitable Mortgage of Commercial Land & Property measuring 0.260 Hectares situated at Village Magrora, Patwari Halka No. 50, Part of Survey No. 556, 553/3, Tehsil Dabra & Distt. Gwalior-475110 in name of Smt Rachna Gupta W/o Shri Radheyshyam Gupta and Shri Rakesh Bhutani S/o Shri Mohan Lal Bhutani as per Registered Sale Deed Volume No. 5833 Documents No. 7954 dated 28.03.2011 Registered with Sub/Joint Registrar Dabra, Madhya Pradesh bounded as under- EAST- Land of Seller Devendra Singh, WEST- Land of Radheshyam Gupta etc, NORTH- Land of Pushpendra Rawat, SOUTH- 10 feet Way (kaccha rasta)	10.10.2025 / 03.01.2026	7,80,00,000.00 [Rs. Seven Crore Eighty Lakhs only]	78,00,000.00 [Rs. Seventy Eight Lakhs only]	7,80,000.00 [Rs. Seven Lakhs Eighty Thousand only]

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided in secured creditor's website i.e. **www.centralbankofindia.co.in** or Bank's approved service provider's (auction Platform). M/s. PSB Alliance Pvt. Ltd. web portal **https://ebkray.in.** or **https://baanknet.com** Please contact Helpline No. **8291220220** or Regional Office Gwalior Mob. **9109132851.**

Date : 17.06.2026, Place : Gwalior, M.P. ; **AUTHORISED OFFICER CENTRAL BANK OF INDIA,REGIONAL OFFICE- GWALIOR, M.P.**

THURSDAY
June 18, 2026

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CMRL CASE

Pinarayi's daughter appears before ED

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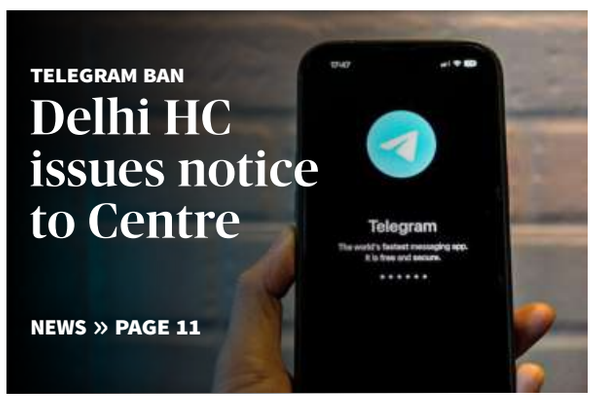

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A.P.'s incentive for large families is misplaced

A one-time aid cannot offset childcare costs

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MAGICIAN AT WORK

Messi treble powers Argentina to victory

SPORT » PAGE 15

IN BRIEF

Rebuild education system to cut stress, says Rahul in Kota

JAIPUR
Addressing an event in Kota on Wednesday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi called for rebuilding the education system, saying it puts pressure on children, causes stress to students and extorts money from parents. » Page 11

L-G orders audit of all Delhi schools for POCSO compliance

NEW DELHI
Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Taranjit Singh Sandhu has ordered a comprehensive citywide audit of schools to assess compliance with the provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. » Page 2

Modi meets Trump, raises safety of Indian seafarers

PM commends Trump for his efforts to restore peace in West Asia, stresses importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open; Trump praises Modi, says U.S. and India 'very close' to trade agreement

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday raised the issue, in broad terms, of the safety of seafarers with U.S. President Trump during their bilateral meeting in Evian, France, on the fringes of the G7 Summit.

"Mr. President, you are aware across the world, Indian seafarers in the hundreds of thousands are working and performing their duties across global maritime trade routes, including the Strait of Hormuz, and their safety is of utmost importance to us," Mr. Modi said, referring to the killing of three Indian seafarers in a U.S. strike last week off the coast of Oman.

Holding hands: PM Narendra Modi with U.S. President Donald Trump on the sidelines of the G7 meet in France on Wednesday. AP

"I'm confident that the issue of seafarers will receive the highest priority during the implementation of this agreement," Mr. Modi said. The Prime Minister "commended" Mr. Trump for his efforts to restore peace in West Asia and said he was confident this would lead to a long-term peace in the region. The Prime Minister told the President that they both agreed that keeping the Strait of Hormuz open was vital for the world economy.

Mr. Trump was asked by a pressperson if he had words of condolence for the grieving families of the sailors. "I heard about that. It is a rough profession. There is no question about it," he said, adding, "this has been happening throughout time, but we work together. We love all of those people."

Mr. Trump said Iran would not have a nuclear weapon and that Mr. Modi felt "very strongly" about that as well. Mr. Trump said the U.S. and India were "very close" to finalising a trade deal, calling Mr. Modi a "very tough" negotiator. The two countries announced the finalisation of a deal in February this year but it is yet to be signed, held up partly over changes to U.S. tariff policies and some gaps in the finer details.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 10

Iran-U.S. framework deal outlines nuclear pledge, financial relief

Stanly Johny

The U.S. has agreed to facilitate the release of frozen Iranian assets, contingent on progress in negotiations towards a final agreement, and create a plan for Iran's economic development, involving $300 billion, according to a text of the 14-point framework agreement reached between Tehran and Washington which was published by Saudi Arabia's *Al Arabiya* network and the Bloomberg news agency on Wednesday.

The memorandum of understanding is expected to be signed in Geneva on Friday. The draft stated that Iran has pledged never to produce nuclear weapons and, pending a final agreement, maintain a status quo on its nuclear programme. However, the *AP* reported later that unnamed U.S. officials read out the draft to pressper-

Peace process

The 14-point framework is expected to be signed in Geneva tomorrow

U.S. PLEDGES
- Lifting sanctions on Iran's products and services, including crude and banking
- Immediate lifting of naval blockade
- Withdrawing forces from 'surrounding areas'

IRAN PLEDGES
- Restoring pre-war traffic through Strait of Hormuz
- Never produce nuclear weapons

sons, according to which Iran has agreed to down-blend (dilute) its highly enriched uranium under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

CONTINUED ON
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UNLOCKING ACCESS
» PAGE 14

Odisha CM orders action over errors in textbooks

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Taking strong exception to errors in school textbooks, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Wednesday directed immediate corrective measures and action against the officials responsible.

A day earlier, teachers' and parents' associations claimed that the recently issued textbooks for Classes 1 to 8 contain as many as 1,678 mistakes, including Newton being described as the "greatest pilot" and a photo of the Karnataka Legislative Assembly being used to represent the Odisha Legislative Assembly.

An official said a three-member panel will be constituted to probe the matter and based on its findings, action will be taken against those found responsible.

Schools across the State will reopen on Thursday.

INBRIEF

Five clusters identified under new slum rehabilitation policy

Five clusters have been identified under the new Delhi Slum and JJ Cluster Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy, 2026, where infrastructure projects will be started, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has announced. Located in Mayur Vihar, Seelampur, Sultanpuri, Lajpat Nagar and Pitampura, the projects will provide basic amenities to the *jhuggi-jhopri* cluster residents. The Delhi Development Authority and the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board will begin tendering within 45 days, the CM said, adding that the initiative will provide dignified housing to slum residents. PTI

Two held for firing outside Guru Randhawa-linked gym

Two alleged associates of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang have been arrested for opening fire outside a gym linked to Punjabi singer Guru Randhawa in Paschim Vihar, the police said on Wednesday. The accused, Arman, 19, and Tushar alias Tashu,21, from Sonipat, were apprehended in Bahadurgarh. Police said two motorcycle-borne assailants fired outside the gym on June 11, and no one was injured. A social media post allegedly by gangster Anil Pandit claimed responsibility. The Crime Branch tracked the suspects across nearly 100 km before arresting them. Seven empty cartridges were also recovered. PTI

SC seeks Delhi Police reply on bail pleas of two 'Indian Mujahideen operatives'

K.A. Najeeb case judgment, as interpreted in the Gulfisha Fatima case, would apply in the present case with 'full force', says the top court; notes that the accused have been incarcerated for 12 years

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The SC noted that the Delhi HC denied bail to the two based on apex court's Jan. 5 order, which has since been referred to a larger Bench.

The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday asked the Delhi police to respond to bail pleas filed by two men accused of operating the Rajasthan module of the banned outfit Indian Mujahideen. The accused, who have been in custody for 12 years, have challenged a Delhi High Court order denying them bail.

The Supreme Court's January 5 judgment denying bail to activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, which the High Court had relied on while rejecting the bail pleas of these two men, has since been referred to a larger Bench for consideration, a Bench of Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M. Pancholi noted on Wednesday.

'Reasoned order'

The accused's counsel informed a Bench of Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M. Pancholi that the two men had been in custody since March 2014, when they were arrested by Delhi Police's Special Cell and charged under various provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Indian Penal Code.

Additional Solicitor General Anil Kaushik, appearing for Delhi Police, said the High Court's order refusing bail was a "reasoned one" and consistent with the principles laid down by the Supreme Court in its January 5 judgment in the Delhi riots conspiracy case involving Mr. Khalid and Mr. Imam.

"What reasoned order? The judgment relied upon has since been referred to a larger Bench... You will have to file a counter-affidavit," Justice Bagchi remarked orally.

While hearing the bail pleas of Delhi riots accused Tasleem Ahmed and Khalid Saifi on May 22, a Bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and P.B. Varale had asked the Chief Justice of India, Surya Kant, to constitute a larger Bench to determine how the Supreme Court's three-judge Bench decision in *Union of India v. K.A. Najeeb* (2021) ought to be applied in cases under the UAPA involving prolonged incarceration and delays in trial. It had pointed out that an "authoritative resolution" of the legal position was needed.

In *Najeeb*, the top court had recognised that prolonged incarceration and delay in the commencement or conclusion of trial could justify the grant of bail notwithstanding the stringent curbs contained in anti-terror statutes.

Accordingly, Justice Bagchi on Wednesday observed that the *Najeeb* precedent would apply with "full force" in the present case, given the length of custody undergone by the accused. "The K.A. Najeeb case will apply with all force here, subject to the way it has been interpreted in the Gulfisha Fatima case," he said. The Bench directed the police to file a counter-affidavit by July 20 and listed the matter for further hearing on July 27.

L-G orders citywide audit of schools for POCSO compliance

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

L-G Taranjit Singh Sandhu asked the police to maintain presence near schools. FILE PHOTO

Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Taranjit Singh Sandhu has ordered a comprehensive audit of schools in the Capital to assess if they are complying with the provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, according to a statement issued by his office on Wednesday.

At a review meeting attended by senior officials from Delhi Police and the Departments of Women and Child Development, Education and Transport on Tuesday, Mr. Sandhu directed authorities to identify gaps in the implementation of child protection norms and take action against institutions violating guidelines.

The Education Department has been asked to ensure strict compliance with POCSO provisions, and every school has been directed to maintain a dedicated Child Protection Committee that meets regularly to monitor safety-related issues, a statement read.

'Zero tolerance'

To improve security around educational institutions, the L-G directed the police to ensure a visible presence near schools and major student hubs.

He emphasised a "zero-tolerance approach" towards harassment and molestation of women and children.

Mr. Sandhu also instructed the police to ensure all women police stations handle complaints and cases related to crimes against women and children to enable more sensitive and efficient response mechanisms. Authorities were instructed to observe July as the 'Child Protection Month' and conduct a month-long awareness campaign, including training programmes for teachers, school staff, and parents on child protection measures.

Won't tolerate negligence during monsoon: CM to officials

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday directed all departments to ensure continuous monitoring of waterlogging-prone areas and warned that any negligence during the monsoon season will not be tolerated.

Ms. Gupta also directed that for every identified waterlogging point, a nodal officer be appointed who will be held directly accountable in case of waterlogging at that particular point. She instructed all departments to keep their teams on alert and remain prepared to deal with any emergency situation during the monsoon.

Earlier, she chaired a meeting attended by MPs, Ministers and senior officials and shared the 'Flood Control Order-2026', outlining guidelines on drainage, embankments, pumping stations, regulatory mechanisms, operational plans, and control room contacts.

Noting that the government aims to anticipate risks and prioritise prevention over response, the CM directed departments to inspect relief equipment and ensure arrangements for safe evacuation during flooding.

Govt. to organise three-day welfare camps to resolve citizen grievances on the spot

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The exercise will bring many welfare schemes of the Central and Delhi governments on a single platform

The Delhi government will set up three-day public welfare camps at 42 locations in the city from Thursday, bringing a slew of services and schemes directly to citizens' doorsteps and ensuring the prompt resolution of people's grievances.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the government's priority was to ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive the benefits of welfare schemes in a timely and transparent manner. The exercise will bring various welfare schemes and public services of the Central and Delhi governments on a single platform and eliminate the need for citizens to visit multiple offices. All departments have been asked to participate in the camps and resolve as many cases as possible on the spot.

Camps in schools

Most of the camps will be set up on school premises to provide citizens with convenient and easily accessible venues. The camps will function daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Officials and staff from departments such as the Irrigation and Flood Control Department, Delhi Jal Board, Power Department, Transport Department, Urban Development Department, Health and Family Welfare Department, Education Department, Women and Child Development Department, and Revenue Department will be present at the camps.

A range of citizen-related applications and services will be addressed, besides necessary guidance and assistance. Ms. Gupta said the camps will offer services related to Pink Saheli cards, registration and loan facilities under the Pradhan Mantri SVANidhi Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana, ration card services, Aadhaar registration, e-Shram cards, Jan Dhan accounts, loan facilities for Start-up India, and MSMEs.

Speaker, Ministers take part in cleanliness drives

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta, Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, and Labour Minister Kapil Mishra on Wednesday participated in cleanliness drives in Chandni Chowk and Model Town to mark 12 years of the Union government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Mr. Gupta urged citizens to make cleanliness a daily habit while Mr. Sirsa said a clean India can be achieved only through collective responsibility and public participation.

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Website: www.cosmopolitanclubchennai.com
NOTICE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Extraordinary General Meeting ("EGM") of the Club is scheduled to be held on Saturday, the 11th July 2026 at 04:30 p.m. to transact the agenda as set out in the Notice calling for the EGM.

Notice dated30.5.2026 was dispatched to all members by Registered Post /Courier on 18th June 2026.

The Club is providing the facility of voting through electronic means ("remote e-voting") in compliance with Sec.108 of the Companies Act 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014. The business as set out in the aforesaid Notice will be transacted through electronic voting facility provided by M/s Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL). The Executive Committee has appointed Sri K.M.Subheramaniam, Advocate, as Scrutinizer to oversee the remote e- voting and Manual Ballotting.

The remote e-voting period begins on Wednesday,08.07.2026 (9.00 a.m.) and ends on Friday, 10.07.2026 (5.00 p.m.). The e-voting module shall be disabled for voting after 5.00 PM on 10.07.2026,During this period, Members whose name appear in the Register of Members as on 21.06.2026 and those who are eligible as per Article-48 only shall be entitled to exercise their vote through e-voting process.

Members who have cast their vote by remote e-voting may attend the Meeting but shall not be allowed to vote again in the meeting. The members attending the meeting who have not already cast their vote by remote e-voting can exercise their right to vote at the meeting. The facility for voting by manual ballot will be made available at the meeting venue.

The notice of the meeting is displayed in the club's website www.cosmopolitanclubchennai.com and the e-voting website of CDSL: www.evotingindia.com. In case of grievances connected with the facility for voting by electronic means may be addressed to Mr. Rakesh Dalvi, Manager, (CDSL) Central Depository Services (India) Limited, A Wing, 25th Floor, Marathon Futurex, Mafatlal Mill Compounds, N M Joshi Marg, Lower Parel (East), Mumbai-400013 or send an email to helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com or call on 022-23058738 / 022-23058542/43.

/ By order of the Executive Committee /
Place: Chennai S.Swaminathan
Date: 18.06.2026 Honorary Joint Secretary

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COURT NOTICE
Summons For Settlement Of Issues (O.V RULE 20 (1-A) OF (C.P.C.)
IN THE COURT OF THE CIVIL JUDGE SENIOR DIVISION A COURT, MAPUSA.
Special Civil Suit No. 130/2025/A
Mrs. Ana Vanisa D'Souza and anr .....Plaintiffs
V/s
Haardik Ishani Fabrications Private Ltd and 2 ors .....Defendants
To,
The Defendant
1. Haardik Ishani Fabrications Private Limited, A Private Limited Company having its office at RZ C-1, Jeewan Park, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi, Delhi, India 110059. WHEREAS the above named plaintiffs have instituted a Suit for Declaration, Permanent, Mandatory Injunction and other Consequential Reliefs under section 34 & 38 of Specific Relief Act, 1963. AND WHEREAS earlier summons to you at your last available address have returned to this Court unserved. AND WHEREAS the Plaintiffs has prayed for substituted service by way of Publication in a local daily newspaper circulated in New Delhi and this Court has passed an order on the said application: Publication to be carried out in two newspapers widely circulated in that area. NOW THEREFORE, notice is hereby given to you Under Order V Rule 20(1A) of C.P.C. to appear before this Court on **22.07.2026 at 2.30 p.m.** either in person or by a pleader duly instructed if any and able to answer all material questions and you are directed to produce on the day all the documents upon which you intend to rely in support of your defence and to file your written statement and reply. TAKE NOTICE THAT, in default of your appearance on the day before mentioned, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence. GIVEN under my hand and the seal of the Court, this 14th day of the month of May, 2026.
(Ms. Puja U. S. Sardessai)
Senior Civil Judge 'A' Court, Mapusa-Goa

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME
I, **MUNNI,** residing at S–12/26 indira gandhi camp lodhi colony new Delhi 110003, hereby declare that I have changed the name of my minor son from krishanpal to krishan pal ahirwar, born on 28/10/2010 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 16th june 2026

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EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tender notice No.: TL-AC-CRW-HRT-REBC-4, Date : 16.06.2026
For and on behalf of President of India, Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer, Carriage Repair Workshop, Harnaut invites open e-tender for the following works as detailed:
1. Name of work with its location : Provision of 4.5 KW under-slung-type constant voltage regulated cum emergency battery charger in LHB type Non-AC & AC Coaches as per CAI No. ED/CAI/024 dt. 09.10.2024 & ED/CAI/025 dt. 09.10.2024 at Carriage Repair Workshop, Harnaut. 2. Approx. cost of the work: ₹69,22,176.50/- (Rupees Sixty Nine Lakh Twenty- Two Thousand One Hundred Seventy Six And Fifty Paisa Only). 3. Cost of Tender Form : Nil. 4. Bid Security to be deposited : ₹1,38,500/- (Rupees One Lakh Thirty Eight Thousand Five Hundred Only). 5. Date & Time for submission of tender and opening of Tender : The tender have to be submitted online on https://www.ireps.gov.in website up to 12:00 hrs. on 07.07.2026 and will be opened on the same day at 12:30 hrs. 6. Website particulars, Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc. Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria & tender documents can be seen from the CRIS website https://www.ireps.gov.in & full details of notice can be seen on notice board in the office of Chief Workshop Manager, Administrative Building, Carriage Repair Workshop, Harnaut, Nalanda and Bihar-803110. All corrigendum will be uploaded on website if required.
Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer/ Carriage Repair Workshop/ECR/Harnaut
PR/0411/CRW-HRT/MECH/T/26-27/52

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given that the share certificates for Shree Cement Limited holding 50 Shares, Start Dist No. 1770671 TO End Dist No. 1770720, Folio No. SCL034660, Certificate No. 11849, in the name of Shri Arun Kumar Sharma and Shri Vijay Kumar, have been lost or misplaced. Anyone with a claim or objection should report it to Shri Arun Kumar Sharma at 204, Jahaz Apartment, Rohtak Road, Paschim Vihar, Delhi 110087, within 14 – 21 days of notice, after which the company will proceed with issuing duplicates.

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कार्यालय अधिशासी अभियन्ता, निर्माण खण्ड (द्वितीय), उ०प्र० जल निगम (नगरीय), गाजियाबाद
आर-1, राजनगर, (निकट टेलीफोन एक्सचेन्ज), गाजियाबाद (उ०प्र०) पिन - 201002
पत्रांक : 622/M-8/09
दिनांक 17/06/2026
निविदा सूचना
यू.पी. जल निगम (नगरीय) की ओर से निम्नलिखित कार्य के निष्पादन हेतु निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है: **'गवर्नमेन्ट पॉलिटेक्निक, शास्त्री नगर गाजियाबाद परिसर में स्थित अवर जलाशय के ध्वस्तीकरण का कार्य "।** निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक 20.06.2026 से 04.07.2026 तक खरीदे जा सकते है। निविदा प्रपत्र शुल्क रू० 3000.00+18% GST है । निविदा जमा करने की अन्तिम तिथि 07.07.2026 को अपरान्ह 03.00 बजे तथा खोलने की तिथि 09.07.2026 को अपरान्ह 03.00 बजे है।

Govt. of Bihar
Department of Environment Forest & Climate Change
Advt. No.-04
Applications are invited online (Link-https://state.bihar.gov.in/forest/CitizenHome.html) from eligible Indian Nationals for the post of Chairman, Bihar State Pollution Control Board, Patna. Application with all enclosures must be finally submitted online latest by **06:00 PM** on **06.07.2026** after which the portal will be disabled for further submission.
Details of the terms and conditions for the post and the prescribed format may be seen on the departmental website (https://state.bihar.gov.in/forest/CitizenHome.html).
The department shall not be liable for any delay in the submission of application and application submitted after the prescribed time shall not be entertained.
(Alok Kumar)
CCF-Cum-Special Secretary
PR- 006078 (Forest) 2026-27
For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar
नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार

Thapa resigns as GTA chief

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Anit Thapa, the Chief Executive of Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA), resigned from his post on Wednesday.

GTA, a regional autonomous body formed as an agreement between Centre, State and Gorkha Janmukti Morcha in 2011, has been functioning for the past two decades. Mr. Thapa, whose party Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGPM) was an ally of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), urged CM Suvendu Adhikari to work towards fulfilling promises made to the Gorkhas. Mr. Thapa took up the post in 2022 after elections to the regional autonomous body. The BGPM won 27 out of 45 seats. The resignation comes a day after CM Suvendu Adhikari visited Darjeeling hills and raised the issue of 'corruption' in the GTA.

Timings
DELHI

THURSDAY, JUN. 18		
RISE	05:24	SET 19:21
RISE	08:39	SET 22:31
FRIDAY, JUN. 19		
RISE	05:24	SET 19:22
RISE	09:47	SET 23:08
SATURDAY, JUN. 20		
RISE	05:24	SET 19:22
RISE	10:50	SET 23:40

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	38	24
Safdarjang	38	24
Palam	38	22

Delhi Palam Today
36°C The weather will be very warm and uneasy. Night will be comfortable. Spell of duststorm and thundershower with strong winds to occur.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
38°C Morning will be comfortable. The weather will be hot and uneasy. Chances of duststorm & thundershower. Night also will be comfortable.

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Mamata marches against eviction of hawkers in W.B.

TMC, CPI(M) demand rehabilitation of hawkers before eviction against backdrop of a comment by the CM that 'unchecked encroachment' is now a governance issue rather than a livelihood issue

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

TMC chairperson Mamata Banerjee, party leaders and workers, during a protest march in support of hawkers in Kolkata on Wednesday. ANI

Trinamool Congress (TMC) chairperson and former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday took to the streets in Kolkata in protest against evictions of hawkers in the State.

Accompanied by Beleghata MLA Kunal Ghosh and former MP Dola Sen, Ms. Banerjee reached Esplanade in the heart of the city. She marched for almost a kilometre to the Subodh Mullick Square. Her presence drew a large crowd.

'Drive illegal, unjust'
The TMC described the eviction drive "illegal, unjust and inhuman".

"Our chairperson, alongside party leaders and workers, led a peaceful protest march against the illegal, unjust and deeply inhumane eviction of hawkers across #Bengal. The people of Bengal have always come first," the party posted on social media.

The party also added that it will fight for the dignity, livelihoods and rights of the workers. "The ruthless @BJP4Bengalregime, driven solely by greed for power and blatant disregard for ordinary citizens, will soon collapse under the weight of its own anti-people policies!" the TMC said.

No comments
Ms. Banerjee did not make any statement for the media.

Since the BJP came to power in the State in May 2026, it has started an eviction drive against hawkers and settlers in markets and railway stations. Thousands of hawkers and settlers have been evicted from public land.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) leadership in the State tried to resist the drive and in some cases courted arrest.

The Opposition parties are demanding rehabilitation of the hawkers before eviction.

Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari on June 12 had defended the anti-encroachment drives."People have the right to walk on footpaths. Nobody has the right to occupy them. No one has given me the right to hand over Kolkata's wide roads and footpaths to anyone. I am accountable to the people," he had said.

Mr. Adhikari claimed that congestion in areas such as New Market, Rajabazar and Metiabruz in Kolkata due to "unchecked encroachment" had become a governance issue rather than merely a livelihood issue.

UCC Bill to be tabled in Monsoon Session of M.P. Assembly in July, says CM

The Hindu Bureau
BHOPAL

The Bill will be passed in this session itself, said M.P. CM Mohan Yadav. FILE PHOTO

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Wednesday said that a Bill on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) would be introduced in the upcoming Monsoon Session of the Legislative Assembly, slated to be held from July 20.

"In the [upcoming] Assembly session, the government will bring up various important and contemporary issues. One of them will be the common civil code, and we are progressing towards that," Mr. Yadav said addressing reporters on the Assembly premises.

He hoped that "it will be passed in this session itself".

A six-member high-level committee formed by the State government in April is currently working on a draft Bill after touring various parts of the State.

On June 16, the Assembly Secretariat issued a notification, saying that the Monsoon Session would be convened over five days from July 20 to 24.

Public's suggestions
Earlier this month, Mr. Yadav invited the public to share their suggestions regarding the UCC on a recently launched government portal, saying that a law would soon be implemented in the State.

The committee, headed by retired Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prasad Desai, has been tasked with submitting the draft Bill along with a detailed report of its findings to the State government within 60 days.

The government has also asked the panel to study models adopted by other BJP-ruled States that have already implemented UCC, especially Uttarakhand and Gujarat.

Apart from these two States, the Assam Legislative Assembly also passed a UCC Bill in May.

Rahul Gandhi speaks to family of U.P. sailor killed in U.S. attack

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday spoke with the family members of Shivanand Chaurasiya, a native of Surouli village in Deoria district of Uttar Pradesh, who was among the three sailors killed following a U.S. attack on an oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman near the Strait of Hormuz recently.

A Congress delegation, led by former U.P. Congress unit president Ajay Kumar Lallu, visited the family and arranged the conversation with Mr. Gandhi, who assured them of all necessary help. "Rahul Gandhi spoke with me and promised to help us. He is writing letters to authorities to accept our demands such as a government job for my sister-in-law," said Rampravesh Chaurasiya, the brother of the deceased.

"Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak, Agriculture Minister Surya Pratap Sahi have not met the family. The government has abandoned its citizens," Mr. Lallu told *The Hindu*.

Oppn. attacks Mann over video; BJP seeks FIR

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

The Opposition parties in Punjab sharpened their attack on Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann over an alleged objectionable video, with BJP leader Jagmohan Singh Raju on Wednesday demanding registration of an FIR in the matter.

The matter stems from the summoning of Mr. Mann by the Akal Takht, the highest temporal seat of Sikhs, in January this year for allegedly making comments on 'Guru ki Golak' (gurdwara donation box) and indulging in "objectionable activities" with the pictures of the Sikh Gurus and slain militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale in a purported video clip.

The Opposition parties have been demanding Mr. Mann's resignation after Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargajj pronounced the edict from the *faseel* (podium of the Akal Takht) on Monday in Amritsar.

'Video authentic'
State BJP leader Raju wrote to Governor Gulab Chand Kataria, seeking registration of an FIR, and said the Akal Takht has found the video to be "authentic".

BJP MP and party national general secretary Tarun Chugh said Mr. Mann has lost the moral right to remain in office after the Akal Takht edict. He

also accused the CM of "misleading" people by claiming that the video was fake and AI-generated.

Congress MP Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa said the Akal Takht Sahib is the pride of the 'Sikh Panth'. "No one can tarnish its glory, no matter how high a position one may occupy. Every position is small before the highest institution of the 'Panth' and every Sikh bows his head," he posted on X.

INBRIEF

Ambekar for people-to-people connect between India, Pak.

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leader Sunil Ambekar on Wednesday made a pitch for "people-to-people connection" between India and Pakistan, saying dialogues held between the governments of two countries, their armies and agencies so far have "failed". During his interaction with reporters at the Pune Union of Working Journalists, Mr. Ambekar also said the 'dialogue with Pakistan' remarks made earlier by senior RSS functionary Dattatreya Hosabale and the organisation's chief Mohan Bhagwat were about people-to-people connection and not about official diplomatic engagement. PTI

6 killed, 20 injured as bus crashes into truck in Vadodara

Six persons were killed and nearly 20 others injured after a private bus rammed into a parked truck on a highway in Gujarat's Vadodara district in the early hours of Wednesday, police said. The accident occurred near Kotambi village on the Vadodara-Halol highway at around 4 a.m. The luxury bus, heading from Rajasthan to Surat in Gujarat, crashed into the rear side of the truck, Vadodara District Superintendent of Police Sushil Agrawal said. The truck had been parked on the roadside as its driver was checking tyre pressure. A majority of the passengers travelling in the bus were from Rajasthan, Mr. Agarwal said. PTI

Parliamentary body meet convened by Sena (UBT) today amid split rumours

Party leaders led by Sanjay Raut meet LS Speaker, request him they should be heard first in case any other group approaches him; Jairam Ramesh accuses BJP of breaking Opposition parties

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut addressing a press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday. PTI

Amid speculations that at least six of its nine Lok Sabha MPs are likely to rebel, the Shiv Sena (UBT) has convened a meeting of its parliamentary board on Thursday. The party issued a whip on Wednesday after writing to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla late night on Tuesday seeking exclusive recognition as the authorised faction in Parliament. Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut and Lok Sabha MPs Arvind Sawant and Anil Desai also met Mr. Birla on Wednesday with a caveat letter, requesting him that the party should be heard first, in case any other group approaches him.

"When we met the Speaker, he told us that nobody else had met him yet, that nothing had reached him yet. We have full faith in the system. We hope no undue relief is given to them (rival faction)," Mr. Desai told *The Hindu*.

Six Sena (UBT) MPs – Sanjay Dina Patil, Sanjay Jadhav, Sanjay Deshmukh, Nagesh Patil Ashtikar, Bhausaheb Wakchaure, and Omraje Nimbalkar – reportedly comprise the rebel faction.

Sources confirmed to *The Hindu* that Mr. Sanjay Dina Patil and Mr. Nimbalkar had not signed the letter to the Speaker. Mr. Sanjay Dina Patil was in touch with party leaders till Wednesday afternoon, but went incommunicado thereafter, sources also said.

On Wednesday, the party claimed that these breakaway MPs were offered ₹50 crore each, and given ₹15 crore before they boarded chartered flights to Delhi. "We don't know where they are at this point. All these MPs were elected on the face of the undivided Shiv Sena founder, Bal Thackeray, and the hard work of Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray," said Mr. Raut.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh accused Union Home Minister Amit Shah of resorting to breaking Opposition parties. "The Union Home Minister is continuing his onslaught on the Opposition and his wrecking of Indian democracy to compensate for his humiliation in the Lok Sabha on April 17, 2026 when he failed to have the Delimitation Bills passed. His allurements are enticing a number of those who were elected just two years ago on a strong anti-BJP agenda to now join the BJP...," he posted on X.

'Judicial scrutiny'

Sena (UBT) leaders said the six MPs have been told that they might face the sword of disqualification if they end up splitting from the party. "Whatever action the BJP takes in the House, these MPs will be subject to judicial scrutiny once we approach the court. It's likely that the six have developed cold feet after considering the repercussions," a Sena (UBT) leader said. "We'll see who all turn up for the meeting," said another party MP.

Disqualification case: ex-AIADMK MLAs file responses to Speaker

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

T.N. Speaker J.C.D. Prabhakar said he'll go through the replies and make a decision later. ANI

Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker J.C.D. Prabhakar on Wednesday said the four former AIADMK MLAs against whom disqualification proceedings were initiated, and notices served on June 9, have submitted written responses. The Speaker said he would go through their replies and make a decision later.

Disqualification proceedings were initiated against S. Jayakumar (Perundurai), Maragatham Kumaravel (Madurantakam), P. Sathyabama (Dharapuram) and Esakki Subaya (Ambasamudram) for defying the party whip and voting in favour of the government led by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay during the trust vote in the Assembly on May 13. They later resigned as MLAs and joined the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK).

AIADMK whip moves HC

Meanwhile, AIADMK whip Agri S.S. Krishnamurthy contended before the Madras High Court on Wednesday that Mr. Prabhakar ought to have conducted a "meaningful inquiry" before accepting the resignations of the four MLAs. Mr. Krishnamurthy filed two writ petitions challenging the gazette notifications issued on May 25 and May 26 notifying the acceptance of the resignations of the four MLAs. He claimed that the Speaker had accepted them "with remarkable haste and without any meaningful inquiry or application of mind".

Even as a plea to initiate disqualification proceedings against them was pending before Mr. Prabhakar, Mr. Jayakumar, Ms. Maragatham and Ms. Sathyabama resigned as legislators on May 25 and joined the TVK minutes after submitting their resignations.

Mr. Subaya followed suit a day later.

Frenzied political activity as INDIA bloc, NDA finalise plans on eve of Jharkhand RS poll

Press Trust of India
RANCHI

Strategy meeting: BJP leader Babulal Marandi arriving at a hotel in Ranchi on Tuesday ahead of the Rajya Sabha election. PTI

A day before the elections for two Rajya Sabha seats, Jharkhand witnessed frenzied political activities on Wednesday, with both the ruling INDIA alliance and the opposition NDA MLAS holding meetings in hotels here to firm up their poll strategies.

Three candidates are in the fray for the election. In the INDIA bloc, JMM has fielded Baidyanath Ram and the Congress Pranav Jha. BJP-backed Independent nominee Parimal Nathwani is also in the fray.

'NDA stands united'

Jharkhand BJP chief Aditya Sahu asserted that NDA MLAs were united and said, "Several MLAs from the Opposition camp will vote as per their conscience and in the larger national interest." Congress leaders claimed that all 56 MLAs of the ruling INDIA bloc are united and will secure a win in both the Rajya Sabha seats. While the JMM has an adequate number to secure one seat, a tough fight between the Congress nominee and the BJP-backed candidate is likely for the second seat.

Mr. Nathwani met NDA leaders at a hotel and later said, "I have sought support from all legislators and parties." On the other hand, Congress legislators met at another hotel, where they were given training about the polling exercise.

The BJP-led NDA has 24 MLAs in the Jharkhand Assembly, while the INDIA bloc has 56 members. The Jharkhand Loktantrik Krantikari Morcha has one MLA.

Jharkhand BJP seeks action over attack on RSS office in Ranchi

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

The Jharkhand unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday questioned the State's law and order situation after two unidentified persons allegedly hurled petrol bombs at the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) office in Ranchi's Niwaranpur area in the early hours of the same day. BJP leaders described the incident as "tragic" and "unfortunate".

BJP leader and Union Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth described the incident "as an attack on a mother". Several leaders, including Jharkhand BJP president Aditya Sahu and Leader of the Opposition Babulal Marandi, visited the RSS office to take stock of the situation.

According to the police, two persons threw bottles filled with petrol into the RSS office late on Tuesday night. The incident was captured on CCTV cameras. No one was injured.

No details yet

When contacted by *The Hindu*, Ranchi Superintendent of Police (City) Paras Rana declined to share details about any arrests made so far, saying that the police were investigating the case and could not disclose further information at present. He added that any development in the case would be shared through the appropriate channel.

A restaurant located near the RSS office is being looked at as a possible reason behind the attack, as RSS office-bearers had reportedly complained a few days earlier about garbage being scattered by the restaurant. However, the police have not officially confirmed any motive behind the incident.

War of words erupts as BJP ally Rajbhar says SP headed for split; Akhilesh hits back

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

SBSP chief Om Prakash Rajbhar and SP president Akhilesh Yadav

A war of words erupted in Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday after State Minister and Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party (SBSP) president Om Prakash Rajbhar claimed that the Samajwadi Party (SP) is headed for a major split, with a large number of its leaders willing to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

'Noose tightening'

"There will be a major split in the Samajwadi Party. [SP leader] Ram Gopal Yadav has submitted a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The entire State knows who the mastermind behind the mining scam and the Gomti riverfront scam is. The SP is worried as the noose tightens. Leave aside Maharashtra and Bengal, the entire SP is ready to join the BJP," Mr. Rajbhar, an ally of the BJP in Uttar Pradesh, posted on X.

The statement was supported by Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya, who said as many as 27 of the 37 SP MPs are ready to defect. "In the Samajwadi Party itself, around 26-27 MPs are ready to defect. We are not trying to split the party. As the 2027 [Assembly] elections approach, they will leave on their own. The Samajwadi Party will be finished in 2027," said Mr. Maurya in Kanpur.

SP president Akhilesh Yadav hit back, claiming that BJP MLAs are themselves ready to switch sides in Uttar Pradesh. "Anyone who gets scared will leave their party. If we want to fight the BJP, we need a team of brave people. In Uttar Pradesh, even BJP MLAs are ready to switch sides," Mr. Yadav told reporters in Lucknow. The SP further ridiculed the BJP ally's claims, alleging that such comments are aimed at diverting attention.

Summer rush: police adopt new strategy as 15 lakh vehicles enter Shimla in 45 days

Press Trust of India
SHIMLA

Weather takea a turn: Umbrellas come handy as tourists take a walk amid rain in the 'Queen of the Hills' on Wednesday. PTI

Around 15 lakh vehicles entered Shimla between May 1 and June 15, with police adopting a five-point strategy to tackle the summer tourist rush. The traffic management measures include deployment of additional force, strict surveillance, mapping alternative routes and encouraging public transport, a senior police officer said.

As schools close for summer holidays, tourists are making a beeline for destinations across Himachal Pradesh. The heavy influx has sparked frequent traffic jams along highways and link roads.

According to hoteliers, average occupancy at tourist accommodations across Himachal Pradesh last week stood at 60-70% during weekdays, rising to 80-90% on the weekends.

"Managing the tourist influx is not a problem if internal bottlenecks are addressed," said Superintendent of Police Gaurav Singh.

He said malfunctioning heavy vehicles such as buses or trucks on the Cart Road, the lifeline of the hill town, are a major issue as they often cause long traffic jams. Bringing in a crane on a single-lane road to tow away an impaired vehicle is a time-consuming process, Mr. Singh said.

He said three cranes have been stationed in different sectors to swiftly handle such situations.

The traffic management strategy includes deployment of an additional 210 police personnel and home guards, besides volunteers. Traffic personnel have also been deployed at major parking sites to ensure smooth entry and exit of vehicles and prevent congestion.

Interceptor vehicles

The number of bike-borne traffic personnel has been increased to 32 for rapid response to traffic-related situations. Interceptor vehicles are being operated in several areas to enforce traffic regulations and ensure swift action against violations.

Shimla city has been divided into five sectors to ensure better monitoring and regulation of traffic.

Moreover, tourists are being encouraged to use alternative routes to save time and reduce congestion within the city.

Congress charts plan to emerge as AAP's main challenger in Punjab Assembly poll

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

Party sources indicated that a change in top leadership of Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee is also under discussion. FILE PHOTO

As the Punjab Assembly election draws closer, the Indian National Congress, the principal Opposition party in the State, is formulating its electoral strategy in a bid to position itself as the primary challenger to the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

The party has been grappling with internal discord, and efforts to address it have gathered pace through a series of meetings. In February this year, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, during his visit to Punjab, gave a stern message to the State unit, asking leaders to work as a "team", days after party leader and former CM Charanjit Singh Channi called for "greater Dalit representation" in the party, saying the community was not getting due representation. The remarks brought internal differences within the party into public view.

Three-member panel

The three-member panel comprising Ajay Maken, Meenakshi Natarajan, and Bhajan Lal Jatav, set up by the Congress on June 11 to assess and submit a report on the current political situation in Punjab, has held several rounds of meetings in New Delhi over the past two days. The panel has met several senior Congress leaders, including Leader of the Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa, former Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, Congress Working Committee member Vijay Inder Singla, former Chief Minister Rajinder Kaur Bhattal, former State Congress chief Shamsher Singh Dullo and Mr. Channi, among others.

Party sources indicated that a change in the top leadership of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) is also under discussion, keeping in mind the complexities of caste, community, religion and regional considerations in Punjab politics.

"Formulating an early electoral strategy and setting up key organisational committees to address burning public issues are vital for our party ahead of the upcoming Assembly election," Ms. Bhattal told *The Hindu* on Wednesday.

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INBRIEF

Fire breaks out at Vijayawada children's hospital; none hurt

A fire broke out at Rainbow Children's Hospital in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, on Wednesday. No casualties were reported, and the patients were shifted to a nearby hospital, Fire Department officials said. Smoke began from the emergency ward and spread to the first floor. "We suspect the fire was caused by an electric short circuit, which led to an air-conditioner burning in the casualty ward. A thorough probe is on," the Fire Services Additional Director G. Srinivasulu said.

Traveller booked for assault on Lufthansa crew member

An air passenger was booked by the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport police after he allegedly assaulted a Lufthansa cabin crew member during a flight from Frankfurt to Hyderabad on Tuesday. The accused, B. Satish Kumar, allegedly attacked a cabin crew member on board flight LH-752 after a snack trolley brushed against the passenger's leg during an in-flight service, the police said. After the flight landed at Hyderabad, a case was registered based on the crew's complaint.

ATM of nationalised bank stolen in A.P; ₹18 lakh missing

Thieves stole an ATM of a nationalised bank in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh early on Wednesday. The incident took place in Bukkarayasamudram mandal headquarters. The burnt machine was later found in a field in Akuledu village. According to the police, nearly ₹18 lakh was stolen from the machine. Three people are believed to be involved in the theft. The police have formed special teams to catch the accused.

ED quizzes Veena for around 8 hours in CMRL pay-off case

Daughter of former Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan was grilled about payments of ₹2.78 cr. made by CMRL to her now-defunct Exalogic IT company; it was her first personal appearance before ED

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday questioned T. Veena, daughter of former Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, for around eight hours in connection with the money-laundering probe in the Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd. (CMRL) pay-off case.

She turned up at the zonal office of the ED here around 10.30 a.m. P.A. Mohamed Riyas, her husband and Beypore MLA, accompanied her in a vehicle and left the premises after she entered the office.

She left after questioning around 7.50 p.m.

High-profile probe: T. Veena arrives at the Enforcement Directorate office in Kochi on Wednesday. R.K. NITHIN

The Central agency is learnt to have asked her about the payments amounting to ₹2.78 crore made by the CMRL to her now-defunct Exalogic IT company.

The ED also raised questions on the loans worth ₹50 lakh extended to Exalogic by Empower India Capital Investments Pvt. Ltd. (EICIPL) operated by CMRL Managing Director S.N. Sasidharan Kartha, despite her company failing to make timely repayments.

Tight security at office

It was Ms. Veena's first personal appearance at the ED office here.

The security at the office premises had been beefed up ahead of her questioning in view of the violent incidents during searches held by the agency at the residence of Mr. Vijayan in Thiruvananthapuram on May 27 as part of the probe.

Personnel of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and the Kerala Police were posted at the entrance to the ED office.

Nitish behind security downgrade, vacation notices to Rabri: Lalu

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal president Lalu Prasad has accused the NDA government of indulging in vendetta politics. FILE PHOTO

Bihar Opposition party Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad on Wednesday held former Chief Minister and ruling Janata Dal (United) president Nitish Kumar responsible for the downgrade of his security cover and the issuance of notices to vacate the family's government-allotted residence at 10, Circular Road in Patna.

Mr. Prasad recently returned from Singapore, where he underwent a medical check-up.

"Yes, the security cover has been downgraded. It is all being done at the behest of Nitish Kumar," Mr. Prasad told mediapersons, refusing to elaborate.

10, Circular Road house

Notices were recently served on Mr. Prasad's wife and former Chief Minister Rabri Devi, asking her to vacate the 10, Circular Road bungalow, where the family has lived for over two decades.

The bungalow has now been allotted to Nand Kishor Ram, a Minister in Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary's Cabinet. Ms. Devi has been allotted another official residence at 39, Harding Road.

Recently, she had sought more time to vacate her residence citing her husband's poor health, among other reasons.

The RJD and JD(U) chiefs have been part of alliances and rivalries over the years. Mr. Kumar walked away from Mr. Prasad in 1994 and founded the Samata Party.

In November 2005, Mr. Kumar dethroned Mr. Prasad and his party and became the Chief Minister of Bihar. He continued in the post till April 2026 when he resigned in favour of Mr. Choudhary, who became the first BJP Chief Minister of Bihar.

His son Nishant Kumar became the Health Minister in Mr. Choudhary's Cabinet and was recently allotted a sprawling bungalow at 5, Deshratna Marg.

'Politics of hate'

In a previous reaction over the security cover and the vacation notices, when he had just returned from Singapore, Mr. Prasad said, "The NDA government is indulging in hate and vendetta politics."

Mr. Prasad and Ms. Devi have built a house at Kautilya Nagar in Patna, which they often visit to oversee the construction work. They are likely to perform a house-warming ceremony before moving in.

Stage set for Council election in Karnataka

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

On the eve of the anticipated Legislative Council polls to seven seats that is expected to give the Congress a majority in the Upper House in Karnataka, number churning became the focus of parties that gathered their legislators on Wednesday.

While the Congress trained its legislators through mock voting in a resort near Bidadi, the Janata Dal (Secular) brought theirs to a resort near Nandi Hills, and the BJP legislators were trained in a hotel in the city.

Of the seven seats, the Congress and the BJP are expected to comfortably win four and two, respectively, and the former is tied in a battle with the JD (S) for the seventh seat in which Vinay Karthik is pitted against Govindaraju.

The Congress currently has a tally of 37 in the 75-member Upper House.

Not part of burial case: Prakash Raj

B.V. Poojitha
BENGALURU

Actor Prakash Raj on Wednesday clarified his position on the Dharmasthala case, stressing that he had no involvement in the matter except for a phone call, which is now being read out of context.

The clarification came days after reports emerged about Chinna C.N., alias Chinnaiah, 50, the central figure in the mass burial case, mentioning Mr. Raj's name in a writ petition filed before the Karnataka High Court. According to Mr. Raj, Chinnaiah had contacted him after the SIT began probe. The actor said, in the call, he reassured Chinnaiah there was nothing to be afraid of if he was being honest, and that he personally had no interest in the matter.

Mr. Raj maintained that this brief exchange was the entirety of his involvement and urged the public not to communalise the issue.

'Gaming company directors' arrest illegal'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has declared as contrary to law the arrest of Deepak Singh, Vikas Taneja and Prithviraj Singh, directors of Gameskraft Technologies Pvt. Ltd., by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) in May following searches conducted in connection with an alleged fraud-linked money laundering case, and ordered their release from prison.

The court found that the ED had arrested them without issuing them summons under Section 50 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Also, the court said there was no new material to arrest them as they were not arrested despite searches on their premises during November 2025 on the same allegations based on which the searches were conducted again on May 7-8, 2026.

A.P.: ganja smuggling ring busted

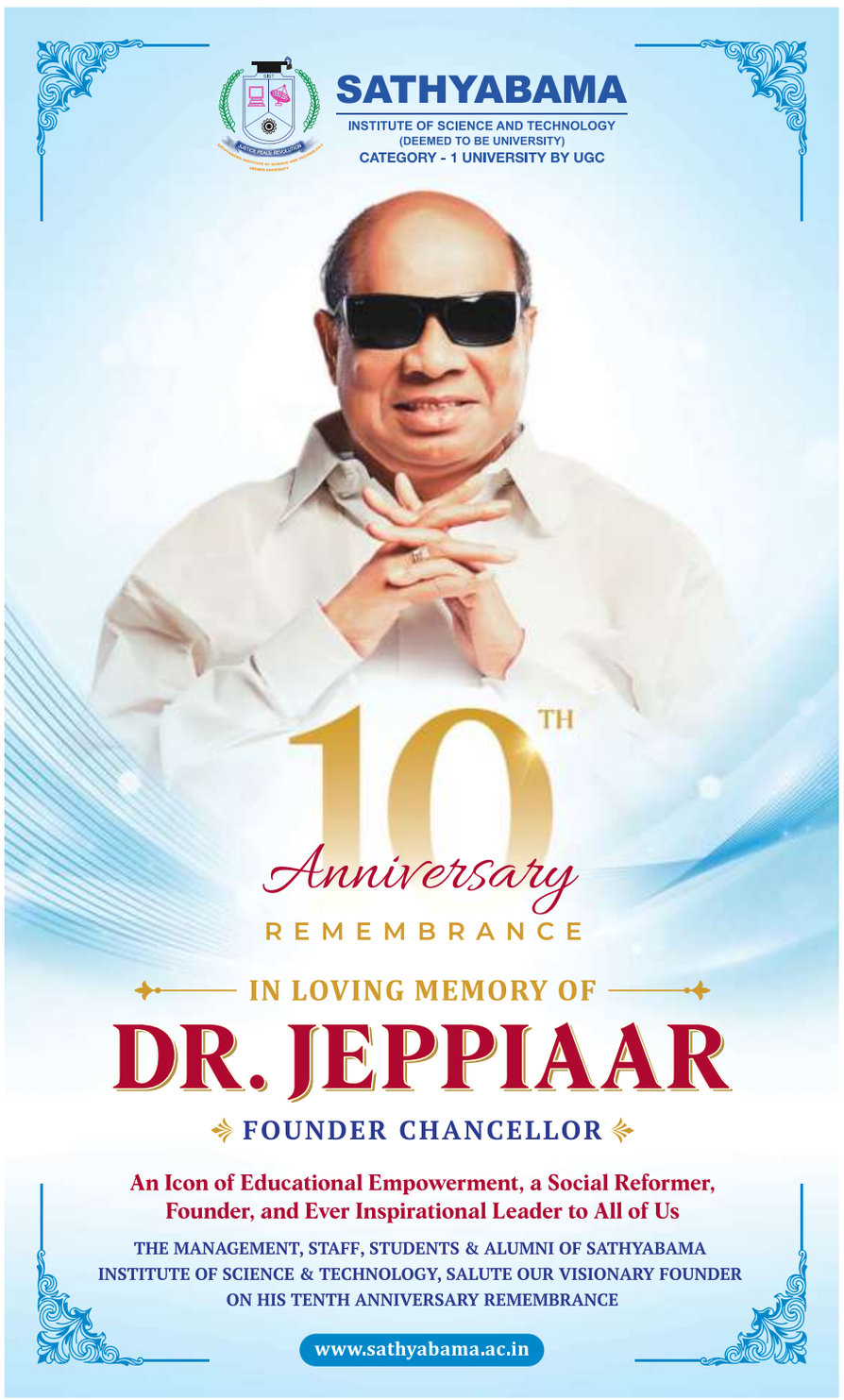
Harish Gilai
ANAKAPALLI

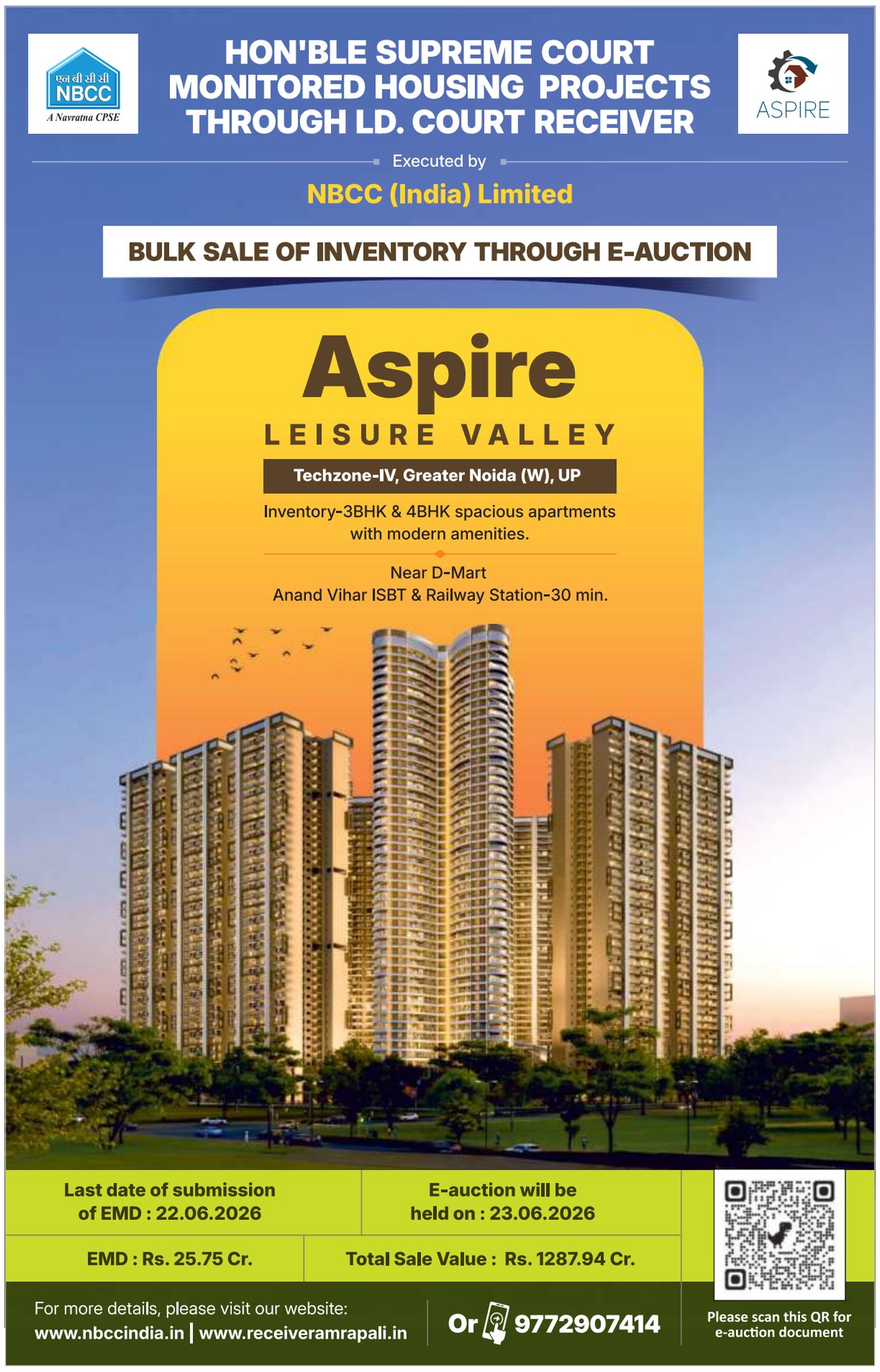
The Anakapalli police in Andhra Pradesh arrested five persons, including an alleged drug smuggler said to have links to Sri Lanka, and seized 213 kg of ganja, the police said.

The arrested were Shaikh Ajmal Khan, 30, of Ramanathapuram in Tamil Nadu; Shaikh Abdul Rahman of Narsipatnam, brother of Khan; T. Durga Prasad of Narsipatnam; K. Lova Prasad; and Ch. Ravi Kumar of Pedabayalu.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Tuhin Sinha said a special team of the Parawada police, acting on information about ganja smuggling, conducted vehicle checks at Lankelapalem Junction on June 16 and intercepted a gang transporting 213 kg ganja in a car. They also seized ₹95,000 in cash.

During probe, the police found that prime accused Shaikh Ajmal Khan had a criminal background linked to narcotics trafficking in Sri Lanka. Mr. Sinha said he had been arrested by the Sri Lankan Narcotics Bureau in April 2022 in a case involving seizure of 495 g methamphetamine and 8.5 kg hashish oil. He was lodged in a prison in Sri Lanka. "He established contacts with criminals involved in narcotics trafficking," the SP added.





Innovate or be eaten

India must realise the importance of innovating up to the frontier

There is no question that Indian professionals are capable of pathbreaking innovation. As evidenced by the strong representation of Indian and Indian-origin technology industry leaders, Indian executives have displayed extraordinary talent in both the managerial and technical work that goes into building and advancing complex businesses at the forefront of the global economy's most important engines. 'Bharat Innovates 2026', the event in Nice, France, supported by the Ministry of Education, has shown that many of these innovations are possible in India, and that patient incubation of startups in key strategic areas can lead to exceptional results that are competitive with the best-in-class globally. India's potential to be a global home for innovation is real, especially with the kind of middle power collaboration that French President Emmanuel Macron advocated for at the event. The innovation question is key to processing the aftermath of Anthropic's most powerful AI models, Claude Mythos and Fable, being banned for non-Americans, a move that has already affected some Indian entities and users.

Perhaps it is not possible to brute-force frontier AI or semiconductor technology, given the tens of billions of dollars even a single player requires to make incremental advances in these fields. Becoming an AI deployment superpower, as many tech policymakers advocate, may also be a pursuit of a losing battle; India, after all, is not alone in seeking knowledge economy efficiencies from AI. But the field of opportunities remains nonetheless vast: deep tech in areas such as space exploration, defence, and even material sciences remain an open contest. For India to pursue innovation, two ingredients are important: India must be a stable and attractive home for capital and talent. For the former, the swashbuckling rent-seeking of the successful must be reined in to keep innovators from dreading success on Indian soil; venture capital must be in a position to assess exploratory and cutting-edge pitches on the same footing as they do in other countries; and tax policies must be clear and predictable. To be an attractive home for talent, what is required is quite simple: the top talent must look forward to their future in India, instead of running into a dead end for their potential and the life they feel greener pastures may afford them. For this, investments in public goods such as clean air, abundant urban green spaces, and affordable and reliable public transport can go a long way. These are, after all, what returnees miss the most. Some of India's oldest and most stubborn problems are in the way of a truly innovative ecosystem. The good news is that these problems need political capital, not risk capital.

Step forward

The top court has given an economic value to unpaid domestic work

The Supreme Court's judgment in *Shishupal @Shish Ram vs Surjeet* by a Division Bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and N.K. Singh, is likely a landmark. The ruling originated as the Court revised compensation granted by the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) for a road accident in 2001. The first MACT awarded the family of Reshma, the accident victim, ₹2.42 lakh, which the Punjab and Haryana High Court revised in 2024 to ₹8.43 lakh. But in its order, the Court revised it to ₹62.78 lakh after attaching a sum of ₹30,000 a month to Ms. Reshma's 'economic value', for the service she rendered as a homemaker. The ruling is not surprising. In *Lata Wadhwa* (2001), the Court valued a homemaker's services at a modest ₹3,000. In *Kirti vs Oriental Insurance* (2021), it said the economic value of a homemaker's work cannot be discounted simply because it is unpaid or performed by women. However, the 'official' value attached to that work has suffered from inconsistent quantification. The Bench's value of ₹30,000 a month is itself notional and a floor; it added that the floor must be hiked by 10% every three years and a woman's salary, where applicable, has to be added to the floor, in the context of MACT's claims. The judgment does not create a salary, wage entitlement, pension scheme or employment relationship for homemakers, and applies to compensation calculations in MACT cases only. That said, the now-normalised societal tendency to undervalue women's work means that any advance is valuable and will likely have ripple effects.

The connection between unpaid domestic labour and suppressed female labour force participation is a major theme in contemporary Indian labour economics. Now, for example, homemakers seeking maintenance under the Hindu Marriage Act, say, have judicial reasoning supporting the economic value of their domestic work. Rural women who "assist in sowing, harvesting, and cattle-tending", as the Court noted, can now invoke the Court's reasoning to pitch to have their labour, which is often treated as being incidental to household work, valued higher. The additive rule may encourage litigants to invoke similar reasoning in employment disputes *vis-à-vis* 'work from home' arrangements and domestic responsibilities. Future litigation may test whether male homemakers can claim equivalent treatment. Motor insurance is already a low-margin segment for many insurers, and a large increase in the average claim size – likely applied retrospectively as well – may force companies to reassess their risk models and render them more inclined to settle claims quickly in Lok Adalats. All said, the Shishupal judgment is a vital corrective to decades of economic erasure.

Health data must drive action, not just headlines

Chandrakant Lahariya

Practising physician in preventive and cardio-metabolic medicine and specialist in health policy. He has worked with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN system for nearly 18 years

There is an unsettling paradox in the release of health survey data in India. Survey findings often end up doing exactly the reverse of what they should. They often highlight what we already know, do not take a sufficiently serious view of what has not improved, and rarely lead to immediate programmatic action. The discussion that follows is often ritualistic: the government highlights achievements, newspapers amplify numbers, academics wait for raw data to analyse, and business and industry identify market opportunities.

This seems to be the case with the three recently released health-linked surveys: the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6), the National Statistical Office (NSO) 80th Round Household Consumption on Health and the National Health Accounts Estimates for India 2022-23.

All three should have offered a moment of national stocktaking. Instead, the two reports on health expenses barely received any attention, while the third, the NFHS-6, and its use by key stakeholders, tells a familiar story. In government communication, improvements have been selected and celebrated. Achievements must, of course, be acknowledged. However, the real value of such surveys is not in confirming what has worked, but in showing where programmes remain weak and old strategies are no longer sufficient.

The business of disease

Industry and business groups have flagged rising health challenges reported in NFHS-6. Rising obesity becomes an argument for weight-loss products, apps, gyms, diagnostics and drugs. Rising diabetes becomes an opportunity for monitoring devices, test packages and private clinics. Rising non-communicable diseases become the market case for more screening, testing and medicalisation. Where public health messaging is weak and private health markets are aggressive, every survey finding can become a business prospect.

The one positive development so far has been the extensive coverage in the print media, which has flagged what matters to citizens: the rise of obesity, diabetes, hypertension and other non-communicable diseases (NCD). Yet, much of this was already known. Obesity and other NCDs have moved from urban and affluent groups to all social and economic groups. The new data merely put fresh numbers to an old warning.

What is grossly missing is critical reflection and policy dialogue around these findings. This should worry us. A health survey is not meant to be a national reminder of familiar problems but an instrument of course correction. If anaemia has not improved, the response cannot be another paragraph in a report. If out-of-pocket expenditure remains high, the answer cannot be only a headline on a declining percentage share. If obesity is rising among children, the response cannot be a few articles followed by silence.

Health data should guide accountability, budgets and programme reform

The NFHS-6 also carries a temporal problem. Its data were collected during 2023-24, but the findings entered public debate in mid-2026. In a political system skilled at both claiming credit and avoiding blame, this lag is convenient. A government can celebrate positive indicators as proof of current policy success while dismissing uncomfortable findings as "old data", influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, past administrative disruptions or conditions that have since improved. The survey then becomes less a compass and more a weapon. This is unfair to the survey and unhelpful to policymaking.

Academicians and public health researchers play a crucial role in interpreting large-scale survey data beyond official reports. In India, however, such analysis is often delayed because raw data are released late. By the time peer-reviewed studies appear, three to five years may have passed since data collection. Policymakers can then dismiss critical findings as outdated and no longer relevant. As a result, data lose their impact: when reports are released, raw data are unavailable for scrutiny; when analysis finally arrives, the opportunity for policy action has often passed.

From data to action

There is a need to reflect on how India continues to miss these opportunities. Data improve health outcomes only when they are linked to timely and relevant policy decisions. Countries that make effective use of health data do not wait years for perfect academic papers or definitive solutions. Instead, they have robust systems and empowered institutions that generate rapid policy briefs, identify lagging districts and regions, conduct regular reviews, compare performance, allocate resources efficiently and adapt programmes as needed. The translation of data into action is not merely a slogan; it is a discipline. India needs to cultivate that discipline if it is to realise the full value of the vast amounts of health data it collects.

First, every major national health survey should be followed, within 30 to 45 days, by a national and State-level action note jointly prepared by the government and independent academic institutions. The note should candidly identify what has improved, what has remained stagnant and what has deteriorated. Each finding should be linked to a specific programme and a clearly accountable authority. If child nutrition has stagnated, the nutrition programme must respond. If hypertension detection remains inadequate, the primary health-care system must respond. If out-of-pocket expenditure on medicines remains high, the drug procurement system must respond. Data should not merely describe problems; they should trigger accountability and corrective action.

Second, there should be State-level health data review meetings, not ceremonial events but working sessions. Health Secretaries, Finance Departments, District officials, public health experts, civil society representatives, other key stakeholders and independent subject experts should examine the findings together. The question should not be, "What can we highlight?" It should be, "What must we change?"

Third, India needs systems for the optimal and timely use of survey data. It has started developing the Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP), but that is primarily for real-time data. Survey data, Health Management Information System (HMIS) data and IHIP data must be combined to generate analytical information. Fragmented data produce fragmented policy.

Fourth, primary data and source files from surveys should be made available early so that independent researchers and public institutions can produce quick analysis. There is no reason to wait years for serious interpretation. Data should not sit like a guarded file. They should be available as a public good.

Fifth, findings should influence budgetary allocation. If a survey shows rising NCDs, primary care budgets must reflect the need for NCD prevention and treatment. If households are spending heavily on medicines, public facilities must strengthen essential drug availability. If obesity is rising in children, school health, food regulation and urban planning must respond. Data without budgetary consequence are merely information.

Looking ahead

Economist Aaron Levenstein said in 1951 that "statistics are like bikinis. What they reveal is suggestive, but what they conceal is vital". Health data should be like an x-ray. They are useful only when interpreted correctly, discussed honestly and followed by policy actions. Data and statistics are only as useful as their interpretation; interpretation is only as useful as the action it produces. The next time survey findings are released, the real question should not be what the numbers show. The real question should be: what will change in programmes in a month's time, in six months and in a year? Alongside this, India definitely needs more and timely health data. However, what we need even more is accountability.

Rubio's remarks and the limits of strategic empathy

Abhijit Singh

Retired naval officer and former Head of the Maritime Policy Initiative at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi

A day after the United States and Iran struck an interim deal on June 14, 2026, to end the war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz, it remains unclear whether the agreement will be implemented at all. Not only have details not been made public, but negotiators have, by all accounts, pushed the difficult issues down the road. There is no mention in the interim agreement of Iran's nuclear programme, its missile programme, or even ending Tehran's support for regional groups. Iran's top officials maintain that a final deal for a lasting truce is yet to take shape.

Washington's troubling response

These developments, though significant, are unlikely to make headlines in India, where policymakers and the public are still smarting over the deaths of three Indian sailors in a U.S. strike in the Strait of Hormuz on June 10.

Particularly galling are the remarks by the U.S. Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, who told External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar last week that "violations of the American blockade and the illicit transport of Iranian oil would not be tolerated and that commercial vessels must immediately comply with US forces". There was reportedly no expression of condolence for the deaths of the sailors, nor any indication that the incident would prompt a broader reassessment of the risks now confronting civilian shipping in the Gulf.

The implication was unmistakable: Washington does not view the episode principally as a humanitarian tragedy requiring accountability, but as a compliance problem arising from the failure of merchant vessels to obey American directives.

That framing has implications for New Delhi. It suggests that for Washington, the safety of neutral shipping and the interests of partner countries during a conflict are secondary to the enforcement of U.S. strategic objectives.

The U.S. Secretary of State's comments reveal the human cost of American strategic objectives

Merchant vessels are expected simply to comply with American instructions; should they become collateral victims of the increasingly militarised environment in the Strait of Hormuz, the costs are expected to be borne by the countries that own the ships and by the sailors who crew them.

Indian sailors stand alone

For a nation such as India, whose economic interests are deeply tied to the free flow of commerce through the Strait of Hormuz and whose citizens make up a significant share of the global maritime workforce, this should be unacceptable. Great power competition inevitably imposes costs on third parties with little say in the decisions that create or sustain crises. But those costs cannot simply be externalised onto partner countries and civilian mariners in the expectation that they will quietly acquiesce.

India's predicament is particularly stark because it supplies roughly a fifth of the world's maritime workforce but possesses few realistic means of ensuring the safety of its seafarers. The Indian Navy's escort operations in the Gulf are valuable but necessarily limited. They cannot protect the more than 18,000 Indian sailors in the region, many of whom serve aboard vessels registered under flags of convenience such as Palau, Guinea-Bissau and the Marshall Islands. Such flags offer little meaningful diplomatic protection in times of crisis. When things go wrong, Indian sailors are often left effectively stateless from a protection standpoint. The three deaths aboard the *MT Settebello* have exposed a structural vulnerability that New Delhi has long recognised but never adequately addressed.

Whether or not this will fundamentally alter the trajectory of India-U.S. relations is hard to say. The bilateral relationship possesses too many load-bearing elements – defence cooperation, critical technologies, the Indo-Pacific and the Quad (Australia, India, Japan, U.S..) – for one incident to trigger a rupture. Even so, Mr. Rubio's remarks seem to have done real damage at the level of trust and political optics. New Delhi's summoning of the U.S. Chargé d'Affaires twice within three days last week signals genuine anger. Many in India view Washington's response not as an aberration but as evidence of a deeper pattern: when the interests of partner states conflict with American strategic objectives, the U.S. invariably chooses itself.

Seeking accountability and answers

From an Indian standpoint, accountability for the incident has yet to be established. India must push for a credible, independent fact-finding investigation into the circumstances surrounding the strike. Beyond bilateral protest, New Delhi should consider taking the issue to multilateral forums, including the International Maritime Organization and consultations with other crewing and flag states. A lone démarche simply does not carry the weight of a coordinated international position. Importantly, Indian officials must articulate a principled and consistent position on maritime norms, one that applies irrespective of how powerful the state violating them may be.

For the Narendra Modi government, this episode is about more than the tragic deaths of three Indian sailors. Mr. Rubio's remarks have inadvertently laid bare an uncomfortable truth about great-power partnerships: strategic empathy has limits. The United States may regard India as an indispensable partner in the Indo-Pacific, but it will not subordinate its priorities in the Gulf to Indian sensitivities. That is not a reason for New Delhi to distance itself from Washington. It is, however, a reminder that close partnerships do not eliminate divergences of interest. India must continue to engage the U.S. with clear eyes and defend its maritime interests without assuming that others will do so on its behalf.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Water management

The report, "India stares at 35% rain deficit amid El Niño trail (Front page, June 17), points to a key issue — water scarcity, which has become one of the most pressing challenges facing India's metropolitan cities. Falling reservoir levels and the overexploitation of groundwater have made urban areas increasingly vulnerable, particularly during the summer months.

Several studies have warned about the alarming depletion of aquifers, yet authorities often treat each shortage as a temporary crisis rather than addressing its root causes. For decades, India's water policy has focused primarily on augmenting supply. While this approach has contributed significantly to food security, it has overlooked the need for institutional reforms and efficient water management. Cities must adopt sustainable measures such as rainwater harvesting, permeable pavements, and other forms of green infrastructure to improve groundwater recharge. Simultaneously, aging water distribution networks, inadequate metering, and poor urban governance require urgent attention. A comprehensive strategy that combines conservation, infrastructure modernisation, and better governance is essential to ensure urban water security.

M. Jeyaramachandran,
Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

Operation NEET retest

The Indian Air Force being used to transport National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) question papers sends the wrong signal (June 17). Although it is part of a fool-proof exercise to conduct the retest, using the armed forces to secure delivery of confidential material sends a message of 'lack of trust' and corruption everywhere.

Thomas Palocaren,
Vellore, Tamil Nadu

Corrections & Clarifications

In a report (Front page, June 17), "India stares at 35% rain deficit amid El Niño trail", a sentence in the last paragraph should have said: "... analysts are more cautious and have said that a serious farm disruption *could add to retail food inflation*, a risk that even the Reserve Bank of India has flagged."

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Water security is central for a Viksit Bharat

C. R. Patil

Union Minister of Jal Shakti

Did you know that the Jal Jeevan Mission is the world's largest rural drinking water supply programme? Or that the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) is the most significant rural sanitation movement in the world? Together, these initiatives represent not merely government schemes, but a re-imagination of how a nation of 1.45 billion people is building a water-secure future.

Few sectors shape human dignity, economic growth, public health, agriculture and environmental sustainability as profoundly as water. Yet, for decades, India's water challenges were addressed in fragmented ways. What has changed in recent years is the focus and integrated nature of the response led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The scale of investment and execution in the water sector in the last 12 years has been unparalleled. Water is now viewed as a shared national priority, cutting across departments, States, and communities. While earlier water was relegated to the side, under Prime Minister Modi, the Government of India has assumed responsibility for filling the long-standing gaps in planning, management, and delivery in the water sector.

A complete turnaround

The most prominent example of this transformation is the Jal Jeevan Mission. When the programme was launched, only about 3.23 crore rural households, roughly 17% of rural Indian households, had tap water connections. Today, more than 15.8 crore rural households, covering over 81% of rural India, have access to tap water at home. The government is moving towards achieving 100% coverage by 2028. For millions of families, this is not merely a utility service; it is a change in their way of life.

Studies indicate that earlier, rural women in India spent billions of hours each year fetching water. The expansion of household tap water supply has helped save more than 5.5 crore person-hours daily; that time is now being invested in education, livelihoods, childcare and economic activity. Across households, access to safe drinking water has also reduced out-of-pocket health expenditure arising from water-borne diseases.

Equally transformative is the SBM. India's sanitation movement demonstrated that behavioural change, public participation and political commitment can work together at scale. According to the World Health Organisation's assessment of health gains, SBM-Grameen is estimated to have averted more than 3 lakh diarrhoea deaths between 2014 and October 2019. The construction of household toilets also brought dignity, privacy and safety to millions of rural women. Beyond making villages open defecation-free, the country has moved towards sustainable solid and liquid waste management under SBM-Grameen 2.0.

India has also undertaken one of the largest water conservation and groundwater recharge initiatives anywhere in the world. Under the 'Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari' initiative, more than 1.55 crore rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge structures have been created across the country by May 31, 2026. The impact of these efforts is visible in groundwater trends as well. Recent assessments indicate improvement in groundwater recharge and a reduction in the number of over-exploited assessment units in several parts of the country. It also showcases that sustained conservation efforts, when combined with community participation, can reverse environmental stress.

Parallelly, India has advanced long-pending national water projects. The Ken-Betwa River Linking Project, the country's first major river interlinking initiative to bring water to the arid region of Bundelkhand, is moving ahead at an accelerated pace.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister Modi, the Namami Gange programme has demonstrated that environmental restoration and development can advance together. Over the past decade, the government has created 4,260 million litres per day (MLD) of sewage treatment capacity; reduced the Biochemical Oxygen Demand from 26 tonnes per day (TPD) in 2017 to 10.75 TPD in 2024; and brought down effluent discharge from 349 MLD to 265.56 MLD. Today, monitoring shows that pH and dissolved oxygen levels in the Ganga meet bathing criteria at all monitored locations.

India's water journey over these years offers an important global lesson. Water challenges in the 21st century cannot be addressed through isolated interventions. Drinking water, sanitation, river conservation, irrigation efficiency, groundwater recharge, wastewater reuse and climate resilience must all be viewed as parts of a connected ecosystem.

The road ahead

This integrated approach becomes even more critical in the face of climate change. For India, the challenge is unique. The country is home to nearly 18% of the world's population, but has access to only about 4% of global freshwater resources. Rapid urbanisation and changing weather patterns will place increasing pressure on these resources in the coming decades.

Today's investments, therefore, are not merely developmental expenditures; they are long-term investments in national resilience. The progress achieved over the past decade demonstrates the immense potential unlocked when selfless leadership, responsive governance, and active public participation come together in pursuit of a shared national vision.

The road ahead requires sustained effort. The government will strive to improve water-use efficiency, promote recycling, strengthen water governance, and encourage citizen participation.

Access to drinking water, sanitation, river conservation, groundwater recharge, wastewater reuse and climate resilience must all be viewed as parts of a connected ecosystem

The existential crisis of the Trinamool

The prevailing need to be on the winning side has led to mutiny within the party

STATE OF PLAY

Shiv Sahay Singh

The 2026 Assembly elections of West Bengal has been one of the most significant elections the State had witnessed in the past several decades not only because it marked the end of the 15-year-old Trinamool Congress regime, and paved the way for the first Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in the State, but also because it reflects a crisis in our polity.

In today's political system, everyone wants to be on the side of the winner or at least have the blessings of the winning side. Being on the side of the opposition where one has to criticise the government and face a volley of police cases does not appeal to the political class any more.

Therefore, whenever the centre of power shifts, the easiest way out of the mess is to shift one's allegiance to the winning side, even if it means giving up one's political loyalty and sabotaging a decade-long political career. This is exactly what is happening with the Trinamool and the so-called rebellion of its MPs and MLAs.

Those who have seen the functioning of the Trinamool Congress from up close would agree that it was run more like a fan club than a political party. Mamata Banerjee was the presiding deity and everyone/everything revolved around her. It was not the political or the organisational acumen that determined the nomination of a Trinamool leader to the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha; everything hinged on the liking of the party chairperson, and over the past few years, the general secretary. The back-to-back victories for the party in the State polls only added to the

overarching persona of Ms. Banerjee within the Trinamool.

This model worked well for everyone, especially for the party chairperson, who thought that she was in ultimate control of the party, and for her loyalists who knew that they had only one task – to keep her, and later her nephew Abhishek Banerjee, happy and present themselves as committed party workers.

A shattered illusion

There were a few exceptions such as Suvendu Adhikari and Tapas Roy who left the party disillusioned and charted a different political course. Retired bureaucrat Jawhar Sircar is perhaps the only exception in recent times who gathered the courage to call out the bluff of the Trinamool after the rape and murder of a doctor at Kolkata R.G. Kar Hospital in August 2024. But a majority of the Trinamool Congress leadership continued singing odes to the party leader, turning a blind eye to corruption, authoritarianism and misrule; all because they wanted to be on the side of the winning team.

Those who have turned rebels now are not the victims of the Trinamool's fan club model but those who have been its biggest beneficiaries. These rebel MPS and MLAs cannot claim ignorance of what was happening under Trinamool rule from 2011-26, and now suddenly realise how the party has failed the people of West Bengal.

The 28-year-old experiment of Trinamool Congress is failing not because it suffered an electoral setback, but because the foundations of the party have crumbled. Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee were living in a bubble and liked being surrounded by sycophants, whose only ideology was opportunism, to the extent that just one electoral setback has pushed them to a crisis threatening the very existence of the party.

Though the rebellion of about 60 of 80 MLAs and 20 of 28 MPs is something that the people of West Bengal have not witnessed in the past, between 2011 and 2024 there were innumerable instances where representatives of civic bodies, MLAs and even MPs from the Opposition joined the ruling Trinamool Congress. In the 15 years of the party's regime, almost 50 MLAs from the Left Front, the Congress and the BJP joined the Trinamool, and in not a single case did the Speaker of the Assembly disqualify any legislator under the anti-defection law. Mamata Banerjee has thus become a victim of her own machinations.

Additionally, anger is spilling out on the streets against local Trinamool leaders accused of corruption, extortion and electoral violence, with over a hundred local Trinamool leaders being arrested.

The BJP leadership is aware of the danger of mixing the Trinamool rebels with their own flock. All that the BJP is promising the rebels currently is an assurance that everything will be smooth sailing for the next few years.

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Why A.P.'s incentive for having more children is misplaced

The recently announced cash incentives in Andhra Pradesh cannot offset the economic barriers faced by people to have larger families

DATA POINT

Sambavi Parthasarathy

On May 16, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu announced a one-time incentive of ₹30,000 for the third child and ₹40,000 for the fourth. He said that these incentives were a part of the State's new population management policy to encourage population growth.

On the surface, the incentives to have bigger families may sound sensible with the latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS-6) report for the year 2023-24 placing the **State's fertility level at 1.8**, which is below the replacement level of 2.1. However, a closer look warrants questions on at least three fronts: whether such an incentive is adequate for families to have more children; what the key reasons are for the dropping fertility rate; and whether such an intervention is necessary now.

A comparison of this one-time cash incentive against basic expenditures shows that it cannot offset the childcare costs, a concern that is prompting families to rethink having more children **(Chart 1)**.

The government's incentive is about twice the average cost of hospitalisation for childbirth in India, and a far smaller multiple of the cost in Andhra Pradesh. In fact, it is almost the same as the cost of hospitalisation for childbirth in the State's urban area. In a State where more than 50% of births happen in private hospitals and about 52% of all deliveries happen through Caesarean sections, this incentive will just offset the hospitalisation cost in rural areas **(Chart 2)**. It is also inadequate to cover the cost of C-sections in private hospitals in urban areas.

For a family of five (assuming there are two adults and three children), this incentive is about 1.5 times their Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) in rural areas and almost similar to the MPCE in urban areas, as per the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey for 2023-24. This means that the incentive could just help the families meet their consumption needs for one month, provided the same was not already spent in hospital during childbirth.

Cannot afford children

Moreover, the question around family planning has moved from whether families 'should' have more children to whether they can afford to. The United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) 'State of World Population Report 2025' shows that financial limitations are the prime barrier to having children **(Chart 3)**.

Other barriers included housing limitations, followed by unemployment (or job insecurity), and the lack of quality and affordable childcare options. In many of these indicators, the share of Indians pointing to these concerns was much higher than the average share across the 14 countries that were surveyed for the report.

The survey further pointed out that a larger share of Indian men and women preferred having either one or two children **(Chart 4)**. Less than 10% of Indian respondents said they would prefer to have three, four or more children, which is almost on a par with the share of Indians who preferred having no children.

It is noteworthy that the below-replacement fertility rate in Andhra Pradesh and across India does not mean that the population decline is imminent. The population will continue to increase, then stabilise and eventually begin to decline, which, for India, is likely to happen only in 2063 as per estimates **(Chart 5)**.

For instance, although Japan and South Korea's fertility rates dropped below the replacement level in the late 1970s and the early 1980s respectively, their populations – which are less than 10% of India's – began to decline only around 2010 and 2020.

Wrong incentives

The data for the charts were sourced from the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2023-24, Household Social Consumption: Health 2025, NFHS-6, Our World in Data and the UNFPA

Chart 1: A comparision of A.P.'s new incentives against select expenditures in India ( ) and Andhra Pradesh ( )

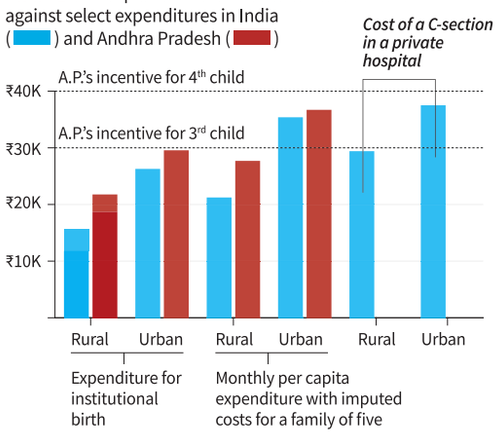


Chart 2: About 50% of institutional births happened in private facilities in 2023-24 in A.P. Among them, more than 60% of the births were delivered by C-sections

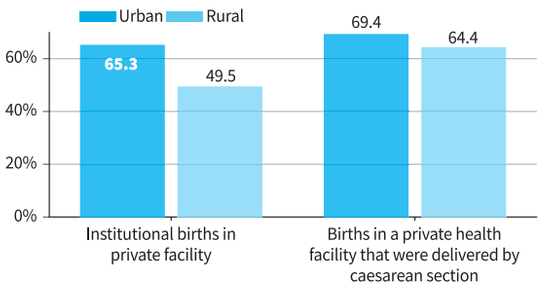
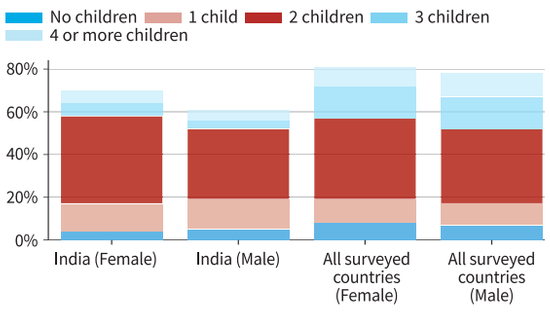


Chart 4: Ideal number of children preferred by male and female respondents as per the UNFPA survey



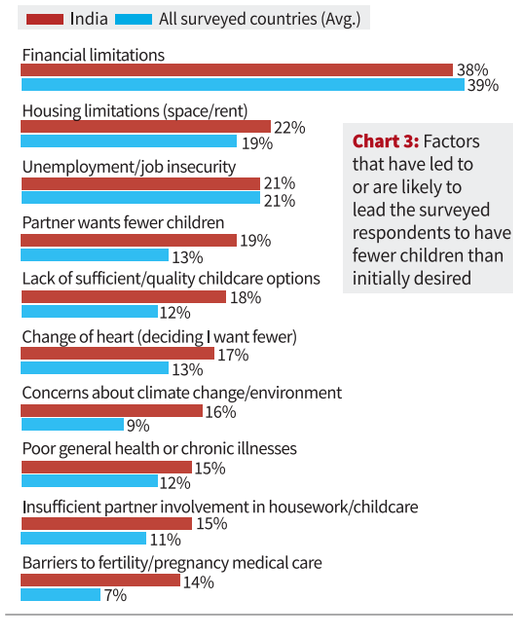
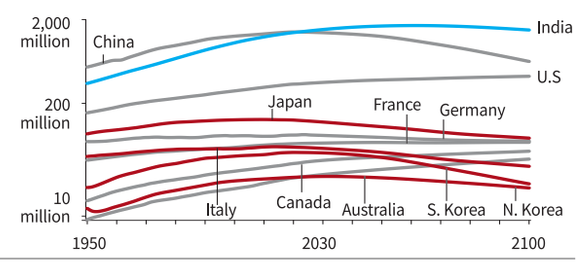


Chart 3: Factors that have led to or are likely to lead the surveyed respondents to have fewer children than initially desired

Chart 5: Population figures and projections for select countries with a fertility rate below the replacement level (Y-axis in log scale)



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 18, 1976

Scheme for crocodile sanctuaries

Dr. H.R. Bustard, an expert on crocodiles and an officer of the FAO (UNDP), was deputed by the Government of India to advise the Andhra Pradesh Government on the conservation and farming of crocodiles in various parts of the State.

It is stated that three species of crocodiles namely gharial (found in the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Mahanadi), the maggar or freshwater crocodile (found generally in rivers and reservoirs) and the estuarian or salt-water crocodiles (found in the estuaries of major rivers) were facing extinction owing to large-scale and indiscriminate killing for meat. The eggs are also eaten and so the species face the problem of survival.

Dr. Bustard inspected the Corangi mangrove forest in the Kakinada Forest Division last week accompanied by Mr. T.V. Subba Rao, Additional Chief Conservator of Forests, Mr. Pushpalumar, Director Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad and Mr. B. Bhomarajam, Conservator of Forests, L.P. Circle, Rajamundry. Dr. Bustard stated the area was eminently suitable for farming the salt-water crocodiles. A scheme would be prepared for the purpose and submitted to the Government shortly.

They inspected the Godavari river area from Devipatnam to Peramtapalli.

Dr. Bustard found the region between the Papi Hills and Peramtapalli was an excellent habitat for crocodiles and has prepared a scheme for the conservation and farming of crocodiles there.

He wanted these two areas to be declared as sanctuaries for the preservation and farming of crocodiles.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 18, 1926

Oil pollution

Washington, June 17: The International Oil Pollution Conferences has passed a resolution which recommends the establishment of a limit of fifty to one hundred and fifty miles from the coasts of maritime nations, within which the discharge of oils or mixtures constituting nuisance, should be prohibited and that each Government would require ships flying its flags to refrain from discharging oil near the shores of other countries.

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Additional military aid to be received by Ukraine from allies

20 in $ billion. Ukraine is working to receive additional $20 billion in military funding from its allies, Ukraine's Defence Minister Mykhailo Fedorov said. A source earlier said that Ukraine would make the request at a meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group on Thursday. REUTERS

Retired military personnel to be recruited by Kerala

1,000 Kerala will recruit 1,000 retired military personnel as home guards to strengthen the operational capabilities of the Fire and Rescue Services, State Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala said on Wednesday. PTI

Persons killed by Israeli fire since the Gaza ceasefire

1,000 Israeli operations in the Gaza Strip have killed 1,005 Palestinians in the eight months since a ceasefire was reached between Israel and Hamas. Earlier this week, the death toll from the Israel-Hamas war surpassed 73,000 in Gaza. PTI

Number of countries in Kenya to adopt the Mombasa declaration

15 Fifteen countries from Africa, Asia, Europe, the Caribbean, and the Pacific adopted a declaration to step up efforts to combat illegal fishing. The Mombasa declaration calls on governments to improve access to information on fishing vessels, ownership and licensing. PTI

Share of stock in reservoirs supplying water to Mumbai

10 in per cent. Amid concerns over the delay in the arrival of the Southwest monsoon, the stock in seven reservoirs supplying drinking water to Mumbai stood at 10.01% of their total useful capacity on Wednesday. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The RBI and its growing fiscal role

RBI's record ₹2.87 lakh crore surplus transfer to the Centre shows its growing fiscal significance, as earnings from reserve management and foreign assets support govt. finances; the trend raises questions about central bank independence, fiscal centralisation, and exclusion of such transfers from fiscal devolution to States

ECONOMIC NOTES

Deepanshu Mohan
Ankur Singh

Central banks occupy a peculiar position in modern democracies. Governments spend, tax, and borrow. Central banks manage inflation, preserve confidence in the currency, and safeguard financial stability. Their credibility rests on maintaining a degree of distance from the fiscal compulsions of the governments they serve.

Recent developments surrounding the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) invite a closer examination of that relationship.

Much of the recent discussion has focused on the RBI's management of foreign exchange reserves, interventions with respect to managing the rupee, including instances of reserve-rebalancing through gold sales, and increased foreign-currency holdings.

Yet, the more consequential story surrounding this is the extent to which the institution may be seen to be becoming more executive or fiscalised in its role to support the government.

In May, the RBI approved a record surplus transfer of ₹2.87 lakh crore to the Union government for FY26. While fully consistent with the Economic Capital Framework, its scale raises questions about the evolving role of the central bank within India's fiscal architecture.

The Reserve Bank of India continues to operate within a well-defined framework. REUTERS

A structural shift

Surplus transfers have been around the ₹30,000 crore to ₹65,000 crore level for the past few years. The tipping point was reached in 2019 after the implementation of the revised Economic Capital Framework.

The transfer is now at a record high of ₹2.87 lakh crore for FY26.

This move coincides with the phenomenal growth of the RBI's balance sheet. It increased by 20.6% in one year to ₹91.97 lakh crore by March 2026. Gross income increased by over 26% during the same period.

Traditionally, governments fund expenditure through taxation, borrowing, and revenue growth. Political consent is needed for taxation. Borrowing is disciplined by markets and future repayment obligations. Economic growth requires real growth in productive capacity.

Central-bank transfers are different. They generate fiscal space without new taxes, new borrowing, or commensurate growth in economic production. The latest transfer alone is bigger than the annual budgets of several Indian States.

This is not a bad practice to make such transfers. However, it does pose an interesting question. When does a stabilising institution start to act as a fiscal instrument?

The evolution of the RBI's reserve management is a good example.

The RBI may have sold almost $12 billion worth of gold and bought foreign-currency assets by about $7.5 billion in the face of rupee pressures, according to recent reports.

These are standard reserve-management decisions when looked at superficially. Central banks are constantly adjusting their portfolios based on market conditions. Gold is a strategic reserve asset. Foreign-currency assets are the source of liquidity for intervening in exchange-rate markets.

However, the management of reserves has become a financial issue.

The recent surplus transfer included a significant portion of gains from foreign assets, foreign exchange transactions, and interest earned on securities holdings. The activities are mainly being carried out to ensure monetary and financial stability, but are also producing increasingly significant fiscal revenues for the sovereign.

This is where the discussion transcends accounting. The RBI's balance sheet is now at ₹92 lakh crore. The composition of reserves, intervention in the exchange rate, and asset allocation decisions now impact not just monetary stability, but also the economy's overall health. They are becoming more and more important for fiscal results as well.

The experience of India is different from that of the advanced economies, where central banks became entangled with fiscal policy by engaging in quantitative easing and buying a large number of bonds. In this case, the link has come about because of the increasing significance of the fiscal value of central-bank earnings.

The federal blind spot

The least talked about part of this debate is fiscal federalism.

The total amount of ₹2.87 lakh crore transfer is non-tax revenue and hence it is a Union government gain. It is not part of the divisible pool of income tax collections or GST revenues which are subject to Finance Commission formulas. There is no automatic share to the States.

States still have significant spending obligations. Concurrently, they have restrictions on borrowing under Article 293 and have much less fiscal flexibility than the Union government.

However, one of the biggest transfers of resources from the public sector in recent years is still not part of fiscal devolution.

The point isn't whether States have a legal claim to RBI profits. They do not. The question is whether a central institution acting on behalf of the monetary union as a whole should indirectly support fiscal centralisation, without any mention of accountability, transparency or federal balance.

Dividend transfers, cesses, surcharges and borrowing restrictions are all considered to be individual policy instruments when viewed individually. Together, they show a progressive shift in the fiscal landscape of India towards the centre.

An evolving institution

The debate over the RBI's record surplus transfer is therefore not ultimately about the dividend itself. It is about how modern states finance themselves.

The central bank has evolved from being primarily a guardian of monetary stability into an increasingly important source of fiscal capacity. The latest transfer may have eased borrowing pressures and strengthened the government's fiscal position, but it also underscores how closely monetary institutions and fiscal outcomes have become intertwined.

The RBI continues to operate within a well-defined framework and retains substantial operational autonomy. Yet central bank independence is not merely a matter of legal design. It is also a question of institutional distance.

As surplus transfers become larger and fiscal pressures intensify, preserving that distance may become more difficult. It may also become more important.

(Deepanshu Mohan is Dean and Professor of Economics at O.P. Jindal Global University. He is currently Visiting Professor at LSE and a Visiting Research Fellow at University of Oxford. Ankur Singh is a Research Analyst with Centre for New Economics Studies)

THE GIST

- The RBI's balance sheet increased by 20.6% in one year to ₹91.97 lakh crore by March 2026, while gross income rose by over 26% during the same period.
- The RBI may have sold almost $12 billion worth of gold and bought foreign-currency assets by about $7.5 billion in the face of rupee pressures, with the recent surplus transfer including gains from foreign assets, foreign exchange transactions and interest earned on securities holdings.

What does the India-Russia logistics agreement allow?

What is RELOS, and does it allow India and Russia to station troops on each other's territory?

Dinakar Peri

The story so far:

The India-Russia bilateral Logistics Support Agreement (LSA), termed the Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS), which had been dragging on for several years, was operationalised in January this year. There was a flutter on social media recently with claims that it allows the stationing of 3,000 Russian troops on Indian soil or vice versa, painting it as a military alliance. However, it is like any LSA, the likes of which India has signed with other countries.

What are Logistics Support Agreements?

A logistics agreement is a foundational military cooperation agreement between countries for administrative purposes that enables the reciprocal use of each other's bases and ports for supplies, repair, and fuel. The agreement also stipulates the occasions on which this can be utilised, generally for exercises, joint training, port calls, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief situations. As defence cooperation and military-to-military engagement become vital in international relations, the agreement simplifies essential administrative procedures and reduces bureaucracy.

For instance, the agreement with the U.S., Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) signed in 2016, the first such, provides a framework for reciprocal provision of logistic support, supplies and services for activities such as joint exercises, training, or humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. "It does not provide for the establishment of any bases or basing arrangements," Minister of State for Defence Subhash Bhamre said in a written reply in the Parliament in February 2017.

If the hyperbole is to be believed, India and Russia can station troops on each other's territory, then by convention, it also means that India and the U.S. can do the same under the LEMOA. But that is grossly incorrect, as clarified by the Minister, and is so for any LSA.

What are the existing agreements?

India has signed a series of logistics support agreements since the LEMOA in 2016. Currently, India has similar agreements with nine countries – the U.S., the U.K., France, Vietnam, Japan, Australia, Singapore, and Russia – concluded on similar lines, which provide logistics support and technical aid. The basic template and purpose for all these remain the same. There is also one with Oman covered under the overarching defence cooperation agreement.

What is the agreement with Russia?

Like other agreements, RELOS defines procedures for supporting military formations, port calls of warships, and the use of airspace and airfield facilities by military aircraft of both countries and the organisation of logistics and technical support of military formations of warships, military aircraft, and other equipment.

The agreement was signed in Moscow on February 18, 2025, and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the federal law ratifying it on December 15, 2025. According to the Kremlin, the purpose of the agreement is to define the procedures for the deployment of military formations, port calls by warships, and the use of airspace and airfield infrastructure by military aircraft of the two countries.

Broadly, RELOS covers joint military exercises, training, HADR missions, port and repair services, medical support, as well as delivery of food and technical resources and reciprocal access to military facilities, including airbases and ports, to support ship and aircraft personnel.

The agreement stipulates a maximum of 3,000 troops, representing a broad upper limit that takes into account the size of contingents and the number of ships or aircraft that may visit during engagements mutually agreed upon by both sides. It is valid for a period of five years, allowing for revisions later to reflect changing circumstances and requirements. The time frame for positioning of assets and personnel would be subject to the visit mutually agreed upon by both parties, one official said.

In fact, the scale of bilateral and multilateral relations between India and other countries is much larger. Indian armed forces exercise with the U.S. now.

Also, the agreement does not confer any provision for permanent basing of assets, and the agreement shall be exercised during joint exercises, port calls, or visits mutually agreed by both nations based on provisions of the agreement, officials clarified. "No permanent or long-term stationing has been agreed upon as part of the Agreement."

One important aspect is that RELOS gives access to Russian military facilities in the Arctic as both countries expand cooperation there, as new navigation routes open up, a fallout of global warming.

(Dinakar Peri is Fellow, Security Studies at Carnegie India)

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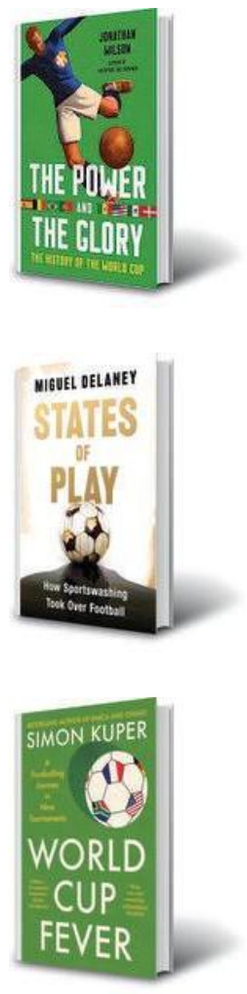


Young football fans carry cutouts of Argentina's Lionel Messi, Brazil's Neymar and Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo, in Kolkata. AFP

The World Cup between the magic of football and the reality of power

Three books capture how the football World Cup has become entwined with power, politics and sportswashing; yet despite controversies and the growing influence of powerful interests, the tournament retains an emotional pull that continues to captivate fans worldwide

Suresh Menon

In his classic *Soccer in Sun and Shadow* (Nation Books), the Uruguayan writer and poet laureate of the sport Eduardo Galeano says, "Soccer is a pleasure that hurts." This refers both to the fan's reaction while watching his team play and the despair over how autocrats are stealing the beautiful game. And it seems to be happening again – this time in a democracy, with the U.S. hosting this year's World Cup alongside Canada and Mexico. Ticket prices are ridiculously high because Gianni Infantino, the president of football's governing body FIFA, wants to maximise revenue as he bids for re-election next year. Parking for one of the quarterfinals alone costs $900. The number of teams has expanded to 48, which will likely result in some mediocre matches. Tough visa regulations are discouraging fans. This could be a World Cup squeezed between two presidents with similar notions of self-aggrandisement.

FIFA has cash reserves larger than Cuba or Kenya, and more than twice that of Curacao, the smallest country at the World Cup. It is a monopoly, so the fan, unlike the customer, is seldom right. Matches are played to satisfy television viewers in Europe, even if it means playing at odd hours and at odd times of the year, such as in Qatar in November.

The larger context

How did the people's sport come to this? Three recent books seek to explain the change. No one believes today that sport exists in a vacuum, independent of the politics and culture around it. No history of the World Cup, therefore, can afford to focus only on the matches while ignoring the larger context. Earlier accounts did that. As early as the 1938 tournament, Benito Mussolini had already hijacked the event to promote his vision of a muscular, triumphant Italy, an episode that is rarely featured prominently in those accounts.

The final of the 2022 tournament in Qatar was one of the finest, but the politics leading to it were unsavoury. Jonathan Wilson writes in *The Power and the Glory: A New History of the World Cup* about how things were arranged. Following a lunch nine days ahead of the vote with the then French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the Crown Prince of Qatar, and other dignitaries, Michel Platini, the then head of UEFA (Union of European Football Associations), was advised by Sarkozy to vote for Qatar. Platini, who had been against the move earlier, went with it. Soon Qatar Sports Investment bought a majority stake in the Paris Saint-Germain club, Al Jazeera launched beIN Sports to challenge the French TV channel Sarkozy disliked, and Qatar ordered 36 Rafale jets from France for around $10 billion. As Wilson says, "The relationship between France and Qatar was mutually beneficial and extremely lucrative." Those at that lunch denied any connection between these events. Later, Platini was investigated for corruption and acquitted.

Exploiting the World Cup

But sportswashing did not begin with Qatar. "Long before the term 'sportswashing' had entered the general consciousness, long before Russia (host in 2018) and Qatar had shown that you didn't have to win the tournament before gaining propaganda success, that hosting was enough, the World Cup was being exploited," writes Wilson, a popular historian of the game.

When Lionel Messi lifted the World Cup in 2022, he did so with a *bisht*, a traditional Qatari cloak, draped across his shoulders. It was a victory for Qatar, too. "The state's autocratic ruler ensured the hosts intruded upon this moment of football history. The *bisht* may be entirely innocent but the bestowing of it was not," argues Miguel Delaney in *States of Play: How Sportswashing Took Over Football* (Seven Dials). Modern football, says Delaney, a football writer of *The Independent*, represents extreme economic neoliberalism distilled into sporting form. "It sucks up money from everywhere but then redistributes it as narrowly as possible."

The 'easternisation' of football has seen Qatar (Paris Saint-Germain), the UAE (Manchester City, Palermo, Girona), and Saudi Arabia (Newcastle United) own clubs in Europe and elsewhere, and pay international stars (Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Neymar) to play in their leagues. If the balance of power is shifting, there are millions of reasons.

In the run-up to 2022, Qatar had been criticised for its treatment of women, migrants, and the LGBTQ community. But as Simon Kuper, the *Financial Times* writer, says, "Qatar and FIFA got through the tournament unscathed. All their flaws combined couldn't do lasting damage to the World Cup."

In his personal diary/social commentary/history/political tract/memoir/travelogue *World Cup Fever* (Profile Books Ltd), Kuper, who writes engagingly and with humour on the sport, points to FIFA's consistent willingness to embrace brutal regimes, from Argentina's military junta of the 1970s to Vladimir Putin's Russia and Mohammed bin Salman's Saudi Arabia.

Of the recent books, Kuper's bears comparison with Galeano's masterpiece for its rich mixture of passion and indictment. The criticism of those who love the game comes from a place of sadness.

Purity in the game

Reporting on nine World Cups, with all their negative energies, pedestrian matches, politics, and lost opportunities, has not dulled Kuper's enthusiasm for the game. And that is the strength of not just this book, but in fact all the books discussed here. They are written by men who understand that somewhere beneath it all, there is a purity to the game which can be seen untrammelled by the selfishness of megalomaniacs.

"The World Cup is a vision of an alternative international hierarchy in which the U.S. is an also-ran and China doesn't even figure," says Kuper in a throwaway line that hints at its attraction for many nations.

A return to childhood

Spanish writer Javier Marias called football "the weekly return to childhood." Perhaps that is the key. The World Cup is a return to childhood at four-year intervals. It is when we say: Forget the FIFA, enjoy the centre forward's run. Did you see that save? Or if we are supporters of Argentina: If Messi be for us, who can be against us?

The World Cup doesn't solve the world's problems, but it can focus attention on them. Saudi Arabia will host the World Cup in 2034. We are guaranteed more of the same, some of it depressing, some elevating. Meanwhile, over the next few weeks, let us celebrate the magic.

(The writer's latest book is Why Don't You Write Something I Might Read?)

THE DAILY QUIZ

Here is a quiz on events that happened on June 18

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

Sindhu Nagaraj

QUESTION 1
On this day, which U.S. President signed a declaration of war against Great Britain, initiating the War of 1812, which arose chiefly from U.S. grievances over oppressive maritime practices during the Napoleonic Wars?

QUESTION 2
Which English musician, born on this day, gained global fame with the Beatles?

QUESTION 3
The SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks) II treaty, signed on this day, was signed by which two countries?

QUESTION 4
On this day in 1940, which French General, broadcasting from London, after France fell to the Nazis, appealed to his compatriots to continue World War II under his leadership

QUESTION 5
British explorer and mountaineer George Mallory was born on this day in 1886. His story became one of the most-celebrated mysteries of the 20th century. Where did he disappear?

QUESTION 6
This American suffragist was fined after being convicted for voting in the 1872 presidential election, though she refused to pay it. Who was she?

Visual Question:
Identify this person. She became the first American woman to fly into outer space in 1983.

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. What do the colours on the Icelandic National flag represent? **Ans: Mountains, white ice, and volcanoes**
2. Who is Jón Sigurdson in the modern history of the country? **Ans: He was the 19th-century leader of the independence movement whose birthday is now observed as National Day**
3. Name the volcano whose eruption in 2010 created a massive ash cloud that grounded thousands of flights across Europe. **Ans: Eyjafjallajökull**
4. Name the 13th-century book by Icelandic author Snorri Sturluson that serves as a primary source for Norse mythology. **Ans: Prose Edda**
5. What is the name given to the popular traditional Icelandic knitted sweater known for its bold, circular yoke pattern around the neck and shoulders? **Ans: 'Lopapeysa'**
6. Often mistaken as yogurt due to its creamy texture, what dairy product is technically classified as a soft cheese? **Ans: Skyr**
7. Which natural phenomenon inspired the first Norse settlers to give the National capital, Reykjavík (smoky bay), its name? **Ans: Steam from the geothermal hot springs**
Visual: Name this famous Icelandic singer. **Ans: Bjork**
Early Birds: Tamal Biswas | K.N. Viswanathan | Lalchand Bhutani | Pankaj Gharde | Deepak Jiloha

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

"Happy new year!"
"A Happy New Year to you too. You don't look too good. Too much dancing last night?"
"Not really. I stayed awake till 5:00 in the morning. That's all."
"You look terrible. Go into the drawing room and take a load off your feet."
"What load are you talking about?"
"When someone says, 'get a load off your feet', it means they want you to sit down and relax."
"I see. But didn't you say, 'take' a load off your feet the first time?"
"That's right. You can either say, 'take a load off your feet', or 'get a load off your feet'. Both are acceptable."
"So, can I tell someone, 'Come on in, and take a load off your feet'?"
"Yes. Here's another example. Get a load off your feet and have a drink."
"A drink! That's nice. What is it that you are offering?"
"That was just an example."
"You are such a lousy host. Anyway, what did you do during the Christmas break?"
"Nothing much actually. Just let the grass grow under my feet."
"What does that mean?"
"It means that I didn't do anything...."
"....Geetha is the only person I know who doesn't let the grass grow under her feet."
"Most people I know who work in Government offices let the grass grow under their feet."
"Isn't that what people working in Government Departments are supposed to do? Many of my cousins think that I let the grass grow under my feet. Anand keeps telling me this all the time."
"How is Anand doing by the way? Does he like the new job?"
"He is still finding his feet."
"Finding his feet! Has he lost them?"
"Ha! Ha! The expression 'to find...."
"....I know what the expression 'to find one's feet' means. It means getting used to a new situation. Am I right?"
"Absolutely. When I joined the company, my boss said that I would need time to learn about how the company works. He said that I would find my feet gradually."
"When my cousin went to the States, she was miserable. But when she called us up last week, she said that she was finally beginning to find her feet."
"That usually happens to people who push off to the States. First, they hate the place. Later, they fall in love with it and they don't want to come back home."
"That's true."
"Here's another example. When my cousin Gayathri was made the Principal of her college, she was all at sea. Now, she is slowly finding her feet."
"Isn't she an actress?"
"No, that's my cousin Ambika. Gayathri is the one who wrote a couple of plays."
"Does she still write....?"
"....I don't think so. The last one she wrote, the audience voted with its feet."
"Another expression with feet?"
"When you 'vote with your feet', you show your displeasure about something by walking out. You ...."
"....in other words, if you don't like something, you just get up and walk."
"That's right. When the superstar's latest movie was released, a lot of people voted with their feet. Many walked out after the first half an hour."
"The next time a politician visits our constituency, we should vote with our feet."
"That's a good idea!
Published in The Hindu on January 2, 2001

Word of the day

Brummagem:
cheap and showy

Synonyms: kitschy, gaudy, flashy

Usage: *The antique turned out to be a brummagem copy.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/brummagem

International Phonetic Alphabet: /brʌmədʒəm/

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

From Page One

Modi raises seafarers' safety in Trump meet

The U.S. President also dismissed perceptions that the India-U.S. relationship was fraying, saying that as long as he was President, India would have a "great friend" in the White House. He lavished praise on Mr. Modi repeatedly and their friendship, painting a picture at odds with the mounting challenges the relationship has had to weather in recent times, including a protracted trade negotiation, restrictions on skilled migration, the death of Indian sailors, and a closeness with the Pakistan government that has ruffled feathers in New Delhi.

"He's the most beautiful looking man. He looks so nice. He's like an angel, but actually he's a killer," Mr. Trump said, praising Mr. Modi. "He's as tough as they come, but he looks so good. So he gets you by surprise," he added.

Mr. Trump said he appreciated Mr. Modi (i.e., India) investing in the U.S.

Asked to speak on the India-U.S. defence relationship, Mr. Trump said that though they did not have a contract, if India were to be attacked "we would be there to help", stretching out his hand to hold Mr. Modi's.

Mr. Trump suggested he would go to India at some point in the future.

Following the meeting, Mr. Modi posted on social media saying the two sides had reviewed U.S.-India cooperation in trade, energy, defence, technology and people-to-people ties.

Framework deal reveals nuclear commitment

On its part, the U.S. will lift sanctions on the sale of Iranian crude oil, petrochemical products, and financial services, including banking, during the negotiation period.

The draft, which has not been released officially, calls for an "immediate and permanent end to the war on all fronts, including Lebanon" – a key Iranian demand.

Under the agreement, the U.S. and Iran have pledged to "respect each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to refrain from interfering in each other's internal affairs".

The U.S. will immediately lift its naval blockade and Iran will allow traffic through the Strait of Hormuz to reach pre-war volumes within 30 days. Mr. Trump has said that traffic through the Strait will be toll-free. According to Iran's Foreign Ministry, however, Tehran will not impose a toll but ships will have to pay a fee to Iran's newly created Persian Gulf Strait Authority, for environmental upkeep and other services

Nuclear talks in next phase

"Iran reiterates that it will never produce nuclear weapons. Iran and the U.S. have agreed that the fate of enriched material and the fate of all other mutually agreed nuclear-related issues, including Iran's nuclear needs, will be adequately addressed in a final agreement," the leaked text says.

Iran has hundreds of kilograms of highly enriched uranium, which the U.S. and Israel want to take out of the country and dilute or destroy.

Two of the contentious points of the MoU are Iran's demands for the unfreezing of its assets and reparation for the war damage. The leaked text says Iran would get access to the funds and financing for reconstruction.

"The U.S. undertakes that, in light of the progress of negotiations towards a final agreement, frozen or restricted funds and assets of Iran will be released and made fully available."

After protests, injured Kukis shifted from Imphal hospital

Three youth were moved 60 km away to Churachandpur Medical College under tight security; protesters earlier tried to storm RIMS and take away the trio injured in an attack in Kangpokpi

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Three Kuki youth, injured in an armed attack on their village in Kangpokpi district of Manipur on June 15, were moved out of Imphal's Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) early Wednesday morning.

Officials said the trio – 18-year-old Genlenmang Vaiphei and Paogoulal Chongloi, and 20-year-old Lunliandaw Vaiphei – were shifted from the RIMS under tight security around 12.15 a.m. to the Churachandpur Medical College, about 60 km south of Imphal.

The Meiteis are in a majority in Imphal and the valley beyond, while the Kuki-Zos dominate Churachandpur and Kangpokpi districts. An ethnic conflict broke out between the two communities in May 2023, claiming more than 250 lives.

Protesters gathered outside RIMS soon after the three Kuki youth, including a footballer who has played for Kolkata's Mohun Bagan club, were admitted on June 15. The security forces used batons and tear gas shells to disperse the mob.

Rising tensions: Protesters gather outside the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences premises in Imphal late on Tuesday. PTI

The following night, the security forces foiled attempts by the protesters to storm the hospital in a bid to take the injured trio away.

Kuki organisations said the three youth should not have been admitted to the RIMS in the first place, given the ethnic tension. They said the three were injured when armed cadres of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN) and the Kamson faction of the Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF) fired at people near Leilon Vaiphei village around 6 a.m. on June 15.

The NSCN and ZUF are Naga armed organisations. Six Naga men, whose bodies were recovered almost a month after they were abducted on May 13 after the killing of three church leaders, belonged to Leilon Vaiphei village.

Meanwhile, the State police said a suspected militant was killed on Tuesday in joint operations by security forces, launched across Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, and Ukhrul districts to dismantle extremist bases.

"During the encounter, one suspected militant was killed. An AK-47 rifle, along with magazines, ammunition, explosives, and other incriminating items, was recovered from the spot," the statement read.

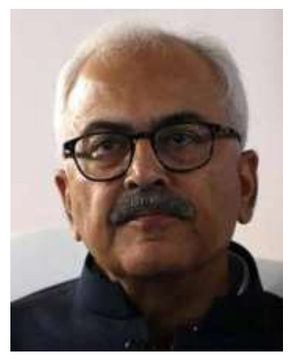
Fake encounter: MLA

Local MLA Letzamang Haokip claimed the person killed was a civilian named Lenminsang, and not a militant.

Condemning the "shocking killing" in what he said could be a fake encounter, he demanded a "thorough judicial and independent" probe into the incident and stringent action against all those responsible for his death.

Manipur Governor discusses security situation with Shah

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Ajay Kumar Bhalla

Amid continuing violence in Manipur, Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi on Wednesday.

Mr. Bhalla is learnt to have apprised the Minister of the security situation in the northeastern State where tensions have escalated between the Kuki and Naga communities over the past one month.

The ethnic violence, which first erupted in the State on May 3, 2023, between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei people, has claimed the lives of more than 250 people so far.

"The overall security situation in the State was discussed," said a senior government official.

While no details were provided, the Union Home Ministry posted on X, "Governor of Manipur Shri @BhallaAjay26 met Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri @AmitShah today."

After remaining under President's Rule for a year, the elected government in Manipur was restored on February 4 this year.

Other than Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh and Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam, two Deputy Chief Ministers – Losii Dikho and Nemcha Kipgen, representing Naga and Kuki communities – were sworn in.

The expansion of the Manipur Cabinet is yet to take place even as Assembly elections in the State are due early next year.

Ms. Kipgen, who took oath virtually from Delhi, is yet to travel to Imphal and attends all meetings online.

12 students of Hyderabad dental college suspended over ragging

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Twelve final-year students of the Government Dental College (GDC), Hyderabad, have been suspended for six months pending a police inquiry following allegations of ragging and harassment of first-year Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) students staying at the Osmania Medical College hostel.

According to Sarjeev Singh Yadav, principal, GDC, Hyderabad, the first-year BDS students, who joined the institution a few months ago, had been subjected to repeated harassment by senior students. The juniors and postgraduate medical students submitted a written complaint on June 11 detailing the alleged incidents.

Bangladesh PM's adviser was stopped at airport as name was on 'blacklist'

Vijaita Singh
Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman's Information and Broadcasting Adviser Zahed Ur Rahman was stopped by immigration officials at the Delhi airport on June 14 as his name had been included in a "blacklist" generated by the External Affairs Ministry in 2025.

Zahed Ur Rahman was travelling using a regular passport with a SAARC visa to participate in a conference in India. As his name had not been withdrawn from the blacklist, the immigration authorities stopped him at the Delhi airport following a system-generated alert against his name, government sources told *The Hindu*.

According to *Prothom Alo*, a Bangladesh-based newspaper, the Bangladesh High Commission sent a formal letter to the Indian Ministry on June 12, confirming that Mr. Rahman would lead the Bangladeshi delegation at the conference.

Zahed Ur Rahman

Mr. Rahman was reportedly placed on the blacklist by the Ministry as he had made anti-India remarks in the past on social media platforms.

After the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) assumed power in the neighbouring country in February, Mr. Rahman was appointed as an adviser holding the rank of a State Minister in the Bangladesh government.

He was scheduled to attend a meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in Delhi.

Hours-long wait

"Zahed Ur Rahman, Information & Broadcasting Adviser of Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman was allowed by the immigration to enter India but he chose to return from the airport in Delhi," said a source in response to a question on whether Ministry officials had forgotten to remove Mr. Rahman's name from the blacklist before his arrival in Delhi to attend the IORA conference.

When the case was flagged by the Bangladesh High Commission, the immigration notice against Mr. Rahman was withdrawn and he was allowed to enter India, sources said.

The process took more than two hours, prompting Mr. Rahman to return to Dhaka via a connecting flight from Colombo.

In 2016, the Union government informed Parliament that "names of foreign nationals and foreigners of Indian origin who are found to have indulged in anti-India activities, heinous crimes or violated visa rules are placed in a negative list after due consultations... Such persons are barred from entering into India for specified time period."

The list is then forwarded to the Bureau of Immigration (BOI), which screens for such entries at airports and land and seaports.

Defence production hits record ₹1.78 lakh cr.

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

India's annual defence production has surged to an all-time high of ₹1.78 lakh crore in the financial year (FY) 2025-26, the Defence Ministry said on Wednesday.

According to the Ministry, the milestone represents a 15.6% growth over the previous fiscal year's output of ₹1.54 lakh crore and a staggering 110% increase since FY 2020-21 when the figure was ₹84,643 crore.

The indigenous defence production has increased almost four times from ₹43,746 crore in FY 2013-14.

Defence Public Sector Undertakings and other PSUs accounted for approximately 76% of total production, while the private sector contributed 24%.

Indian, Thai officials talk on bilateral, defence ties

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The 10th Thailand-India Defence Dialogue was held in Bangkok on Tuesday with both the countries reviewing bilateral defence cooperation and exchanging views on regional and global security issues of mutual interest.

The dialogue was co-chaired by Thailand's Deputy Permanent Secretary for Defence, Admiral Nuttapol Diewvanich, and Joint Secretary in Defence Ministry Satyajit Mohanty.

According to the Ministry, both sides discussed the evolving security environment in the Indo-Pacific region and shared their perspectives on key regional developments. Defence industry cooperation featured prominently in the talks. They reaffirmed the importance of strengthening cooperation to promote stability and prosperity across the region.

Full body scanners on trial at four key airports; three more next in line

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Passengers flying from Srinagar, Jammu, and Ayodhya may soon pass through full body scanners at airport security, with the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) having requested operators at these airports to install the advanced imaging technology on a priority basis, a senior government official said on Wednesday.

The Bureau has also asked all other airport operators handling the movement of more than 50 lakh passengers annually to install the machines.

These scanners are already being used on a trial basis in the Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Kochi airports. The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), which provides aviation security cover at 73 civil airports across the country, is evaluating the functioning of the scanners in these airports. The trials began in May and will continue for three months.

Through and through: The scanners detect metallic items under clothing, reduce the need for physical frisking. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The scanners can detect metallic and non-metallic items concealed under clothing, while reducing the need for physical frisking and ensuring a smoother travel experience, the official said.

On April 2, the BCAS had issued the standard operating procedure for these scanners which are installed at pre-embarkation security points.

"The deployment of [full body scanners] is expected to significantly enhance threat detection capabilities by minimising physical frisking. The trial initiated in May 2026 will evaluate its operational effectiveness, passenger convenience, privacy safeguards, and integration with existing security procedures," the official said, adding that the evaluation will guide future policy decisions.

Other security measures include bomb detection and disposal squads that have been deployed at 25 airports, while bomb detection teams have been activated at 35 additional airports. Dog squads have been established at most airports to augment security operations, the official said.

Multiple seizures

In 2025, the CISF detected around 31.46 kg of gold, 114.13 kg of silver and cash amounting to ₹52.91 crore being illegally transported through airports. Until May 31 this year, 12.779 kg of gold, 23.825 kg of silver and ₹14.49 crore in cash has been seized by CISF personnel at airports.

Between 2021 and June 17, 2026, there have been 63 cases of drugs detected by the CISF

The CISF is also in the process of digitising operational records, including those pertaining to explosive detection system checks and prohibited item detections.

'Parasites': SC denies bail to man accused of cyberfraud, calls for sterner legislation

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday came down heavily on cyberfraudsters, describing them as "parasites" who prey on unsuspecting citizens, and observed that such offenders ought to be dealt with firmly. Refusing to entertain a plea by an accused seeking the clubbing of multiple criminal cases and the grant of bail, the court remarked that the interests of society are better protected when those involved in such offences remain in custody.

"You people are parasites. We have to be very harsh on you. Society's interest is there only when you are inside jail and not outside", a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant observed.

The top court was hearing a petition filed by Manoj Kumar Singh, who is facing multiple cyberfraud cases across Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and Jammu and Kashmir.

Cyberfraudsters commit offences in one State and move elsewhere to avoid detection and arrest, SC Bench observes

Mr. Singh apprised the court that several criminal cases were pending against him in different States and expressed apprehension that additional cases could be registered in the future. He sought interim protection from the court.

The Bench, also comprising Justice V. Mohana, took note of the pattern allegedly followed by cyberfraud accused, observing that they often commit offences in one State and then move elsewhere to avoid detection and arrest.

"You are hardened criminals whose victims are spread pan-India. You cheat someone in Tamil Nadu and then go to Jammu", the Chief Justice said.

Accordingly, the Bench declined to grant any interim relief and observed that Mr. Singh was at liberty to approach the jurisdictional High Court for appropriate relief.

In October 2025, a CJI-led Bench had taken *suo motu* cognisance of "digital arrest" scams, an organised cyberfraud in which criminals impersonate law enforcement or judicial officers to extort money using forged court orders.

Delhi HC issues notice to govt. on Telegram's plea over suspension

Firm alerted to fabricated NEET questions being sold on its platform, but issues persisted, says Centre; company tells court it acted on complaints

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

> Our app is used by students who regularly get study material over it. Teachers use our platform to teach. It's used for business purposes and even for several other things. This is a curtailment of fundamental rights of those who use our app
>
> **TELEGRAM**
> In Delhi High Court

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued notice to the Union government on a petition filed by messaging app Telegram against the Centre's decision to suspend access to its services in India until June 22, citing concerns linked to the conduct of the NEET-UG re-examination.

Justice Tejas Karia directed the government to submit its response by Thursday.

The matter stems from the Centre's temporary suspension of Telegram amid concerns that organised cheating networks involved in the NEET-UG controversy were using the messaging app to circulate leaked or fabricated question papers and coordinate fraudulent activities. The restrictions were issued by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. A separate direction also requires Telegram to disable the editing of previously sent messages until June 30.

During the hearing, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, who represented the Centre, alleged that several channels on the platform were being used to offer leaked examination questions in exchange for money. He added that the authorities had repeatedly alerted the company to these concerns and shared specific examples, but the issues persisted. He said, "If you give me time till tomorrow morning at 8 a.m., I will place shocking things before the court."

Senior Advocate Dhruv Mehta, who appeared for Telegram, challenged the legality of the blocking order and contended that it reflected a failure to consider the company's responses. He told the court that Telegram had acted on lists of objectionable channels supplied by authorities. "We have removed all the contents that you have pointed out," he said, adding that the company had cooperated throughout the process.

Telegram was warned about misuse before blanket ban, says NTA chief

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

Representatives of the messaging app Telegram were called in for meetings "at the highest levels", and warned about the misuse of the app's features that facilitate "paper leak frauds" before a blanket ban was issued, Abhishek Singh, Director-General of the National Testing Agency (NTA), told *The Hindu* on Wednesday.

Mr. Singh said the primary motive behind government intervention was to halt the spread of engineered fake leaks that can spread panic among the students ahead of the National Entrance-Cum-Eligibility Test (NEET) re-test scheduled for Sunday.

"The government had previously approached Telegram regarding the misuse of two specific features, including making edited timestamps visible in Telegram groups and addressing the issue of lack of stringent naming filters for its groups. However, Telegram did not alter its system then," Mr. Singh said.

The NTA was concerned about the *modus operandi* used by bad actors on Telegram to trigger mass panic by fabricating evidence of question paper leaks. Cheating syndicates have been systematically exploiting a specific loophole in Telegram's group and channel synchronisation features.

Locked out: The Electronics and Information Technology Ministry blocked nation-wide access to Telegram until June 22. GETTY IMAGES

For instance, a bad actor can create a public Telegram channel and link it to an associated group. Days before an exam, the administrator can upload a random PDF file on the channel, name it provocatively such as "NEET Question Paper Leaked". The day after the actual exam, the operator then can use Telegram's edit feature to replace the dummy PDF with the actual question paper. While the post inside the channel shows an 'edited' tag, the linked group retains the timestamp of the original post made days earlier. This creates a highly convincing illusion that the actual question paper was available on the platform before the exam began, sparking panic.

"After the ban, Telegram founder Pavel Durov said on X that they are making the 'edited' label more visible to prevent backdating scams. However, this change is still not visible on the app," Mr. Singh said. "Why can't Telegram simply fix its metadata so that timestamp changes are accurately reflected in linked group chats," he asked.

Pointing out that Telegram allows creation of alleged criminal groups with questionable names such as "Paper Leak NEET Mafia", Mr. Singh said the app has to "adhere to norms".

He argued that the lack of stringent naming filters and the ability to rapidly obscure participant identities have turned the platform into a hub for various alleged illegal activities.

The move to ban Telegram has evoked a debate over examination integrity versus digital liberties.

Manindra Agarwal, Director, IIT-Kanpur, said that because NEET exam papers have been leaked, NTA's motive is to stop the spread of fake news. "Telegram is a popular app, but it should also act in a responsible way especially if it has been requested to tweak certain features," Mr. Agarwal said.

However, cybersecurity and policy experts have raised red flags over taking an absolutist approach against the platform.

Nisarga Adhikary, a cybersecurity researcher at IIT-K, warned that a blanket ban or heavy-handed restriction "optimises for visibility rather than actual risk reduction".

SC defers hearing of plea on NEET re-test to July

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday deferred to July the hearing of a plea challenging the National Testing Agency (NTA)'s decision to re-conduct National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) for nearly 22 lakh candidates.

The NEET-UG, originally held on May 3, was cancelled nationwide on May 12 following allegations of paper leak.

Consequently, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) launched a probe, and a fresh examination has been scheduled for June 21.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justice V. Mohana directed that the matter be listed before a Bench led by Justice P.S. Narasimha, which is already hearing a batch of cases related to the examination.

However, Justice Narasimha's Bench is scheduled to sit only after the Supreme Court resumes regular sittings on July 13, effectively rendering the plea infructuous.

Ex-Trinamool Minister arrested in cheating case

Senjuti Sengupta
KOLKATA

Former Trinamool Congress Minister Udayan Guha was arrested from his residence in the Phoolbagan area of Kolkata on Wednesday in connection with a cheating and financial misappropriation case registered in Cooch Behar district.

"Mr. Guha has been arrested based on an FIR lodged at the Dinhata police station on June 11 under Sections 406, 409, 420 of the IPC. The case relates to allegations of cheating and collection of 'cut money' under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana since 2016," said a senior police officer from Cooch Behar.

He said that the complainant, an individual from Dinhata, alleged that the former Minister collected crores of rupees from local residents to set up a children's unit at a government hospital.

Rebuild education system to reduce cost and stress, says Rahul in Kota

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday called for rebuilding the country's education system, saying it puts pressure on children, gives stress to students, and extorts money from parents. The "Gen Z families" were spending an amount three times the Centre's education budget on top five competitive examinations, he said.

Mr. Gandhi addressed a students' convention at the Dussehra Maidan in Kota, considered Rajasthan's hub of coaching institutes, in the first leg of his national campaign to highlight the alleged NEET paper leak, youngsters' distress, exam irregularities, and unemployment, with a demand for accountability.

A large number of youngsters, including NEET and JEE aspirants, attended the programme, titled "Chhatron Ki Goonj" (students' voice) with the catchphrase, "Seal the Leaks". Mr. Gandhi said it was not a political meeting, but an occasion to interact with the young people struggling to get a future, facing challenges every single day.

Ear to the ground: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addressing the "Chhatron Ki Goonj" rally at Kota in Rajasthan on Wednesday. PTI

'Parents burdened'

"The biggest weakness of India's education system is that it does not nurture the dreams of our children," he said. While the public sector education had declined, private education had become expensive, putting an immense burden on parents, Mr. Gandhi said.

Five students, who included NEET, JEE and Civil Services aspirants, were called on stage for an interaction with Mr. Gandhi. He talked to them about their plans for future, their strategies for preparation for exams and the expenditure incurred. A couple with their daughter also came on stage to narrate the family's struggle to arrange for coaching.

'Rejection system'

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha said the examination system for jobs and professional courses had turned out to be a "rejection system", rather than an exercise for selection, with a minuscule number of candidates getting selected from among lakhs. This puts a heavy burden on students and their families, resulting in financial ruin, depression, and suicides in extreme cases, he said.

He referred to the five top competitive exams in the country – UPSC, SSC, RRB, JEE and NEET – and said they drained the energy of the youth as well as the financial resources of middle-class families. "Our education system is in fact an extortion machine."

Mr. Gandhi will address similar conventions in Allahabad, Patna and Delhi during the campaign.

Rahul distracting students for political gain, says BJP leader

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Wednesday attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his event in Kota, Rajasthan where he addressed a large gathering of students, with just three days remaining before the re-conduct of the NEET-UG examination.

BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi accused Mr. Gandhi of attempting to distract students and subject them to unnecessary mental pressure during the final phase of the examination "just to exploit a sensitive issue for political gain". "Why do you want to organise such an event, create stress, and anxiety in the students' minds and subject them to mental harassment?" asked Mr. Trivedi, adding that there would be many other opportunities for Mr. Gandhi and the Congress to do politics after June 21.

"When the decision for the re-test has been made and also noted by the Supreme Court, what exactly are you demanding?," he said. While students were focusing on their preparations and the government was working with "sensitivity and vigilance" to ensure the examination was held smoothly, the leader appeared to be pursuing a political agenda, he said.

He described Mr. Gandhi's move as part of an "established and well-planned toolkit mindset" to repeatedly target institutions in a bid to spread "anarchy and confusion".

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Tender No.	Description	Due date
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262723 001122	Procurement of Acrylic Binder - 1 for TNPL Unit - II	03.07.2026

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website and NIC Portal only. For further details, please visit websites : **www.tnpl.com / https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app**

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Tender ID: **2026_RND_190091_1**
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Abhishek Banerjee to meet LS Speaker over Trinamool 'split'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee will meet Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Friday regarding the split in the party, after 20 Lok Sabha MPs declared a "merger" with the Nationalist Citizens Party of India (NCPI).

In a letter dated June 10 addressed to the Speaker, he urged Mr. Birla not to recognise or grant separate status to any rebel Trinamool faction in the Lok Sabha. The letter was submitted to the Speaker's office on June 14, just hours before the rebel faction met Mr. Birla.

The letter contended that the Trinamool was a "single, indivisible political party" and that its legislative wing cannot be separated from the parent organisation. It added that no breakaway group based solely on signatures can claim recognition.

Abhishek Banerjee

The Speaker's office had initially invited Mr. Banerjee to meet him on Monday at 4 p.m., via an email sent at 2 p.m., on a day when he was being questioned by the Enforcement Directorate. Mr. Banerjee sought a fresh date and time to present his case, following which Mr. Birla scheduled the meeting for Friday.

Rajya Sabha Chairman refers BJP MPs' notice against Cong. chief to Privileges Committee

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan has referred the notice moved by six BJP MPs against Leader of the Opposition in the Upper House Mallikarjun Kharge, accusing him of making "derogatory, disparaging and disrespectful" remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to the Committee of Privileges for examination, investigation and report.

The notice has been submitted against Mr. Kharge "for alleged continual and deliberate use of grossly derogatory, disparaging and highly disrespectful remarks against the Prime Minister and thereby lowering the dignity of Parliament and its members." The notice has been given under Rule 188 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha).

Mallikarjun Kharge

Remarks on Modi

According to sources, they had raised objections to remarks made by Mr. Kharge in April, when he allegedly called the Prime Minister "a terrorist". Though later Mr. Kharge clarified that he never used this phrase for the Prime Minister.

"I said tax terrorism is happening, ED, the Income Tax Department and the CBI are conducting raids... this terrorism is being facilitated by the PM. I did not call him a terrorist," the Congress leader had said.

A notification issued by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat on Wednesday said, "On consideration of the facts, the Chairman, Rajya Sabha has referred on June 16, the matter under Rule 203 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) to the Committee of Privileges for examination, investigation and report."

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh is the Chairman of the Privileges Committee of the House.

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5	Supply of Elecon ET Series Gear Box for BCN No.-3. **HGML/2026-27/IND0508**	29,500/-
6	Procurement of Mens Formal Shoes, Cut Shoes, and Ladies Sandals. **HGML/2026-27/IND0512**	31,000/-
7	Procurement of Black Ankle Boots (Derby Shoes). **HGML/2026-27/IND0507**	41,000/-
8	Procurement of KDP 250 Pneumatic Pump. **HGML/2026-27/IND0510**	45,500/-
9	Procurement of Jaw Plates for 80 TPH Jaw Crusher. **HGML/2026-27/IND0487**	1,44,000/-
10	Providing of Staff Nurse & X-ray technicians at HGML Hospital. **HGML/2026-27/SE0089/CALL-2**	98,000/-

Calendar of events: (1) Pre-Bid Meetings (Zoom): **22.06.2026 for Sl.No.1 at 11.00 A.M., for Sl.No.2 at 11.30 A.M., for Sl.No.3 at 12.00 P.M.**
(2) Last date for receipt of tender: **04.07.2026 at 4.00 P.M. (3)** Opening of Technical Bid on: **06.07.2026 at 10.00 A.M.**
For further details interested bidders are advised to log on to website **https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in** or contact the office of undersigned during working hours. For participating in the above tender bidder needs to be registered in KPP portal.

Sd/- The I/c Deputy General Manager (Materials)

LEADING GOLD PRODUCER IN INDIA

INBRIEF

Maoist with ₹10-lakh bounty surrenders in Kolkata: police

A woman Maoist, who goes by the names of Sakuntala and Pushpa, has surrendered before the Kolkata Police. Kolkata Police Commissioner Ajay Kumar Nand said on Wednesday that she surrendered with one gun and 40 rounds of bullets. "She is a native of Mechua in Belpahari, Jhargram district. She was a member of Dalma Squad's general committee, CPI (Maoist)..." Mr. Nand said. Though she belonged to Belpahari, she used to function mostly in Jharkhand. The official also added that there was a ₹10 lakh bounty on Ms. Sakuntala in Jharkhand. She has around four cases against her in West Bengal.

Three burnt to death and two injured in sand mining dispute

Three persons, including a 60-year-old former janpad panchayat vice-president, were charred to death while two others were injured after they were attacked by a large group over a purported dispute linked to sand mining in Chhattisgarh's Korea district on Tuesday night, the police said. Four persons have been arrested so far and the injured are in critical condition, the police said. The former vice-president and his business rivals, the Tripathi family, whose members are among the accused, were both associated with the BJP, a senior police officer said. Following this, the Congress accused the BJP government of providing patronage to illegal sand mining.

Tomato, onion, potato prices rise; farmers get low returns

In potato-growing States such as U.P. and Bihar, farmers are in distress as they get as little as ₹2 or ₹3 per kg for potatoes; but consumers are paying through their nose, says a farmer leader

A. M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

The prices of essential commodities, particularly tomatoes, onions, and potatoes, have increased across almost all States in the past one week, according to data from the Price Monitoring Division of the Department of Consumer Affairs. The price of tomatoes almost doubled in Delhi in this period, while the prices of potatoes and onions have also risen by about ₹3 to ₹5 per kg in the same time.

The Centre has been maintaining that ensuring the right prices for farmers and consumers is its "top priority". Farmers' bodies, on the other hand, say farmers are forced to sell their produce at very low prices, and the increase in retail prices is a failure of the government.

The retail price for a kg of tomatoes in Delhi was ₹53 as on Wednesday, according to data. A kg of tomatoes cost ₹30 on May 17. On June 10, tomatoes cost ₹31 per kg in the national capital's retail market. Similarly, the price for a kg of onions was ₹32 in Delhi on Wednesday, ₹5 higher than last week.

The retail price for a kilogram of tomatoes in Delhi was ₹53 as on Wednesday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Although the government has not provided any details on the rise in prices, an official source said it was a seasonal issue, and the Centre was taking steps to curb the price rise and ensure adequate supplies.

Except in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Manipur, Nagaland, Chandigarh, Ladakh, and Tamil Nadu, tomato prices have gone up in all States and Union Territories in the past week.

The prices of rice, gram dal, tur dal, urad dal, moong dal, masoor dal, mustard oil, and palm oil have also increased in Delhi and some other major centres. "This price rise is the biggest paradox. Retail prices are increasing tremendously and farmers are being fleeced. Who is gaining from this increase? The producing class does not gain, but the corporate houses in retail trade, and big traders, are gaining. They are getting the support of the ruling party to increase their profits," Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) leader, and president of the All India Kisan Sabha, Ashok Dhawale, said.

Farmers in several States, including Maharashtra, did not even have the money to transport onions and tomatoes to the market, particularly after the fuel price hike, he said.

"They are destroying their produce. In potato-growing States such as Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar too, farmers are in distress as they get as little as ₹2 or ₹3 per kg for potatoes. But consumers are paying through their nose," farmer leader Ashok Dhawale said, urging the Union government to help both farmers and consumers.

Farmers warn of protests over fertilizer shortage

NEW DELHI
The SKM has warned that it will begin protests if the Union government fails to ensure adequate supply of fertilizer for kharif crops. After a national council meeting, SKM leaders said on Wednesday that in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, farmers are already facing shortages, and fertilizer is being sold in the black market.

Nicobarese tribal councils oppose draft election rules

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

The councils said the existing forms of self-governance align more closely with democratic values

Nicobarese tribal councils from three different island groups have written to the local administration turning down the idea of Election Commission-conducted polls to their self-governance system, saying it could introduce "election rivalry, division, and conflict" in their society. The councils said the existing forms of self-governance "more closely align with democratic values", and said a new system would interfere with their existing ways which have been "traditional, time-tested, and consensus-based" and in practice for thousands of years.

This comes even as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (A&NI) administration on Wednesday notified a public meeting on June 30 in Sri Vijaya Puram to discuss the draft rules for elections to Nicobarese tribal councils.

The tribal councils in Little and Great Nicobar, Kamorta (Nancowry), and Katchal Island have written objections to the draft rules published by the A&NI administration in May. They have sought the withdrawal of this draft.

The draft rules aimed to reorganise Nicobarese villages into constituencies that would be represented by elected leaders, who would then constitute a larger tribal council. It would involve delimitation, preparation of voter rolls, and reservation of leadership positions for women. The draft also prescribes five-yearly elections. They outlined the polling process, the structure of the new representative system, the delimitation method, the rules for candidature, nomination, and withdrawal, their duties and responsibilities, and the administrative set-up for conducting these elections.

The draft rules were notified on May 15. The 30-day window for objections and suggestions closed this week. The administration has received letters of objection from the Congress party in the islands and the tribal councils.

SC Bench says it will look into allegation of Registry misplacing case records

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday took strong exception to an allegation that its Registry had misplaced a case file relating to a plea challenging a Punjab and Haryana High Court order, observing that such "inefficiency" warranted an inquiry.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justice V. Mohana made the observation after advocate Shubhi Shivani Ahmed informed the court that the file relating to an appeal against an April 27 order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court rejecting her client's anticipatory bail plea had allegedly been misplaced by the administrative wing of the apex court.

"The special leave petition was filed on June 8. However, it has not been registered by the Registry to date," she submitted. Ms. Ahmed further informed the Bench that she had written to the Registrar concerned seeking clarification but had received no response.

"It is a very serious matter if the Registry has misplaced the file. If our Registry is misplacing files in urgent matters, do you think I will simply direct the matter to be listed? I must do something more. Please give me the details. I would like to look into this inefficiency, what is the reason behind it and who is responsible for it," he said.

The CJI also asked Ms. Ahmed to have the advocate-on-record (AoR) who had filed the petition lodge a formal complaint and furnish the relevant details of the incident.

Repeated instances

This is not the first time CJI Kant has voiced concern over the functioning of the Registry.

In May, he delivered a sharp rebuke to the administrative wing, terming the conduct of its officials "nasty" and remarking that some appeared to think of themselves as a "super Chief Justice of India".

Bangladesh returns Assam man abducted from 'no-man's land'

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) returned a 60-year-old farmer from Assam's Cachar district more than 10 hours after he was allegedly abducted from the Indian side of the border on Tuesday morning.

Though Ranjit Das was taken away from the Kinnarkhal area of Cachar's Katigorah, the BGB personnel handed him over to their Border Security Force counterparts at the Bhanga border outpost in the adjoining Sribhumi district later in the day. "The man, a resident of Chandinagar Part-II village, close to our (Kinnarkhal) outpost, was released at 9.15 p.m. after a series of flag meetings between the border-guarding forces," a BSF officer said.

Later, the local police took Mr. Das to Katigorah Model Hospital for a medical examination. He said he was initially assaulted by his abductors, but was treated fairly well during his 10-hour captivity in a house on the Bangladesh side of the border.

Ranjit Das, the farmer who was abducted from the Indian side of border on Tuesday.

Sujit Das, the farmer's son, said his father had gone to the "no-man's land" along with 16 others to work on their agricultural plots. A 150-yard strip on either side of the zero line is referred to as no-man's land.

Rural workers, activists call for repeal of new jobs Act; to stage protest from July 1

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The NREGA Sangharsh Morcha and the Joint Platform for Agricultural and Rural Workers' Unions on Wednesday announced an indefinite protest from July 1, demanding the repeal of the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G).

The VB-G RAM G scheme will come into force on July 1, replacing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, launched by the Congress-led UPA government in 2006.

Announcing the protest at a press conference, the organisations rejected the claim that the new scheme would increase the guaranteed work days from 100 to 125 per rural household.

Several organisations across the country have protested against the proposed VB-G RAM G scheme. J. ALLEN EGENUSE

They cited the recent budgetary allocation to show that the funds, in the best-case scenario, would provide only 42 days of work in a financial year. The bodies said the protests would continue until the proposed law is repealed. Taking a decentralised approach, these would be held at the panchayat level, the activists said.

An analysis of the Centre's proposed interim allocations announced on June 9 indicates a significant gap between the promised 125 days of work and the employment that can be generated, they said.

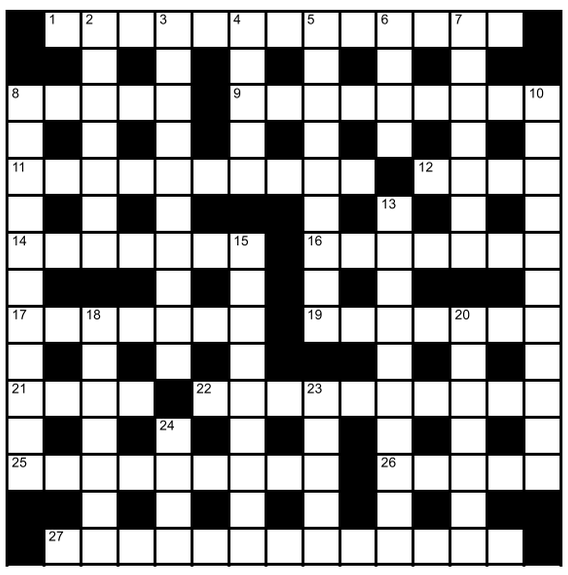
The draft rules require States to contribute 40% of the programme cost, putting an unprecedented burden on the States, said Nikhil Dey of the NREGA Sangharsh Morcha.

TH CROSSWORD + 14823

(set by Dr. X)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Say plainly what one thinks of boy stealing top and denims slyly (5,4,4)
8 Vitality in bedroom, phenomenal (5)
9 In addition to iodine, uranium found in unusual chemical element (9)
11 Speculating in article on crypto finally going up (10)
12 Roll with bit of cheese and cream (4)
14 Quickly controls anger, being most dispassionate (7)
16 Vaguely stealthy, consuming ecstasy behind toilet (7)
17 Policeman's suggestion to catch international head of criminals (7)
19 Really skilful ball, trapping Australia's opener on hundred (2,5)
21 A little kid painting small motor-racing vehicle (4)
22 Bar-hopped in Peru on vacation and fought outside clubs (3-7)
25 Checking lump in body (9)
26 India's top star in retreat getting close to hottie is engaged (2,3)
27 High-strung European overwhelmed by myalgic problem and high blood sugar in US (13)

Down

2 Show that is about Italy's archaeological site (7)
3 Hate blunder in retrospect, taken in by rogue on beach (10)
4 Root's run out, taken aback by abrupt leap (5)
5 Twisted knee after a little tumble in finale (9)
6 Patient beginning to moan with cry of fright (4)
7 Smelly moose in compound (7)
8 Where thief might take wallet, being without money (3,2,6)
10 Awfully comely doll captivating daughter's baby (11)
13 Wild animal mauled emir at compound (10)
15 Distressing nonsense about code-breaker (9)
18 Dreamy fellow beginning to attract women in a flash (7)
20 Contact medicos at centre about copper getting kidney stones (7)
23 Secretive Academy Award-winning actor concealing name (5)
24 Real crazy brute killing bishop (4)

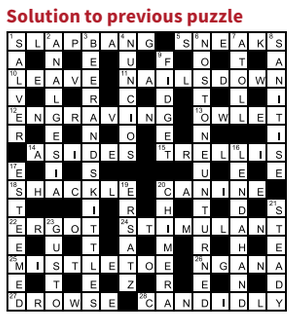
SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

No.SS6915 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Significance of Sara Kshetra

There are two sets of Vaishnava Agamas – Vaikhanasa and Pancharatra. Pancharatra is believed to have been revealed by Lord Narayana over the course of five nights. He first taught the Pancharatra to the serpent Ananta, then to Garuda, then to Senesa, then to Brahma and finally to Rudra. All five to whom the Pancharatra was taught worshipped in Sara Kshetra, said Therazhundur Gosakan Bhattachariar in a discourse. Sara Kshetra is known as Tiruccherai in Tamil and is in Tamil Nadu. Garuda belongs to Kashyapa gotra, and even today the priests who perform puja in the Tiruccherai temple belong to Kashyapa gotra.

At the end of the deluge, Lord Narayana told Brahma to make a pot, and preserve the Vedas and other sacred literature in it. Brahma tried many times to make a pot, but every pot he made broke. So, he asked the Lord what he should do. The Lord said, "Go to Sara Kshetra. There are nine sacred tirthas. Of these the Sara Pushkarini is the most sacred. Make the pot on the banks of Sara Pushkarini." Brahma did as instructed, and this time the pot did not break. He placed all the sacred literature in the pot, and as ordered by the Lord, he placed the pot in Kumbakonam. Bhrugu, Saunaka, Vyasa, Markandeya, Parasara, Phanindra (Ananta) and Vainateya (Garuda) did penance on the banks of Sara Pushkarini.

The temple of Saranatha is on the banks of this pushkarini. The Lord here is Saranatha; the Goddess is Saranayaki; the pushkarini is Sara tirtha; and the vimana is Sara vimana. Brahmanda Purana and Bhavishyottara Purana describe this kshetra.

INBRIEF

RBI allows banks to offer higher interest to NRIs/PIOs

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to temporarily withdraw the interest rate ceiling on fresh Foreign Currently Non-Resident-Bank [FCNR(B)] deposits of 3-5 year tenors and the restriction on interest rates on Non-Resident External (NRE) deposits of three-year and above tenors, including deposits that are renewed upon maturity. The move, a review of its 2025 direction, is to boost forex reserves and will be in effect till September 30, 2026. The central bank issued amendment directions to this effect on Wednesday. As per the directions, banks will be able to offer higher interest rates to this specific category of depositors and interest rates on NRE/NRO deposits will not be higher than those offered by the bank on comparable domestic rupee term deposits.

India's crude oil, LNG imports surge in May

India's imports of crude oil grew about 7.5% in May, the third month of the West Asia conflict, over their level in April while imports of liquified natural gas (LNG) increased about 16% over the same period. However, the import bill for crude oil surged 14.7% and that for LNG by more than 22% during the same period, an analysis of data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) indicates. In April this year, India had imported 20.1 MMT of crude oil spending $16.3 billion and spent $0.9 billion to import 1,954 million metric standard cubic metres per day (MMSCMD) of LNG. When compared with the same month last year, India's crude imports surged 1.41% to 21.6 million metric tonnes (MMT) in May 2026. However, amidst the West Asia crisis, India's importers had to pay $18.7 billion during the reported period, which was approximately 81.6% higher than the $10.3 billion paid in the comparable period last year.

Peace deal: cautious Indian shipowners seek govt. help

Indian govt. to evacuate 34 ships, including 16 fertilizer vessels from Persian Gulf; Naval escorts being planned for safety, as shipowners expect that stability may take more than a month

M. Kalyanaraman
CHENNAI

Though the announcement of the U.S.-Iran peace agreement has been welcomed as good news, Indian shipowners were cautious, just as international shipping companies.

"It's too early to say anything. We have to wait for the agreement to be signed, and then clarity has to emerge on the terms and conditions," says Anil Develi, CEO of Indian National Shipowners Association, adding uncertainty continues.

Mr. Devli said if things go well, it would take another 30 to 60 days for full normalcy. "We hope and expect the government to facilitate getting the vessels back," he said.

Meanwhile, the Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool, that came with a sovereign guarantee of $1.4 billion for providing re-insurance, has been a non-starter, says Mr. Devli. He added that one Indian shipowner had received a quote from a public sector company and it turned out to be more than London rates, despite the government offering to bear re-insurance costs. Blaming the situation on lack of trust and transparency on the part of both shipowners and Indian insurance companies, Tony Fernandez, who has nearly 50 years of experience in insurance, says it was quite possible that, because of audit fears, the public sector insurer could have transferred even the remaining risk to other parties, thereby increasing the cost of insurance. Mr. Fernandez said that this has been an old problem in the insurance industry and has plagued the current effort to mitigate war-risk insurance too. Meanwhile, the government has identified 34 vessels of Indian interest carrying various flags. These include 16 vessels carrying fertilizers, including one Indian-flagged ship, Jag Arnav. Fertilizer supplies are critical for the ongoing kharif season.

In transit: In total, 539 Indian seafarers are on Indian-flagged vessels, including 325 in the Persian Gulf region. AP

Nine energy supply vessels have been identified by the government for evacuation – three are Indian-flagged and six are foreign-flagged.

The government has also been keen on LNG ships, since natural gas is a key component in making fertilizers domestically. The Marshall Islands-flagged LNG carrier Al Ghashamiya transited the Strait of Hormuz on June 16. The vessel is bound for Dahej, carrying more than 90,000 tonnes.

For the purpose of evacuation of these vessels, the government is considering naval escorts and other protective measures for safe exit. Thirteen Indian-flagged vessels are still in the Persian Gulf, west of the Strait of Hormuz; nine are in the Gulf of Oman; three in the Gulf of Aden; and eight in the Red Sea area. These include five crude oil carriers, one LPG carrier, three bulkers, and two container ships.

In total, 539 Indian seafarers are on Indian-flagged vessels (325 in the Persian Gulf region west of the Strait of Hormuz and 214 in the Gulf of Oman). So far, more than 3,600 Indian seafarers have been evacuated by various shipping companies from the Gulf region.

Indian-flagged vessels have faced four incidents, while 19 incidents involving Indian-crewed vessels were reported. So far, seven confirmed Indian seafarer deaths have been reported. Four have been injured, and one is presumed dead. According to the latest assessment of the government, a substantial volume of cargo is currently stranded or awaiting evacuation across ports. At major ports, the volume comprises 11,299 TEUs of containers and 1,771 TEUs of perishable cargo. At non-major ports, including Mundra, Pipavav, and Hazira, 28,891 TEUs of containers and 1,368 TEUs of perishable cargo are awaiting evacuation.

In total, more than 43,000 TEUs of cargo, including over 3,100 TEUs of perishable goods, remain affected. The government has put in place several measures to reduce congestion at ports due to shipping delays.

Additional storage has been allocated for cargo handling requirements, along with extended support for stacking cargo within the port area to avoid unnecessary movement and minimize additional costs for customers.

The relief measures are expected to provide immediate operational and financial support to the trade community while helping ports manage congestion, preserve time-sensitive cargo, and maintain the smooth flow of maritime commerce.

India, U.K. announce July 15 as trade deal implementation date

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

PM Modi with his British counterpart Keir Starmer during the G7 Summit.

India and the United Kingdom have overcome last-minute differences over steel import duties to finally announce July 15 as the implementation date for the trade deal between the two countries, the two governments announced on Wednesday.

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) was signed by the two countries in July 2025 and was all set to be implemented by April or early May 2026.

However, a fresh regulation by the U.K. announced in May and applicable to all countries cut the quota for duty-free steel imports by 60% and doubled the tariff on above-quota imports to 50%. These new rules are to come into effect from July 1, 2026.

These tariffs and quotas were not part of the trade deal negotiations and suddenly halted the implementation process.

According to Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal, a team from India has been in the U.K. over the last few days to move things along.

"Delighted to note that the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement will enter into force on 15th July 2026," Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on X following the announcement. "This agreement will significantly boost our bilateral trade and investment."

The implementation of the trade deal, under which the U.K. will remove tariffs on 99% of its product lines, will be accompanied by the implementation of the Agreement on Social Security, also referred to as the Double Contribution Convention (DCC), on July 15. It further said that such protections would be through a mix of country-specific quotas, residual quotas and access under an Authorised Use Scheme (AUS).

'Landmark consensus'

"Demonstrating the collaborative strength of the India-U.K. Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CETA), India and the United Kingdom have successfully reached a landmark consensus to safeguard and promote bilateral steel trade," the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a release.

Without revealing details on what exactly the solution to the U.K. steel tariff issue would entail, the release added that "both sides mutually agreed to protect commercial interests, minimise market disruptions, and ensure an overall balanced and stable trading environment for exporters".

BMW eyes sales of 20,000 units in India

Sangeetha Kandavel
CHENNAI

Hardeep Singh Brar

German automaker BMW is targeting annual sales of more than 20,000 units in 2026, buoyed by strong demand for luxury vehicles in the Indian market.

"BMW sold around 18,000 vehicles, including 800 MINI cars, last year. The company has maintained its growth momentum, reporting a 17% year-on-year increase in sales during the first quarter of 2026," said Hardeep Singh Brar, president and CEO of BMW Group India.

After launching MINI Countryman C, a sports utility vehicle (SUV) assembled at BMWs plant at the Mahindra World City, near Chennai, he said, "Last year, we sold around 730 MINI cars. So, this year, we want to double MINI sales," he added.

Responding to a query on the profile of MINI buyers, he said most customers already own a luxury vehicle and purchase a MINI as an additional car. "We have also seen many customers buying a MINI as a gift for their spouse," he said, adding that the luxury car segment has consistently outperformed the mass-market segment.

Oil prices tumble on likely U.S.-Iran deal

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

Oil prices fell to their lowest level in more than three-and-half months on Wednesday as markets registered some optimism from a potential peace deal between Iran and the U.S.

Analysts however, do not see a complete return to normalcy immediately. During trade Wednesday, benchmark Brent crude futures declined 1.52% from their previous close to $77.76 per barrel.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) in its latest monthly forecast held that a complete recovery would not happen immediately.

"As mines have to be removed, the main shipping lines and supply chain would take time to normalise," the IEA stated.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Prashant Vashisht, senior VP and co-group head, corporate ratings, ICRA, said it may take about 8-9 months for the inventories to be stocked up to pre-war levels, which would continue to reflect in elevated effective prices.

He added that, considering the volatile situation, countries may also rush to boost reserves.

On inflation, Maulik Patel, head of research, Equirus Securities told *The Hindu* that lower crude prices were a positive and would "gradually ease imported inflation pressures".

"However, the benefits may play out over the coming quarters rather than immediately.

"That said, the overall macro-outlook is improving compared with the uncertainty seen over the past two months," he said.

'India to meet 3% compressed biogas blending goal for FY27'

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

The Centre is on track to meet the goal of blending 3% compressed biogas (CBG) with CNG and domestic piped natural gas for FY27 with the blending percentage having already nearly doubled to about 2% at present, officials told *The Hindu*.

They added with more CBG plants under varied stages of construction, this would provide a fillip towards achieving the target.

India's present consumption of natural gas for domestic PNG and CNG in transport combined is about 34-35 million metric standard cubic metre per day (MMSCMD).

A biogas Plant at Bengaluru in the State of Karnataka.

"In April, CBG sales were approximately 0.66 mmscmd and about 0.63 mmscmd in May," they stated, explaining that at the present rate of consumption they amount to nearly 2% of blending.

More plants

According to the Petroleum Ministry's Gobardhan portal, construction of 324 CBG/bio-CNG plants are under progress while construction work is yet to start on 1,261 plants.

Suresh N.S., senior research scientist, Strategic Initiatives Group at think-tank CSTEP said geopolitical developments underscore urgency of boosting India's domestic energy security and reducing dependence on imported fuels.

Rupee up for fourth session in row on softer oil price

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Indian currency appreciated for the fourth consecutive session on Wednesday, closing at ₹94.50 a dollar, up 10 paisa as easing tensions between U.S. and Iran cooled crude prices.

"Local currency outperformed Asian peers as oil prices continued to soften on expectation of easing energy supply pressures from a U.S.-Iran deal. Technically, spot USD-INR faces resistance at 95.10," said Dilip Parmar, research analyst at HDFC Securities

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग संभाग-प्रथम, उदयपुर
क्रमांक :- ACE/NIT/2026-27/D-206 दिनांक : 10/6/2026
निविदा संख्या 03/2026-27
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से **भवन निर्माण कार्य** हेतु उपयुक्त श्रेणी में सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग राजस्थान में पंजीकृत संवेदकों एवं राज्य सरकार / केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संगठनों / केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग / डाक एवम् दूर संचार विभाग / रेल्वे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत संवेदकों, जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के ए, एए श्रेणी के संवेदकों के समकक्ष हो, से निर्धारित प्रपत्र मे भवन निर्माण कार्य के लिए ई- प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट प्रक्रिया से ऑन लाईन निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती है।

कार्य का नाम	कुल 1 (एक) भवन कार्य
निविदा की कुल लागत	राशि रु. 3186.00 लाख
ऑनलाईन निविदा आवेदन डाउनलोड एवं अपलोड करने की तारीख	16.06.2026 प्रातः 9:30 बजे से 06.07.2026 सांय 6.00 बजे तक
ऑनलाईन निविदा खोलने की तारीख	08.07.2026 सांय 4.00 बजे से

निविदा से सम्बन्धित विवरण वेब साईट http://dipr.rajasthan.gov.in, http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in व sppp.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है। सम्पूर्ण निविदा प्रक्रिया http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर ऑनलाइन सम्पादित की जावेगी।
NIB Code:- PWD2627A1034
UBN:- PWD2627WLOB04488
DIPR/C/10423/2026
अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियन्ता
सा.नि.वि. सम्भाग-प्रथम उदयपुर

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, वृत्त बारां
क्रमांक : 813 दिनांक : 09/06/2026
निविदा सूचना संख्या 07/2026-27
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से **बजट घोषणा 2026–27** मे घोषित सड़को का निर्माण कार्य हेतु उपयुक्त श्रेणी में सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग राजस्थान में पंजीकृत संवेदकों एवं राज्य सरकार/केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संगठनों/केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग/डाक एवम् दूर संचार विभाग/रेल्वे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत संवेदकों, जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के एए श्रेणी के संवेदकों के समकक्ष हो, से निर्धारित प्रपत्र में ई–प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट प्रक्रिया से ऑन लाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित विवरण वेब साईट http://dipr.rajasthan.gov.in व http://pwd.rajasthan.gov.in http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है। यू.बी.एन संख्या निम्नानुसार है।
इच्छुक संवेदकों को अपने डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर के माध्यम से वेब साईट http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर रजिस्टर्ड होना आवश्यक है।
NIB Code :- PWD2627A1018. UBN No. :- 1- PWD2627WSOB04405, 2- PWD 2627WSOB04410, 3- PWD2627WSOB04411, 4-PWD2627WOB04412, 5-PWD2627WSOB04414, 6- PWD2627WSOB04415
DIPR/C/10283/2026
अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
सा.नि.वि. वृत्त बारां

KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
CIN : U85110KA1970SGC001919
ABSTRACT e- TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPP Portal Only)
KPCL invites Bids in two parts through GoK KPP Portal: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** for the following works.

BHADRA GENERATING STATION
1) **KPCL/2026-27/PS/WORK_INDENT4148/CALL-2, Date:11.06.2026.** Design, Manufacture, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 11 kV KIOSK consisting of 1 incomer, 2 outgoing feeders cubicles supplied with 11 kV vacuum circuit breakers, CTs, VTs, protective relays and multi-function meter etc., complete including dismantling of the existing equipment at Bhadra Generating Station. EMD: **Rs. 35,950/-**. Last date and time for on-line submission of tenders: **25.06.2026 upto 16:30Hrs.** Further information if required can be obtained from office of the **Executive Engineer (O&M)Bhadra, Bhadra Generating Station, KPCL, B.R. Project - 577115, Bhadravathi Taluk, Shivamogga District, Karnataka.**

KALINADI HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT
1). **KPCL/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT4252, Date: 12.06.2026.** Comprehensive AMC of 13Nos. High mast systems installed at Ambikanagar and Dam sites. **EMD: Rs. 10,250/-.**Tender processing fee: **As per e-procurement norms.** Period of Completion: **365 days(1 year AMC). Last date and time for On-line submission of Tenders: 27.06.2026, 16:00Hrs.** Further details can be had from the office of the **Executive Engineer (O,PS&C)Nagjhari, KPCL, Ambikanagar-581363, Uttara Kannada District.** Mobile: **94482 30872.**

KALINADI HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT - I & II
1). **KPCL/2025-26/GH/WORK INDENT4065, Date:10.06.2026.** Supply and replacement of electrical control panels and re-wiring of 35 Ton crest gantry crane and 20T draft tube gantry crane at Kadra Dam. Tender Amount (excl. GST): **Rs. 8,40,000/-.** EMD: **Rs.21,000/-.** Last date and time for receipt of tenders: **24.06.2026, 17:00Hrs.** Further details can be had from the office of the **Executive Engineer(Gates) Kali, KPCL, Kadra, Karwar Taluk, North Kanara District - 581396,** Mobile: **9141611350.** E-mail: **eegateskali@gmail.com.**

SHARAVATHY HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT
1). **KPCL/2026-27/GH/WORK_INDENT4227, Date:15.06.2026.** Providing Under water diving Services & mobile crane services at Sharavathy Valley Project, Varahi Hydro-Electric Project & Bhadra Dam. EMD: **Rs. 25,320/-.** Last date and time for receipt of tenders: **01.07.2026 @ 16:00Hrs.** Any Further, information if required can be obtained from office of the **Executive Engineer (Gates)Sharavathy, KPCL, Kargal-577421, Sagar Taluk, Shivamogga District,** Mobile: **91483 46914 / 94808 30315,** E-mail: **eegatessharavathy@gmail.com.**

MAHATRANSCO Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.
E-TENDER NOTICE (4th call)
MSETCL SRM invites online RFx (e-Tender) from the Registered Contractors for MAHATRANSCO e-Tendering (SRM) website for below mentioned work.
E-tender No./ RFx No.:- 7000040355 - 4th call Name of work:- "4th call for Augmentation by providing additional 1x50MVA, 220/22kV T/F along with 6 x 22kV GIS bays, 1 x 220kV AIS bay, 1 x 22kV GIS Bus Coupler bay, 1 x 22kV GIS PT bay with extension of 220kV Main Bus, Auxilliary Bus and allied civil works at 220kV Airoli Knowledge Park (AKP) S/s under EHV O&M Dn., Bhandup in Vashi Zone.(Transformer will be supplied by MSETCL)" **Estimated Cost:-** Rs. 13,32,59,967/- Excluding GST Rs.15,72,46,761/- Including GST **EMD cost-** Rs. 13,32,599.67 **Tender Fees:-** Rs. 25,000/-+ GST. **Date for Sale and Submission of the e-Tender Documents:** From 17.06.2026 @ 15.00 Hrs to 01.07.2026 @ 15.30 Hrs. For detailed information visit our website: **https://srmetender.mahatransco.in**
Sd/- **CHIEF ENGINEER,**
EHV PC (O&M) Zone, Vashi

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ୍ ଶକ୍ତି ସଂଚାରଣ ନିଗମ ଲିଃ
(ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାରଙ୍କ ଏକ ଉପକ୍ରମ)
ODISHA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
Regd. Office: OPTCL Tech Tower, Janpath, Saheed Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007
ADVERTISEMENT FOR ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANT FOR 765/400 kV PROJECTS IN OPTCL
Advt. No. MPPR - 03/2026-27 Dated:17.06.2026
Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL), established on 29th March 2004, is a State owned Power Utility in Odisha. OPTCL has infrastructure that spans for about 17261 CKT KMs of transmission line, encompassing a vast and robust transmission network of 207 substations ranging from 132 kV to 400 kV. OPTCL has successfully executed transmission projects up to the 400 kV level and is now planning to venture into the 765 kV transmission system.
OPTCL invites application from Electrical Engineers not exceeding 63 years of age as on 01.06.2026, having at least 20 years of professional experience in the design, engineering, execution, or project management of 400 kV/220 kV transmission lines and substations with minimum 5 years of specific experience in 765 kV transmission line and substation projects for engagement as Consultant (02 nos.) on contractual basis. The details of the position, terms & conditions, remuneration and application format is available at OPTCL website: **www.optcl.co.in.**Last date for submission of application form: **16.07.2026 (05:00 PM)**
HIPR-26/2026-27
Sd/-
GM(HRD)MPPR
/optcl.odisha /optcl_odisha

KAZAN

Putin hosts ASEAN leaders as West mounts pressure on Ukraine war

AFP

Russian President Vladimir Putin hosts a summit of 11 Southeast Asian nations in Kazan from Wednesday. Facing Western sanctions over the Ukraine conflict, Moscow has pivoted its economy towards Asia. Moscow said the leaders will "exchange views on global and regional problems" and new aims in Russia-ASEAN ties. AFP

BRUSSELS

EU lawmakers vote to approve 'return hubs' migration reform

REUTERS

European lawmakers gave final approval on Wednesday to tougher migration rules that will grant authorities much broader detention powers and allow for the creation of deportation centres outside the bloc. The 418 to 218 vote was one of the last hurdles for a reform that has sailed through EU's legislative process. AFP

SEOUL

South Korea to ease civilian curbs along border with North Korea

REUTERS

Civilians in South Korea will be able to get several kilometres nearer North Korea under new rules broadening public access to the highly militarised border zone, Seoul's Defence Ministry said on Wednesday. The Civilian Control Line will be shrunk to an average of six km starting 2027, Defence Minister Ahn Gyu-back said. AFP

JILJILIYA

Israeli settlers torch two West Bank mosques, say Palestinian officials

AP

Israeli settlers set fire to mosques in two West Bank villages, the local mayors said, while signs of arson and vandalism were seen at the site. "The forces searched the area for suspects and located two burned mosques, as well as graffiti on the walls. The suspects had fled prior to the arrival of the forces," Israel's military said. AFP

U.S.-Iran deal could remove restrictions on tankers; unlock banking, insurance access

Before the conflict, international shipping through the Strait of Hormuz operated without tolls, service fees or any mandatory reporting to national authorities; while the U.S. says no tolls should be imposed, Iran says ships transiting the strait will have to pay a service fee and report to authorities

NEWS ANALYSIS

M. Kalyanaraman

Tankers and cargo vessels in the Gulf of Oman, along shipping routes linking the Strait of Hormuz and the Arabian Sea. AP

The 14-point Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Iran and the U.S., as published by Al Arabiya English, contains several commitments by the U.S. and Iran relating to shipping and transit through the Strait of Hormuz.

Under the agreement, the U.S. will lift its naval blockade and help restore maritime traffic within 30 days. Iran, in turn, has committed to restoring traffic "proportional to the pre-war volume" and to facilitating the movement of merchant vessels to and from the Persian Gulf within the same period.

According to the text published by Al Arabiya, Washington has agreed to immediately lift Treasury Department sanctions on exports of Iranian crude oil, petroleum products and derivatives, along with related services such as banking, insurance and transportation.

In practical terms, this would remove restrictions on tankers previously sanctioned for carrying Iranian oil and enable them to access international banking systems, insurance markets and credit facilities more easily.

Days before the MoU was signed, the U.S. carried out punitive strikes on vessels allegedly transporting Iranian oil, including two ships bound for India and crewed by Indian seafarers, three of whom were killed. Subsequently, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio maintained that the transport of "illicit" Iranian oil would not be permitted. However, negotiations on sanctions relief had reportedly been nearing completion for several days. Before the conflict, international shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a naturally occurring one, operated without tolls, service fees or any mandatory reporting to national authorities. Malacca-Singapore straits involve reporting to national authorities for the purpose of safe navigation but no fee, so is the Gibraltar.

In Bosphorus and Dardanelles, vessels pay service charges, including for pilotage to Turkiye. In the artificial Suez and Panama canals, ships pay substantial transit fees, though alternative longer and more expensive routes remain available if those waterways are disrupted.

"Any fee to any authority for Strait of Hormuz would be vehemently opposed by global shipping for various reasons," said Capt. Ritesh Kumar, a veteran master mariner.

While the U.S. has indicated that no tolls should be imposed, Iran has signalled that it may seek to levy service charges. Iranian officials had also suggested that future arrangements could require ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz to report to Iran and/or Oman.

Iran accord to end the war to be signed 'shortly', says Trump

Agence France-Presse
EVIAN

Donald Trump

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he expected the accord with Iran ending the West Asia war to be signed "shortly" but cast uncertainty over the exact date.

"The deal we reached with Iran on Sunday will be signed shortly, tomorrow (Thursday), maybe the next day (Friday)," Mr. Trump said at the G7 summit, after previous announcements that it would be signed on Friday in Switzerland with Vice-President J.D. Vance representing the United States.

"We are going to most likely sign a deal," he added.

'Prepared to bomb'

Mr. Trump told pressspersons at the final press conference of the G7 that he was prepared to "bomb the hell" out of Iran if they violated the agreement.

"If they are not behaving they will be hit again," he said.

But he added: "They don't want to get bombed, they don't want to get hit."

Mr. Trump said he "might" stay in Europe for the signing but added that as a memorandum of understanding "it might not be the kind of a document I should be signing".

Asked if sending Mr. Vance to the signing rather than going himself was to avoid blame if it did not work out, Mr. Trump replied: "I like that idea."

"If it works out I am going to take the credit, if it doesn't work out I'm blaming JD! You better be careful JD! He is going to turn his plane around and get the hell out of here!"

Following reports of tensions with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Mr. Trump said Washington "did send a copy" to Israel of the accord.

Dilute uranium

Meanwhile, senior U.S. administration officials said that Iran has agreed to dilute its enriched uranium stocks under its interim deal with the U.S., as they released what they said was the text of the agreement.

"The fact that they're conceding to that is a major, major win for the United States of America," one of the U.S. officials said of the nuclear issue on a call with presspersons.

U.S. drops 'Indo' from name of its military's Pacific Command

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

The Pentagon is restoring the name of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command to the U.S. Pacific Command, it said on Tuesday, reversing a 2018 decision.

The renaming will not change the command's area of responsibility, which stretches from the western part of India to America's Pacific coastline, the Department of War said in a statement.

Its "fundamental mission and its unwavering commitment to maintaining a free and open theatre alongside regional allies and partners" also remain unchanged, it added. The name change "honours the command's deep historical roots, fostering a sense of pride and collective spirit among all who serve in the Pacific," the department said.

The U.S. Pacific Command was established after the Second World War. It was renamed as the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command in 2018, in a nod to the growing importance of the Indian Ocean in U.S. strategic thinking.

Trump delays Clayton's DNI nomination to try to push Congress on voter ID Bill

Associated Press
EVIAN-LES-BAINS

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that he was delaying federal prosecutor Jay Clayton's nomination to lead the U.S. intelligence community in a bid to force Congress to act on a voter ID Bill that currently lacks enough support for passage.

The Republican President said in a social media post just hours before Mr. Clayton's scheduled confirmation hearing that he will keep Bill Pulte, a top U.S. housing official, as acting Director of National Intelligence. Democratic and Republican lawmakers had opposed Mr. Trump's selection of Mr. Pulte, citing his lack of known experience in intelligence and his use of his current administration perch to target perceived adversaries of the President – resistance that last week forced Mr. Trump to turn to Mr. Clayton.

The abrupt announcement creates instant uncertainty over the long-term leadership of the 18-agency intelligence community and dashes hopes for a swift renewal of Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act that expired in Congress last week due to bipartisan anger over Mr. Trump's pick of Mr. Pulte.

Jay Clayton

Mr. Clayton had been set to appear on Wednesday for a Senate confirmation hearing that was fast-tracked because of the program's lapse. Democrats had said they would not renew the expired surveillance programs until Mr. Trump withdrew the selection of Mr. Pulte.

In his social media post, Mr. Trump accused Democrats of breaking a deal to renew the program after he nominated Mr. Clayton.

Trump also added another condition: linking his approval of the surveillance program to the passage of a Bill requiring people to show ID to vote.

The Republican-controlled Congress has not acted on the voting Bill because it does not have enough support in either chamber, particularly from Democrats.

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS - TIRUMALA
SRI TT DEPARTMENT, TIRUMALA.

Roc. No. TTD-14023(31)/17/2024-AEO(VQC)-TTD 16-06-2026

NAME OF THE WORK: Supply of Manpower - 23 Nos., of Unskilled Workers as attendants to work at VQC-II, TTD, Tirumala for attending to maintain Q-lines at VQC-II compartments, Tirumala as assigned by the department from time to time for a period of 24 months (02 years) to work at VQC-II, Tirumala, ● **NIT download starting date: 17-06-2026 @ 5.00 PM** ● **NIT download ending date: 23-06-2026 @ 1.00 PM.** For further details including terms and conditions please visit log on to the web site **http://www.tirumala.org** and **http://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in.** For enquiry, please contact Phone Nos:**0877-2263758/2263592.**

TTD-40021(31)/1/2026-PRO SEC(Adv.No.83) Date:17-06-2026 **EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Elon Musk's AI tool Grok was used in strikes against Iran: U.S.

Agence France-Presse
SAN FRANCISCO

Elon Musk's artificial intelligence tool Grok was used in strikes against Iran, the United States government revealed in a legal briefing seen on Tuesday.

The June 15 brief defends the gas turbines used by a giant data centre belonging to the trillionaire's company xAI, which are the target of an environmental lawsuit.

In the brief, the U.S. Department of Justice argued that the lawsuit "threatens American national, economic, and energy security by seeking to shut off the power supply for artificial intelligence innovation that supports the Department of War's military operations."

To support the argument, federal prosecutors presented testimony from Pentagon AI chief Cameron Stanley in which he states, under oath, that Grok is already in use within Project Maven, the U.S. military's AI-assisted targeting program that was initially powered by Anthropic's Claude model.

The project's Maven Smart Systems 'enabled U.S. forces to deploy over 2,000 munitions to 2,000 distinct targets within 96 hours,' a statement said. REUTERS

The project's Maven Smart Systems (MSS) "enabled U.S. forces to deploy over 2,000 munitions to 2,000 distinct targets within 96 hours during Operation Epic Fury," Mr. Stanley's statement said.

Mr. Stanley praised Mr. Musk's technology and "the greatly increased operational efficiency made possible by the Grok Gov Model".

At the end of February, the government terminated its contracts with Anthropic after it refused to allow its tools to be used for fully automated strikes or the mass surveillance of Americans. The Pentagon then turned to Anthropic's competitors, like Google, OpenAI and xAI, to continue its pursuit of AI.

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (CIVIL), IDCO, IDCO TOWER, BHUBANESWAR
Bid Identification No.Civil/EST/08/2026-27 : TCN No.15383, Dt.30.05.2026
NOTICE INVITING TENDER UNDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

1. Name of the Work : Construction of Block level Stadium (with Indoor Hall) in Lephripara Block under Sundargarh District.
2. Value of the Work : Rs.1515.86 lakhs
3. Period of completion : 12 (Twelve) Calendar Months
4. Availability of tender online for Bidding :
i. Start Date : 18:00 Hours of dt.22.06.2026
ii. End Date : 17:00 Hours of dt.07.07.2026
iii. Opening date : 11.30 Hours of dt.08.07.2026.

Tender details can be seen from the e-procurement portal: **www.tendersorissa.gov.in.** Corrigendum or Addendum if any will not be published in newspapers and can be seen in **e-procurement portal** as well as in **IDCO website.**

Chief General Manager (Civil), IDCO, Bhubaneswar
4001/162/2627 OIPR-4001/4075/1/26-27/0051

Bhubaneswar Development Authority
Bhubaneshwar Development Authority
Akash Shova Building, Sachivalaya Marg, Bhubaneswar, Odisha - 751001. Ph.:+91-0674-2392801
INVITATION FOR BIDS
Bid Identification No.454/EM/BDA **Date: 16/06/2026**

Engineer Member, BDA on behalf of Bhubaneswar Development Authority, Bhubaneswar invites following item rate bids in double cover system in **ONLINE MODE** from eligible bidders as mentioned below:

Sr.	Particulars	Details
1.	Name of Work	Selection of an Agency for Operating & Maintaining Gymnasiums in Pokhariput Park in Bhubaneswar, Odisha
2.	Cost of Bid Documents	INR 10,000.00 + 18% GST = INR 11,800.00 (Online Mode)
3.	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	INR 5,00,000.00 (Online Mode)
4.	Availability of Tender	From 19.06.2026 to 05.00 PM of 09.07.2026
5.	Last date and time of submission of Tender	05.00 PM of 09.07.2026
6.	Date and time of opening of Tender	06.00 PM of 09.07.2026
7	Place of opening of Tender	O/o - Engineer Member, BDA, Bhubaneswar.

Further details can be seen from the website: **https://tendersodisha.gov.in**. Any addendum / Corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Engineer Member, BDA, Bhubaneswar.
13001/890/2627 OIPR-13001/13033/1/26-27/0061

Government of Karnataka
TOWN MUNICIPAL OFFICE, SRIRANGAPATNA
Mandya District-571438
Website:www.srirangapatnatown.mrc.gov.in
E-mail:itstaff_ulb_srirangapatna.yahoo.co.in,
Phone : 08236-252229/253030
No: TMC/SRP/TS/Ten:01/2026-27 Date:15/06/2026

E-Procurement Tender Notification

Tenders are invited from eligible (Grade-01) Civil Contractors registered with the Public Works Department for the execution of the following works under the Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT) within the limits of Srirangapatna Municipality in accordance with the Karnataka Public Procurement Transparency Act, 1999, Rules, 2000 and the instructions and provisions of the Standard Tender Documents. The stipulated period for completion of the following works is nine (09) calendar months including the monsoon season. The date for submission of tender in e-procurement is fixed till Dtd: 03-07-2026 upto 5.30 PM. And the technical bid of the tender will be opened on Dtd: 06.07.2026 at 11:00 AM Further details can be obtained from http://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in and from the Technical Branch of the Municipal Office during office hours.

Sl No : 01. Indent of works : DMA/2026-27/OW/WORK_INDENT57254. Work Details : DEVELOPMENT OF PROACTIVE 2.0 STREET IN SRIRANGAPATANA. Tender Amount (in Lakhs) : 590.44. EMD Amount (in Lakhs) : 8.86. Tender Reservation : General.

Note: Any change in the tender schedule and conditions due to any reason will be notified only on the e-Procurement portal.

Sign/-Administrator, Town Municipal Council, Srirangapatna.
Sign/-Chief Officer, Town Municipal Council, Srirangapatna.

ಪಾಸಾಸಂಂ/ಹಿಸನಿ–ಮಂ/ಕೆಎಸ್.ಎಂಸಿ&ಎ/208/2025–26

STALEMATE

Wissa's strike helps a battling DR Congo hold Portugal

AFP

Portugal was held to a 1-1 draw by the Democratic Republic of Congo on Wednesday as Cristiano Ronaldo played in a record-equalling sixth World Cup. Joao Neves opened the scoring in the sixth minute in Houston but Yoane Wissa equalised in first-half injury time to give the Congolese their first-ever World Cup point.

HIGH PRAISE

Messi is a madman: Haaland in awe of the Argentine superstar

AFP

Norway's Erling Haaland was in awe of Lionel Messi, saying that he is a "madman", after the Argentine legend scored a hat-trick against Algeria in the defending champion's 3-0 win in their World Cup opener. In a Snapchat story, Haaland uploaded his selfie and wrote in the caption, "Messi is a madman" along with a crown emoji.

UP AND AWAY

Haaland double powers Norway's big win over Iraq

REUTERS

Erling Haaland struck his first World Cup goals as Norway beat Iraq 4-1 in Boston on Tuesday in its first game at a major tournament in 26 years. The win left Norway on top of Group I on goal difference, level with France on three points. The Norwegians face Senegal in their next game in New Jersey on June 22.

LIKE FATHER LIKE SON

Norway fields three children of former World Cup stars

FIFA

In a World Cup first, Norway became the first team to field three sons of former World Cup players in the same match, in the contest against Iraq on Wednesday. Alf-Inge Haaland, Goran Sorloth and Erik Thorstvedt, the fathers of Erling, Alexander and Kristian respectively, had played against Italy on June 23, 1994.

1, 2, 3, here we go! Messi sets Argentina off to flyer with a wicked shot from distance, follows it up wth a cheeky strike to beat Luca Zidane before completing his treble with another unstoppable effort past Algeria's flat-footed defence. REUTERS, AFP, AP

Messi hat-trick headlines Argentina's romp past Algeria

The captain leads the way for the defending champion with a dazzling show, putting the 38-year-old level with Germany's Klose's all-time record of 16 goals at the quadrennial showpiece

FIFA WORLD CUP

Agence France-Presse
KANSAS CITY

Lionel Messi scored a dazzling hat-trick for Argentina on Tuesday to equal Miroslav Klose's all-time record of 16 goals at World Cups as the defending champion swept Algeria aside 3-0.

Messi also became the first player to feature in six World Cup tournaments, in his 200th international match. Messi produced a majestic finish from distance in the 17th minute, sparking a frenzy among his adoring fans.

Algeria goalkeeper Luca Zidane, son of France great Zinedine, got his hands to the ball, but could not keep it out.

Messi netted again in the second half from close range, gobbling up a rebound to take him just one goal behind the all-time record held by Germany's Klose. And he completed his first hat-trick at a World Cup with an unstoppable finish in the 76th minute.

The diminutive genius was substituted shortly afterwards.

The Group J match in the open-air stadium started at a frantic pace and both sides had early goals ruled out for offside, including one from Messi.

The South Americans were largely in control of the match, fluid in attack with their No. 10 pulling the strings.

But as the clock ticked towards half-time Algeria enjoyed a better spell, with Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez forced to parry a shot from Fares Chaibi from a tight angle.

Messi curled another effort over the bar in the early minutes of the second half and Zidane kept out a shot from Lautaro Martinez.

Lionel Scaloni's Argentina is seeking to become the first back-to-back winners since Brazil managed the feat in 1962.

Algeria is hoping to reach the knockout round for only the second time, in a group that also includes Austria and Jordan.

Earlier, the roads around the Kansas City Stadium were clogged as tens of thousands of Argentine fans streamed towards ground dressed in blue and white, many with Messi's name on the back of their shirts.

Compiled by Anirudh Velamuri

Stat Attack

1 Olwan, who top-scored for Jordan with nine goals in the Qualifiers, netted its first in the World Cup

3 Mbappe is the third player to score for France in three different editions (after Platini and Rocheteau)

3 Hussein is the third (after Brandts in 1974 and Mandzukic in 2018) to score a goal and an own goal in the same game at the World Cup

5 Mbappe has the most multi-goal (two or more) games at the World Cup

10 Schmid's goal from outside the penalty area is the 10th in the 2026 tournament. In the 2022 edition, 12 such goals were scored

11 Algeria is the 11th nation Messi has scored against at the World Cup, more than any other player

15 Mbappe also overtook Platini (14) for most strikes in major tournaments by a Frenchman

1 Haaland is the first to score a brace for Norway in the football extravaganza. He also tied Rekdal for most goals (2) in its World Cup history

14 Mbappe has gone past Fontaine's all-time World Cup record (13) for France. He is now tied with Muller. Only Messi (16), Klose (16) and Ronaldo Nazario (15) are ahead

18y 143d
Mbaye (Senegal vs. France) is the youngest African scorer at the FIFA showpiece, and the second youngest to find the back of the net on his debut after Spain's Gavi (18y 110d, 2022) at this level

15 Norway is on a 15-game winning streak (across all competitions) when Haaland scores. The Manchester City forward has found the target 28 times in this period

23y 287d
Barcola is the youngest Frenchman to score on his World Cup debut since Henry (20y 299d, 1998)

58 Mbappe has surpassed Giroud (57) to become France's top-scorer

COMPILED BY ANIRUDH VELAMURI

Mbappe magic helps France pass Senegal test

Ayon Sengupta
NEW JERSEY

France beat Senegal 3-1 at the MetLife Stadium in their FIFA World Cup Group I opener on Tuesday, but the scoreline scarcely reflected how uncomfortable Didier Deschamps' side was made to feel for much of the match. Senegal coach Pape Thiaw trusted experience over youth in midfield, preferring Idrissa Gueye to Pape Matar Sarr, and his side quickly settled into a familiar rhythm.

Though France held most of the early possession, it struggled to build anything substantial from that advantage. Kylian Mbappe was guilty of breaking down promising moves with heavy touches after Michael Olise and Ousmane Dembele had twice, in quick succession, found him in space.

Senegal, meanwhile, looked content to sit deep and absorb pressure, waiting for opportunities to exploit any free space. Sadio Mane, Ismaila Sarr and Gueye combined neatly in the seventh minute, carving a hole in the French midfield, but Nicolas Jackson's final pass was a little too quick for Sarr to reach its end.

Precise finish: Mbappe outwits Mendy to draw first blood for *Les Bleus*. REUTERS

As the temperature climbed, so did Senegal's confidence. France's adventurous approach left room for Jackson to attack, and the striker came closest to breaking the deadlock after Mbappe was robbed of the ball in the middle. He burst clear down the left and slipped a low effort beyond Mike Maignan, only for the post and a fortunate ricochet off the goalkeeper's leg to keep the scores level.

Deep into stoppage time, Mane released Sarr into space with only Maignan to beat, but the winger's effort was nowhere near the intended target.

The pattern, however, began to shift as the game restarted. France moved the ball with greater urgency, with Olise becoming increasingly involved in taking the fight to the opponent's bay. The Bayern Munich winger forced Edouard Mendy into a sharp save after a surging run through the middle. The pressure was mounting. Mbappe had a penalty appeal waved away and later saw another effort gathered by Mendy, but the breakthrough felt inevitable.

It finally arrived in the 66th minute. Released inside the right channel, Mbappe guided a precise finish beyond Mendy to break a deadlock that was making the French increasingly agitated.

Senegal thought it had found an immediate response when Jackson rifled a finish into the top corner, but the offside flag intervened.

Adrien Rabiot threaded a pass into the path of Bradley Barcola, and the substitute lifted a composed finish past an advancing Mendy to double the advantage.

Senegal finally found a way back when persistent pressure produced a goal from Ibrahim Mbaye. But before the West Africans could fully entertain the thoughts of a comeback, Mbappe scored again to deliver the final flourish. Collecting possession outside the area, he unleashed a right-footer which curved beyond Mendy and into the top corner.

THE RESULTS

Group I: France 3 (Mbappe 66, 90+6, Barcola 82) bt Senegal 1 (Mbaye 90+5); Iraq 1 (Hussein 39) lost to Norway 4 (Haaland 29, 43, Ostigard 76, Hussein 90+6-og).
Group J: Argentina 3 (Messi 17, 60, 76) bt Algeria 0; Austria 3 (Schmid 20, al-Arab 76-og, Arnautovic 90+12-pen) bt Jordan 1 (Olwan 50).
Group K: Portugal 1 (Neves 6) drew with DR Congo 1 (Wissa 45+5).

Smriti, Shafali and Shree Charani on song as India makes it two out of two

The openers put on 115 after being put in to bat by the Dutch; the left-arm spinner returns a four-wicket haul to bowl out the minnows for 114

T20 WORLD CUP

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LEEDS

Stroke-filled: Smriti's knock was studded with 11 fours and one maximum. GETTY IMAGES

Strike force: Shree Charani was the most successful Indian bowler much to the delight of Harmanpreet. GETTY IMAGES

The two schoolboys hopped on a train from London early in the morning, got off at Leeds, and then took a bus to Headingley. Oscar and Dylan weren't disappointed, as they got to watch some fascinating cricket at the Women's T20 World Cup.

They must have liked what they saw from one of their favourite teams: India. Harmanpreet Kaur's side scored a facile victory against the Netherlands at Headingley on Wednesday.

Once India posted 209 for five after losing the toss, the only question was about the margin of the victory. India won in the end by 95 runs.

Though the Netherlands got off to a fine start, with openers Heather Siegers and Phebe Molkenboer adding 30 in just four overs, it was always going to be a tough ask for a team of part-timers making their World Cup debut, no matter how spirited they are.

Skipper Babette de Leede fought hard again, and was the only batter who lasted more than 20 balls. For India, the young Shree Charani came up with another fine spell, and finished with four for 19. It hasn't taken her long to look so much at home in international cricket.

There were three wickets for Shafali Verma, who came on to complete the over after Shreyanka Patil had to leave the field, injuring her ankle.

The off-spinner looked in considerable discomfort and there seemed cause for concern for the Indian camp. "Shreyanka was taken for a scan and the BCCI medical team is monitoring her" Shafali said, later. Earlier, the much adored Indian batting blossomed on a hot afternoon.

There were runs for Shafali. And there were more runs for Smriti Mandhana, who made her second successive fifty.

Smriti (74, 47b, 11x4, 1x6) and Shafali (55, 38b, 10x4) got into the act quickly and put on 115 for the first wicket, scoring at about 10 an over.

Both played some fine strokes and India should be hoping for more such stuff from them in the matches to come.

Jemimah Rodrigues disappointed her fans in England – there are quite a few – once more and Yastika Bhatia, who came in for Bharti Fulmali, failed, too. But that trusted firm lower down the order, of Richa Ghosh and Deepti Sharma, ensured India would have more than enough runs on the board.

Like Australia, the Women in Blue have won both their games. Tougher challenges await them, though.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA

Smriti Mandhana c Zwilling b de Lange 74 *(47b, 11x4, 1x6)*, Shafali Verma c Zwilling b Heather Siegers 55 *(38b, 10x4)*, Jemimah Rodrigues c de Leede b van den Raad 19 *(13b, 2x4)*, Richa Ghosh (not out) 20 *(8b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Yastika Bhatia st. de Leede b de Lange 3 *(4b)*, Harmanpreet Kaur c Rijke b Zwilling 12 *(9b, 2x4)*, Deepti Sharma (not out) 10 *(2b, 1x4, 1x6)*; Extras (lb-1, nb-1, w-14): 16; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 209.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-115 (Shafali, 11.4 overs), 2-162 (Smriti, 15.6), 3-162 (Jemimah, 16.1), 4-168 (Yastika, 17.1), 5-199 (Harmanpreet, 19.4).

NETHERLANDS BOWLING

Zwilling 4-0-41-1, Heather Siegers 2-0-31-1, van der Woning 2-0-25-0, van den Raad 4-0-37-1, Silver Siegers 3-0-32-0, de Lange 4-0-32-2, Overdijk 1-0-10-0.

NETHERLANDS

Heather Siegers c Smriti b Nandani 21 *(16b, 4x4)*, Phebe Molkenboer c Jemimah b Deepti 15 *(20b, 2x4)*, Babette de Leede st. Richa b Nandani 28 *(27b, 3x4)*, Sterre Kalis b Shafali 18 *(13b, 3x4)*, Robine Rijke lbw b Shree Charani 8 *(8b, 1x4)*, Frederique Overdijk c Smriti b Shree Charani 9 *(7b, 1x4)*, Iris Zwilling c Jemimah b Shree Charani 8 *(9b, 1x4)*, Myrthe van den Raad c Richa b Shree Charani 0 *(1b)*, Silver Siegers st. Richa b Shafali 1 *(2b)*, Caroline de Lange (not out) 0 *(0b)*, Isabel van der Woning c Jemimah b Shafali 0 *(2b)*; Extras (lb-1, w-5): 6; Total (in 17.3 overs): 114.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-34 (Heather, 4.2), 2-50 (Molkenboer, 7.3), 3-77 (Kalis, 11.2), 4-96 (de Leede, 13.5), 5-98 (Rijke, 14.1), 6-113 (Overdijk, 16.1), 7-113 (van den Raad, 16.2), 8-114 (Zwilling, 16.6), 9-114 (Silver, 17.1).

INDIA BOWLING

Kranti 4-0-26-0, Nandani 3-0-22-2, Shafali 3.2-0-20-3, Shreyanka 0.1-0-0-0, Shree Charani 4-0-19-4, Deepti 3-0-26-1.

Toss: Netherlands; **PoM:** Smriti.
India won by 95 runs.
India's next match: June 21 vs. South Africa, Manchester, 7 p.m. IST.

Women's cricket taking off in a big way, says Maroof

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LEEDS

Maroof. P.K. AJITH KUMAR

Maroof Khan has watched some great talents from up close. He grew up in Mumbai playing cricket with the likes of Sachin Tendulkar, after all.

Now his job is to find out the finest talents in women's cricket. In England, that is.

Maroof is working as a scout to select players for the England women's cricket team. "It has been an exciting assignment for me," he told *The Hindu*. "My job is to watch the domestic matches around the country and see the players in action."

Maroof, who is now living at Leeds after travelling to places like Los Angeles, Singapore, Hong Kong and London, is a vastly experienced coach. He has, in fact, been an assistant coach with the England mixed disability team.

He is delighted to be part of women's cricket at a time when it is rapidly increasing in popularity.

"We have seen how women's cricket is taking off in a big way in India with the WPL and the ODI World Cup triumph last year," Maroof said. "In England, there is a lot more awareness about the game. The Hundred, where the men's and women's teams play on the same day, has been a huge boost."

Maroof says the world could soon see some brilliant young players from England. "I have been mighty impressed with some of those players," he said.

"There is no doubt that women's cricket is going to get bigger. The game will definitely benefit with England hosting this World Cup."

He is glad he could reunite with his old friend Amol Muzumdar, the India women's coach. "We had so much talent in Mumbai those days," Maroof said. "Sachin was different, of course. It was a privilege to bowl to him, and I remember thousands coming to watch him just train".

Today's match

West Indies vs. Scotland

Leeds, 11 p.m. IST

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 1

West Indies	Scotland
1	0

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIOHOTSTAR

Perry. AFP

Australia has it easy against Bangladesh

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LEEDS

The Australian women haven't won a cricket World Cup for three years. That ought to sound a bit strange still.

It is a bit like saying Meryl Streep hasn't come up with a sensational performance for a while. Her brilliance is taken for granted. Like the success of Australia in women's cricket.

Such is the sheer talent and depth in the women's game Down Under. Of late, other teams have caught up with them in international cricket. But Australia looks the side to beat at the T20 Women's World Cup.

After crushing South Africa in the opening match by 65 runs, Sophie Molineux's women were expected to have it easy against Bangladesh in their Group A clash. It surely was. Australia came up with a clinical show to restrict Bangladesh to 77 for eight and then chased down the modest target with nine wickets to spare.

The scores: Group A:
Bangladesh 77/8 in 20 overs (Nigar Sultana 27) lost to Australia 78/1 in 9.3 overs (Georgia Voll 45 n.o.).
Toss: Australia; **PoM:** Perry.
On Tuesday: Group B: Ireland 118/9 in 20 overs (Orla Prendergast 26) lost to England 119/6 in 17.3 overs (Nat Sciver-Brunt 48, Heather Knight 26).
Toss: England; **PoM:** Ecclestone.

Gill and Kishan make merry for India

AFGHANISTAN IN INDIA

N. Sudarshan
LUCKNOW

Unstoppable: Gill and Kishan combined for a match-defining 224-run third-wicket partnership. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

India came out largely unscathed from the cauldron that the Ekana Cricket Stadium was on Wednesday as it beat Afghanistan by 170 runs in the second ODI to take an unassailable 2-0 series lead.

As afternoon temperatures soared into the high 30s, players baked in the largely airless arena. With just 13,300 fans turning up at the 50,000-seater, there was also a severe lack of energy.

But India, guided by splendid centuries from captain Shubman Gill and Ishan Kishan, mastered the elements, racking up a mammoth 402 after being asked to bat first. Afghanistan, in reply, was bowled out for 232, with Darwish Rasooli retiring hurt.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Sediqullah Atal got starts, scoring 41 and 42, respectively. Rahmat Shah made 79 (89b, 8x4). However, seldom did they display the necessary urgency. It also did not help that Afghanistan missed Mohammad Nabi and Azmatullah Omarzai because of injuries.

For the host, Prince Yadav made his debut while Kuldeep Yadav and Yashasvi Jaiswal got opportunities. Out went Harsh Dubey, Prasidh Krishna, and an injured Nitish Kumar, leaving the side with just five specialist bowlers.

But Gill and Kishan did the heavy-lifting by batting admirably under the unrelenting, energy-sapping sun, combining for a massive, match-defining 224-run partnership for the third wicket.

Gill conjured his ninth ODI century (154, 110b, 22x4, 2x6) while Kishan notched up his second (125, 79b, 14x4, 7x6), more than three-and-a-half years after his first (210 versus Bangladesh at Chattogram).

The skipper oozed class, as always, and was particularly impressive with his driving. Kishan stood out for his acceleration and six hitting. When the latter walked in, Gill was already on 42 from 31 balls. That both batters crossed 100 in the same over – 33rd of the innings – told the story.

Kishan reached his half-century off 52 balls but accumulated the next 50 runs from just 19 deliveries. He appeared unstoppable even after going past the treasured milestone, clubbing left-arm spinner Nangeyalia Kharote (four for 76) for back-to-back one-handed sixes. A third attempt, however, led to his downfall.

The scoring rate dipped after Kishan's dismissal, with Shreyas Iyer (26, 24b, 1x4, 1x6) and Washington Sundar (19, 19b, 1x4) unable to kick on.

After having got to 300 in 35.5 overs, India seemed set to breach its record ODI total of 418 for five (against West Indies in Indore in 2011).

But it took until the last over of the innings to touch 400.

In the end, though, the late-innings tardiness – rather lethargy – did not matter, for Afghanistan's hopes had long evaporated into thin air.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA

Yashasvi Jaiswal c Kharote b Saleem 4 *(9b, 1x4)*, Rohit Sharma b Rashid 48 *(39b, 6x4, 2x6)*, Shubman Gill c Rasooli b Kharote 154 *(110b, 22x4, 2x6)*, Ishan Kishan c sub (Alikhil) b Kharote 125 *(79b, 14x4, 7x6)*, Shreyas Iyer c Zadran b Kharote 26 *(24b, 1x4, 1x6)*, K.L. Rahul c Zadran b Kharote 0 *(1b)*, Washington Sundar c Gurbaz b Rashid 19 *(19b, 1x4)*, Gurnoor Brar c Zadran b Rashid 3 *(7b)*, Arshdeep Singh c Rashid b Ghazanfar 3 *(4b)*, Kuldeep Yadav (not out) 3 *(3b)*, Prince Yadav run out 5 *(5b)*; Extras (lb-8, nb-1, w-3): 12; Total (in 49.5 overs): 402.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-9 (Jaiswal, 1.6 overs), 2-96 (Rohit, 13.1), 3-320 (Ishan, 36.3), 4-360 (Gill, 42.3), 5-360 (Rahul, 42.4), 6-371 (Shreyas, 44.3), 7-387 (Gurnoor, 46.6), 8-392 (Arshdeep, 47.6), 9-396 (Washington, 48.5).

AFGHANISTAN BOWLING

Ghazanfar 10-1-69-1, Saleem 8-0-75-1, Sami 8.5-0-90-0, Kharote 10-0-76-4, Rashid 8-0-48-3, Shahidi 5-0-36-0.

AFGHANISTAN

Rahmanullah Gurbaz c Rahul b Gurnoor 41 *(33b, 7x4, 1x6)*, Ibrahim Zadran c Prince b Arshdeep 21 *(31b, 3x4)*, Sediqullah Atal lbw b Washington 42 *(50b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Rahmat Shah c Gurnoor b Prince 79 *(89b, 8x4)*, Darwish Rasooli retd. hurt 6 *(6b, 1x4)*, Hashmatullah Shahidi b Gurnoor 4 *(2b, 1x4)*, Nangeyalia Kharote b Prince 6 *(11b)*, Rashid Khan c Rohit b Arshdeep 12 *(12b, 2x4)*, AM Ghazanfar c Shreyas b Arshdeep 1 *(2b)*, Mohammed Saleem b Gurnoor 9 *(19b, 2x4)*, Bilal Sami (not out) 2 *(14b)*; Extras (lb-2, nb-2, w-5): 9; Total (in 44.3 overs): 232.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-52 (Gurbaz, 7.3), 2-71 (Zadran, 13.1), 3-128 (Sediqullah, 23.1), 4-140 (Shahidi, 24.5), 5-170 (Kharote, 30.1), 6-188 (Rashid, 32.6), 7-190 (Ghazanfar, 34.1), 8-220 (Saleem, 39.6), 9-232 (Rahmat, 44.3).

INDIA BOWLING

Arshdeep 9-0-45-3, Prince 7.3-0-56-2, Gurnoor 10-0-60-3, Kuldeep 10-0-42-0, Washington 7-0-24-1, Jaiswal 1-0-3-0.

Toss: Afghanistan; **PoM:** Gill.
India won by 170 runs to lead the three-match series 2-0.
Third ODI: June 20, Chennai, 1.30 p.m.

Manpreet... a proud moment.

Manpreet scales a new peak

Press Trust of India
ROTTERDAM

Manpreet Singh, with his 413th appearance, became India's most-capped hockey player during the FIH Pro League match against Germany here on Wednesday.

The 33-year-old midfield star surpassed former captain and current Hockey India president Dilip Tirkey, who represented the country 412 times. In recognition of his achievement, Hockey India announced a cash reward of ₹10 lakh for Manpreet.

The day was made more special as India defeated Germany 3-1 through goals from Mandeep Singh (seventh minute), Shilanand Lakra (13th) and Nilakanta Sharma (35th).

Raphael Hartkopf (45th) scored for Germany.

Kiwis fight back on day 1

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Tom Blundell hit New Zealand's first fifty of the series and Glenn Phillips posted an unbeaten 49 as the tourist reached 291 for seven against England on the opening day of the second Test at the Oval on Wednesday.

The scores: New Zealand 291/7 in 77 overs (Daryl Mitchell 44, Tom Blundell 51, Glenn Phillips 49 batting) vs. England.
Toss: England.

South Africa and Czechia can't slip up

FIFA WORLD CUP

Ayon Sengupta
ATLANTA

Schick. AP

South Africa's return to the World Cup after a 16-year absence has so far resembled much of its footballing history – spirited, organised and competitive, but ultimately punished by fine margins.

A 0-2 defeat to host Mexico in the opening match has left *Bafana Bafana* with little room for error as it prepares to face Czechia here in a contest that could shape Group A's destiny.

For Czechia, the equation is no different. In a 1-2 loss to South Korea, Ivan Hasek's side produced enough attacking moments to suggest it can still emerge from one of the tournament's most evenly balanced groups. With Mexico and South Korea already holding an advantage, neither team can afford another defeat.

South Africa coach Hugo Broos has built his side around defensive discipline and fast transitions. Against Mexico, *Bafana Bafana* spent long periods without possession but remained compact, frustrating the home team at times. The midfield led by Teboho Mokoena will again be tasked with shielding the back four while launching counters through the pace of Oswin Appollis and Elias Mokwana.

Czechia, meanwhile, prefers a more direct and physical approach. Hasek's side is comfortable playing through wide areas and delivering early crosses into the penalty area. Much of its attacking threat revolves around the movement and finishing of Bayer Leverkusen's Patrik Schick, whose aerial presence gives Czechia an easy outlet.

This will be the first senior international meeting between the two nations. South Africa's finest moment remains hosting the tournament in 2010, while Czechia's modern football identity is shaped by its memorable run to the semi-finals of Euro 2004 and its appearances at the 2006 World Cup.

Ronwen Williams, South Africa's top performer against Mexico, will inevitably have a major role to play in goal, but South Africa's greater concern will be preventing Czechia from creating the chances that allow Schick to become decisive.

At the other end, Appollis carries South Africa's hopes of providing the attacking spark that was missing in the opening game.

With Mexico facing South Korea later in the day, the stakes could hardly be higher. For both South Africa and Czechia, this is already beginning to feel like a knockout disguised as a group-stage game.

Friday's Matches

GROUP B
Switzerland vs. Bosnia & Herzegovina, 00:30 a.m.
Canada vs. Qatar, 3.30 a.m.

GROUP A
Mexico vs. South Korea, 6.30 a.m.

The day and time(s) pertain to India

India-A routs Afghanistan-A, all but confirms final berth

Tilak & Co. win by 101 runs, which takes the side to the top of the points table on Net Run Rate; the 104-run fourth-wicket association between the skipper and Kushagra proves decisive

TRI-SERIES

Shayan Acharya
DAMBULLA

India-A all but sealed a place in the tri-nation series final with a commanding 101-run win over Afghanistan-A at the Rangiri International Stadium on Wednesday, thanks to a composed knock from Kumar Kushagra and a disciplined bowling effort.

Asked to bat, India-A recovered from a wobble to post 319 for nine. Half-centuries from Priyansh Arya (58, 42b, 9x4, 1x6), skipper Tilak Varma (59, 75b, 5x4) and Kushagra (58, 67b, 5x4) formed the backbone of the innings, with the 104-run fourth-wicket stand between Tilak and Kushagra proving decisive.

The changes to the XI paid off immediately. Priyansh, drafted in for Prabhsimran Singh, continued his impressive run at the top, while Kushagra justified his inclusion ahead of Ayush Badoni.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (38) once again got a start but failed to convert it despite surviving a couple of chances. Ruturaj Gaikwad looked fluent in his 30 before edging Abdollah Ahmadzai behind. When wickets fell in quick succession, Kushagra remained calm and assured, rebuilding the innings alongside Tilak.

The pair wrestled back control before Vipraj Nigam added late impetus with a brisk 30 off 20 balls to take India-A past 300.

Calm and composed: Kushagra, Tilak and Priyansh notched up stylish half-centuries. SLC

The run chase began brightly. Hassan Eisakhil attacked Anshul Kamboj and Yash Thakur before mistiming a pull to Ruturaj at short mid-wicket. Khalid Taniwal and Imran Mir also got starts but failed to capitalise.

The chase remained alive through an 87-run fourth-wicket partnership between Bahir Shah and Faisal Shinozada. Just when Afghanistan-A threatened to mount a challenge, India-A struck back.

Anukul Roy tightened the screws in the middle overs, while Vipraj delivered key breakthroughs. The turning point came when Bahir departed soon after reaching a hard-fought fifty.

From there, Afghanistan-A unravelled as left-arm spinner Nishant Sindhu cleaned up the tail with four wickets, bowling out the side for 218.

The win lifted India-A to the top of the table, ahead of Sri Lanka-A on Net Run Rate, leaving it on the verge of a place in the final.

The scores: India-A 319/9 in 50 overs (Priyansh 58, Tilak 59, Kushagra 58) bt Afghanistan-A 218 in 36.5 overs (Shinozada 46, Bahir 57, Sindhu 4/31).
Toss: Afghanistan-A.
PoM: Sindhu.

Sooryavanshi, Halambage and Tilak face fines

Shayan Acharya
DAMBULLA

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Sri Lanka-A's Vishen Halambage have each been recommended fines amounting to 50% of their match fees, while India-A captain Tilak faces a proposed 30% sanction following incidents during Monday's India A-Sri Lanka-A match.

Match referee Pradeep Jeyapragash has also recommended a 20% fine for Sri Lanka-A wicketkeeper-batter Niroshan Dickwella.

The sanctions come in the aftermath of a tense finish to the contest. Sooryavanshi was involved in a heated exchange with Halambage and a few Sri Lankan players after the match, bringing an ugly end to what had otherwise been a gripping encounter.

Sources claimed that a few Sri Lankan players had been sledging Sooryavanshi and some of his India-A teammates since the start of the tournament, often taunting them about their IPL performances.

Unlike senior international cricket, disciplinary sanctions in A-team matches are not automatically enforced by the ICC. The match referee's recommendations have instead been forwarded to BCCI and Sri Lanka Cricket, with the two boards now responsible for deciding whether to ratify and impose proposed penalties.

While there was no formal hearing, the match referee imposed the sanctions based on the reports of the on-field umpires.

Glory beckons: Scheffler will target his first Major of the year. AP

Scheffler seeks career Slam as Europeans eye Major treble

US OPEN GOLF

Agence France-Presse
SOUTHAMPTON

While top-ranked Scottie Scheffler chases a career Grand Slam at this week's US Open, European golfers can achieve an unprecedented treble if one of them wins the title at Shinnecock.

The year's third Major begins on Thursday over the windy 7,440-yard (6,800m) Long Island layout, where lightning-fast greens and thick rough add to the challenge.

"A lot of it just comes down to execution, but I think patience is a large part of it as well," said Scheffler.

Elite company

Much of the focus is upon the American, who could become only the seventh player to complete the career Slam with a victory on Sunday, which is his 30th birthday.

Scheffler would join Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy, Jack Nicklaus, Ben Hogan, Gary Player and Gene Sarazen as the only players to achieve the feat. Player is the only one to have completed the career Slam by winning a US Open.

"Would it be a dream to win the US Open? Of course," Scheffler said. "But at the end of the day, the Grand Slam has never been a motivating factor for me. I always just wanted to be the best version of myself and that got me this far."

Golfers from the United Kingdom have won the first two Majors of the year, second-ranked McIlroy of Northern Ireland defending his Masters crown completing his career Slam last year and England's Aaron Rai taking the PGA Championship.

It's a feat not seen in the four-Major era since the Masters began in 1934, and another European victory would match the continent's best run of three Majors in a year since 2014, when McIlroy won the PGA and British Open after Germany's Martin Kaymer captured the US Open.

"A historic start to the Major season for golfers from that part of the world, and I would say this is more a UK/European style of test than certainly the first two Majors," McIlroy said. "So it certainly wouldn't surprise me to see a few players from Europe and the UK in contention on Sunday."

McIlroy is wary of Shinnecock luring players into mistakes. "This course demands so much patience and it can lure you into doing things you shouldn't do," he said.

"If everything is going the way everyone wants it in terms of weather, setup, it's the best championship test in the country."

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The third volume in our Table Talk series brings you fascinating insights on the personalities of business leaders and how they run their companies

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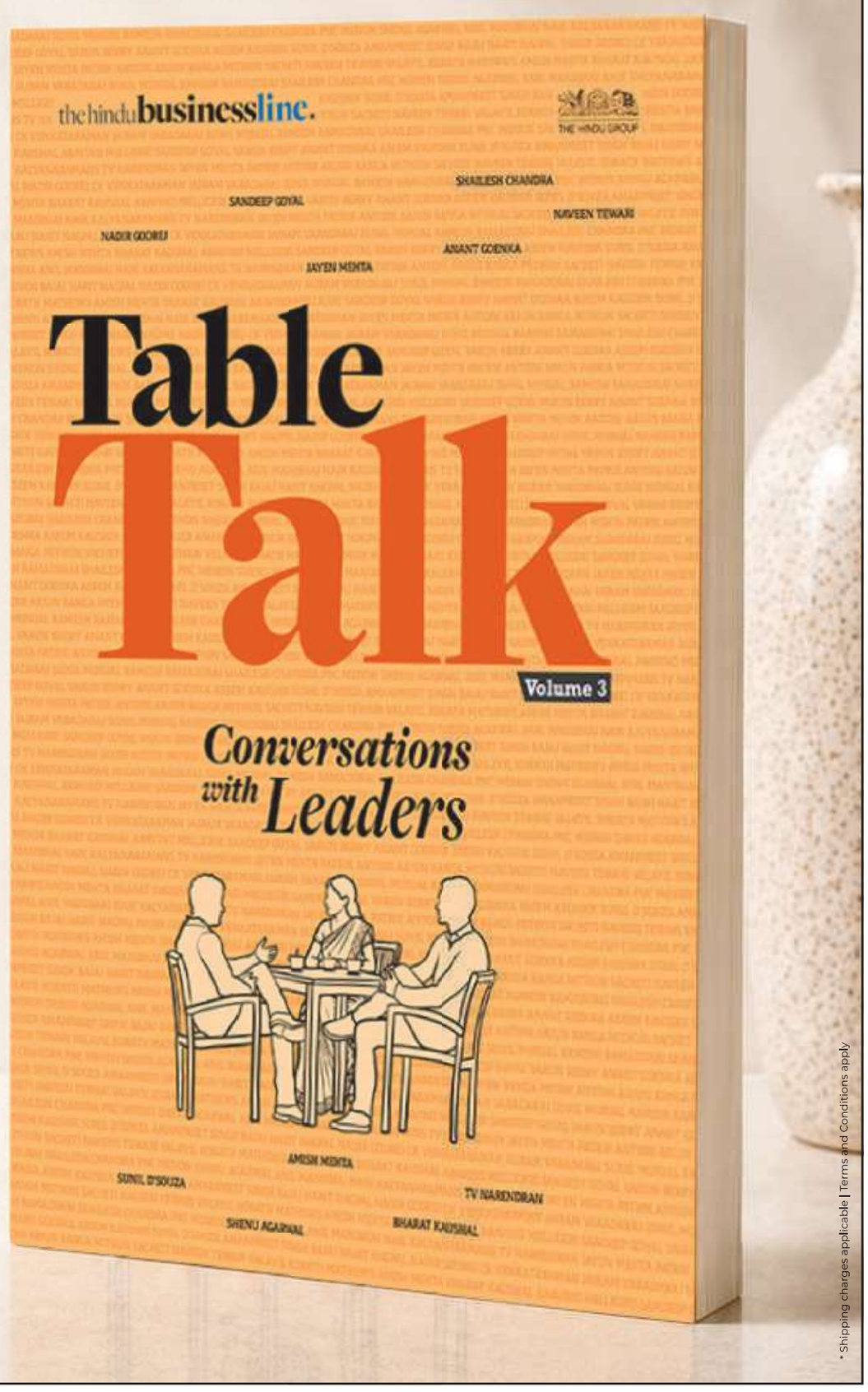

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INBRIEF

Spinners Zampa and Davies set up Australia's win

Slow bowlers Adam Zampa and Joel Davies claimed three wickets apiece to lead Australia to a four-wicket victory over Bangladesh in the opening game of the three-match T20I series at Chattogram on Wednesday.

The scores: Bangladesh 131 in 19 overs (Adam Zampa 3/18, Joel Davies 3/17) lost to Australia 133/6 in 18.2 overs (Cooper Connolly 47). **Toss:** Bangladesh; **PoM:** Zampa.

India beats Mongolia, makes it to the quarterfinals

India scored a 3-1 win over Mongolia to book a place in the quarterfinals of the World team snooker championships at Guangdong (China) on Wednesday. India will meet China 'B'.

The results: Pre-quarterfinals: India bt Mongolia 3-1 (Aditya Mehta bt Nasanbuyan Orgil 65-46; Pankaj Advani bt Sergelen Batdelger 70(51)-6; Advani & Ketan Chawla lost to Orgil & Batdelger 54-70; Advani bt Orgil 67-37).
League (Group 'B'): India bt Turkey 3-0 (Advani bt Ismail Turker 60-39; Mehta bt Enes Bakirci 95-17; Advani/ Mehta bt Turker/ Bakirci 90-13).

Man City legend Silva joins Real on a two-year deal

Manchester City great Bernardo Silva has joined Real Madrid on a two-year contract, the Spanish club said on Wednesday.

LIVE TELECAST

FIFA World Cup: Unite8 Sports 1, 2 & Z5 App, 7.30 a.m. 9.30 p.m. 12.30 & 3.30 a.m. (Friday).
England vs New Zealand: 2nd Test, day 2, Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 3.30 p.m.
Women's T20 World Cup: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 11 p.m.

India looks to continue its winning run against Uruguay

The team has scored all five goals in its two matches through penalty corners and chief coach Marijne would expect his strikers to up their game and find the target from field efforts

FIH NATIONS CUP

Press Trust of India
AUCKLAND

Focused: India is determined to triumph in the tournament to get its place back in next season's elite FIH Pro League. X@THEHOCKEYINDIA

With a semifinal spot already sealed, a relaxed Indian women's hockey team would look to end the pool engagements undefeated against a lower-ranked Uruguay in the FIH Nations Cup here on Thursday.

India tops Pool A with six points from two wins in two games and is determined to win the tournament to get its place back in next season's elite FIH Pro League.

The Salima Tete-led India will start as favourites against world no. 17 Uruguay, which lost both its opening two matches.

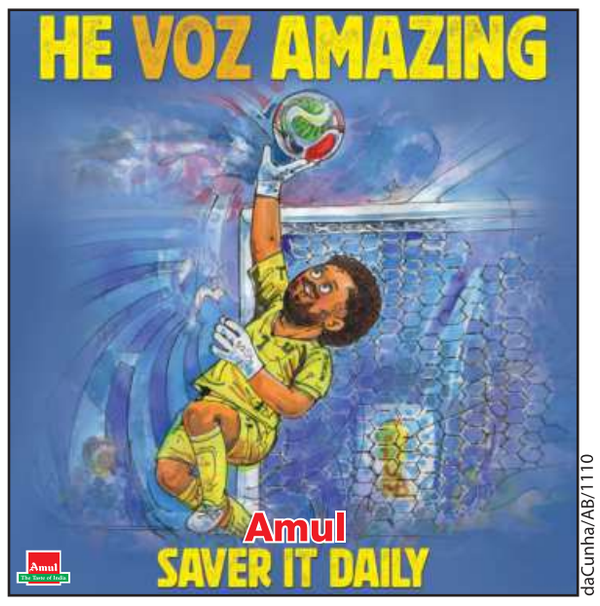
India scored all five goals in its two matches through penalty corners. Deepika is joint second in the scorers list with two strikes, while Navneet Kaurn Salima and Lalremsiami found the net once each.

Going into the business end of the tournament, chief coach Sjoerd Marijne would expect his strikers to find the net from field efforts and Uruguay provides them the best opportunity to do that.

Having conceded three goals in two matches, the Indian defence, though, needs to tighten up a bit.

"In tournaments like this, small moments often make the biggest difference. We need to remain disciplined and make the most of our opportunities," said Marijne.

"The objective is not only to achieve good results but also to continue building a strong foundation for the future," he said.



Srihari breaks his own 50m backstroke record

Sports Bureau

Srihari.

Srihari Nataraj broke his seven-year-old men's 50m backstroke record on his way to retain the title at the National aquatics in Ahmedabad on Wednesday.

The 25-year-old Srihari performed better than his 2019 National mark of 25.58 in the morning heats by clocking 25.21. In the evening session, he recorded 25.32 in the final to claim gold. Saanvi Deshwal lowered the women's 200m medley mark with 2:19.15. She erased Hashika Ramachandra's three-year-old record of 2:21.15. Karnataka swimmers won the 4x100m freestyle mixed relay crown with a new record.

Srihari breached the qualification marks for the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games.

Saanvi also clocked the best Indian time.

The results (winners only): Men: 50m freestyle: Jashua Thomas (TN) 23.24; **50m backstroke:** Srihari Nataraj (Kar) 25.32; **100m breaststroke:** Danush Suresh (TN) 1:02.19; **4x200m freestyle relay:** Karnataka (Dharshan S., Akash Mani, Aneesh S. Gowda, Dhakshan S.) 7:38.71. **Women: 200m freestyle:** Dhinidhi Desinghu (Kar) 2:03.07; **50m backstroke:** Suvana C. Baskar (Kar) 29.85; **200m medley:** Saanvi Deshwal (Mah) 2:19.15 (NMR, Old 2:21.15, Hashika Ramachandra, 2023); **4x100m freestyle mixed relay:** Karnataka (Akash Mani, Aneesh S. Gowda, Nina Venkatesh, Tanishi Gupta) 3:37.68 (NMR, Old 3:41.18, Karnataka, 2025).

Anmol, Rakshitha and Shriyanshi in pre-quarterfinals

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
MACAU

Anmol Kharb led the charge in the women's singles with a straight-game win as three Indians progressed to the pre-quarterfinals of the Macau Open Super 300 badminton tournament, here on Wednesday.

Anmol brushed aside Indonesia's Mutiara Ayu Puspitasari 21-13, 21-16 in just 42 minutes and will next face Malaysia's Goh Jin Wei.

Rakshitha Sree Ramraj defeated Malaysia's Kisona Selvaduray 21-16, 24-22 and will meet South Korea's Kim Min Sun in the pre-quarterfinals.

Seventh seed Shriyanshi Valishetty downed countrymate Tasnim Mir 21-18, 19-21, 21-15 and will play South Korea's Kim Min Ji.

In men's singles, Rounak Chouhan rallied from a game down to beat Chinese Taipei's Wu Zhe Ying 18-21, 21-15, 21-19 in an hour and five minutes.

Other results: Men: Rounak Chouhan bt Wu Zhe Ying (Tpe) 18-21, 21-15, 21-19; Huang Ping-Hsien (Tpe) bt S. Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian 11-21, 21-18, 21-16.
Women: Han Qian Xi (Chn) bt Shreya Lele 21-12, 21-15; Kim Min Ji (Kor) bt Aakarshi Kashyap 21-17, 18-21, 21-17.
Mixed doubles: Ishaan Bhatnagar & Shruti Mishra bt Calvin Devereux & Desiree Toepffer (Ger) 21-4, 21-6; Low Han Chen & Chan Wen Tse (Mas) bt Mohit Jaglan & Lakshita Jaglan 21-9, 21-12; Song Hyun Cho & Jeong Na Eun (Kor) bt Dhruv Rawat & K. Maneesha 24-22, 21-18; Supak Jomkoh & Ornnicha Jongsathapornparn bt Sathwik Reddy & Radhika Sharma 21-10, 21-19; Zhu Yi Jun & Li Qian (Chn) bt Rohith Mohankumar & Riduvarshini Ramasamy 21-9, 21-11.

Deepti rediscovering her mojo augurs well for the Women in Blue

One of India's trusted performers for many years, the off-spinner has vaulted back as the world's highest wicket-taker in T20Is, thanks to her match-winning five-wicket haul against Pakistan

GETTY IMAGES

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LEEDS

Deepti Sharma had gone five T20Is in a row without taking a wicket on India's tours of Australia and South Africa. With the format's World Cup around the corner, that wasn't a good sign. But it is unlikely that the Indian team management would have been overly worried.

Deepti was bound to be among the wickets soon. It was only in December that she had gone past Australian quick Megan Schutt to become the world's highest wicket-taker in T20Is. She had done that against Sri Lanka in Thiruvananthapuram, where India completed a 5-0 whitewash.

She, however, lost that spot. When the T20I World Cup got underway in England last week, an unfamiliar name headed the all-time wicket-takers' list: Thipatcha Putthawong. The young left-arm spinner has not faced the challenge of bowling to the world's best batters on too many occasions as Thailand is not a full member.

Deepti got back the all-time No. 1 slot during India's opening match in the Women's T20 World Cup at Edgbaston. She took five for 10 to help her team score a thumping 64-run victory. Those figures are the best by an Indian at the World Cup. That was also the third best spell in the tournament's history – after West Indies' Deandra Dottin (five for five against Bangladesh in 2018) and Sune Luus of South Africa (five for eight against Ireland in 2016).

Dottin and Luus are also playing at this World Cup, and Deepti is due to come up against the latter, as South Africa is in the same 'Group of Death'. India needs Deepti continues to come up with more shows like that.

Straight second five-for

It was the off-spinning all-rounder's second straight five-wicket haul in an ICC World Cup match. She had taken five for 39 in the ODI World Cup final against South Africa in Mumbai to play a big role on what was the greatest day for Indian women's cricket. She had done her bit with the bat as well, making 58.

Against Pakistan here too she played a crucial knock. Her 12 not out was priceless actually, as it was her sixth-wicket partnership with Richa Ghosh that saved the Indian innings from a precarious position. She played the perfect foil to her younger partner, who once again played her role as finisher perfectly.

After the match, Deepti was all praise for Richa's brilliant knock (34 off 17 balls). "Sometimes the start is good, sometimes the middle overs are very good, but it is equally important how you finish and Richa batted very well," she said. "If you have a thirty, forty or fifty partnership in the last five to six overs it helps a lot; it sets you up to reach a good total. Richa was striking every ball well, no matter which bowler was coming up against her."

Deepti said Smriti Mandhana's half century at the top of the order was important as well. "I think it was unbelievable batting by Smriti and her partnership with Harmanpreet helped us get back the momentum, after losing early wickets," she said. "We have always thought we have a good batting line-up and it is commendable that we could contribute."

Self-belief

About her match-winning spell, she said her plan was simple. "I just have the self-belief that whenever such situations arise, I will have to step up," said Deepti. "And since the wicket was slightly turning, I was landing the balls well. It was just about bowling back-to-back in the good areas."

About her back-to-back five-wicket hauls in ICC World Cup matches, though in different formats, she said she thrived on pressure. "I like pressure and the ICC tournaments," she said with a smile. "I feel I have started (at this World Cup) from where I had finished off (at the ODI World Cup). It feels good."

Deepti's first World Cup was in England – the ODI variety in 2017. After shocking Australia in the semifinals, thanks, of course, to that unreal innings from Harmanpreet Kaur, India faltered in the final against England at Lord's.

It wasn't a memorable final for the 19-year-old Deepti, as she was the ninth wicket to fall, in the penultimate over. The Indian innings folded up in that over, in fact, and fell just nine runs short.

"I think when you look at young Deepti and now senior Deepti, it feels very good," she said. "Looking back at the earlier matches and the 2017 World Cup, if I look at that, I learned a lot from that World Cup. I learn from every match. I learn from the errors and see in which areas I can be better."

She has good support, too. "I regularly talk to Aavishkar Salvi and that always helps me," she said. "I watch my videos, so I think there is always something to learn from every game. It doesn't matter whether you are winning or not. You are considered a good player only when you think about how to improve (even your good qualities), and every match is important to me. And I am just enjoying it."

> You are considered a good player only when you think about how to improve

That is pretty obvious when she is out on the field. She makes her presence felt even when she is not batting or fielding. In addition to her five wickets against Pakistan, she had also effected a run-out with a direct hit.

Combative

And she is a very combative player, who just doesn't shy away from going that extra mile within the rules. Remember how she reduced England Charlie Dean to tears at Lord's in a tense finish in the third ODI at Lord's in 2022, by 'Mankading'.

India doesn't play Pakistan as often as other teams like England or Australia. She said there was nothing special about it. "I don't think we felt anything different in this game," she said. "We always play every game in a different way. But the first game is always special; you get momentum from there. So I can only say that it was a good win (against Pakistan) and a good start for the team. We don't think about the opponent, we just try to play our best cricket."

Great support

She said the whole team was enjoying playing the World Cup in England, with so many Indian fans turning out to support the Women in Blue. "Actually I didn't feel like that we are playing in the UK, to be very honest," she said. "We have got so much support from the crowd. The fans are cheering for us. It feels like home conditions. It is a good thing. Fans will come and support, and we will do our best and play our best cricket."

And Deepti will have a vital role to play in this Indian team that is trying to win its second ICC World Cup within a space of a few months. One of India's trusted servants for many years, she is a woman for all seasons.

Her numbers tell us how significant her contribution has been ever since making her India debut in 2014. She has scored 2771 ODI runs at an average close to 36 and struck 18 fifties and a hundred in 124 matches.

And that hundred was special. She made 188 against Ireland in South Africa in 2017 and added 320 for the opening wicket with Punam Raut, a record that remains unbeaten. She also has 166 ODI wickets.

After Wednesday's match against the Netherlands at Leeds, she has 1232 runs in 146 T20Is and that world record tally of 167 wickets. She has also notched up four fifties and a five-wicket haul in six Tests.

And she continues to show why she is regarded as one of the best all-rounders in the women's game, and why her captain has so much faith in her. It may be no exaggeration to say that she is the go-to woman of this Indian team.

THE GIST

- It was the off-spinner's second straight five-wicket haul in an ICC World Cup match after the five for 39 in the ODI World Cup final against South Africa
- In 146 T20Is, Deepti has taken a world record 167 wickets and notched up 1232 runs
- The impactful all-rounder has scalped 166 wickets and scored 2771 runs in 124 ODIs since making her India debut in 2014
- She made a massive 188 against Ireland in South Africa in 2017 and added a world record 320 for the opening wicket with Punam Raut

Dhaka's new Padma barrage will reshape water power in the region

The new barrage will lie just 180 km downstream of the Farakka barrage in Bengal — which Bangladesh has blamed for its periodic water scarcity; the Farakka, one of India's largest with a feeder canal, was built to divert water from the Ganga to the Bhagirathi-Hoogly, and flush the Kolkata Port

Sonikka Loganathan
CHENNAI

A view of the Padma river from space in 2016. NASA

Bangladesh recently signed off on the new Padma barrage to control the Padma river, which is the Ganga in Bangladesh, and abate the country's seasonal water scarcity.

The 2.1-km-long structure will store 2,900 million cu. m of water to serve 6.5 crore people across southwestern and northern Bangladesh. It is estimated to cost Tk 50,443 crore (Rs 39,170 crore) over seven years.

The barrage will lie just 180 km downstream of the Farakka barrage in West Bengal – which Bangladesh has increasingly viewed as an impediment. The Farakka barrage is one of India's largest with a feeder canal and was built to divert water from the Ganga to the Bhagirathi-Hoogly and flush the Kolkata Port.

Under the 1996 Ganges Water Treaty, Bangladesh will receive half the water from the Farakka barrage when the flow is under 70,000 cusecs. But during the dry season between March and May, each country has to receive at least 35,000 cusecs of water in three alternating 10-day periods.

Treaties past and future

A 2019 review by a team of experts in *Water Policy* found that there were "repeated occurrences of low flow at Farakka during the drier years in the post-Treaty period," including in 1997, 2008, 2010 and 2016. They concluded that the 1996 Treaty couldn't account for rising unpredictability in the flows.

The agreement is set to expire in December 2026.

But Dhaka has also said the Farakka barrage is responsible for the country's periodic water scarcity. To add to the anxiety, several river-sharing agreements between India and Bangladesh also remain unsigned, including the Teesta River Treaty.

According to S. Janakarajan, president of the South Asia Consortium for Interdisciplinary Water Resources Studies, "All transboundary water issues centre around the lack of timely flow of water," implying the barrage will be a way for the lower riparian state to exert some control over its water resources.

But this equity will come at a considerable environmental cost.

Effects of Farakka barrage

The Farakka barrage has altered the Ganga river's character and ecology in Bangladesh. About a third of the country's population relies on the Ganga basin, mostly to irrigate crops. But by redirecting the river and reducing flow, the barrage has diminished groundwater recharge, reduced the extent of waterways for navigation, increased salinity, eroded riverbanks, and has left less freshwater flowing to the Sundarbans.

According to Mr. Janakarajan, "a substantial part of Bangladesh" is less than 10 m above sea level.

"In the near future, sea-level rise will lead to the disappearance of 17% of the territory of Bangladesh," researchers wrote in the *Journal of Marine Science and Engineering* in 2022.

This, they added, will "create 20 million refugees, and 2,20,000 km^2 of land will be submerged following a projected sea-level rise of 1,500 mm to take place within 150 years."

Bangladesh also drew around 520 litres of groundwater per person per day in 2008 (the latest year for which the UN FAO Aquastat database provides national figures for withdrawals by source). While this is not particularly high, the country's dependence on groundwater is a matter of concern.

Because the Farakka barrage also reduces flow in the Padma, the Padma is less able to transport silt, which sinks to the riverbed and piles up. When the monsoons arrive, the river overflows quickly and floods.

The sediments are also crucial to maintaining ecosystems and the livelihoods that depend on them.

For example, the Sundarbans region hosts the world's largest contiguous mangrove forest and depends on water from the Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Meghna rivers. Mr. Janakarajan said less sediment and freshwater flowing from these barrages will cause water in the Sundarbans to become saline whereas the ecosystem requires brackish water, which is less salty.

These changes will also lead to fewer fish, affecting the lives and livelihoods of fisherfolk in the area.

Fondness for concrete

South Asia is currently on a dam-building spree. There are more than 160 hydroelectric power projects underway in the region, per a 2023 review in *Water*. China is also building what will be the world's largest dam over the upper course of the Brahmaputra, just before the river enters India. In response, India has initiated a Rs 6.4 lakh crore hydroelectric power project, including building over 200 dams in its Northeast.

Dams – of which barrages are a type – are generally designed to operate for a century. Climate change is breaking this guarantee.

To ensure a barrage doesn't overflow under heavy bursts of rain, for instance, engineers have to drain water from behind it using canals, Omair Ahmad, former South Asia managing editor at *Dialogue Earth*, said. However, this will require building extensive water diversion infrastructure that would likely be made of cement.

"Creating greater pondage here in a cement thing means water is not going into your groundwater. It cannot," Mr. Ahmad said. "It is robbing a much larger area around that barrage of the regular flow of water that would seep in from a river basin."

Given the adverse environmental consequences, experts said building another barrage is not the most rational choice.

"We think big projects will actually manage [water] despite historical evidence that they do not," Mr. Ahmad said. "It is rare for big projects to be able to manage this because ecosystems are a bit too complex."

Mr. Ahmad and Mr. Janakarajan also suggested that instead of one large barrage, Bangladesh should consider building a series of smaller check-dams, which don't dramatically alter a river's flow.

But this has the downside of requiring cross-country planning and maintenance, whereas a barrage will be 'confined' to a specific area.

"Water sharing is always going to be a political issue," Sreeradha Datta, an international affairs professor at O.P. Jindal Global University, said. "The more we try to tame the river, the more we fall into other issues [with] long-term consequences which we cannot see now. But in the immediate context, it looks beneficial, and we are always pandering to the constituency."

The Daily Star has reported Bangladeshi officials saying the government will build the Padma barrage with its own money. Experts, however, said the country lacks the engineering resources for a project of this scale and likely has help from China.

Working on a project so close to the border alongside India's scepticism towards Bangladesh's new Tarique Rahman administration could make India uncomfortable, Prof. Datta added.

"China gets to be seen more and more as a dominant water manager in South Asia, as it has already become in the Mekong," Mr. Ahmad said. "India becomes a less relevant actor within its own neighbourhood."

So far, India has not directly commented on the Padma barrage. Dhaka has said its relationship with India depends on what they agree about sharing the Ganga's waters – and New Delhi that all river-sharing issues will be handled within the existing bilateral framework.

The treaty's renewal process is underway.

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The galaxy NGC 2525 located nearly 70 million light-years from earth. It is famous for its supernova SN 2018gv, which the Hubble space telescope captured in 2018. ESA/NASA

The universe's expansion still accelerating: researchers

Reuters

Taking a fresh look at data involving a type of exploding stars, a team of researchers says it has confirmed the notion that the universe is expanding at an accelerated rate – the very observation that led to the identification in the 1990s of an enigmatic cosmic force called dark energy.

The study's results rebut research published last year that concluded that this cosmic expansion is no longer speeding up – a finding that had challenged the basic understanding of the universe. "The universe is still accelerating," said astrophysicist Brodie Popovic of the University of Southampton in England, one of the leaders of the study published this month in the journal *Monthly Notices* of the Royal Astronomical Society. The study's findings, by a team that included two Nobel Prize recipients, were guided by observations in two different datasets of a type of stellar explosion called a Type Ia supernova in order to calculate vast cosmic distances. These supernovae cause the destruction of an object called a white dwarf, the dense remnant of a low- to intermediate-mass star at the end of its lifecycle. This type of supernova has proven valuable in investigating the universe's structure based on evidence that all of these explosions have roughly the same luminosity. Their observed brightness differs depending upon their distance from earth, making them useful as cosmic mile markers.

The study rebuts argument that the cosmic expansion is no longer speeding up – a finding that had challenged the basic understanding of the universe

By measuring the brightness of these supernovae as seen from earth, scientists can gauge the universe's expansion rate and its change over time. The Big Bang event roughly 13.8 billion years ago initiated the universe, and it has been expanding ever since. Scientists in 1998 disclosed that this expansion is accelerating, with an invisible force called dark energy as the hypothesised reason.

The universe's contents include ordinary matter – stars, planets, gas, dust and all the familiar stuff on earth – and dark matter and dark energy. Ordinary matter represents an estimated 5% of the contents. Dark matter, which is known from its gravitational influences on galaxies and stars, makes up an estimated 27%. Dark energy makes up an estimated 68%. The authors of the 2025 study, which was published in the same journal as the new study, concluded that dark energy is weakening and has stopped accelerating the universe's expansion.

"Over the past decade, a group at Yonsei University has argued that supernova distances should be calibrated differently by accounting for the ages of the stars that eventually explode, and that this 'age effect' could substantially alter the evidence for acceleration. In our study, we found no evidence for the claimed 'age effect' in the largest calibrated supernova samples used by the cosmology community over the last decade," astrophysicist Adam Riess of Johns Hopkins said. Astrophysicist Young-Wook Lee of Yonsei University, located in Seoul, was one of the leaders of the 2025 study. He defended the findings of his team, and said the main arguments made by the researchers in the new study have "serious methodological flaws or lead to conclusions that are internally inconsistent by their own logic."

The researchers in the new study expressed confidence in their methodology and their conclusions confirming acceleration.

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

A quiz on counterintuitive effects

Vasudevan Mukunth

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

QUESTION 1

The _____-_____ phenomenon is a cognitive bias where something you've noticed for the first time recently suddenly seems to appear everywhere. It arises because you've simply learnt to notice the item more often when you encounter it and you remember each encounter. Fill in the blanks.

QUESTION 2

The Dzhanibekov effect describes an object spinning freely about its intermediate principal axis, the axis whose moment of inertia lies between the other two. As small disturbances accumulate, the object will reverse its orientation by ____ repeatedly even as it continues to spin. Fill in the blank with the value of an angle.

QUESTION 3

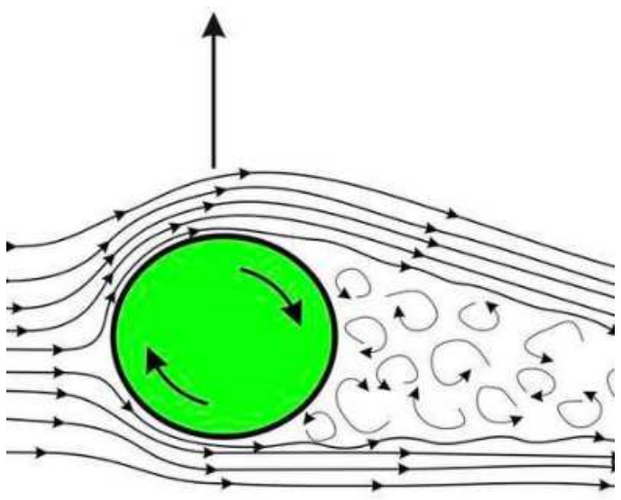
When a thin stream of a shear-thinning liquid, such as shampoo or liquid soap, strikes a surface of the same fluid, the latter may suddenly leap. This is called the X effect, and it happens because the rapid flow reduces the fluid's viscosity, creating a lubricating layer that redirects part of the incoming stream. Name X.

QUESTION 4

The _____ effect describes how people may adjust their behaviour in response to increased safety measures by taking greater risks. Named after the American economist, the effect suggests that some benefits of interventions such as seat belts and helmets can be partly offset by riskier behaviour. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 5

Sometimes, efforts to suppress some information can have the unintended effect of amplifying it to more people. Name the American artiste for whom this effect is named. In 2003, this artiste tried to remove an aerial photograph of her home from the public domain, which only popularised the image further.



Visual: Name the force depicted by the large vertical arrow here. When a spinning football sails through the air, its path might curve sideways. This is because as the ball spins, air moves faster on one side and slower on the other, creating a pressure difference that deflects the ball. RDURKACZ (CC BY-SA)

Answers to June 16 quiz:
1. Light you still see in a perfectly dark room – Ans: **Eigengrau**
2. Organelles that synthesise melanin – Ans: **Melanosomes**
3. Structural components of Vantablack – Ans: **Carbon nanotubes**
4. Radiation thought to be emitted by black holes – Ans: **Hawking radiation**
Visual: **Peacock spider**

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