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Tech vendor blames manual oversight

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PARLEY

Are graduates outpacing job creation?

Experts discuss skills and changing industry needs

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PERFECT START

Kane leads the way as England beats Croatia

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IN BRIEF

Jharkhand RS poll: BJP-backed candidate wins

PATNA
A BJP-backed Independent candidate, Parimal Nathwani, on Thursday won one of the two Rajya Sabha seats in Jharkhand, defeating Pranav Jha of the Congress. Baidyanath Ram of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha won the other seat. » Page 15

Doctor kills house help at his home in East of Kailash

NEW DELHI
A well-known dermatologist was arrested on Thursday for bludgeoning and stabbing to death his 58-year-old domestic help at his Mount Kailash home in south-east Delhi, the police said. » Page 2

Telegram evolved into 'new dark web', govt. tells Delhi HC

Govt. says the app is used by cybercriminals, exam paper leak operators; court questions the platform-wide ban as it hears Telegram's challenge

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Thursday submitted before the Delhi High Court that the messaging platform Telegram had evolved into the "new dark web", arguing that its architecture and privacy features had made it a preferred tool for cybercriminals, fraud networks, extremist and terror groups, and operators involved in examination paper leaks.

The government's submissions relied heavily on an Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) assessment that the platform was a growing hub for illicit online activity. The government has restricted access to the platform ahead of the June 21 NEET re-examination.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre during the hearing on Telegram's petition challenging the temporary ban imposed till June 22 under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, told the court that the enterprise behind the messaging app had been repeatedly asked to proactively monitor and curb illegal and suspicious channels on the platform.

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Telegram on trial

The messaging platform contests restrictions imposed under Section 69A of the IT Act

Govt.'s stand

- Used by cybercriminals, fraud networks, extremist groups, and exam leak operators
- Fails to act against illegal and suspicious channels despite repeated requests
- Features can be misused to falsely portray exam papers as leaked and trigger law-and-order concerns

Telegram's stand

- Centre fails to justify emergency powers or a platform-wide ban
- Specific content can be blocked instead of restricting the entire platform

Trump and Pezeshkian sign deal to end war; U.S. lifts blockade

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON/GENEVA

The U.S. on Thursday lifted a blockade of Iranian ports imposed during the West Asia war after President Donald Trump signed a deal to end the conflict, as uncertainty surrounded planned talks in Switzerland aiming to take the accord further.

Mr. Trump and Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian signed a deal on Wednesday meant to end the war, with Tehran agreeing to dilute its enriched uranium in return for large-scale economic relief. The signing of the deal set in motion a 60-day period for talks on wider issues.

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtab Khamenei endorsed the talks with the U.S. in a statement.

It remained unclear if the two sides, who have had no diplomatic relations following the 1979 Islamic revolution, would hold a signing ceremony and talks in Switzerland on Friday as announced. The U.S. forces lifted their parallel naval blockade of Iranian ports that had prevented ships from sailing to or from the Islamic republic.

'OPENS DOOR FOR IRAN' » PAGE 17

N. Murali appointed Chairman of The Hindu Group Publishing Pvt. Ltd.

N. Murali has been unanimously appointed Chairman of the Board of Directors of The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited (THGPPL) for a term of three years. He succeeds Dr. Nirmala Lakshman, who stepped down as Chairperson at the Board's meeting on Thursday, June 18, 2026, upon nearing the completion of her three-year term. The Nomination and Remuneration Committee of the Board, chaired by Mr. Krishna Srinivasan, Senior Advocate, unanimously recommended appointment of Mr. Murali to lead the Board at this challenging time for the news media and for professional journalism.

Mr. Murali brings more than 56 years of hands-on experience in the management, business, and financial aspects of the newspaper industry to this role. After completing his school education at the Madras Christian College High School, graduating in Commerce from Loyola College, Chennai, and professionally qualifying as a Chartered Accountant, he joined the family business of *The Hindu* in 1969. He became General Manager in 1977 and Joint Managing Director in 1995. In 2006, he took over as Managing Director of M/s. Kasturi & Sons Limited, publishers of *The Hindu* and other allied publications. He subsequently served as Chairman, Kasturi & Sons Limited (the holding company of The Hindu Group of Publications). Over the last several years, he has been a Director of THGPPL and KSL.

Over the decades, Mr. Murali has served in senior positions in a number of industry bodies: he was President of the Indian Newspaper Society (INS); Chairman, Council of Management, Audit Bureau of Circulations; Chairman, National Readership Studies Council; Chairman, Board of Governors, Advertising Standards Council of India; and Chairman, Board of Trustees of the Press Institute of India-RIND. He was elected as the first Board Member from South Asia of the world's leading association for media publishing, IFRA, Darmstadt, Germany (1998-2004), and served as a Member of the Board of the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), Paris (2005-2006). He is a Trustee of the Media Development Foundation, Chennai, which administers the Asian College of Journalism (ACJ).

He is the President of The Music Academy, Madras.

The Board of Directors of The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited placed on record its appreciation of Dr. Nirmala Lakshman's contributions to the Group and its publications and the efficient way in which she led the deliberations and proceedings at the Board level.

Board members and employees expressed enthusiasm and confidence that Mr. Murali, with his rich experience and perspectives gained in a field that has witnessed many successes, undergone a series of disruptive transformations, and repeatedly demonstrated resilience and relevance, will lead the company to new heights.

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Some elements want to keep Manipur on the boil: CM

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh said certain elements were working against his government's efforts to restore peace and normality in the State.

Addressing a programme in Imphal West district's Singjamei, his Assembly constituency, on Wednesday, he said the continuing violence has affected developmental projects. "There have been several incidents of unrest after I became the CM. The focus on maintaining law and order has made it hard for us to focus on development," he said.

'Have a duty'

He, however, said the law and order situation could not be an excuse for not pushing developmental projects. "We cannot run away from our duties." The Chief Minister recalled his visits to conflict-hit areas and meetings with people of all three major communities – Kuki, Meitei, and Naga – in Manipur to appeal for peace and reconciliation. "I believe there are some people who don't want peace in our land. Some people presume that peace would rob them of their income," he said.

Doctor bludgeons, stabs his domestic help to death at Mount Kailash home

Accused confesses to attacking his long-time employee; was found sitting beside Mina Halder's body when police reached his house; motive behind killing yet to be ascertained, say police; FIR registered on a complaint filed by a neighbour

Shrimansi Kaushik
NEW DELHI

A well-known dermatologist was arrested on Thursday for bludgeoning and stabbing to death his 58-year-old domestic help at his Mount Kailash home in south-east Delhi, the police said.

The 56-year-old doctor, identified as Manish Gupta, was found sitting beside Mina Halder's body when the police reached Mount Kailash Apartments, an upscale residential enclave in the East of Kailash area, after a neighbour spotted the victim lying in a pool of blood and raised alarm.

Police said they received a PCR call at 11.36 a.m. reporting the murder of a woman. "The caller said the woman was murdered on the terrace of the building and was lying in a pool of blood," a police officer said.

The accused has confessed to attacking the victim with a bat and later stabbing her with a knife. He was taken into custody and a crime team was called to examine the scene, the police said, adding that they recovered the cricket bat and knife from the living room.

(Clockwise from top) Family members and friends of the victim protesting outside the building in south-east Delhi on Thursday; Mina with her son and daughter-in-law; Manish Gupta. PTI/SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Vastly experienced

According to his website, Mr. Gupta is associated with the National Heart Institute and runs two clinics in East of Kailash and Karol Bagh. He completed his medical residency from AIIMS, Delhi, in 2001 and has more than two decades of experience in dermatology.

According to his neighbours, they have never seen him behave aggressively.

Mina, originally from Kolkata, had worked at the doctor's home for 16 years. "On Thursday, she left home around 8 a.m. as usual. She first worked at the house downstairs and then went to Dr. Gupta's home around 9 a.m. He and his son were there. The next thing we heard was that a neighbour had found her body," said her brother, Shubho Haldar.

'Complete shock'

Residents said a woman living in the opposite building noticed Mina lying motionless on the floor in a pool of blood. Mina lived nearby with her son and daughter-in-law.

"There had never been any problem with the family. In 16 years, she never complained about them. This has come as a complete shock," said her son, Robin Haldar.

The police have registered a case of murder on a complaint filed by a neighbour. As per the FIR, the neighbour's wife saw a man stabbing a woman on Mr. Gupta's terrace. When she went to his house, Mr. Gupta opened the door and said he has murdered her because "she would have spoiled" his home.

The motive behind the murder is yet to be ascertained, the police said. As officers removed the body for post-mortem, relatives and domestic workers gathered outside the house and demanded a speedy probe.

The incident comes after a 22-year-old daughter of an Indian Revenue Service official was raped and killed at their home in nearby Kailash Hills on April 23 by their former domestic help.

Fresh plan afoot to divert Ganga water for Yamuna clean-up

Nikhil M Babu
NEW DELHI

The Centre and the Delhi government are working on a new project to divert Ganga water to rejuvenate the Yamuna in the national capital and clean the heavily polluted river, multiple officials told *The Hindu*.

The proposal for the new project, which is estimated to cost around ₹4,500 crore, was presented at a meeting chaired by Home Minister Amit Shah on June 8, and now the government is in the process of preparing a detailed project report, according to officials.

Last year, the government had considered a similar project. However, it was shelved over feasibility concerns raised by the Uttar Pradesh government.

Experts and courts have long called for increasing the Yamuna's flow through Delhi to dilute pollutants and improve water quality.

The new plan involves diverting about 500 cusecs of additional water from the Upper Ganga Canal, the river's largest canal, flowing through western Uttar Pradesh, into the Yamuna.

Since the Upper Ganga Canal does not cross Delhi or directly connect to the Yamuna, the plan involves channelling water from it through a 29-km twin-pipeline or canal system. As per the plan, the canal or pipeline system will be constructed from the Muradnagar regulator of the Upper Ganga Canal in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, to Wazirabad in Delhi to carry 500 cusecs of water to the Yamuna. But Uttar Pradesh will not lose out on the 500 cusecs of water, as it will ultimately flow into the State via the Yamuna downstream of Delhi, officials said.

A layer of toxic foam floating on the surface of the Yamuna river near the Okhla Barrage in New Delhi on June 2. PTI

The construction of the pipeline is expected to take about three years and land acquisition, if required, may increase the total time required to complete the project, officials said.

Quota for ex-Agniveers: L-G sets June 30 deadline

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Thursday instructed all departments to implement a 20% reservation for former Agniveers in direct recruitment to vacant Group C posts and set June 30 as a deadline for completing the required amendments to recruitment rules.

The decision was taken at a review meeting chaired by the L-G to assess preparations for introducing the quota in various Delhi government departments.

According to officials, the reservation will apply to direct recruitment for posts such as police constables in Delhi Police, firemen in the Delhi Fire Services (DFS), jail warders in the Prison Department, and forest and wildlife guards in the Department of Environment, Forest and Wildlife.

Employment push

Mr. Sandhu directed all departments concerned to complete procedural formalities and make the necessary changes to their recruitment rules by June 30 to implement the reservation without delay. The move follows the Centre's broader push to create employment opportunities for former Agniveers after completion of their four-year tenure under the Centre's Agnipath scheme launched in June 2022.

Officials said the Delhi administration plans to utilise the training, discipline and operational experience acquired by these personnel in public service roles that require field-level deployment. Mr. Sandhu said integrating former Agniveers into the civic and public safety institutions will boost service delivery and the capacity of departments dealing with law enforcement, emergency response and environmental protection.

Child-trafficking racket busted; 5 infants rescued

Shrimansi Kaushik
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has busted an inter-State child-trafficking racket allegedly run from a private hospital in north-west Delhi's Begumpur, and rescued five infants while arresting 13 individuals, including the facility's owner, officers said on Thursday.

The case surfaced on June 5 after a Paharganj resident reported seeing a woman carrying different infants over two weeks. Police analysed CCTV footage and launched a decoy operation. An undercover officer posed as a prospective buyer, and the woman allegedly agreed to hand over an infant after receiving ₹20,000 as an advance. During the handover, police arrested Jyoti, Shalu and Lalit, and rescued a four-to-five-day-old baby.

During questioning, the arrested persons revealed information about other gang members, including Pratibha, a freelance laboratory technician at Hira Hospital, driver Vipin and hospital owner Viveki, whom the police described as the "kingpin". The other suspects were subsequently arrested and booked for human trafficking and under provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act.

Selling for profit

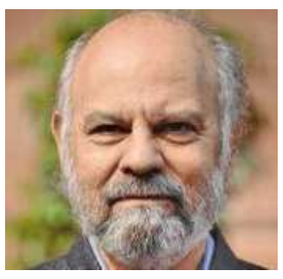
Police said the racket had been operating for nearly one-and-a-half years and may have trafficked at least 30 infants. The accused bought newborns from vulnerable families and sold them to childless couples at a substantial profit, said an officer. "They bought a girl child for around ₹1 lakh and a boy child for up to ₹2 lakh. They then sold the girls for ₹3-4 lakh and boys for ₹6-8 lakh," said DCP (Central) Rohit Rajbir Singh, adding that three couples who bought the infants have also been arrested. Police said the owner forged birth certificates to facilitate illegal adoptions. Three police teams are tracing other infants and buyers.

Ex-Rajya Sabha MP Naresh Gujral duped of ₹7.68 crore in cyber fraud

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Former Rajya Sabha member Naresh Gujral was duped of ₹7.68 crore after cyber fraudsters impersonated him on a messaging platform and tricked an employee into transferring funds to multiple bank accounts, the police said on Thursday.

The former parliamentarian, 78, is the son of the late I.K. Gujral, who served as India's 12th Prime Minister from April 1997 to March 1998. The fraud occurred between June 12 and 16 when the employee, authorised to handle Mr. Naresh's finances, received messages from an account displaying the former MP's photo, seeking urgent transfers. He made four transactions over four days. The fraud surfaced on June 16 after verification by Mr. Naresh's daughter, and an FIR was registered.



Naresh Gujral. FILE PHOTO

The police said ₹4.28 crore has been frozen and efforts are under way to trace the accused.

Govt. to set up Cooling Zones near NEET centres

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Thursday announced that the Delhi government will set up Cooling Zones outside all 97 NEET re-examination centres in the city on June 21.

The facilities will provide seating, drinking water, ORS, '*shikanji* (lemonade)' and first aid for candidates' parents and others accompanying them.

"While candidates remain inside, parents often wait outside for hours. Their anxiety, discomfort and exposure to the heat frequently go unnoticed," Ms. Gupta said, adding that the initiative reflects the government's recognition of the role parents play in supporting their children.

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NOTICE OF THE 104th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, E-VOTING AND BOOK CLOSURE INFORMATION

Notice is hereby given that the 104th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of the **Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Limited,** will be held on **Tuesday, July 14, 2026** at 11:00 A.M. IST through Video Conferencing ("VC") / Other Audio Visual Means ("OAVM") without the physical presence of the members at a common venue, in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and rules made thereunder, read with MCA circular (vide General Circular No. 03/2025 dated September 22, 2025), and in compliance with the applicable provisions of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, to transact the businesses as set forth in the Notice of the AGM.

The Bank has sent the 104th AGM Notice along with the Annual Report for the Financial Year 2025-26 on June 18, 2026, through electronic mode to the members whose e-mail address(es) are registered with the Registrar & Share Transfer Agent (RTA) / Depository Participant(s), as per the data downloaded from Registrar & Share Transfer Agent (RTA) / Depository Participant(s) as on June 12, 2026, in compliance with aforesaid MCA Circular and the applicable provisions of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.

The Bank has also sent a letter containing the web link, including the exact path and complete details of the Annual Report, to the shareholders who have not registered their email address(es) with the Registrar & Share Transfer Agent (RTA) or Depository Participant(s).

Further, members may also download the copy of the 104th AGM Notice and the Annual Report for the Financial Year 2025-26 from the website of the Bank www.tmb.bank.in under 'Investor's Relations' section, from the website of Central Depository Services (India) Limited ("CDSL") at www.evotingindia.com and from the website of Stock Exchanges i.e., BSE Limited at www.bseindia.com & National Stock Exchange of India Limited at www.nseindia.com. The copies of the said documents are also available at the registered office of the Bank for inspection on all working days during the business hours up to the date of 104th Annual General Meeting.

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 (the "Act") and the rules made thereunder and in compliance with the Regulation 42 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 ("SEBI LODR"), the Register of Members and Share Transfer Books of the Bank will remain closed from Wednesday, July 08, 2026 to Tuesday, July 14, 2026 (both days inclusive).

Members can attend and participate in the AGM only through VC / OAVM. The instructions for joining the AGM through VC / OAVM is provided in the Notice of the AGM.

In accordance with the applicable circulars issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the Bank is providing to its Members facility to exercise their right to vote on resolutions proposed to be passed at the AGM, by electronic means ("e-Voting"). The Bank has engaged the services of Central Depository Services (India) Limited ("CDSL") as the agency to provide e-Voting facility.

The remote e-Voting schedule is as under:

Commencement of e-Voting	**Saturday, July 11, 2026 at 9:00 A.M. IST**
End of e-Voting	**Monday, July 13, 2026 at 5:00 P.M. IST**

Voting rights of a member / beneficial owner (in case of electronic shareholding) shall be in proportion to his/her/its shareholding in the paid-up equity share capital of the Bank as on the cut-off date, i.e., Tuesday, July 07, 2026 ("Cut-off Date").

Additionally, the Bank is providing the facility of voting through e-Voting during the AGM for the members who have not exercised the remote e-Voting facility earlier. Detailed procedure for remote e-Voting / e-Voting during the AGM is provided in the Notice.

In case of any queries, you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Shareholders and e-Voting user manual for Shareholders available at the download section of www.evotingindia.com or call on: 1800 21 09911 or send a request to Mr. Rakesh Dalvi at helpdesk.evoting@cdslindia.com.

Shareholders may note that, pursuant to the Income Tax Act, 2025, dividend income is taxable in the hands of the Members and the Bank is required to deduct tax at source ("TDS") from the dividend paid to the Members at prescribed rates as mentioned in the Income Tax Act, 2025. In this regard, we had already sent mails on May 22, 2026 and June 08, 2026, to all the shareholders who had registered their email address with the Bank / RTA.

Members may note that as per extant guidelines of SEBI, it is mandatory for shareholders holding securities in physical form in listed entities, to furnish PAN, Bank account details, Specimen Signature, Contact Details and Address. With effect from April 01, 2024, SEBI has mandated that all dividends shall be paid only after submission of all the above-mentioned particulars. Henceforth, the Bank's RTA i.e., MUFG Intime India Private Limited, will attend to all service requests of the shareholders with respect to transmission, dividend, etc., only after updating the above details in their records.

By Order of the Board of Directors
For Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Limited
Sd/-
Swapnil Yelgaonkar
Company Secretary
(Membership No: ACS 21877)

Date : 18.06.2026
Place : Thoothukudi

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE
DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

FIRST ANNIVERSARY

DOB: 17.07.1957
DOD: 19.06.2025
Mrs. R. PRAMEELA
W/o. R.Jeevankumar
You are in our hearts forever
Fondly Remembered by
Family members

CHHATTISGARH HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Paryawas Bhawan, Sector- 19, North Block, Nava Raipur Atal Nagar- 492002

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Dated:

For sustainable growth of the urban areas, Government of Chhattisgarh has approved various Redevelopment Projects in the prime locations of the cities / towns via Public Private Partnership mode. On behalf of GoCG, CGHIDB Invites proposal for Selection of Developer for Redevelopment of land parcels at five (5) different locations on license basis.

Details of the Project

Sr. No.	NIT No.	Name of the Project & Land Area	Offset Price (in Cr.)	EMD (in Lakhs)	Cost of RFP Document (in Lakhs)
1	AHC (R) NIT No. 16 Dt. 16.06.26	Redevelopment of land parcel(s) of total area 1.81 acres Opposite to BTI Ground, Raipur	56.30	28.15	1.18 (With GST)
2	AHC (NR) NIT No. 25 Dt. 16.06.26	Redevelopment of land parcel(s) of total area 5.19 acres at Clubpara, Mahasamund	40.31	20.15	1.18 (With GST)
3	AHC (Durg) NIT No. 8 Dt. 16.06.26	Redevelopment of land parcel(s) of total area 5.0 acres at Kailash Nagar, Rajnandgaon	115.01	57.50	1.18 (With GST)
4	AHC (JDP) NIT No.07 Dt. 16.06.26	Redevelopment of land parcel(s) of total area 0.65 acres at Chandani Chowk (Phase II), Jagdalpur	15.95	8.00	1.18 (With GST)
5	AHC (BSP) NIT No. 114 Dt. 16.06.26	Redevelopment of land parcel(s) of total area 6.49 acres at Katghora, Korba	22.74	11.40	1.18 (With GST)

- Bid start date : From 10:30 AM on 22/06/2026
- Pre-bid meeting schedule- 12:00 Noon, 2nd July-26 at Sector-19, Paryawas Bhawan, CGHIDB (HO), Nava Raipur Atal Nagar.
- Due date for online submission of Bids (Both Technical and Financial):up to 5:30 PM on Date: 22/07/2026
- Due date for hard copy submission: up to 5:30 PM on Date : 24/07/2026.
- Bid Opening Date: 27/07/2026, 11:00 AM onwards
- For more information bidders may contact to Dy. Housing Commissioner, Head Office CGHIDB (94242-09032); EE Div-2 Raipur (94242-09041); EE Div. Mahasamund (76971-92220); EE Div. Rajnandgaon (98271-75003); EE Div. Jagdalpur (99932-33629); EE Div. Korba (99072-85405).
- Bidder may download the RFP documents and other terms and conditions from website https://cghb.gov.in & http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in. Any amendment / corrigendum in the tender documents, will only be uploaded on the e-Procurement website and shall not be published in any newspaper.

S-48196/5 **DHC(HO), CGHIDB, Nava Raipur Atal Nagar**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO
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INBRIEF

Kejriwal condemns detention of Goa anti-project protesters

AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday paid tributes to freedom fighters on the occasion of Goa Revolution Day and accused the ruling BJP of using the same dictatorial practices as the Portuguese to suppress people's voices. Mr. Kejriwal, along with his party's Goa in charge Atishi Marlena, State president Valmiki Naik and others, paid respects at the martyrs memorial at Azad Maidan in Panaji. Referring to the detention of villagers from Karapur-Sarvan, who were opposing a mega housing project, near the Goa Revolution Day function in Panaji, he called the action condemnable. PTI

SUV plunges into gorge in Himachal, seven killed

Seven persons were killed when an SUV plunged into a gorge in Chamba district early on Thursday, police said. The victims, including three women, were returning to Mahal village when the accident occurred around 2 a.m. Police said the driver lost control over the vehicle, causing it to veer off the road and fall into the gorge. While six occupants died on the spot, another succumbed to injuries later. Rescue teams retrieved the bodies from the wreckage after a strenuous operation, the police said. Residents of the area alleged there was no crash barrier at the accident-prone stretch. Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu expressed grief over the loss of lives. PTI

Governor's address reiterates T.N.'s long-held stand on 2-language policy

Arlekar urges Centre to swiftly complete caste enumeration as part of the population census, after which State would conduct a 'Social Justice Survey'; address reaffirms position on NEET, NEP, financial devolution, inter-State river disputes

B. Kolappan
N. Sai Charan
CHENNAI

In his customary address to the Tamil Nadu Assembly on Thursday, Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar reaffirmed the State's long-standing position on the two-language policy, NEET, and inter-State river disputes, while outlining the plans of Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay's government for industrial growth and administrative reforms.

The Governor's address, which passed off without disruption after a gap of four years, also conveyed the government's decision to go ahead with the existing welfare schemes and projects.

During the previous DMK government, former Governor R.N. Ravi had walked out of the House on all such occasions since 2023, citing disagreement on the text of the address or the rendering of the national anthem.

Opposition DMK MLAs participated in the proceedings by wearing black badges that said "Vaai Thiranga CM [Open your mouth, CM]".

Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar delivering his address to the Assembly on Thursday.

In his 37-minute speech, the Governor urged the Centre to swiftly complete caste enumeration as part of the population census, following which the State would conduct a "Social Justice Survey". He said the government would continue to adhere to the two-language policy and press for the use of Tamil as the language of pleading at the Madras High Court and its Madurai Bench, besides seeking a Supreme Court Bench in Chennai.

Reiterating the government's opposition to the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020, he termed as "unacceptable" the Centre's stand that the ₹3,458 crore due to Tamil Nadu under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan would be released only if the three-language formula was implemented.

He said a resolution would be passed in the House seeking Tamil Nadu's due share of financial devolution and a special legal committee would be constituted to pursue the issue up to the Supreme Court. Accusing the Centre of "discriminatory approach", he said every rupee due to Tamil Nadu would be documented and a report on financial devolution would be published.

The Governor also announced a Tamil Nadu Investor Promotion Commission, headed by the Chief Secretary, to fast-track approval for companies investing over ₹200 crore or generating 5,000 jobs. He said procedures for setting up industries, particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises, would be simplified through a single-window system, while a new industrial policy with incentives for domestic and global investors would be unveiled.

The government would oppose the Kerala government's move to build a new Mullaperiyar dam and take steps to carry out strengthening work and raise the dam's water level, the Governor said, adding that legal measures to halt the proposed balancing reservoir project at Mekedatu by Karnataka will be taken up.

Alleging that corrupt practices had led to significant revenue leakage in the mining sector, the Governor said the government would ensure the efficient and environmentally sustainable exploitation of mineral resources. Organised illicit mining and tax evasion would be curbed with an iron hand to ensure that revenue flowed into the government treasury without diversion.

'Content for reels'

Speaking to reporters outside the Secretariat, Leader of the Opposition and DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin said that while the Governor's address was traditionally regarded as a blueprint of the government's policies, the one delivered Mr. Arlekar merely provided content for the ruling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam to produce social media reels.

In a first, national anthem played twice

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Deviating from convention in the Assembly, where the national anthem is played only at the end of the Governor's address, it was on Thursday played twice – at the beginning and at the end of Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar's address to the House.

The rendition of the national anthem was a bone of contention between the previous DMK government and former Governor R.N. Ravi. The then Governor had walked out of the House in protest against the then Speaker for not heeding his demand to play the national anthem at the beginning of the session as well.

However, on Thursday, the Assembly session began with a rendition of the State song, *Tamil Thaai Vaazhthu*, followed by the national anthem. After Speaker J.C.D. Prabhakar concluded the Tamil version of the Governor's address, the national anthem was played again. Mr. Arlekar hailed the rendition of the national anthem twice and expressed happiness over the smooth conduct of the proceedings, saying it marked the dawn of a new era in the House.

Mamata's 'Z' category security removed by Suvendu govt. out of vendetta: Trinamool Cong.

Senjuti Sengupta
KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Thursday alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party government in West Bengal has removed the 'Z' category security that had been accorded to former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for several years.

Although there has been no official confirmation of the removal of Ms. Banerjee's security cover, the Trinamool Congress, on its official X handle, made the allegation, denouncing "political vendetta" and "petty politics".

"What exactly are you plotting, [CM] Suvendu Adhikari? Removing the long-serving security personnel protecting Mamata Banerjee is not an administrative action, it is a calculated move to isolate and endanger her," read the post.

> Why are they doing this? Because she filed a case against the Bhabanipur election result?
>
> **DEREK O'BRIEN**
> Trinamool leader, Rajya Sabha MP

On Wednesday night, Trinamool's Rajya Sabha member Derek O'Brien shared a video from the party president's residence in Kalighat at 9.30 p.m. showing no security personnel at the site. He alleged that personal security officers (PSOs) who had been with Ms. Banerjee for 20 years were called back by the West Bengal police, and three "unfamiliar" security personnel had been sent to her.

"Why are they doing this? Because she walked for the hawkers this (Wednesday) evening? Because she filed a case against the Bhabanipur election result? Why have they sent three unfamiliar people? Those PSOs had been with her since she was Union Railways Minister," said the senior party leader.

Meanwhile, a team of West Bengal Police's Criminal Investigation Department visited the residence of the former CM's sister-in-law in Kalighat in connection with the "provocative statements" made by the party's national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee while campaigning for the recently held State poll.

The CID team reached the house around 2 p.m. and left nearly an hour later, said officials.

On June 9, the CID had searched the Trinamool chief's residence in connection with the 'signature forgery' case.

'Only 10% of 31,429 poll candidates since 2023 were women'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Since the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill in 2023, Assembly polls have been held in 20 States and Union Territories (UTs). Out of a total of 31,429 candidates who contested in these polls, only 3,273 (10.2%) were women.

The proportion of women candidates did not exceed 14% across these States and Union Territories, according to an analysis by the Association for Democratic Reforms.

The Women's Reservation Bill mandates that 33% seats be reserved for women.

In the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, held months after the passage of the Bill, out of 8,360 candidates analysed, only 800 (9.6%) were women and 152 (28%) in 543 constituencies had zero women candidates, the report said.

Assemblies which had the highest number of women candidates were Odisha (2024) at 13.9%, Delhi (2025) at 13.7% and Puducherry (2026) at 13.6%. Arunachal Pradesh (2024) and Jammu and Kashmir (2024) recorded the lowest participation, with women constituting only 4.9% of the total candidates.

Benchmark not met

As far as the Lok Sabha polls were concerned, no political party met the one-third (33%) benchmark for women candidates in the 2024 general election.

While the Bharatiya Janata Party and Indian National Congress fielded women candidates in the range of 13%-16%, several State parties recorded substantially higher levels of female representation.

Ruling ZPM's Laltluangkima secures party its first-ever representation in Rajya Sabha

Press Trust of India
AIZAWL

Laltluangkima got 26 of 36 votes polled, defeating Zothansangi Hmar of Mizo National Front

Mizoram's ruling Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) on Thursday secured its first-ever representation in the Rajya Sabha as party leader K. Laltluangkima won the election to the lone Upper House seat from the State.

Mr. Laltluangkima secured 26 of the 36 votes polled, defeating Zothansangi Hmar of the Opposition Mizo National Front (MNF), who received all 10 votes cast by her party's legislators, according to Assembly Secretary and Returning Officer Zothansanga Ralte.

Three legislators abstained from voting, including BJP MLAs K. Beichhua and K. Hrahmo, as well as lone Congress legislator C. Ngunlianchunga.

ZPM legislator W. Chhuanawma was unable to vote due to health reasons, Mr. Ralte said.

In the 40-member Mizoram Assembly, the ZPM holds 27 seats, followed by the MNF with 10, while the BJP and Congress have two and one legislators, respectively. The victory marks a significant political milestone for the ZPM, which was founded in 2017.

Mr. Laltluangkima became the party's first Rajya Sabha member and the eighth person from Mizoram to be elected to the Upper House since 1972, when the State was still a Union territory.

Historically, the Congress has won the Rajya Sabha seat six times with former MP Hiphei serving two consecutive terms between 1990 and 2002, while the MNF won the seat three times, with Lalhmingliana serving two consecutive terms from 2002 to 2014.

Outgoing member

The outgoing Rajya Sabha member is K. Vanlalvena of the MNF.

Mr. Laltluangkima joined active politics in 1997 through the MNF (Nationalist), which later was rechristened as the Zoram Nationalist Party (ZNP) founded by Lalduhoma.

He first contested the Assembly election from Bilkhawthlir constituency in 1998 but lost to MNF candidate Lalchamliana by a margin of 1,256 votes. He currently serves as member secretary of the ZPM's Political Affairs Committee.

Families bid farewell to seafarers killed in U.S. strike

Press Trust of India
DEORIA/HAMIRPUR

The body of Aditya Sharma arriving at his home in Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh on Thursday. REUTERS

The last rites of Shivanand Chaurasia, who was among the three Indian seafarers killed in a U.S. military attack on a commercial vessel near the Oman coast, were held on Thursday in his village in Uttar Pradesh's Deoria.

The body was taken in a procession under tight security to Katailwa Ghat in Barhaj where Chaurasia was cremated in the presence of family members and locals.

The body of Chaurasia, who was working as an engine fitter on a tanker operated by a foreign shipping company, arrived at the Delhi airport from Muscat early Wednesday morning. It was later flown to the Gorakhpur airport and brought to his native Sourauli village by road on Wednesday evening.

As the body reached the village, the atmosphere turned sombre, with Chaurasia's parents, wife and brother breaking down. The family demanded an ex gratia of ₹1 crore each from the Centre and the state government, a government job for a dependent and "martyr status" for him. District Magistrate Madhusudan Hulgi received the family's memorandum and assured them of necessary action, officials said.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also spoke to the sailor's brother, Ram Pravesh Chaurasia, on Wednesday and assured all possible help. In a phone call with the sailor's brother, Mr. Gandhi paid tributes to Chaurasia, saying the country would always remember his sacrifice.

Final rites for cadet

Merchant navy cadet Aditya Sharma, 23, who also lost his life in the U.S. strike was cremated near his native Bhalu village in Himachal Pradesh's Hamirpur on Thursday. Hundreds of locals gathered to pay their tributes. Gandhrva Rathore, the Deputy Commissioner of Hamirpur and the Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Nadaun also attended the funeral procession and offered their condolences to the family.

The body of Sharma, who was a merchant navy cadet on probation, was flown from Mumbai to Chandigarh on Wednesday and then transported to Hamirpur by road. Earlier on Thursday morning, a postmortem was conducted upon him at Hamirpur hospital after which the body was handed over to his parents.

Sharma did a merchant navy course in Chennai and studied Nautical Engineering in Scotland. He then secured a job at a merchant ship last year in November. His family said they were looking forward to his return home for the holidays before they heard news of his passing.

The U.S. military struck Palau-flagged *MT Settebello* in the Gulf of Oman on June 10 accusing the ship of violating an American blockade amid the conflict in West Asia. There were 24 Indian crewmen on board the vessel, of whom 21 were rescued.

Kota hospital deaths reflect institutional failure, says Gehlot

Press Trust of India
JAIPUR

Ashok Gehlot

Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday termed the reported deaths of five women at Kota's New Medical College as "extremely serious and disturbing", alleging that a probe has pointed to negligence in treatment.

In a statement, Mr. Gehlot said the deaths were not "normal" and described them as "institutional failures", citing reports that flagged possible infection in the operation theatre (OT).

Referring to findings by a team from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), he claimed that indications of infection in the OT contradicted assertions made by the hospital administration.

Mr. Gehlot also said that several other women admitted at the facility were in critical condition.

He urged the government to take strict action against those responsible.

CJP gets police permission for June 20 Delhi protest

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Youth-led movement Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on Thursday said it had secured Delhi Police's permission for its June 20 protest at Jantar Mantar seeking the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the NEET paper leak controversy and examination-related issues.

Announcing the development, CJP spokesperson Saurav Das said students, parents, teachers and citizens from across the country would gather peacefully to demand accountability for paper leaks and irregularities in examinations.

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Char Dham equines to get insurance subsidy of 20%

Press Trust of India
DEHRADUN

The Uttarakhand Cabinet on Thursday approved several proposals, including a decision to cover 20% of the insurance premium for equines' owners used during the Char Dham Yatra.

Director General of Information B.D. Tiwari said the government will provide relief to equine owners operating on the Kedarnath, Yamunotri, and Hemkund Sahib pilgrimage routes by paying 20% of the insurance premium.

The scheme will cover an estimated 15,000 registered horses and mules for the 2026 pilgrimage season. Based on an estimated value of ₹70,000 per animal and an insurance rate of 5%, the total premium is calculated at ₹525 lakh.

Timings
DELHI

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
SUNDAY, JUN. 21	
RISE 05:24	SET 19:22
RISE 11:49	SET 00:00

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	40	28
Safdarjang	40	28
Palam	40	26

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

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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AAP terms viral video 'fake', cites forensic reports from two labs; Oppn. seeks Mann's lie detector test

Entire episode part of a larger 'political conspiracy' to defame Punjab CM, claims AAP leader; Badal says a 'Dharam Yudh Morcha' will be launched from the Akal Takht today to seek CM's removal; ruling party lying, its defence 'lame': Congress

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and (right) an AAP team meeting Punjab Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav in Chandigarh on Thursday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT & PTI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday said forensic examinations by two independent laboratories have found no resemblance between Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and the person seen in a controversial video, which it said was "fake" and circulated to "inflame public emotions", prompting criticism from the Opposition.

The Sikh clergy at Akal Takht - the highest Sikh temporal seat – on June 15 declared its edict against Mr. Mann, citing allegations that he made false statements in connection with a reportedly objectionable video involving him.

"For several days, Akali Dal leaders have been attempting to falsely link the video to Bhagwant Mann. The entire episode is part of a larger political conspiracy to defame a popular Chief Minister who has consistently worked for the people of Punjab," senior AAP leader and Cabinet Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said at a joint press conference with Punjab media in-charge Baltej Pannu in Chandigarh.

Mr. Cheema said two independent laboratories recognised by the Indian government had thoroughly examined the viral video and reached the same conclusion. "The forensic analysis examined a total of 1,191 frames from the video. Every aspect, including facial features, height, body structure, posture, movement patterns, side profile and back profile, was analysed. The reports clearly conclude that the person shown in the video does not match CM Bhagwant Mann," he said.

Hitting back, Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal challenged Mr. Mann to undergo a lie detector test. "Sri Akal Takht Sahib had asked Bhagwant Mann to nominate two forensic labs of his own choice so that the video's authenticity could be verified. For nearly six months, he did not do so. In the meantime, the video was referred to two forensic labs in the country. The labs found the video to be authentic and not AI-generated, as had been claimed by Mr. Mann," he said.

'Shifting stand'
Mr. Badal accused the CM of "shifting his stand", saying Mr. Mann was now claiming that the person in the video is not him. The Akali leader also said that a 'Dharam Yudh Morcha (campaign for righteousness)' will be launched from the Akal Takht on July 19 to seek Mr. Mann's removal as the Chief Minister.

Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring described AAP's defence as "lame", accusing the party of "trying to defend the indefensible and telling one lie after another". "I wonder how AAP managed to procure reports from two different laboratories within 24 hours to give a clean chit to the Chief Minister," he said.

Bengal people have rejected atmosphere of fear, says Governor on Day 1 of Assembly

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The first session of the 18th West Bengal Legislative Assembly began on Thursday with Governor R.N. Ravi delivering his inaugural address.

From curbing corruption to evicting intruders, evicting illegal encroachments to women's safety, the Governor touched upon almost every initiative of the State government in the last one and a half months in his address.

"For the first time in the last one and a half decades, the people of West Bengal have given a clear public opinion in favour of the new government. The people have rejected the atmosphere of fear and despair that existed in the State for a long time," the Governor said addressing the House.

Mr. Ravi, in his 20-page address, commended the State government's decision taken within days of assuming office to strengthen border infrastructure and provide land to the Border Security Force for erecting barbed-wire fencing along the international border.

"The new government led by Suvendu Adhikari will develop the State overall, regardless of caste or religion. My government is aware of the challenges and responsibilities ahead," he said.

Budget on Monday
The first budget of the BJP government will be presented on June 22.

Prior to this, a six-hour discussion on the Governor's address and a ten-hour discussion on the budget are also scheduled in the session.

Save your MPs, Rajbhar tells SP chief Akhilesh again

Press Trust of India
LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Minister and Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) chief Om Prakash Rajbhar on Thursday made fresh claims of an impending split in the Samajwadi Party (SP) and asked Akhilesh Yadav to "save his MPs", drawing sharp response from the latter who called him a "rumour-mongering Minister".

Mr. Rajbhar claimed that a group of "rebel" SP MPs was preparing to break away from the party and suggested that the faction would be led by "a son of rebel Ballia".

'Son of rebel Ballia'
"A son of Uttar Pradesh's 'rebel land' will lead the faction of dissident SP MPs," he posted on X.

This is the second time in two days that Mr. Rajbhar has made the claim of an impending split in the SP.

Though he did not name anyone, the remarks appeared to be aimed at SP MP from Ballia Sanatan Pandey.

Mr. Yadav responded with a veiled attack on the SBSP chief in a post on X, referring to him as a "rumour-mongering Minister". He alleged that the Minister was being searched by ticket aspirants, officials and contractors from whom "advance payments had allegedly been taken".

Attack on ED officials: bail plea of 3 CPI(M) workers rejected

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The officials were attacked during a raid on former Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's residence last month

The Thiruvananthapuram Judicial First Class Magistrate Court-III on Thursday rejected the bail plea of three Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] workers accused of attacking Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials and damaging vehicles during a raid on former Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's residence in the city last month.

Magistrate Tania Mariam Jose dismissed the bail petition filed by the three accused- sixth accused Kiran, eighth accused Shafiq, and seventeenth accused Vysakh.

The same court had earlier dismissed the bail pleas of five other accused identified as Sreejith, Jithinraj, Manoj, Jeevan, and Shahin.

'False and baseless'

In the bail application, the accused contended that the allegations against them were false and baseless.

Further, the investigation in the case had been completed. The defence also informed the court that not all of the accused had any criminal antecedents and that they were willing to comply with any bail conditions imposed by the court.

However, the prosecution opposed the bail pleas, arguing that the investigation was still in progress. The prosecution also argued that granting bail to the accused would send the wrong message to society and that bail should not be granted in serious offences where a *prima facie* case exists, particularly in cases that shock the public conscience.

Accepting the prosecution's contention, the court rejected the bail petitions. The police have invoked multiple charges against the accused, including murder attempt.

The Museum police had registered a case against around 300 persons last month in connection with the case.

CMRL case

The Enforcement Directorate on May 27, 2026 raided the houses of Mr. Vijayan in Kannur and Thiruvananthapuram in what is viewed as a major escalation of a long-running inquiry into whether his daughter and former IT consultant, T. Veena's now-defunct firm, Exalogic, had received sizeable monthly retainers from Cochin Minerals and Rutile Limited (CMRL), a private mining company, during the 2017-2021 period allegedly without rendering any tangible service.

The ED on Wednesday questioned T. Veena for around eight hours in connection with the money-laundering probe.

Congress wins five seats, BJP two in Karnataka MLC polls

The confusion over where the four extra cross votes came to the Congress remains a bone of contention; the BJP insisted that four of its candidates had voted in favour of the JD(S) candidate

Sharath S. Srivatsa
BENGALURU

The speculation over cross voting in election to seven Legislative Council seats in Karnataka came true on Thursday, with Congress winning all five seats that it had contested, even as it garnered 11 votes through cross voting from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners - the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Janata Dal (Secular).

The result is also seen as a shot in the arm for Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who faced his first election after taking over from his predecessor Siddaramaiah.

Congress candidates who won in the Legislative Council elections in Bengaluru on Thursday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

While the BJP, which was left red-faced, has lost at least three votes in cross voting, the JD(S) that suffered an embarrassing defeat has lost at least four.

The confusion over where the four extra cross votes came to the Congress remains a bone of contention.

The results immediately triggered tensions among the NDA partners as the BJP insisted that four of its candidates had indeed voted in favour of the JD(S) candidate Govindraju. The regional party refuted the claim and said that the BJP members did not vote in its favour. Mr. Govindraju got 14 votes as against the regional party's strength of 18 in the Legislative Assembly.

Eventually, the Congress candidates won the elections, along with the BJP candidates Lingaraj Patil and R. Raghu. Except Mr. Patil, all others were declared winner after the first round of counting. One vote polled in favour of Mr. Raghu was declared invalid. The Congress that has claimed strength of 140 seats in the 224-member Assembly, managed to receive 151 votes together across five candidates.

Sabarimala gold case: High Court asks SIT to file detailed report by June 29

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The special investigation team (SIT) inquiring into the alleged misappropriation of gold from the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple informed the Kerala High Court on Thursday that it has established a clear sequence of events that led to the removal of the Dwarapalaka idols from the temple for gold plating.

During the hearing, a Division Bench directed the SIT to submit a detailed report on the investigation by June 29. The report should include the extent of involvement of the persons concerned, role of each accused in the transactions related to transportation and gold-plating of the idols in 2025, and the specific time frame for the submission of the final report before the Inquiry Commissioner and Special Judge (Vigilance), Kollam.

The report, submitted by S. Sasidharan, head of the SIT, disclosed that the chain of events was established from the documents seized, communication exchanged among the accused, and various decisions, orders, and proceedings of the Travancore Devaswom Board that ultimately facilitated the transportation and removal of the idols for gold-plating.

The suo motu petition was initiated on a report by the Special Commissioner, Sabarimala, that the gold-clad copper coverings of the Dwarapalaka idols, located on either side of the Sreekovil, were removed for gold plating without prior intimation in 2025.

The court had constituted the SIT in 2025 to conduct a thorough independent investigation into the alleged misappropriation, after noting a series of grave irregularities and possible acts of misappropriation, allegedly carried out with the active connivance of officials of the Travancore Devaswom Board.

Delhi to miss June 27 date for arrival of monsoon: experts

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Women shielding themselves from the heatwave in New Delhi. FILE PHOTO

Delhi may have to wait until the first week of July for the arrival of monsoon, instead of its usual onset around June 27, weather experts said, attributing the delay to the absence of favourable weather systems.

Explaining the weather pattern, experts said around June 18-19, a low-pressure area forms over the Bay of Bengal, and then the easterly winds help draw moisture-laden winds from the Arabian Sea towards the southern peninsula.

The system then moves across Odisha, Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh before advancing into northwest India, including Delhi; this creates a favourable anti-clockwise cyclonic circulation pattern that helps the monsoon progress further inland, they explained.

Mahesh Palawat from Skymet said that the delay in arrival of monsoon is due to absence of the crucial weather system over the Bay of Bengal that typically helps propel rain-bearing winds towards northwest India and bring the monsoon to the Capital around June 27.

"We expect a favourable system to develop over the Bay of Bengal around June 25-26, after which the monsoon is likely to reach Delhi during the first week of July rather than June 27, which is the expected onset," he said.

The monsoon flow from the Arabian Sea has also weakened and bifurcated, with one circulation moving towards the southern peninsula and another extending towards Rajasthan. "The current monsoon flow lacks a strong surge from the Arabian Sea," India Meteorological Department (IMD) scientist Krishna Mishra said.

Rainfall deficit

The delay comes at a time when India is facing a rainfall deficit of 41% between June 4 and June 18, with the southwest monsoon stalled over southern Maharashtra, according to the latest IMD data. The country has received 42.6 mm of rainfall against the normal 72.2 mm during the period.

The IMD's region-wise rainfall departure data showed deficits of 67% in central India, 42% in east and north-east India, 22% in the southern peninsula and 6% in north-west India.

Delhi recorded a maximum temperature of 39.5 degrees Celsius on Thursday, 0.7 degrees above normal.

INBRIEF

Two T.N. boats detained for fishing in Andhra waters

Two fishing boats from Tamil Nadu were seized for allegedly fishing in Andhra Pradesh's territorial waters near Nellore. The action was taken during a joint operation by a team of officials from the Marine Police, Fisheries and Forest Departments. District Fisheries Joint Director Chand Basha said: "The joint team immediately detained the two boats, and shifted them to the Juvvaladinne Harbour (Andhra Pradesh), where they were handed over to the Marine Police for further legal action." Officials said that strict action would be taken.

Kerala woman with suspected Ebola symptoms hospitalised

A 54-year-old woman with suspected symptoms of Ebola Virus Disease was admitted to Government Medical College hospital in Kottayam, Kerala on Thursday. The woman had returned from South Sudan and is a native of Valavoor, Pala, Kerala. A special team has been appointed to monitor her. She, however, does not exhibit any other symptoms typically associated with Ebola. Confirmation of whether she has contracted Ebola can come only after the results of the swab sample from Thiruvananthapuram are received.

Bail not shield for IPS officer in torture case, says A.P. HC

Taking a serious note of the alleged involvement of IPS officer M. Sunil Kumar Naik in the custodial torture of former Member of Parliament and current Deputy Speaker K. Raghu Ramakrishna Raju, the Andhra Pradesh High Court on Thursday observed that attacking a MP was not different from attacking the Parliament itself. Hearing the anticipatory bail plea filed by Mr. Naik, the court said the bail could not be a shield for a person against whom severe allegations were levelled.

Jagan demands CBI probe into custodial death of youth

G.V.R. Subba Rao
VIJAYAWADA

Sai Krishna has been missing for the last one month; family alleges police have tortured and beat him to death

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) president and former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday visited the residence of Gade Sai Krishna, 26, in Krishnalanka here and met his mother, Gade Vijayalakshmi, amid continuing controversy over the alleged custodial death of the youth.

Family members of Sai Krishna, who has been missing for the last one month, have alleged that the Krishnalanka police of NTR Commissionerate tortured and beat him to death while he was in custody. They demanded that the State government order a judicial probe into the issue and book all those responsible for it.

"Accusing my son of being involved in some cases, the police beat him to death. When I went to Krishnalanka police station a few days ago, Circle Inspector Nagaraju said that Sai Krishna died. He misbehaved with me," Ms. Vijayalakshmi told the media on Wednesday.

Mr. Reddy's visit comes against the backdrop of allegations that Sai Krishna died while in police custody and that authorities attempted to conceal the circumstances surrounding his death.

Speaking to pressperson later, Mr. Reddy alleged that complaints submitted by the victim's family were ignored by authorities and claimed that attempts had been made to bring pressure on Sai Krishna's mother. The family had been forced to approach the High Court through a *habeas corpus* petition after failing to receive satisfactory answers from the police, he said.

Demanding an impartial inquiry, the YSRCP chief reiterated his call for a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the alleged custodial death.

ED searches Kerala hospitals in organ trade racket probe

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Several leading private hospitals across Kerala were among the places raided simultaneously by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) as part of the probe into alleged money laundering linked to a suspected organ trade racket busted by the State police in Kochi last month.

Sleuths from the Kochi zonal unit of the ED fanned out to multi-speciality hospitals and houses of suspects in multiple districts on Thursday morning as part of probing the proceeds of the crime generated by the main accused Mohammed Najeeb Kallatra, a native of Kasaragod, through alleged organ trafficking. The raids, which lasted hours, were initiated based on the investigation agency's suspicion that staff at various hospitals connived with the accused in pulling off the alleged fraud. Organ transplantation records and other related documents were examined, sources said.

The ED is focussing on the alleged financial misappropriation, whereas the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Kerala Police continues to investigate the alleged criminal conspiracy, forgery and possible human trafficking aspects. Donor registries, transplant records, internal approvals and financial documents at hospitals are being reportedly examined by the ED officials.

The ED is looking at whether dubious agents from outside manipulated the approval process to facilitate illegal transplants. The agency is also examining whether the hospitals have been involved in financial transactions with any of the accused in the case. The police suspect that not less than 20 such dubious transplants were conducted under the aegis of the alleged racket in various hospitals across Kerala by luring vulnerable donors with money.

It is suspected that documents, including doctors' seals, medical certificates and hospital letterheads, were forged to secure statutory approvals mandatory for organ transplantation.

'Kafir' screenshot case puts CPI(M) on the defensive again

Sam Paul A.
KOZHIKODE

After its severe drubbing in the Assembly polls, the 'Kafir' screenshot case appears to be shaping up as another political setback for the CPI(M), with the special investigation team (SIT) making headway in its efforts to identify those behind it.

This comes even as the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) attempts to corner the nascent Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) government on multiple issues, ranging from the outbreak of Nipah and other contagious diseases to the contentious PM-SHRI scheme.

The SIT has already arrested Jithin Bhaskaran, a Vadakara block committee member of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), the youth wing of the CPI(M), and reportedly interrogated a few CPI(M) leaders in connection with the case.

Members of the Palakkad Block Congress Committee burn Pinarayi Vijayan's effigy during a protest in Palakkad on Wednesday, alleging him of shielding the accused. K. K. MUSTAFAH

The controversy resurfaced after Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) leader and Kuttiyadi MLA Parakkal Abdulla submitted a petition to Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala seeking a comprehensive probe, which led to the constitution of the SIT.

The controversy has witnessed several twists and turns since it emerged during the 2024 Lok Sabha election campaign in the Vadakara constituency.

The case centres on a communally charged screenshot shared on social media, urging Muslim voters to support UDF candidate Shafi Parambil of Congress over Left Democratic Front (LDF) nominee K. K. Shailaja of the CPI(M) in Vadakara.

The screenshot was initially attributed to P.K. Mohammed Khasim, district secretary of the Muslim Students Federation (MSF), the student wing of the IUML.

He has denied the allegation.

Ms Shailaja, in response to the ongoing probe, maintained that it would be appropriate to investigate all offensive comments posted on online platforms in the Vadakara region during the 2024 election.

"Let the SIT investigation continue. Let it find out who created this ('Kafir' screenshot). If a crime has been committed, those responsible should be punished," the CPI(M) Central Committee member told *The Hindu*.

The UDF has seized on the development to intensify its attack on the CPI (M), arguing that the 'Kafir' screenshot case is exposing the party's "real face".

"The arrest of the DYFI leader shows that the CPI (M) is willing to resort to communal polarisation for political gains. The arrest is only the tip of the iceberg." Mr. Abdulla said.

Court allows two-day custody of DYFI leader

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

The Judicial First Class Magistrate Court, Vadakara, on Thursday granted the police two days custody of Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) leader Jithin Bhaskar, who was arrested in connection with the probe into the controversial 'kafir' screenshot case. The court allowed the SIT to interrogate the accused till 5 p.m. on June 20.

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138	115.386	89,500	1,23,51,000	41,000	12,35,100	37,05,300	80,31,600	1,29,72,000
150	125.419	89,500	1,34,25,000	41,000	13,42,500	40,27,500	87,30,000	1,41,00,000
161	134.617	89,500	1,44,09,500	41,000	14,40,950	43,22,850	93,70,200	1,51,34,000
170	142.142	89,500	1,52,15,000	41,000	15,21,500	45,64,500	98,94,000	1,59,80,000

*BBA to be executed after successful allocation | PLC as Applicable

IMPORTANT DATES

REGISTRATION START DATE
Mon, 1st June 2026

LAST DATE OF REGISTRATION
Mon, 22nd June 2026

ALLOCATION DATE
Fri, 26th June 2026

GENERAL CATEGORY

Size (sq. yds.)	Size (sq. mtr.)	Basic Unit Price (Per sq. yds.)	Total Basic Cost	Registration Amount (Fully Refundable)	10% On Allocation Sunday (28-06-2026)	30% Within 30 Days of Allotment Monday (27-07-2026)	60% CLP	Total* Sales Value (EDC/IDC Included)
80	66.890	91,500	73,20,000	49,000	7,32,000	21,96,000	47,52,000	76,80,000
138	115.386	91,500	1,26,27,000	49,000	12,62,700	37,88,100	81,97,200	1,32,48,000
150	125.419	91,500	1,37,25,000	49,000	13,72,500	41,17,500	89,10,000	1,44,00,000
161	134.617	91,500	1,47,31,500	49,000	14,73,150	44,19,450	95,63,400	1,54,56,000
170	142.142	91,500	1,55,55,000	49,000	15,55,500	46,66,500	1,00,98,000	1,63,20,000

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A ND-NDE

Taxi and auto drivers registering for a Marathi course at the Wadala RTO in Mumbai. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Linguistics over licences

Maharashtra's Transport Minister has made it mandatory for the State's taxi and auto drivers to learn Marathi by August 15 or lose their licences. Chinmay R. Gaikwad reports on how RTOs are doubling as classrooms for migrant drivers who are struggling to learn the basics of a new language in just four days of classroom learning. He finds that some drivers are hopeful, while some others feel humiliated

Inside Mumbai's Andheri Regional Transport Office (RTO), rows of plastic chairs that once held people waiting for their token numbers to take driving tests, now seat a different kind of crowd: auto drivers, with notebooks open, mouthing Marathi sentences for the first time in their working lives. The four-day Marathi course, introduced from June 1, has become an unlikely part at five of 25 RTOs, each in a different zone in Mumbai. Every day, 50 to 80 drivers turn up at each centre, racing to clear a language test before their permits are flagged.

The urgency stems from an announcement made in April by Pratap Baburao Sarnaik, Maharashtra's Minister of Transport and chairperson of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC). Sarnaik held a press conference to announce that taxi and auto drivers in Mumbai would need to know how to read, write, and speak Marathi, or risk losing their licences. Transport officials who issue licences without proper checks may also face action. The drive was to start from May 1.

His statement sparked a political storm within days, drawing backlash from the Shiv Sena's Sanjay Nirupam and Samajwadi Party leader Abu Azmi, who objected to the timeline. Sarnaik, who is also from the Shiv Sena, part of the ruling alliance, then pushed the deadline to August 15, giving drivers a longer window to learn to read, write, and speak in Marathi. Mumbai has 88,923 registered taxis and 4,22,990autos, many of which are driven by people who have migrated to the State in search of work.

For some, the classroom is an unfamiliar and uncomfortable space, one that surfaces old anxieties about literacy, age, and what their children might think. Drivers, who have spent years memorising routes, fares, and the unwritten etiquette of Mumbai's roads, now find themselves holding a pencil again, sounding out words under the gaze of an instructor.

For some, the four days pass quickly, and without much fuss; for others, each session is a small, quiet reckoning with a part of their past they had hoped never to revisit.

> I am 42. My children go to school. If I also start going to school, my children will think I cannot read and write
>
> **RAKESH MANDAL**
> Taxi driver, Mumbai

For him, Marathi is simply the next thing to adapt to, no different from learning a new route or a new app. Some drivers at his stand grumble about the classes cutting into their peak earning hours, but he chooses to see it differently. A few mornings spent learning the language, he reasons, could mean better conversations with Marathi-speaking passengers, and possibly more regular customers in the long run. For Yadav, the classes are less an imposition and more an opportunity, a way to earn the trust of more passengers, and with it, more money.

Not everyone shares his enthusiasm. In Govandi, in Mumbai's eastern suburbs,Rakesh Mandal bristles at the idea of sitting in a classroom. "*Mera* age 42 *hai*. *Mere bachche* school *jaate hain*. *Agar main bhi* school *jaane lagunga, toh woh sochenge ki unka baap padha-likha nahi hai* (I am 42. My children go to school. If I also start going to school, my children will think I cannot read and write)," he says, even though he admits quietly that he can't.

Mandal has driven a taxi in Govandi for 20 years, ferrying his own children to school before starting his shifts. The thought of his children seeing him study daily fills him with dread. The discomfort runs deeper than the test itself. For Mandal, going back to school risks exposing a gap he has spent decades concealing, and no certificate, he feels, is worth that cost.

Contrasting views

In Kurla, Moolachand Yadav, 53, who has been driving an auto in Mumbai since 1991, says he has no quarrel with the new requirement. "*Itne saal se yahi sheher mein gaadi chala rahe hain, ab* Marathi *seekh lenge toh sawari bhi badhegi* (I have been in this city for so many years now. Maybe learning Marathi will help me find more customers)," he says, confident of finishing the course. Yadav has watched the city change around him for over three decades: new flyovers, new fares, new passengers.

Sarnaik feels that learning the language of the region where a person works is a responsibility. The Transport Department had received complaints, particularly from the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, and Nagpur, that many drivers were unable or unwilling to speak Marathi with passengers, he added, at the press conference.

RTOs turn schools

At the Andheri RTO, the person overseeing the programme is Deputy Regional Transport Officer Sudhir Jaybhaye. "On the first day (June 8) there were 52 students, the second day the numbers went up to 74. Now, we have 85-plus students in every batch," he says. Classes are between 12.30 p.m. and 1.30 p.m., which he says is between the hectic morning and evening office commute.

Jaybhaye explains that the office uses its routine paperwork as leverage to get drivers enrolled in the programme. When drivers come in to get new licences or renew old ones, or to register a vehicle, the RTO staff tells them to enrol in the free-of-cost Marathi course. "Drivers are told to finish the course first, after which their pending applications are taken up."

Anjali Deshpande, 73, one of the teachers at the Andheri centre, says attendance is recorded meticulously. She produces a sheet where each driver's licence number, vehicle registration number, and badge number is logged. Attending all four lectures and signing the attendance register is compulsory to receive a certificate, jointly issued by the Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh and the Kokan Marathi Sahitya Parishad, well-known institutions for their work in the Marathi language, which are under the Department of Cultural Affairs, Maharashtra.

Deshpande is a retired clerk from the Centre's defence department who took voluntary retirement and turned to tutoring in Marathi and Hindi. She speaks warmly of her days teaching in the RTO classes. "More than 200 auto drivers now call me 'Marathi madam'. I now get a different, more pleasant kind of treatment from auto drivers when I step out to run errands," she says, laughing. Unlike in many parts of India, Mumbai's autos run by the meter, though fares can involve negotiation.

At the Wadala RTO, lectures held are between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m., during what is typically the RTO's lunch break. One of the course coordinators there explains the philosophy behind the teaching method: a combination of visuals and text. Most of the instructors, she says, are retired professors and language teachers who have spent years in academics.

"The key difference between teaching children and adults, is that children ask far more questions and are starting from scratch, while adult learners tend to work through their difficulties on their own, with less hand-holding," she says, adding that the focus is on conversational Marathi. Students are taught 14 sentences. On the final day, students are tested on these, to qualify for the certificate. Officials say the test will assess whether a driver can read a signboard or document in Marathi, write a basic sentence, and hold a simple conversation in the language.

Commuters weigh in

The reactions to the drive are not confined to the drivers. Jyothi Ganta, a corporate professional who commutes nearly 9 kilometres daily from the Shimla House area to Fort, about 5 kilometres apart, in south Mumbai, offers a passenger's perspective. "It's not always necessary for drivers to speak Marathi. Sometimes commuters and drivers are both so busy on our phones that we just exchange OTPs, that's it," she says.

Ganta's mother tongue is Telugu, but she speaks Marathi fluently because she was born and raised in Mumbai. "When we change location geographically, only two things change: one is food, and the other is language. So, we should speak the language of the soil." Chetan Tokde, 28, an auto driver from Ambernath, in Thane district, takes a combative position. "Why should we change our language, our culture, our pride?" he says, adding that drivers unwilling to adjust "should go back to their hometowns". Maharashtra's Marathi-speaking drivers, he feels, are capable of running the city's transport on their own.

Vedant Jather, 34, a call-centre employee who commutes daily to Kanjurmarg station, strikes a more measured note. He says he has no problem with migrants, but he finds it telling that some drivers who had lived, worked, and earned in the city for more than 40 years had still not picked up the local language. "Is it possible that this would happen in Karnataka or Tamil Nadu?" he says, arguing that learning the local language is a responsibility drivers should have taken on themselves, rather than waiting for a government deadline to force the issue.

The political crossfire

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena's Mumbai vice-president Arvind Gawde is critical of the government's approach, framing the entire exercise as an attempt to woo migrant voters from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. "Why is this government running a 'learn Marathi' project for people coming from U.P. and Bihar?" he says, alleging that the ruling alliance wants to help migrants settle permanently in Mumbai and convert them into a vote bank.

He calls the exercise a "political theatre", questioning why taxpayer money is being spent on language instruction at all, pointing out that no other State runs comparable programmes. "Have you ever heard of Tamil Nadu's government spending money and manpower to teach its language to outsiders?" He also feels it is a poor use of the RTOs's limited resources. The RTOs should be focussing on illegal drivers, road safety, and the broader problems plaguing public transport, than on what he dismissively calls "schooling these *bhaiyyas*".

The four-day Marathi course has, in a matter of weeks, become a small but telling window into the larger anxieties of language, identity, and belonging that continue to define life in Mumbai. As the August 15 deadline approaches, RTO offices across the city swell even as the debate over who truly belongs to the city, and on what terms, remains far from settled.

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Vidya Prabhu, a retired teacher, conducting a four-day speaking, reading, and writing Marathi course. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Tourist traps Indian travellers have been facing renewed flak over their behaviour abroad. AI GENERATED ILLUSTRATION AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Extra baggage

As outbound travel from India surges, a handful of viral videos are shaping how the world sees Indian travellers. Is the criticism fair?

Barry Rodgers
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For a country whose travellers are among the most sought-after in the world, Indians seem to spend an inordinate amount of time being told how badly they travel.

According to the Mastercard Economics Institute's Travel Trends 2025 report, India is among the world's fastest-growing outbound travel markets, with destinations such as Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, Indonesia and the UAE reporting a surge in Indian arrivals.

Scroll through social media, however, and you would think the Indian traveller is single-handedly responsible for the collapse of global decorum. There was the group filmed performing garba beside a parked aircraft in Vietnam, followed by the inevitable commentary about Indians carrying theplas abroad, filming reels at landmarks and treating public spaces like private stages.

And while every traveller has a responsibility to respect public spaces, the problem is that this is true of almost everyone else too.

Pranav Sharma, a second-generation hotelier and founder of Manuscript Jhilwara Haveli in Udaipur, is no stranger to the quirks of global tourism. Before returning to India a few years ago, he worked with design-led boutique hospitality properties in Berlin.

"The British tourist spent decades perfecting the art form. Entire stretches of Spain, Greece and Thailand built reputations around young Britons treating weekends abroad as endurance contests involving cheap alcohol and questionable decisions. There is a reason 'stag do in Prague' conjures such a specific image," says Pranav.

Americans too have long been caricatured as loud and culturally oblivious. Chinese tourists spent much of the 2000s and 2010s under intense scrutiny as outbound travel from China exploded, with international headlines focussing on public etiquette, overcrowding at attractions and the occasional visitor behaving badly at a heritage site. In many ways, Pranav's observation echoes that of Sumir Nagar, a financial expert.

"In the 1980s, Western media often caricatured Japanese tourists as travelling in tightly organised groups, cameras slung around their necks, photographing everything in sight and rushing from one landmark to the next," he says. The stereotype became so pervasive that psychiatrists even coined the term Paris Syndrome to describe the disappointment some Japanese visitors reportedly experienced when the romanticised Paris of their imagination failed to match reality.

What makes the Indian traveller particularly vulnerable to stereotyping, Sumir argues, is visibility.

The spotlight on Indians

Journalist Prathap Nair, who grew up across South India and has spent the better part of a decade living in Germany, suspects the obsession with the supposedly unruly Indian traveller is often stronger in India than abroad.

"Just because you've seen a couple of videos of people singing bhajans, shouting religious slogans or behaving badly abroad doesn't mean that's representative of millions of Indians who travel every year," he says.

An IT consultant from Bengaluru, who requested anonymity, believes the conversation around Indian travellers cannot be separated from questions of class, hierarchy and how people relate to places they perceive as being "for them".

"I've noticed that people are generally more conscious of rules and social norms in Europe or the United States," he says. "But in parts of Southeast Asia, where travel is cheaper and more accessible, you occasionally see a greater sense of entitlement."

Keyur Joshi, founder of eco-resort Tipai by Wildlife Luxuries, proximate to Nagpur, and formerly part of MakeMyTrip, argues that "social media amplifies isolated incidents, while the travel industry looks at growth, spending and long-term value," he says.

According to estimates cited by Keyur, India now accounts for more than 30 million international departures annually, while Indian travellers spend upwards of US$40 billion (around ₹3,798 crore) overseas every year.

The burden of being an Indian traveller today is that your mistakes are often treated as representative of everyone else's.

Ray of colour

This exhibition at DAG lends a new dimension to the legendary filmmaker, Satyajit Ray

On film A 1974 image of Satyajit Ray behind the camera. NEMAI GHOSH.

Neeta Lal

For generations, Satyajit Ray has lived in public memory in shades of black-and-white. The celebrated filmmaker appears in iconic portraits with his trademark spectacles, directing actors on set, smoking thoughtfully between takes. These images, etched in India's cultural imagination, seem inseparable from the man himself.

Yet, a remarkable exhibition at DAG is challenging that familiar image. Faces and Facets; Satyajit Ray in Color, presents the filmmaker through a series of rarely-seen colour photographs by Nemai Ghosh, who documented Ray's life and work for over two decades.

Ghosh was Ray's trusted collaborator and principal still photographer. Beginning with *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* in 1968, he documented the filmmaker with rare access. Interestingly, photography was not Ghosh's first calling. As a young man, he was immersed in theatre, performing with Utpal Dutt's Little Theatre in Calcutta and starring in the landmark 1959 production *Angar*. His entry into photography was accidental. A friend who owed him ₹240 showed him a Canonette QL-16 camera that had been left behind in a taxi. Ghosh immediately asked for it in lieu of repayment – an act that altered the course of his life.

On a trip to Burdwan with friends, he carried the camera to the set of Ray's *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* and took several photographs with no particular intention. Seeing them, art director Bansi Chandragupta took Ghosh to Ray, who was impressed by his photographic skills and invited him to join his unit in 1968 – beginning a collaboration that lasted until the filmmaker's passing in 1992.

What makes the images at DAG compelling is not just the fact that they are in colour, but the manner in which colour alters our perception of a personality – long frozen in a monochrome-memory. Suddenly, Ray feels less like a distant legend and more like a living, breathing artiste. The trust Ray had in Ghosh, is evident throughout the exhibition. The images feel unguarded and spontaneous, capturing Ray in ways that formal portraits rarely can – in moments both public and personal – studying scripts, sketching storyboards, directing and conversing.

Few filmmakers have shaped modern Indian culture as profoundly as Ray. His debut film, *Pather Panchali* (1955), transformed Indian cinema and introduced international audiences to a new cinematic language – rooted in realism, empathy and everyday experience. Together with *Aparajito* and *Apur Sansar*, it formed the celebrated Apu Trilogy. His films explored social change, urbanisation, class, gender and human relationships with a subtlety rarely matched in cinema.

Seen in this context, the colour photographs possess an additional resonance. They offer a glimpse into the creative environment from which some of cinema's most enduring works emerged.

The exhibition is equally a tribute to Ghosh, whose photographs have become inseparable from the visual history of Ray's career. Reflecting on the relationship years later, Ghosh wrote: "I followed him like his shadow. I was crazy about capturing him on my camera every moment."

He passed away in Kolkata on March 25, 2020, leaving behind an invaluable visual chronicle of one of cinema's greatest masters and the world around him.

Faces and Facets; Satyajit Ray in Color is on at DAG, Janpath, until July 4.

Rebuilding bridges with Srinagar's fading past

A cultural centre in the midst of the city's crowded lanes aims to protect Kashmir's dying but essential intricate crafts

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Art in history Aabiyari is a restored house in Srinagar's Maharaj Gunj that retains old vernacular elements of Kashmiri architecture. IMRAN NISSAR.

With 4,000 years of documented history, the old city of Srinagar is a maze of narrow alleys. A walk through this labyrinth leads to Maharaj Gunj, an important commercial hub during the pre-1947 Dogra era, where traders of the Silk Route once lived. It is here that we encounter Aabyari.

This four-storey house transports visitors to the days of yore with its architectural elements typical of Kashmiri homes. A double-door with an iron chain hanging, lamp niches on walls, arched windows and lattice work – all rare today, have been preserved. What is rarer still is the dhajji dewari and taq work, a unique but now disappearing vernacular style of construction in wood and brick to resist quakes and keep houses warm in extreme winters.

Preserving the past is 48-year-old Mehboob Iqbal Shah whose great-great-great grandfather set up the House of Ali Shah in 1860 to popularise shawls and carpets in overseas markets. The old city still has women weaving pashmina wool in their homes, with shawls washed on the banks of the Jhelum river and dyes brimming in cauldrons. Shah has combined these architectural elements and Kashmir crafts to put a fresh spotlight on the city, which has largely remained out of bounds for travellers for over three decades due to the conflict. "We chose to return to Maharaj Gunj because it represents the cultural and artistic heart of Kashmir. The much-celebrated Map Shawl of Srinagar [where maps of cities are woven onto wool] first took shape here. These lanes have for generations been home to artisans and traders who defined the identity of Kashmiri craft," says Shah. At a time when cement and mortar are taking over the city's skyscape, this old restored house offers an attempt at experiencing Kashmiri architecture, craft, and cuisine. It is why the nameAabyari, which means nourishment, seems apt.

Evidently, it has not been an easy journey to recreate the past. With an old generation of worksmen no longer around, it has been hard to restore architectural elements like mud walls, carved deodar doors with geometric motifs, *morakh* (intricate planks of roofing), timber beams and *pinjra kari* or latticework inspired from the architecture of the nearby shrine of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani, a towering Persian Sufi saint and scholar.

Drawing from the past

It took one and a half years for the restoration of architectural elements inside the house, Shah says. The challenge was to restore the structure not only with traditional materials but also through traditional techniques. This includes the incorporation of hand-painted coloured glass in windows, mud plaster walls using hay fibre and kalrun reeds, glazed khaniyari tiles, Kashmiri courtyard planning, copper lamps, vessels and handcrafted accents.

The first floor offers visitors a peak into the living styles of the past while also doubling up as a showroom with an array of Kashmir shawls: from jamawars to kani shawls. "The loom rooms are designed with intimate traditional *karkhanas* (traditional manufacturing factories)," says Shah. Conceived as a living heritage space, Aabyari offers visitors an authentic window into the region's cultural legacy. It also aims to strengthen the artisan ecosystem through capacity-building workshops, design interventions, and collaborations with artists and designers from around the world. "The larger vision is not only to preserve traditional knowledge, but also to ensure that these crafts remain relevant and sustainable for future generations," says Shah.

While art engages the eye and intellect, cuisine creates a more intimate emotional connection through taste, hospitality and memory; the immersive centre also has a floor to display Kashmir's culinary heritage. With walls designed with motifs of iris and daffodils, the third floor has a setting for Sufiyana music.

In the past, Srinagar's Maharaj Gunj attracted traders from even parts of Central Asia. The market has bustling shrines, temples and ghats nearby. Lanes still hold the fragrance of the goods being sold. It remains to be seen if Aabyari spurs others in the market to ensure that the historical character of the city survives the throes of modern times.

Lopsided solution

In India, regulatory oversight for pharmaceuticals needs to improve

As part of an overarching attempt to restore confidence in India's pharmaceutical supply chain after a series of deaths damaged the country's reputation as a drug exporter, the government has required a doctor's prescription for individuals to purchase syrup-based medicines. However, while it seems like a credible measure, it is also defensive rather than reformist. The Union Health Ministry has removed the term "syrup" from Schedule K of the Drugs Rules 1945, a change it had signalled when it issued the draft notification in December 2025, thus requiring cough syrups to be sold only with a prescription, through licensed pharmacies. These products were singled out after ethylene glycol (EG) and diethylene glycol (DEG) contamination in India-made cough syrups killed over 300 children across several countries since 2022. The WHO's warnings in 2022 and 2023 also undermined assumptions that India's export quality controls were effective and functioning independently. But beyond contamination, doctors have long raised concerns about how cough syrups are formulated and used. Many over-the-counter (OTC) cough syrups are 'cocktails' of bronchodilators, antihistamines, and decongestants, which can cause tremors and heart palpitations, extreme sedation or paradoxical agitation in infants, and blood pressure effects. The American Academy of Pediatrics has said that cough suppressants are quite ineffective for children under six years and may even be dangerous, as they can mask underlying conditions such as pneumonia or asthma. Yet, India's entrenched OTC culture makes pharmacists de facto primary care providers in many rural and semi-urban areas.

Most importantly, however, the contamination was the result of failures in manufacturing quality control, testing of raw materials, and regulatory oversight rather than consumer access. Even now, requiring a prescription may reduce inappropriate use and push patients away from self-medication, but it could never prevent contaminated products from reaching the market in the first place. The fundamental issue is that the government continues to tolerate the pharmaceutical lobby's argument that high-end testing requirements – for stronger quality control and ultimately better drugs – will bankrupt smaller manufacturers. Second, while the *Indian Pharmacopoeia* and the *Pharmacopoeia Internationalis* updated their analytical methods to detect EG/DEG following the deaths, failures in batch testing and enforcement persist. As a result, while India has around three dozen State drug controllers, they are chronically understaffed – so without a large increase in the inspectorate, the notification is likely to be ignored sans consequence in rural areas. In a globalised economy, subpar enforcement for medicines in even one country is dangerous; that is infinitely more so in a country aspiring to remain the world's pharmacy.

Essential upgrades

The updates to India's statistical system are welcome, albeit long overdue

The government has, in recent months, implemented several long-overdue but welcome upgrades to India's statistical databases. Wide-ranging, they cover the way the country measures Gross Domestic Product (GDP), industrial production, and price changes at the retail, wholesale, and producer levels. These updates have not only made India's key economic statistics more representative of reality, but have also brought them in line with international best practices. The most basic change across all indices has been the updating of base years. Until recently, the base years for GDP, the Consumer Price Index (CPI), Wholesale Price Index (WPI), and Index of Industrial Production (IIP) were either 2011 or 2012. As such, these measures were significantly outdated and less reflective of reality with each passing year. In February, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the new series of national accounts data, including GDP, with a base year of 2022-23. The new series incorporates methodological improvements and new data sources, making it more granular and robust. Some of these, such as the double-deflator approach, have long been demanded by statisticians and international bodies, including the IMF.

Similarly, MoSPI had in February also released the new series of the CPI with an updated base year of 2024, a more inclusive basket of items measured, and more accurate weightages. This has enabled a more realistic reading of retail inflation, a key metric in interest-rate decisions. In early June, MoSPI then released the new series of the IIP as well. The base year was updated to 2022-23 and the index's data collection was strengthened. This, too, eventually feeds into more accurate GDP data. The other factor to be highlighted is that the data upgrades have not been limited to just MoSPI. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry also updated its WPI, releasing the new series on Monday. A more accurate WPI and CPI yield a more accurate GDP deflator, which strengthens the way that statisticians derive real GDP growth after having adjusted for inflation. The Commerce Ministry also released a new Producer Price Index (PPI), which is to replace the WPI in five years. A PPI is the standard among developed economies and provides more information about both goods and service price levels at the producer stage. With all these, the IMF is sure to improve the recurring 'C' grade it has given India's national accounts data. These, it is hoped, will also be capped off by a time-bound release of the new Census with no further delays.

NFHS-6 reveals progress amid nutrition challenges

Soumya Swaminathan

Chairperson, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, and Principal Adviser to the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme, Government of India

Rama Narayanan

Senior Research Fellow at the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation

The recently released National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-6 report presents a mixed progress card for India, offering reasons to cheer while also sending clear signals to pause and reflect. On the bright side, stunting levels (for children under five), which indicate long periods of sub-optimal food intake with other deprivations, have declined from 35.5% to 29.3%. Though a modest decline, any gain is welcome given the complexity of the task that involves strengthening women's access to knowledge and resources, improved water and sanitation, and ensuring access to healthy affordable diets. Wasting levels that indicate whether children have adequate weight for their height, show no change, except for severe forms of wasting. The pattern across indicators makes one thing clear: gains in child nutrition are due to better health-care access, immunisation coverage, maternal education and improvements in housing, water and sanitation, while feeding practices and access to quality diets remain weak and continue to limit progress.

Institutional births have reached 90%, with public health facilities accounting for 58% of births; 91% of deliveries were attended by skilled medical personnel and 95% of mothers were visited at least once by health personnel during the antenatal period.

Equally gratifying is vaccination coverage for children – 87% of children between 12 and 23 months of age are now fully vaccinated. Since private facilities account for only about 3% of vaccinations, the high coverage reflects the strong outreach efforts of frontline workers – Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA), Anganwadi workers (AWW), and Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM). These national averages hide regional disparities, but access to health services has improved across States.

Poor feeding practices

Despite the high rate of institutional births, only about 50% of newborns are breastfed within the first hour of life, indicating that the health system must intensify efforts to support early initiation of breastfeeding. About 60% of children between the ages of six to eight months, receive solid/semi-solid food, while only 15% between six to 23 months receive an adequate diet. Improving the timely initiation of complementary feeding and ensuring that all children receive an adequate diet are key to reducing undernutrition. In India, complementary feeding is closely linked to the annaprasana ritual, typically performed between six and 12 months – any delay will result in growth faltering.

Better health care alone cannot overcome India's nutrition challenges

A growing and under-explored determinant of child nutrition in India is maternal time poverty. Women perform multiple roles within and outside the home. NFHS-6 reports that about 30% of women engaged in paid work during the past 12 months, but this significantly underestimates their overall work burden. A large proportion of women in informal economies engage in unpaid family labour, in farming/fisheries, livestock care, and domestic chores. There are no clear estimates of the percentage of young mothers with children between six-23 months who are in the work force and there is very little documentation on how women manage child feeding with their other work roles. In many rural areas, in the absence of crèches, women leave their infants and young children with older family members or the child's older sibling (usually a girl), impacting both breastfeeding and complementary feeding, when they are out in the fields.

The processed food trap

Recent consumer expenditure survey results show that households are spending less on cereals and more on dairy, processed foods and beverages, with the latter two forming a large part of the expenditure. This creates an impression of diversity which is not the same as nutritional adequacy. A nutritionally adequate diet would have to follow the ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) food-based dietary guidelines. Unfortunately, for a sizeable section of the population, a nutritious diet consisting of pulses, millets, fruits and vegetables, animal foods and nuts is unaffordable. Processed foods, in contrast, are easily available, ready to eat and packaged in affordable packs.

The first 1,000 days – from pregnancy to a child's second birthday – form the most critical window for healthy physical and cognitive development (most brain growth occurs in the first five years). We need disaggregated data for the 0-2 age group, currently unavailable, as stunting typically peaks during the second year of life and growth faltering often begins much earlier. The Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment (POSHAN) Abhiyaan programme currently focuses on identification and rehabilitation of severely malnourished children. Prevention of growth faltering must receive greater priority. Early identification of stagnation in weight or length, with timely counselling and support to mothers, is central to prevention.

Empowering frontline nutrition workers

Monthly anthropometric data for young children is collected by AWWs. Strengthening their skills in data collection would improve data quality. The huge volume of collected data should be analysed locally and feedback provided to the ASHAs and AWWs for timely action.

For this task, recruitment of a nutritionist and a data analyst at the district level is needed. Where possible, digital tools can be used to supplement in person counselling, by providing both workers and mothers practical information on how, when and what to feed young children at different ages, based on locally available healthy foods.

Behaviour change communication efforts should be culturally grounded, integrating practices such as annaprasana to reinforce timely and appropriate complementary feeding. Joint capacity building of AWWs, ASHAs, and ANMs in assessing feeding practices and advising families with effective communication materials on improving diets using locally available, affordable foods would enhance the quality of counselling and reduce the risk of undernutrition.

Multisectoral convergence is critical to addressing child malnutrition, yet it remains weak. Child nutrition should be a standing agenda item in Gram Sabha and Panchayat discussions. Local planning must prioritise improvements in Anganwadi infrastructure, safe drinking water, and sanitation facilities, as these foundational services directly influence child growth and health.

Engaging men in childcare, promoting shared domestic responsibilities, and strengthening support to mothers can significantly enhance feeding and caregiving behaviours. Many non-governmental organisations in India have developed crèche models that combine childcare, nutrition and early learning, and can be run by trained local women. From a gender perspective, crèches are not only child development interventions; they are social infrastructure that enables women's economic participation and reduces unpaid care burdens. With coordinated action across sectors and communities, meaningful and sustained progress in child nutrition is entirely achievable.

The real barriers to trade are no longer tariffs

Anuj Gupta

Managing Director of BowerGroupAsia

Recently, the CEO of a large multinational called to ask whether the upcoming visit of the United States Trade Representative to India could result in tariff rates returning to around 18% or settling at a different level.

Such conversations reflect the extent to which trade negotiations are often viewed through the prism of headline tariff numbers. Yet, in practice, tariff rates are only one part of the picture. The more significant determinants of market access and competitiveness frequently lie elsewhere. This presents an opportunity for India to move beyond a narrow focus on tariff bargaining and instead address the broader set of factors that shape trade outcomes.

When India and the U.S. issued a joint statement in February 2026 agreeing on a framework for an interim trade agreement, the headlines highlighted the obvious: the tariff numbers. The U.S. reciprocal rate cut to 18%. India's pledge to move toward zero duties on American goods. The "$500 billion" purchase commitment. But the White House fact sheet buried the more consequential admission – that both sides needed to negotiate the removal of non-tariff barriers. The U.S. deploys its own formidable non-tariff barriers arsenal while India has its quality regulations. The tariff headline was the press release. The NTBs on both sides are the actual problem.

For decades, trade diplomacy revolved around tariffs. Governments negotiated reductions in import duties, and success in trade talks was measured in percentage points shaved off customs rates. In today's hyper-regulated global economy, tariffs barely matter. The real obstacles are faced in the laboratory and the law offices through NTBs.

NTBs are the regulations, certifications, licensing rules, and product requirements that goods must meet before entering a market. They include technical regulations, environmental rules, health and safety requirements, packaging standards and testing procedures. Unlike tariffs, which are transparent and easy to measure, these regulatory hurdles operate within the system and exert a far-reaching influence on trade.

NTBs, the quiet trade weapon

Since the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995, average tariff rates among its members have fallen by nearly half, yet governments have not abandoned protectionism. As tariffs declined, NTBs surged. Today, they affect around 90% of global trade – a sixfold increase over the past three decades.

Tariffs dominate the headlines, but regulations increasingly determine trade outcomes

The regulatory landscape has expanded just as rapidly. More than half of the 20,000 global product and safety regulations introduced over the past 70 years have emerged since 2000, creating a dense web of overlapping rules that complicates cross-border commerce and raises compliance costs, particularly for smaller exporters. The WTO itself reflects this shift. In 2025 alone, governments submitted over 7,700 notifications of NTBs and health-related trade measures, 10 times more than in 1995.

Among major economies, the European Union (EU) is the most extensive user of these regulatory tools. According to the World Trade Organization and World Bank data, non-tariff measures cover roughly about 94% of imports entering the EU, compared with about 77% in the U.S. and nearly 45% in India. Each major economy deploys these barriers differently. The EU has built the world's most expansive regulatory architecture for trade, with NTBs concentrated in environmental rules, chemical safety regulations, product standards, packaging requirements and climate-related policies such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and the EU Deforestation Regulation. These rules are justified as protections, often acting as powerful filters on trade.

The American NTBs are driven by strategic competition, security concerns and technological dominance. Export controls, entity lists and restrictions on semiconductors, AI chips and advanced computing hardware increasingly limit rivals' access to critical technology supply chains. India has traditionally relied more on tariffs, but this is changing. As part of its industrial strategy, New Delhi is expanding quality regulations on imports of electronics, machinery and chemicals to boost domestic manufacturing and reduce dependence on external supply chains.

The Indian experience

India's own FTA record makes the point sharply. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-India agreement has been in force since 2010, yet preferential tariff utilisation among Indian businesses remains below 50%, largely because non-tariff barriers (NTBs) make claiming these benefits commercially impractical. Indonesian registration requirements restrict Indian pharmaceutical exports, while Thai customs procedures force gems and jewellery exporters to reroute shipments through Hong Kong. Tariffs have fallen, but trade barriers remain.

Japan and South Korea tell a similar story. Despite an FTA with Japan since 2011, Indian pharmaceutical exports remain negligible because market approvals can take five to seven years and Japan has resisted recognising international testing standards. With South Korea, bilateral trade reached $27 billion in 2024-25, but India accounted for only $6.5 billion. Overall, India's FTA utilisation rate is about 25%, compared with 70%-80% for developed economies. The agreements existed on paper; the barriers remained in practice.

The next frontier of trade

This does not mean abandoning legitimate environmental or consumer protections, but regulatory systems must be transparent and proportionate. Otherwise, they risk fragmenting global markets at precisely the moment when supply chains are being re-organised.

India's newer agreements signal a genuine shift. The United Arab Emirates Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement explicitly mandates automatic recognition of medicines approved by major global regulators, and requires mutual acceptance of laboratory testing that eliminates duplicate compliance costs. The India-European Free Trade Association Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement, in force since October 2025, goes further with mutual recognition of standards, streamlined conformity assessment, and a dedicated sub-committee mandated to address NTBs on an ongoing basis. For the first time, NTB reduction is a legally binding obligation.

The politics of trade still talks about tariffs. The economics of trade has already moved on. In the 21st century, the real barriers are regulatory. If the West wants a serious economic pivot to the east, addressing those barriers will matter far more than cutting tariffs ever did.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

American ambiguity

The United States appears to be sending mixed signals once again — downplaying India's global importance while simultaneously praising the Indian Prime Minister. The killing of three Indian sailors in the Gulf and reports of the Pentagon dropping "Indo" from the Pacific command name have further fuelled questions about the reliability of U.S. commitments. India must always maintain a contingency plan and be prepared for any eventuality should American policy shift unexpectedly.

It is also important to seek clarity on what exactly is meant by the statement that the "U.S. will help India under Prime Minister Modi's leadership if it comes under attack".

Govardhana Myneedu,
Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

Wildlife management

Animal welfare groups have objected to the culling of wild boars, especially in parts of Kerala. However, they must also recognise the extensive damage these animals cause to crops and the risks they pose to human life. Many of those opposing the measure may not have experienced these challenges first hand, particularly in areas where human-wildlife conflict is acute.

Rather than imposing a blanket policy of indiscriminate culling, authorities should prioritise intervention in regions where the problem is most severe. At the same time, the growing populations of predators such as tigers and leopards require careful management to prevent escalating conflicts with humans.

Animal welfare groups and experts must strike a balance between conservation goals and the legitimate concerns of affected communities. Ultimately, protecting human lives and livelihoods must remain a central consideration in wildlife management policies.

J.K. John,
Thrissur, Kerala

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

Is India producing more graduates than what the economy can absorb?

PARLEY

Rajan Wadhera

Former President, Automotive Sector, Mahindra & Mahindra

O. R. S. Rao

Chancellor, ICFAI University, Sikkim

India is witnessing an unprecedented expansion in higher education. Over the past decade, thousands of new colleges and universities have been established, producing millions of graduates every year. Yet unemployment of the educated remains a growing concern. Nearly one in three graduates are unemployed. Is India producing more graduates than what the economy can absorb? Rajan Wadhera and O.R.S. Rao discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **M. Kalyanaraman**. Edited excerpts:

Is India producing more graduates than the economy can absorb?

O.R.S. Rao: The numbers point to a widening gap between the growth in graduates and the growth in jobs. In engineering alone, the number of graduates has risen sharply over the past few years while job creation has not kept pace. Earlier, the IT services sector was the principal employer of engineering graduates. Today, hiring by IT services firms has slowed considerably, even though sectors such as banking and financial services, manufacturing, defence and space technologies have expanded their recruitment. The challenge is that these new opportunities have not grown fast enough to absorb the increasing number of graduates entering the labour market.

A second issue is the nature of investment. Much of the recent investment in sectors such as semiconductors, advanced manufacturing and technology has been capital-intensive rather than labour-intensive. As a result, large investments do not necessarily translate into proportionate job creation.

Has AI made the problem worse?

ORSR: We are in the middle of a major technological transition. AI is changing the nature of work much faster than how educational institutions can adapt. Companies now want graduates who can work with AI systems, validate AI-generated outputs, understand responsible and ethical AI use, and solve complex problems using technology. Four years ago, when many of today's graduates entered college, these skills were not widely discussed. Universities cannot redesign programmes overnight, and students cannot acquire entirely new competencies instantly.

As a result, many graduates are entering a labour market that demands skills different from those they were trained for.

Is employability more important than just job creation?

Keeping up: Candidates who came for a mega job fair at the Government Engineering College in Thrissur in 2025. NAJEEB K.K.

Rajan Wadhera: There is certainly a growing concern about employability, particularly among engineering graduates. The problem is often a mismatch between what is taught and what the industry requires. Students may graduate with strong academic credentials but have limited exposure to laboratories, manufacturing environments, teamwork and real-world problem-solving. When they enter the industry, employers frequently find that they need substantial additional training in order to contribute effectively. Companies run their own training programmes to bridge this gap. This was far less common a few decades ago.

Has manufacturing failed to create enough opportunities?

RW: Manufacturing still has considerable potential, but it too is undergoing profound change. People often focus on the impact of AI on software jobs, but manufacturing is also being transformed by automation, robotics, and Industry 4.0 systems. Historically, a large number of engineers were employed in supervisory and operational roles on factory floors. Today, many of those functions are automated. Digital manufacturing systems require fewer people to oversee production processes. As a result, the number of engineering jobs generated by manufacturing is not increasing at the pace many people expected. Even as factories expand output, they often require fewer workers and supervisors than before.

Does that mean the future is one of permanent jobless growth?

RW: I would not go that far. India's push towards self-reliance in sectors such as defence,

> Students may graduate with strong academic credentials but have limited exposure to laboratories, manufacturing environments, teamwork and real-world problem-solving
> **RAJAN WADHERA**

aerospace and advanced manufacturing is creating new opportunities. There is increasing emphasis on domestic design and product development, and that is encouraging. The challenge is that automation and digitalisation are reducing labour requirements even as industries grow. Therefore, employment growth may not automatically match economic growth. This makes it even more important for educational institutions and industry to work together. Curricula needs to be aligned much more closely with industry requirements.

Has India focused too much on manufacturing and too little on innovation?

ORSR: Over many years, India became increasingly proficient at manufacturing products designed elsewhere; manufacturing alone does not create enough opportunities for highly trained engineers. The real value lies in research, development and design. Countries that control intellectual property and technology create far more opportunities for engineers than countries that simply manufacture products. Recent global developments have reinforced this lesson. Increasing restrictions on access to critical technologies such as semiconductors and strategic components have shown that excessive dependence on external technologies carries risks. India therefore needs to invest much more aggressively in indigenous research, innovation and product development.

Has India made progress in indigenous design capabilities?

RW: It would be incorrect to say that India remains only a manufacturing base. Over the last decade, companies such as Mahindra and Tata Motors have developed significant design and engineering capabilities. Indian engineers today are designing vehicles, platforms, transmissions and other complex systems that would previously have been developed elsewhere. The issue is not whether these capabilities exist. The issue is scale. The number of high-quality engineering graduates being produced is larger than the number of advanced R&D and design roles currently available.

What role should entrepreneurship play?

ORSR: Neither government nor industry can create enough jobs for every graduate. We need more graduates to become creators of enterprises rather than only seekers of employment. One major challenge is access to risk capital. Traditional lenders prefer established businesses and proven revenue streams. Innovation, however, requires investors willing to support ideas at an early stage. India's startup ecosystem has made significant progress, but much more needs to be done to support deep-technology ventures.

What should India focus on in the AI era?

ORSR: India should focus not only on infrastructure but also on products. There is a significant need for sovereign AI as nations with those systems seek to restrict access. Product companies create intellectual property, innovation and high-value employment. The goal should be to develop products not only for India but for global markets. We should identify strategic areas where India can become a global leader. UPI's success demonstrates that India is capable of building world-class digital platforms.

What needs to change in higher education?

ORSR: Industry-academia collaboration must become much deeper. Universities cannot design relevant programmes without industry participation, and industry cannot expect job-ready graduates without contributing to curriculum, internships and skill development.

Looking ahead, what are the priorities?

ORSR: Three priorities stand out. First, India must significantly increase investment in research and development. Second, industry and academia must work together much more closely. Third, we need a stronger entrepreneurship ecosystem that encourages innovation and supports risk-taking.

RW: I would add that India must continue building indigenous capabilities in design, engineering and advanced manufacturing. The opportunities are real, particularly in sectors such as defence and aerospace. The challenge is ensuring that education, industry and policy move in the same direction.

To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

NOTEBOOK

Free media cannot be free

Mainstream media needs subscription-model based revenue in order to remain as a credible source of information

Varghese K. George

The horizontal flow of information across peers on Social Media (SM) is turning out to be more impactful than its vertical flow from a source of authority to the mass audience, as it happens through Mainstream Media (MSM). SM has on the one side democratised information and held authorities accountable, but on the other hand it has created an information anarchy that generates social and political chaos. This crisis, and state attempts to manage it, is evident in the ban on the Telegram app. Public awareness about the NEET question paper leak and issues related to the evaluation of CBSE answer sheets – and reactions to them – were largely shaped by social media. Some students who were directly affected figured out and explained the issues much better than MSM; but in parallel, tons of misinformation also got circulated, creating panic.

This information crisis is evident to all, but nobody has figured a way out of it. Among the critical responses to the situation must be a restoration of the professionalism and independence of MSM, which is impossible without a robust business model. The present crisis is that the public berates MSM but trusts SM forwards from any source – free rubbish. MSM has to recreate itself in such a manner that the public not only trusts it, but also pays for the information and analysis that it provides. And people who lament the fall of MSM must commit to pay for news, and put their money where their mouth is.

MSM platforms and journalists have been trying to imitate SM in creating polemics and polarising content in order to beat it. They no longer seek to fulfil the traditional role of being an independent mediator of information for the public good; instead, they seek to profit from the prejudice and ignorance of the public, which is anyway being inflamed by SM. In this manner, SM and MSM are both contributing to the chaos. Nearly all MSM media houses are seeking to imitate business models built around reels, personality cults, tantalising clickbait, algorithmically driven advertisement models, and also by piggybacking on Big Tech, which is controlling technology and capital at an unprecedented rate. All this will only hasten the decline of MSM.

What appears to be a good sign for MSM is an apparent, though only partial, realisation across political, business and state actors that MSM has a critical role to play in social stability and good governance. While the practice of bypassing MSM to avoid scrutiny will certainly continue, managing governance requires a trusted MSM. During Operation Sindoor this fact was evident, when channels behaved like SM trolls and created a diplomatic embarrassment for the country. The current controversies around exams could have been better managed if there had been proper communication between the government and the public. Before SM, the practice of beat reporting ensured that authorities would explain their plans and set out what students, teachers and other stakeholders should expect when a policy was rolled out. The deliberate weakening of such communication between the government and the public may help avoid accountability, but it also creates governance crises.

This is hence an opportunity for MSM to reimagine itself. What it needs is a business model in which the user pays – that is both a market imperative and a democratic one. Instead of playing defence against SM and Big Tech – which have already decimated conventional advertisement-driven media – and seeking crumbs from the very forces that are destroying it, MSM must assert its role, function and value, both in terms of social impact and money.

Consumers should be paying for news, for news to remain credible. Those who consume free information are paying a huge price for it in terms of social and political impact – and in many cases at a personal level too. For instance, those who adopt quick health fixes obtained from SM can end up in serious medical situations. Media is, and can only be, free when the user is paying for it.

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PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Under a cloud

Looming presence: People walk along the Marine Drive as dark monsoon clouds gather overhead in Kochi on June 17. However, with the southwest monsoon stalled over southern Maharashtra, India has had a nationwide rainfall deficit of 41% between June 4 and June 18, according to the latest India Meteorological Department data. H.VIBHU

FROM THE ARCHIVES The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 19, 1976

Gold ore shoots found near KGF

Bangalore, June 18: Some gold ore shoots in the neighbourhood of the Kolar Gold Fields in Karnataka have been located by both the Geological Survey of India and the Bharat Gold Mines Limited.

The GSI has been exploring the area for nearly three years and it has now located an ore shoot of 200 metres strike length at a depth of about 150 metres. Further exploration underground in the 25th level (1,600 feet below the surface) showed indications over a strike length of one kilometre.

This find has aroused hopes of locating some ore shoots which are likely to extend the life of the KGF mines, the Union Deputy Minister for Steel and Mines, Mr. Sukhdev Prasad told a press conference.

The Bharat Gold Mines (BGML), in the course of surface exploration, has found a similar ore shoot in the nearby Bisanattam area in Karnataka. It is hoped that further exploration may result in the location of ore shoots which may ultimately lead to the opening of a new mine.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 19, 1926

South Indian epigraphy

The annual report on South Indian Epigraphy for last year, which has been published, although not remarkable for any outstanding discoveries or contributions to our knowledge of ancient history has still much information that should be of great interest to the general reader as well as to the student of Indian history. It is a hopeful sign that the department should have woke up to the destructive vandalism that has been the cause of the loss of many invaluable records in temples and other places of worship.

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Amount sought by UN food agencies to shield people from El Nino

202 million dollars. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization and World Food Programme on Thursday appealed for $202 million to help protect 8.8 million people across 22 high-risk countries from theEl Niño weather pattern. El Niño may raise drought, flood and storm risks across several regions, FAO and WFP said. REUTERS

Ration cards to be issued after deleting ineligible entries

3 crores. Union Food Minister Pralhad Joshi on Thursday said there is scope for issuing nearly 3 crore more ration cards to eligible beneficiaries after some States removed 2.21 crore ineligible holders from PDS lists. Addressing the launch of a smart warehousing system, he said the deletions were carried out by States following their own criteria, not by the Centre. PTI

Dip in Saudi tourism this year because of Iran-U.S. conflict

5-6 in percent. Saudi Arabia's tourism sector slowed by 5% to 6% in the first five months of 2026 compared to last year because of the Iran war, Tourism Minister Ahmed Al-Khateeb told the FII PRIORITY Europe summit. He added that Saudi Arabia was able to hedge the impact of the war on travel because of religious tourism. REUTERS

Amount to be disbursed under PM-VBRY on Friday

2,400 ₹ crore. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will disburse ₹2,400 crore through Direct Benefit Transfer to over 15 lakh beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rojgar Yojana (PM-VBRY) on Friday, Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said. Mr. Modi will disburse the funds during an event at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. PTI

Number of schools which had registration cancelled in U.P.

465 The U.P. Board has cancelled the recognition of 465 schools for the sessions 2024-25 and 2025-26, citing that the recognition granted to school is deemed cancelled under provisions of the Intermediate Education Act if no student appears for exams or classes are not conducted for two years. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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What is Kerala's risk profile for Nipah?

How do ecological and human factors intersect in driving spillovers? Will it be possible to prevent recurrent spillovers events? What has Kerala learnt from the multiple outbreaks? What makes Kerala's Nipah response effective in containing outbreaks? Why is Nipah classified as a high-threat pathogen within Kerala's zoonotic landscape?

EXPLAINER

C. Maya

The story so far:

Kerala's first encounter with Nipah virus (NiV) was in 2018, which identified 23 cases (including 18 lab-confirmed ones). The case fatality rate was 91% and there were two survivors. Since then, Kerala has recorded numerous spillovers of NiV.

In 2019, a lone case was identified in Ernakulam and the person survived the infection. In 2021, a 12 -year-old boy was detected with the infection in Malappuram. In 2023, Nipah resulted in a cluster of six cases in Kozhikode. Two single cases each were reported from separate spillover events from Malappuram, in July and September in 2024. In 2025, four cases of Nipah were reported from two districts, Malappuram and Palakkad and epidemiological investigations reported that none of these cases appeared to be linked to each other, suggesting independent spillover events from the natural reservoir.

NiV has resurfaced again in Kozhikode now and a 43-year-old, who tested positive for the virus, is battling for life at Kozhikode Medical College.

Why is Nipah recurring in Kerala?

Research has consistently identified the Indian flying fox bat (*Pteropus medius*) or the fruit bat as the natural reservoir of Nipah virus in Kerala. Serological studies and viral detection in bats have shown that the virus is circulating in bat colonies in the State, particularly in northern districts.

In the 2018 Kerala outbreak, about 25% of the sampled bats were found to be positive for Nipah viral RNA and in subsequent events too, bat samples had revealed the presence of NiV.

The Pteropus species are found across the State and very near human settlements. A mapping study of bat-roosting sites by Kerala Forest Research Institute's Department of Wildlife Biology had found that almost all of the roosts were near human habitats, increasing the risk of zoonotic exposure.

Why is Nipah spillover risk highest in Kerala between April and September?

The recurrent NiV spillovers in Kerala with fair regularity suggest that the virus has established itself in the environment. The peak Nipah virus spillover risk in the State is from April to September, when the abundance of seasonal fruit-laden trees, increased bat foraging activity, bat breeding season and viral shedding dynamics coincide, increasing the risk of human exposure. This pattern has not changed in Kerala since the very first outbreak.

Because of the perennial natural virus reservoir in the State, it might not be possible to prevent recurrent NiV spillover events in Kerala.

What makes Kerala particularly vulnerable to zoonotic diseases?

It is the convergence of ecological, demographic, climatic factors and increased human-wildlife interface that makes Kerala a special lab for zoonotic diseases.

The Western Ghats, which stretches along the State's eastern flank, is one of the world's richest biodiversity spots and the tropical rainforest climate sustains several hundred species of birds, reptiles and mammals. But only about 1,60,000 sq. km of this rich biosphere is formally protected. The high population density in Kerala and the increased presence of human settlements, plantations, and agricultural lands immediately adjacent to and along the forest fringes increases the opportunities for human-wildlife interactions and facilitates exposure to novel pathogens.

Scientific literature links emerging zoonoses to deforestation, habitat fragmentation, urbanisation and agricultural intensification. When wildlife habitats are disturbed, the animals are forced into closer contact with human settlements and cultivated food sources. Scientists also warn that climate-related ecological disruptions could be important contributors to future spillover risk in the case of Nipah.

Nipah is just one among Kerala's broader zoonotic risk profile, which includes other pathogenic diseases like Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), leptospirosis, scrub typhus, Japanese encephalitis, West Nile fever, rabies and avian influenza.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has warned Kerala to be on the vigil about some high threat pathogens (HTPs) – Nipah, Avian Influenza (H5N1) and KFD – which have a high mortality profile and high transmissibility with pandemic potential. Nipah has been classified by the WHO as a priority pathogen because of its lethality, unpredictability and its alarming potential to cause widespread outbreaks or even the next pandemic.

How is Kerala responding to the recurrent threat of zoonotic events like Nipah?

The recurrent spillover incidents in Kerala has primed the health system about the importance of sharp and coordinated disease surveillance, rapid pathogen identification and containment efforts to ensure that human-to-human transmissions do not occur, resulting in a wide outbreak.

The 2018 brush with Nipah took the health system by surprise. Of the 23 cases identified in the outbreak, only the index case had contracted the infection in the community. All the remaining cases were due to nosocomial transmission (the spread of pathogens within healthcare facilities) in three different hospitals.

Kerala used the 2018 experience as an opportunity to develop a clinical algorithm for all emerging viral infections at tertiary care levels, strengthen diagnostic and research capacities and augment standard infection control practices in hospitals. Clinicians in the State have become adept at maintaining a high index of suspicion when they encounter unusual cases of acute encephalitis syndrome and to watch for clustering of cases.

The State now has a stringent system for monitoring all acute encephalitis cases of unknown etiology, screening of severe respiratory infections as well as early lab confirmation and detection of pathogens through its expanded Virus Research and Diagnostic Laboratory (VRDL) networks and intensive health emergency management measures.

In all its Nipah outbreaks, the health system's public health response has demonstrated that it can rapidly identify the index case and swiftly contain the event. After the initial event, human-to-human transmission has occurred only once in 2023.

How is Kerala strengthening its preparedness against recurring Nipah outbreaks?

The recurrence of Nipah in Kerala and the State's swift public health response every time has been a demonstration of the resilience of the State's health system. With the State harbouring a natural reservoir of Nipah virus and a perennial risk of virus spillovers, the Health department's focus has been on creating community awareness about the situation so that the bat-human interface is reduced.

As part of its 'One Health' strategies, it has developed a massive community-based surveillance network supported by over 2.5 lakh trained volunteers at the grassroots, who track and report unusual disease trends, including unusual animal or bird deaths, to enable early detection of zoonotic outbreaks such as Nipah and Mpox.

In 2023, the State set up the One Health Centre for Nipah Research and Resilience at Kozhikode, which has been focusing on building community awareness, resilience and capacity to minimise spillover events and to mount a swift response to any such events.

It has documented every single outbreak in Kerala and prioritised Nipah research for the future, focusing on disease epidemiology, sero surveillance studies and host factors research.

The State government, along with National Institute of Virology (NIV), is also involved in a project to develop indigenous monoclonal antibodies against Nipah, specific to the Bangladesh strain of NiV circulating in Kerala.

Renewed alert: Nipah virus has resurfaced in Kozhikode now, with a 43-year-old patient battling for life at the Government Medical College Hospital. A security guard installs a warning board outside Nipah isolation ward at the hospital on June 11, 2026. K.RAGESH

The WHO has warned Kerala to be on the vigil about some high threat pathogens

THE GIST

A mapping study of bat-roosting sites by Kerala Forest Research Institute's Department of Wildlife Biology had found that almost all of the roosts were near human habitats, increasing the risk of zoonotic exposure.

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IN THE LIMELIGHT

A landmark leap: A still from the movie *Boong,* which was the first Indian film to win a prestigious BAFTA award, the British equivalent of the Oscar, in the children's film category in 2026. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Silent scream that lingers: *Boong*'s quiet reckoning with patriarchal injustice

Beyond the engaging drama of a boy's longing for his long-missing father, the film touches upon the complex gender dynamics of Manipuri society; it also compels viewers to pause and reflect on the deeply embedded patriarchal structures, urging much-needed social introspection

Pradip Phanjoubam

The Manipuri movie *Boong* written and directed by Laxmipriya Devi and co-produced by Farhan Akhtar, was understandably celebrated in Manipur for its cinematic brilliance, and for the pride it brought the place, after all it was first Indian film to win a prestigious BAFTA award, the British equivalent of the Oscar, in the children's film category in 2026. I watched it with my family on the third day of its theatrical release in Imphal.

Beyond the engaging drama of a boy's longing for his long-missing father, and the intimate glimpses his search offers into the complex and emotionally fragile inter-community relationships in multi-ethnic Manipur, the film also struck a deeper, raw nerve among the Manipuri audience.

As the show ended and lights flooded back into the theatre, there was a palpable sense of catharsis – the kind that good performing arts leave behind. Yet, some women remained seated, quietly wiping off tears, taking a few extra moments to regain composure before rising to join the rest of the audience.

Manipur's gender equation reality is complex. At one level, women have historically been at the forefront of many social, economic and political upheavals. Across both the hills and the valley, exclusive women-run markets thrive, and in the agrarian economy, men and women function as equal partners. The fact that the director of *Boong* is a woman reflects this sinew of gender empowerment too.

The Meira Paibi movement amongst Meiteis, which also manifests under different nomenclatures amongst hill communities, is the most prominent alibi of Manipuri women's well-deserved image as social torchbearers.

During the colonial period, in 1904 and again in 1939, women rose to protest against British policies, ultimately forcing their withdrawal. These uprisings are now commemorated as *Nupi Lan* or women's war.

The first was against the forced labour of Manipuri men to rebuild the British Residency in Imphal, which had been gutted in an arson attack by disgruntled elements; the second opposed the large-scale export of rice from the State to support the British World War II effort, which led to severe shortages for local consumption.

Patriarchy persists

Despite this, there are strongly entrenched gender oppressive patriarchal norms which have persisted. This is especially true among Meiteis, who continue to carry the albatrosses of a feudal past. Polygamy is arguably the most troubling.

The practice persists since it is normalised, even though not encouraged. This is particularly common among the elite section, where keeping mistresses or even taking more than one wife, is not uncommon. Many of Manipur's current set of Ministers and MLAs would be guilty of this despicable feudal legacy.

The hurt and humiliation endured by women who suffer this fate are profound. Even those who are spared often live with anxiety over the vulnerability of their daughters and loved ones. As the practice has become normalised within society, this deeply gendered anguish largely remains invisible.

Women often become gatekeepers of the patriarchal order that oppresses them, reflecting what Frantz Fanon characterised as the silent desire of the oppressed to emulate their oppressors. Hence, even women vigilantes tend to overlook men who betray marital fidelity, accepting it as destiny. However, if a woman were to make this breach, these same vigilantes often become the harshest moral police.

Change, however, may not be too far away. Although, no study has yet established a connection, rising cases of divorce among younger Meiteis may be a herald of Fanon's "mailed fist".

In the spirit that good art is hiding good art, *Boong* succeeds in drawing up a non-dogmatic but piercing portrayal of this inherent gender injustice. Boong's father, Joykumar–a carpenter and timber trader played by Hamom Sadananda – works along the India-Myanmar border, in the town of Moreh and the neighbouring township of Tamu in Myanmar.

At some point, the family loses contact with him and for a prolonged period. Many presume he is dead or has joined the insurgents, but the family refuses to give up. Boong, or Brojendro, played by Gugun Kipgen, yearns to find his father and bring the good news to his mother Mandakini, played by Bala Hijam.

On one occasion the boy dupes his mother that his school was organising a 2-day school excursion to Ukhrul district and would like to be part of the tour. He then slips away to make a trip to Moreh instead. His bosom friend, a Manipuri Marwari, Raju Agarwal, played by Angom Sanamatum, follows him there out of concern. The families of the boys learn of the trip but too late. The two boys' adventure is thrilling. Boong traces his father in Tamu, but to his horror, discovers that he has remarried and has a daughter.

The final scene is powerful. Boong finds his mother, on crutches after a scooter accident, waiting for him at their courtyard. Both know the truth – and both know that the other knows. The boy tells his mother bluntly "Baba is dead". The camera then closes in on her. She pauses a while before asking in resignation, "Is he doing well?" Boong replies, "Yes'' and hugs her.

Bala's breathing deepens; her face reddens, and her eyes well up. She is forced to confront what she had long suspected but tried not to believe. Not a word is spoken, yet her tearing pain, numbing humiliation, and seething anger surface – along with a quiet resolve to remain standing for the sake of her son.

For those sensitive enough to hear it, her silent, agonised scream is deafening. For many others who have endured this betrayal themselves, or have witnessed loved ones suffer it, Bala's silent scream becomes their own.

Powerful as this portrayal of an invisible oppressive order is, life may well settle back into its old, abnormal normal. Yet, for many, Bala's silent scream affirms that *Boong* is, at its heart, a desperate appeal for social introspection.

Pradip Phanjoubam is Editor, Imphal Review of Arts and Politics, and the author of two books.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know Your English

S. Upendran

How is the word "blasé" pronounced? (A. Karthik, Nagpur)

The "a" in the first syllable is pronounced like the "a" in "bath", "path", and "calf". The "e" is like the "ay" in "day", "bay", and "say". The "s" is pronounced like the "z" in "zebra", "zoo", and "zip". As for the main stress, some dictionaries have it on the first syllable, while others have it on the second.

When you are blasé about something, you are not excited or worried about it; though those around you may find it exciting or important, etc. Of course, this impression that you create that you are bored and not excited could be just an act! Here are a few examples.

When Shyam's parents heard that he had won two million dollars, they were excited. But he was very blasé about it.

Unlike her father, Sushmita is very blasé about parties.

Why is a person who helps deliver a child called a "midwife"? (S. Bakthavatsalam, Chennai)

There are several theories about the origin of the word. Some argue that the word "mid" stands for "middle"; the midwife was a go-between the child and the mother! Considering the fact that we live in an age when we need middlemen for everything, this explanation may appeal to many. Unfortunately, it is not accepted by the pundits.

An explanation that is accepted by many is the following. The word "wife" (though it was spelt "wif" originally), I understand, in Old English meant "woman". In fact, the original word for "woman" was "wifman" – "wif" meaning "woman" and "man" meaning "human being". The word "mid" comes from the Old English "mid" meaning "with". So, a "midwife", as you can probably guess, was a "woman" who stayed "with" the mother and helped her deliver the child.

What is the meaning and origin of the expression "show a leg"? (L. Mukund, Kozhikode)

When you tell someone to "show a leg" what you want him/her to do is to get out of bed. Instead of telling someone to "wake up", you can tell him/her to "show a leg" or "shake a leg".

The idiom has its origins in the British navy. Before 1840, when the rules were fairly lax, sailors were sometimes permitted to take their wife/girlfriend along with them. While the sailors were expected to report for duty early in the morning, the wives/girlfriends were allowed to sleep on in the quarters down below. To ensure that a lazy sailor was not sleeping downstairs, an officer went down to check. Whenever he came across someone sleeping and wasn't really sure if it was a man or a woman under the covers, he used to shout, "show a leg". The person under the blanket had to stick his/her leg out. If the leg that emerged looked like that of a woman's, she was allowed to sleep, but if it looked like that of a man's, he was asked to get out of bed and report for duty.

So originally when someone asked you to "show a leg", all you had to do was to show him/her your leg! As time went on, this idiom which was mainly used in the navy, became a part of everyday speech as well.

Published in The Hindu on January 9, 2001

THE DAILY QUIZ

Here is another quiz to test your FIFA World Cup knowledge

N. Soorya Prakash

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

QUESTION 1
Which was the first World Cup to be held outside Europe and Americas and who hosted it?

QUESTION 2
Which World Cup final is called as the "Miracle of Bern" and why?

QUESTION 3
Who holds the record as the oldest to score a goal in World Cup history?

QUESTION 4
Who holds the record for scoring the most number of goals in a single edition of World Cup?

QUESTION 5
Prior to Golden Glove award, what was the name of the trophy given to the best goalkeeper of a World Cup tournament?

Visual question: Identify and connect the two players with their unique feat World Cup history? AFP

Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:

1. This U.S. President signed a declaration of war against Britain, initiating the War of 1812, which arose from U.S. grievances over oppressive maritime practices during the Napoleonic Wars? **Ans: James Madison**
2. Which English musician, born on this day, gained global fame with the Beatles? **Ans: Paul McCartney**
3. The SALT II treaty was signed by which two countries? **Ans: The U.S., Soviet Union**
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? **Ans: Charles de Gaulle**
5. Where did British explorer and mountaineer George Mallory, born on this day in 1886, disappear? **Ans: Mount Everest**
6. This American suffragist was fined after being convicted for voting in the 1872 presidential election, though she refused to pay it. **Ans: Susan B. Anthony**
7. Identify this person. She became the first American woman to fly into outer space in 1983. **Ans: Sally Ride**

Early Birds

Abhay Krishnan | Prithvi Chouhan |Yashica | Prem Nath Tiwari | Alisha Yadav

Word of the day

Cynosure:
something that provides guidance; something that strongly attracts attention and admiration

Synonyms: focus, spotlight

Usage: *Her dedication to charity work has become the cynosure of her entire career;*
Dressed in a stunning red gown,
the bride became the cynosure of all eyes at the reception.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/cynosure

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈsɪn.ə.zjʊə/

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

From Page One

Telegram evolved into 'new dark web': govt.

However, the company failed to take any meaningful action, Mr. Mehta said.

Senior advocate Dhruv Mehta, appearing for Telegram, said the government had failed to justify the use of emergency powers and had not demonstrated why specific content could not be blocked, instead of disabling access to the entire platform. "The order says it is in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India. An examination like NEET will affect the sovereignty and integrity of India?" he asked.

A Bench of Justice Tejas Kataria scrutinised the government's justification for a platform-wide restriction, even as it acknowledged concerns about exam malpractice and cybercrime. "How can we stop the rights of 150 million people just because one set of citizens are appearing in examinations?" he said while hearing submissions from both sides.

The judgment has been reserved for Friday.

The Centre's affidavit also details how Telegram is allegedly used by cyber threat actors to coordinate attacks, distribute malware, and facilitate financial crime. It is alleged that Telegram channels host marketplaces for rented and mule bank accounts used in money laundering and cyber fraud. Such channels enable criminals to exchange information on bank accounts, UPI handles, and cryptocurrency conversion mechanisms while, due to the interface, it remains difficult for the police to track them because new channels emerge continuously.

"The entire population of a channel, around a lakh, can be moved to another channel in seconds. This is unique to Telegram and poses a serious risk," the Solicitor General said.

To support its claims, the Centre pointed to a sharp rise in cybercrime complaints linked to Telegram. Data placed before the court show that complaints on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal involving Telegram increased from 75,688 in 2023 to 2.75 lakh in 2025, with reported fraud amounts crossing ₹3,000 crore in 2025. In 2026, by May, over 88,000 such complaints had already been recorded.

"In Telegram, one account can create 40 bots. In WhatsApp it's one bot per user," Mr. Mehta said.

Tech vendor blames manual oversight for CBSE OSM row

Coempt rules out software glitch, says 95% of over 4 lakh students given access to their answer sheets; it admits security breach but says ethical hacker gained entry to 'server used for testing'

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

Protests were held all over the country over the controversy around the CBSE's on-screen marking platform. K.V.S. GIRI

Nearly a month after receiving complaints from students about glitches in the Central Board of Secondary Education's (CBSE) On-Screen Marking (OSM) platform, the Board's technology vendor, Hyderabad-based Coempt Edu Teck, said that "the matter has been traced to the physical scanning process rather than a software glitch".

Among the primary issues that drew public attention was an incident in which a student reportedly received another candidate's answer sheet. "We have identified the location and the individual who conducted the scanning. We have verified, technologically, there is no error in this case... Preliminary findings point squarely toward manual oversight," the company said.

The company said that despite isolated bottlenecks, answer sheets have been successfully delivered to nearly 95% of the students who sought access. On May 26, CBSE had stated that 4,04,319 students had requested 11,31,961 answer sheets.

The Board has not responded to the query of whether 95% (3,84,103) students have received the answer sheets, and what is the status of the requests made by the remaining 20,216 students.

Blurred images

Many Class 12 students had complained that the scanned copies of their answer sheets were hazy. Addressing concerns regarding blurred images and illegible handwriting, Coempt said these cases are being "systematically reviewed".

The company denied allegations that tender conditions were altered to accommodate substandard hardware. "The scanners used by Coempt are standard, industry-grade models utilised across the sector. We upgrade our hardware year-on-year, and the scanning resolution is perfect," it said.

After a 19-year-old ethical hacker claimed to have accessed parts of Coempt's platform, the company's security protocols also came under scanner. The company acknowledged the breach but provided a technical clarification. "He managed to hack a server used for testing, which is never used for any client. It's used for internal purposes, with dummy tests and has public access... Coempt verified that no student data or technical infrastructure was compromised and operational systems remain entirely secure," it said.

With regard to the resurgence of discussion around the 2019 Telangana Intermediate examination controversy, Coempt pointed to official judicial findings.

"The Supreme Court of India (had) noted at the time that out of 3.8 lakh failed candidates, only 1,183 were found to have passed upon review, representing a marginal evaluation variance of just 0.16%. Consequently, the apex court rejected pleas seeking mass re-evaluation, student compensation and criminal charges against the technology provider," the company said.

Coempt said it currently serves over 35 universities and institutions across India, processing nearly two crore answer booklets annually through services such as digitisation, on-screen marking, AI-assisted evaluation and question-paper management. Through direct communications with universities, public clarifications and references to official records, the company said that its operations, compliance standards and service delivery remain fully intact.

"The company's recent outreach to institutions aims to provide stakeholders with clear facts and context surrounding answer sheet accessibility, image quality, data security and its historical track record," Coempt said.

Ensure integrity, be vigilant: Pradhan to officials on NEET

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

Dharmendra Pradhan

Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday chaired a high-level review meeting of senior officials and functionaries of the Ministry of Education, State Governments, National Testing Agency (NTA) and Higher Education Institutions to assess the preparedness of the NEET UG re-examination scheduled to be conducted on June 21.

Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy; Vineet Joshi, Secretary, Department of Higher Education, and Abhishek Singh, Director General, NTA, also attended the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Mr. Pradhan emphasised the importance of maintaining the highest standards of integrity, transparency and efficiency in the examination process and directed all authorities concerned to remain vigilant. He urged the officials to ensure that necessary measures were in place for the free and fair conduct of the re-examination.

Emphasising the importance of coordination at all levels, the Minister said that officers designated by the Ministry would reach all the States to coordinate the activities pertaining to the re-examination process and would report to the Command Centre headed by the DG, NTA. He asked the designated nodal officers of the State governments to ensure that students were provided all necessary facilities to enable them to appear for the re-examination in a stress-free environment.

Providing facilities

Mr. Kumar said the students must be put at absolute ease to appear for the exam, by giving them all necessary facilities, including provision of seating arrangements before the exam and drinking water.

Mr. Joshi remarked that the time leading up to the re-examination was crucial and stressed the need for proactive coordination, timely dissemination of instructions and strict compliance with all prescribed protocols. Mr. Singh said the NTA was working with all stakeholders to ensure that the re-examination was conducted smoothly.

Ranchi RSS office attacked with petrol bombs, 3 held

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

The Jharkhand Police have arrested three persons in connection with the alleged hurling of petrol bombs at the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) office in Ranchi's Nivaranpur area. The incident took place in the early hours of Wednesday, and the arrests were made later that day, the police said on Thursday.

A Special Investigation Team constituted by Ranchi Senior Superintendent of Police Rakesh Ranjan arrested two of the accused while they were allegedly attempting to flee on a Bihar-bound train. The Police apprehended them at Rafiganj railway station in Bihar's Gaya Ji district. A driver who allegedly transported the accused to the site of the incident was also arrested.

Telegram challenge once again puts spotlight on Section 69A of IT Act

NEWS ANALYSIS

Rizmi Lia M.
CHENNAI

Telegram has approached the Delhi HC challenging the ban, which is set to last till June 22.

The Centre's move to block Telegram has once again drawn attention to Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, a provision that gives the government the power to direct intermediaries to block access to online information under specified circumstances.

The temporary ban on the platform, which was initially misused for the medical entrance examination paper leak and misinformation campaigns, was aimed at curbing another paper leak during the NEET-UG retest. Telegram has approached the Delhi High Court challenging the ban, which is set to last till June 22, and the judgment has been reserved.

Section 69A of the IT Act authorises the Union government to block public access to any information via any computer resource, including applications and websites, if it is satisfied that such blocking is necessary "in the interest of India's sovereignty and integrity, defence of India, security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, or for preventing incitement to the commission of any cognizable offence".

But the restriction may interfere with Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution, which protects freedom of speech and expression. Therefore, the orders under Section 69A must be issued with the procedural safeguards established by the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking Access to Information by the Public) Rules, 2009.

In *Anuradha Bhasin v Union of India*, the Supreme Court examined the validity of the indefinite blanket ban on internet services in the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir, and the court held that freedom of speech and expression, as well as freedom to practice any profession or carry on any trade, business, or occupation over the internet, are protected by Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g). The court also concluded that orders restricting internet access must meet the proportionality test: they must be required, use the least restrictive measures available, and be open to judicial review.

Article 19(1)(g) provides the right to practice any profession or to engage in any occupation, trade, or business. A ban on a platform that has about 150 million users in India will disrupt many creators, educators, and entrepreneurs running broadcast groups, and prevent them from maintaining communication with their subscribers. It thus limits one's ability to earn a living.

Section 79 of the IT Act also establishes intermediary safe harbour provision, which means platforms are not liable for third-party content if they exercise due diligence, follow the Information Technology Rules, 2021, and act quickly upon receiving knowledge of illegal content.

35,000 people likely to attend International Yoga Day events in Kolkata led by PM: Suvendu

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

W.B. CM Suvendu Adhikari said it is a matter of pride that the PM chose Kolkata to celebrate International Yoga Day. PTI

More than 35,000 people are expected to participate in a mass yoga demonstration on June 21, International Yoga Day, on Kolkata's Red Road. The session will be led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This will be Mr. Modi's first visit to West Bengal since May 9, when he attended Suvendu Adhikari's swearing-in as Chief Minister following the Bharatiya Janata Party's victory in the Assembly election.

At an official meeting in Nabanna, the State Secretariat, Mr. Adhikari said it is a matter of pride that the Prime Minister had chosen Kolkata to celebrate International Yoga Day.

"On the 12th International Yoga Day, for the first time, the West Bengal government will officially participate in the celebrations, which have brought joy to people...," said the Chief Minister, urging citizens to attend yoga events in large numbers across the State.

Attendance at International Yoga Day event has been made mandatory for all State government employees. They have been directed to take part in the mass yoga sessions from 6.30 a.m. to 7.45 a.m. from their offices, homes, or the event on the Red Road.

Workers' body moves HC

Meanwhile, an employees' organisation on Thursday moved the Calcutta High Court challenging the Chief Secretary's authority in calling for mandatory participation in the International Yoga Day events.

The court directed that the matter will be taken up for hearing again on Friday.

The Chief Minister reiterated that June 20 will be commemorated across the State as 'Paschimbanga Divas' to mark June 20, 1947, when Jan Sangh founder Shyama Prasad Mookerjee moved a proposal in the West Bengal Assembly calling for the partition of Bengal to make way for a "homeland for the Hindus of Bengal".

(With inputs from PTI)

Amit Shah meets Gor, holds talks on measures against terrorism, narcotics

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Home Minister Amit Shah during a meeting with Ambassador Sergio Gor in New Delhi on Thursday. PTI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah met U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor at his residence in Delhi on Thursday. The discussion centred around strengthening cooperation between the two countries on counterterrorism and counter-narcotics.

Mr. Gor is the third U.S Ambassador to have met Mr. Shah since he assumed charge as Home Minister for the first time in 2019. Mr. Shah had earlier met U.S. Ambassador Kenneth Juster in 2019 and Ambassador Eric Garcetti in 2023.

The meeting assumes significance as Mr. Shah rarely meets foreign delegates and Ministers, and it comes a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met U.S President Donald Trump in France during the G7 summit.

Mr. Shah last visited a foreign country in 2006 when, as Gujarat's Minister of Home, he led a delegation to Germany.

Mr. Gor was the first to announce the meeting on X. "Had an excellent meeting with Honorable Home Minister @AmitShah. We had a fruitful discussion on enhancing collaboration to combat terrorism, shield our people from narcotics and illicit drugs, secure our borders, and jointly bring criminals to justice in both nations," he wrote.

Mr. Shah followed with a post of his own, saying, "Under the leadership of PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji, India is firmly committed to advancing the India-U.S. Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and ensuring that the people of both nations benefit from the bilateral relationship."

Maharashtra council elections witness 99.02% voter turnout

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The biennial and byelection to the Maharashtra Legislative Council concluded on Thursday with a turnout of 99.02% across 11 constituencies.

According to the official data released by the election authorities, 6,978 of the 7,047 registered electors exercised their franchise. The voting began at 8 a.m. and continued till 4 p.m. Counting of votes will be held on June 22.

The highest turnout was recorded in Bhandara-Gondia where all 457 voters cast their ballots, achieving 100% polling. Nashik followed with 99.84%, while Parbhani-Hingoli registered 99.79% and Nanded 99.78%. Sangli-Satara recorded 99.89% with 894 of 895 voters participating.

The lowest turnout among the constituencies was in Amaravati at 94.68%, where 427 of the 451 voters cast their franchise.

Other constituencies such as Solapur (99.68%), Osmanabad-Latur-Beed (99.49%), Nagpur (98.44%), Aurangabad-Jalna (98.90%), and Jalgaon (97.78%) also saw significant participation.

Ex-MD of Reliance ADA Group in judicial custody

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday sent former managing director of the Reliance Anil Ambani Group, Sateesh Seth, to 14 days in judicial custody in a money laundering case linked to hawala money transfer. The ED arrested him in a case arising out of allegations that funds were siphoned abroad through hawala channels with fictitious bills against allegedly overvalued diamond imports.

APPEAL

Baby Shreyanshree, Manipal Hospital No.MH018462724, 07 months has been diagnosed to be Suffering from Congenital Heart Diseases, large Muscular VSD occupying half of IVS, additional Swiss chess Muscular Septum, Smalleish LVOT, Severe PAH. She requires to undergo PA banding through Midline Sternotomy. The Estimated cost of the Surgery is Rs.4,50,000/-.

Please send donation however small by Cheque/D.D/M.O Fav. **Save Poor Lives** A/c Shreyanshree, **Our A/c Details:** S/B A/c No. 20000913487. S.B.I. R.A.Puram, IFSC CODE:SBIN0001855. Please Donate by G-pay No.9884607377, UPI Id: savepoorlives@oksbi. Donations are exempted under 80G of I.T.ACT.

SAVE POOR LIVES, Flat No. A1, Ceebros Garden, Door No.14/76, Kamarajar Salai, Raja Annamalaipuram, Chennai-600028. Ph. No. 044 42044165 / 9884607377. Email: savepoorlives@gmail.com. Our website: www.savepoorlives.com

Amid rumours of split, Sena (UBT) issues showcause notices to 6 MPs

The six members, who failed to attend a parliamentary board meeting, were given seven days to respond; one of the MPs, Omraje Nimbalkar, still undecided; rebels to meet Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde on June 21; NCP (SP) legislator slams govt.

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena (UBT) on Thursday issued a showcause notice to six of its Lok Sabha members for failing to attend a parliamentary board meeting, amid rumours that the party is heading for its second split in four years.

"They have been given seven days to respond to the notice. We will take a call after we see their response," said party loyalist MP Arvind Sawant. He said the rebel MPs deserved disciplinary action for not following the party whip and attending the meeting.

"If the entire process is followed properly, these MPs will be disqualified. This fight will happen in Parliament, in the court, and on the streets as well. You will see the repercussions in Maharashtra. That is why the security of the *gaddar* [traitor] MPs has been increased," said Sanjay Raut, the party's sole member in the Rajya Sabha.

NCP (SP) legislator Rohit Pawar slammed the State government, claiming that Y+ security had been provided to all the six rebel MPs. Mr. Raut claimed that the dissident MPs had been moved to a location in Rajasthan.

Political drama: Sanjay Raut, left, and Arvind Sawant at a press conference in New Delhi on Thursday. PTI

However, *The Hindu* has confirmed that at least two of the MPs are still in Maharashtra, and sources close to one of the six MPs told *The Hindu* that he had not yet taken a decision on joining the rebellion.

Sources indicated that the rebel MPs will meet Eknath Shinde, who heads the Shiv Sena, on June 21. Denying speculation that the six MPs were likely to join the Shiv Sena on its 60th Foundation Day programme in Mumbai on June 19, leaders said that some issues were still being addressed.

'No decision yet'

Rumours of a split in the Shiv Sena (UBT), the second in four years, have been doing the rounds in Maharashtra for the past two days. Six MPs – Sanjay Dina Patil, Sanjay Jadhav, Sanjay Deshmukh, Nagesh Patil Ashtikar, Bhausaheb Wakchaure, and Omraje Nimbalkar – have reportedly rebelled against Uddhav Thackeray's party, but the six have refused to make their position clear. Though they failed to attend a party meeting at Parliament on Thursday, they have not yet declared their next steps or stated whether they are forming a separate group.

One of the MPs, Omraje Nimbalkar, is stationed in Pune. Sources close to him told *The Hindu* that he has not yet taken a decision about leaving the party, adding that he will take a call only on June 20, after a special CBI court in Mumbai pronounces its judgment in a 2006 murder case in which the MP's late father, the Congress leader Pawanraje Nimbalkar, was the victim.

The case, which has seen a trial lasting 15 years, involves allegations of a contract killing conspiracy against former Nationalist Congress Party MP Padamsinh Patil, the victim's cousin.

Another of the dissident MPs, Sanjay Dina Patil, is in Mumbai.

BJP leader Girish Mahajan mocked the Shiv Sena (UBT) for its lack of strength to create a stir in the State. In response, Mr. Raut challenged him to enter the fray without any police bandobast, and without the alleged support of Central agencies.

BJP-backed candidate wins Jharkhand RS polls after RJD, CPI(ML) cross-voting

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

A BJP-backed Independent candidate, Parimal Nathwani, on Thursday won one of the two Rajya Sabha seats in Jharkhand, defeating Pranav Jha of the Congress. Baidyanath Ram of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha won the other seat.

Sources said Mr. Nathwani, a Gujarat-based businessman, won the election after the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation legislators cross-voted. Mr. Ram got 30 votes, Mr. Nathawani got 28 votes, and Mr. Jha only managed to get 20 votes. Three votes were declared invalid in the 81-member Jharkhand Assembly.

The ruling INDIA bloc has 56 MLAs, including 34 legislators from the JMM, 16 from the Congress, four from the RJD, and two from the CPI(ML) Liberation.

The Opposition alliance in the State has a total of 24 legislators, comprising 21 MLAs from the BJP and one each from the All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU), Janata Dal (United), and Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas). Additionally, the House has one Independent legislator – Jairam Mahto of the Jharkhand Loktantrik Krantikari Morcha.

Independent candidate Parimal Nathwani (second from right) after winning the Rajya Sabha polls on Thursday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The RJD cross-voting was in reaction to the Congress's actions during the Bihar Rajya Sabha election on March 16, a source said. When elections for the five Rajya Sabha seats were held in Patna, RJD candidate Amrendra Dhari Singh lost after three Congress MLAs did not turn up to vote. Due to this, even the NDA's fifth candidate secured a victory. The Congress has six MLAs in Bihar.

"Tejashwi Yadav*ji* has taken revenge... Even the Left parties followed us because the RJD is the one that gives them proper respect, not the Congress party," said a senior RJD leader on condition of anonymity.

Reacting to his victory, Mr. Nathwani, who has represented Jharkhand twice in the Rajya Sabha, posted a message on social media platform X. "Deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve the fourth term as a Member of Rajya Sabha. This moment is filled with profound emotion as this will be my third term from Jharkhand, the very soil from where my Parliamentary journey began in 2008. It is a matter of immense pride and humility to return once again to my *karmabhoomi*."

He has also represented the YSR Congress Party in the Upper House.

Ram Temple needs CEO, says Misra; backs U.P. govt. action in donation row

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

As allegations of financial irregularities linked to donations received by the Ram Temple in Ayodhya have come under scrutiny, Ram Temple Construction Committee chairman and former Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of India, Nripendra Misra, defended the Uttar Pradesh government's response on the matter.

He also called for a more professional management structure, including the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), to oversee the temple's administration and transparency in use of donation.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Misra said the State government had acted promptly after concerns were raised by the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust.

"The Trust is an autonomous institution created under the Supreme Court judgment. When the Trust sought intervention, the government issued the necessary notification within hours and ordered an inquiry," he said.

Nripendra Misra

He added that the Special Investigation Team (SIT) had been asked to submit both a preliminary and a final report, and if any evidence of financial wrongdoing emerged during the inquiry, the matter could proceed to the stage of lodging a first information report (FIR).

"Whatever the government of Uttar Pradesh had to do, they have done," he added. Mr. Misra, who in the past had said that becoming the chairman of the Ram Temple Construction Committee was divine intervention, termed the allegations of financial irregularity there "painful".

He added that any misuse of donations would damage public faith in the institution.

The next challenge

"If even a pie of devotees' contributions has gone to individuals, devotees will feel cheated," he said, sharing a rough estimate that had gone into the temple construction since 2019, which, according to him, is around ₹1,800 crore.

Using the controversy to underline what he sees as the next challenge before the Trust, which is strengthening governance after the completion of the temple's construction, Mr. Misra said there was a need to formalise the administrative structure, introduce stronger vigilance mechanisms, and establish clear operating procedures for the temple's expanding operations.

"I have said it before and I am repeating. A CEO should be appointed. He can be serving or retired officer. I will suggest, someone who has prior work experience in Uttar Pradesh," Mr. Misra said, praising the management model of the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple.

"I am not saying you bring the Act. But large religious institutions increasingly require professional administrators capable of handling complex operations, infrastructure, and pilgrim services.

He also argued for greater transparency in the handling of donations and expenditure.

"The temple requires the highest level of integrity," Mr. Misra said, adding that contributions should be accounted for openly and expenditure records made available for public scrutiny.

"Every pie should be transparently accounted for. Let people see it."

HC refuses to stay Speaker's move in Trinamool dispute

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday refused to stay West Bengal Assembly Speaker Rathindra Bose's decision recognising rebel Trinamool Congress MLA Ritabrata Banerjee as the Leader of the Opposition instead of Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay, who was nominated for the post by the party leadership.

"The court did not find any *prima facie* case and balance of convenience and inconvenience in favour of the petitioner for grant of interim order as prayed for by the petitioner, accordingly, interim order is refused," an order passed by Justice Krishna Rao said.

Ritabrata Banerjee

The court, however, called for affidavits from all parties to examine the larger question of whether the Speaker had acted within the ambit of his powers while recognising the Leader of the Opposition.

Justice Rao was hearing a petition filed by Mr. Chattopadhyay, whom Trinamool general secretary Abhishek Banerjee had nominated as the Leader of the Opposition.

The court noted the June 3 order through which the Speaker recognised Mr. Ritabrata Banerjee as Leader of the Opposition.

Justice Rao observed that the Speaker had conducted an inquiry and found that the resolution submitted by Mr. Abhishek Banerjee was under dispute with regard to the signatures appearing on it.

The court also noted that the notice expelling Mr. Ritabrata Banerjee and Sandipan Saha was also under challenge.

The order came on the day the Budget Session of the Assembly commenced with an Address by Governor R.N. Ravi. The MLAs backing Mr. Ritabrata described the order as a moral victory.

M.P. HC lifts interim stay on Abhishek's arrest warrant

Press Trust of India
JABALPUR

The Madhya Pradesh High Court has lifted the interim stay on an arrest warrant issued against Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee in a defamation case. The decision is likely to increase legal troubles for the Trinamool general secretary, who is already facing a probe by the ED on corruption charges.

Former Indore MLA Akash Vijayvargiya filed the suit against Mr. Banerjee in the MP-MLA court in Bhopal in 2021.

The suit alleged that Mr. Banerjee called Mr. Vijayvargiya a "goon" while addressing a rally in Kolkata in November 2020.

PM holds discussions with French firms on investments in India

Press Trust of India
PARIS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday met leading business executives here and held discussions on investment opportunities and expansion plans in India.

Discussions with CEOs of French companies focused on strengthening cooperation across sectors ranging from shipping and logistics to railways, construction and artificial intelligence, according to the External Affairs Ministry.

Mr. Modi participated in the G7 Summit over the past two days and held talks with several world leaders, including U.S. President Donald Trump.

Narendra Modi with Rodolphe Saadé in Paris on Thursday.

Among those who met the Prime Minister in Paris was Rodolphe Saade, chairman and CEO of CMA CGM, for discussions focusing on maritime shipping, logistics and global supply chains. Mr. Saade said India has a "major role to play in the supply chains of the world".

CBI questions former Trinamool MLA over R.G. Kar case again

Senjuti Sengupta
KOLKATA

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Thursday questioned Nirmal Ghosh, the former Trinamool Congress MLA from Panihati, in connection with the rape and murder of a resident doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata in August 2024.

This comes after the victim's mother, Ratna Debnath, now a BJP MLA, moved a city court on May 13 seeking the arrest of Mr. Ghosh, Trinamool councillor Sanjib Mukhopadhyay, and party functionary Somnath Das.

Officials said Mr. Ghosh was questioned over allegations made by the victim's family that he and his associates had attempted to hasten the cremation of the doctor's body to prevent a second autopsy. The family has also alleged that the cremation was carried out without necessary documents being handed over to them. Reacting to the development, Ms. Debnath said her "hope for justice" had been revived.

In September 2024, Mr. Ghosh was questioned by the CBI over the same allegations after a doctor who was part of the victim's autopsy team claimed that one of Mr. Ghosh's associates had identified himself as the victim's uncle and directed the cremation be expedited.

ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
Mangalagiri, Guntur District
Andhra Pradesh -522503

[Ref. Advt. F.No./AIIMS/MG/Admin/Recruitment/03/2026/Non Faculty/Deputation/02 dtd. 16.06.2026]

Advertisement for Recruitment of various Non-Faculty Group "A & B" Posts on Deputation Basis at AIIMS, Mangalagiri

AIIMS Mangalagiri invites Online applications from eligible candidates for 09 **Group A & B posts** (Medical Superintendent-01, Superintending Engineer-01, Registrar-01, Assistant Controller of Examinations - 01, Administrative Officer – 01, Assistant Administrative Officer -01, Assistant Accounts Officer -02, Librarian Grade-I – 01) **on Deputation Basis.** The closing date of applications will be 45 days from the date of publication of advertisement in Employment News. For more details, please visit website **www.aiimsmangalagiri.edu.in**.

Sd/-
Executive Director
AIIMS, Mangalagiri

RAMAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE
Bengaluru – 560080

CORRIGENDUM
Advt. No.16/2026 dt. 04.06.2026

The last date for submission of online applications with reference to Advertisement **No.16/2026 dt. 04.06.2026** for administrative posts is extended till **13 July 2026, 11:59 pm.**

Sd/-
Administrative Officer

BENGALURU SOUTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Senior Assistant Director
of Horticulture, Bommanahalli Zone-2, Bangalore-560068.

No:BSCC(BOM)TENDER/PR/02/2026-27 Date: 18.06.2026

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)
(Through GOK KPPP only) (Two Cover System)
website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

The Senior Assistant Director of Horticulture Bommanahalli Zone, (Referred to as Employer in these documents) invites tenders to Implement in accordance with KTPP rules 2000, from eligible and experienced Person/Agencies / Firms (Referred to as Tenderers in these documents) registered in Labour Department for Landscape Development of Parks.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work/Category
1.	Landscape Development Works and other Civil Works including of Borewell and facility in Bommanahalli Zone Parks **(Others). Estimate Cost (₹ in Lakhs) 200.00, EMD Amount in ₹: 3,00,000/-.**

Calendar of Events: (1) Tender can be downloaded from : **19.06.2026, (2)** Pre bid meeting : **20.06.2026 at 11:30 a.m. (3)** Tender Closing Date: **25.06.2026 at 4:00 p.m. (4)** Technical bid opening date: **29.06.2026 at 4:30 p.m. (5)** Financial bid opening date : **After Approval of Technical Bid.**

Sd/- Senior Assistant Director of Horticulture, Bommanahalli Zone, BSCC.

CENTRAL ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
6th, 7th, & 8th Floor, Tower-B, World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi-110029

Petition No. 213/TD/2026 Dated: 17.6.2026

NOTICE UNDER CLAUSE (a) OF SUB-SECTION (5) OF SECTION 15 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003 (the Act)

An application for the grant of a Category-V licence for inter-State trading in electricity all over India has been made before the Commission by **Oasis Greenway Power Trading Private Limited,** Tower No. 10, 8th Floor, Flat No 805, Emerald Isle L&T Gate No.7, Saki Vihar Road, Powai Andheri East Mumbai- 400072.

2. A copy of the application, along with its annexures and enclosures, made by the applicant for the grant of an inter-State trading licence to **Oasis Greenway Power Trading Private Limited** before the Commission can be accessed at the website **https://oasisgreenway.com/** or inspected by any person in the Commission's office by following the laid down procedure.

3. On consideration of the material available on record, the Commission is satisfied that prima facie the applicant qualifies for the grant of a licence for inter-State trading in electricity and by order dated 17.6.2026, the Commission has proposed to grant a Category-V licence to the applicant for inter-State trading in electricity all over India.

4. Notice is hereby given in pursuance of clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Section 15 of the Act to invite suggestions or objections, if any, to the proposal to grant the licence for inter-State trading in electricity as aforesaid by the Commission to be received by the undersigned latest by **4.7.2026** at the above noted address. The objections or suggestions received after the specified date shall not be considered.

5. The Commission has fixed the application for final disposal on **7.7.2026** and the person who files the suggestions or objections may in his discretion attend the hearing, for which no TA/DA shall be paid by the Commission.

Sd/-
(Harpreet Singh Pruthi)
Secretary

INBRIEF

PM to release ₹18,880 crore for farmers tomorrow

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will release the 23rd instalment of the PM-KISAN scheme on Saturday from Tarakeswar, West Bengal. Over 9.44 crore eligible farmers will receive ₹2,000 each, and ₹18,880 crore will be transferred directly into beneficiary accounts. "Over 2.18 crore women farmers will receive the benefit," the Union Agriculture Ministry said in a release. Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said in a separate statement that in West Bengal more than 45.35 lakh farmers will receive ₹907 crore. Mr. Modi will also launch the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana/Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme.

Assam NHM confirms seven Japanese encephalitis deaths

Seven people have died of Japanese encephalitis (JE) in Assam since the beginning of the year, while 32 others have died of acute encephalitis syndrome (AES), as of June 17, the State unit of the National Health Mission (NHM) said in a statement on Thursday. Almost 62% of all JE deaths in India since 2018 have been in Assam, according to national data, and outbreaks usually occur between May and October, peaking in July and August. Noting that the two distinct conditions are not interchangeable, Assam NHM executive director Abhijit Sarma clarified that JE is one cause of acute encephalitis syndrome (AES), but not all AES cases are of JE.

CBI arrests IAS official over alleged diversion of ₹79.46 cr.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested an IAS official over the alleged diversion of ₹79.46 crore from the Panchkula Municipal Corporation in Haryana. The agency identified the accused as Sri Ram Kumar Singh, who was serving as the Commissioner at the time. The funds were diverted from the Corporation's account at the Chandigarh branch of the IDFC First Bank. As part of the alleged conspiracy, Mr. Singh allegedly handed the bankers multiple signed cheques through middlemen under the guise of opening fixed deposits. The CBI had earlier arrested a senior accountant of the Municipal Corporation in the same case.

Direct tax mop-up grows over 14% to over ₹5.21 lakh crore

Net direct tax collection grew 14.64% to over ₹5.21 lakh crore till June 17 this fiscal year on higher advance tax mop-up from corporates, government data showed on Thursday. Net corporate tax collection rose 22% to ₹2.08 lakh crore, and mop-up from net non-corporate tax (NCT), which includes taxes paid by individuals, HUFs, firms, grew 8% to about ₹2.94 lakh crore. Mop-up from Securities Transaction Tax grew 45% to ₹18,856 crore. Advance Tax collection grew 15.30%. On a gross basis, direct tax collection increased 12.46% to over ₹6.10 lakh crore. This includes corporate tax of over ₹2.76 lakh crore and NCT of about ₹3.15 lakh crore. PTI

Bengal moves SC against release of blast convict

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The West Bengal government on Thursday approached the Supreme Court challenging a Delhi High Court order directing the release of Rashid Khan, who is serving a life sentence in the 1993 Bowbazar blast case that left 69 people dead in Kolkata.

Counsel representing the State sought urgent listing of the matter before a Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice V. Mohana, contending that the case involved a "very serious offence" and should be heard on Monday. He also pointed out that the June 5 judgment of the High Court had erred in directing Khan's premature release despite the State Sentence Review Board (SSRB) having repeatedly declined his requests for remission.

The Chief Justice sought to know the period of incarceration already undergone by Khan. Counsel for the State submitted that he had spent nearly 30 years in prison. The Chief Justice thereafter agreed to consider the State's request for listing the matter.

45 rescue teams deployed for Amarnath pilgrimage

The specialised mountain rescue teams have been strategically positioned to provide rapid response in the event of accidents, adverse weather conditions, or other emergencies during yatra

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir DGP Nalin Prabhat, along with senior police officers, flags off the mountain rescue teams for the annual Amarnath Yatra, at the SDRF headquarters in Srinagar on Thursday. ANI

Against the backdrop of the terror attack in 2025 in Pahalgam, which is on the main yatra route, and in the wake of militants shifting to jungle warfare in Kashmir, 45 specialised mountain rescue teams will be deployed at 21 locations along the arduous twin routes of the Amarnath Yatra this year.

"These teams are equipped with enhanced rescue and emergency response resources. They are tasked with assisting pilgrims, and responding to contingencies during the pilgrimage," Nalin Prabhat, Director-General of Police (DGP), Jammu and Kashmir, who flagged the teams off, said.

"The specialised teams have been strategically positioned to provide rapid response in the event of accidents, adverse weather conditions, or other emergencies during the annual yatra," the DGP said of the first such initiative, with highly trained personnel manning the yatra routes.

The Amarnath Yatra is scheduled to begin on July 3. Mr. Prabhat highlighted the "interoperability and coordinated deployment" among the different security agencies tasked with providing security cover during the pilgrimage.

Natural disasters

Mr. Prabhat also highlighted the dangers posed by cloudbursts and landslides in mountainous areas. "These mountain rescue teams play a crucial role during emergencies," he said.

"These special teams are highly trained in the high-altitude rescue operations, special rope techniques, avalanche awareness, and disaster management," Abdul Gani Mir, DGP, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), said. "The level of preparedness was visible during the Gulmarg rescue operation. The presence of these personnel will add to the sense of security for pilgrims," Mr. Mir said, referring to the rescue of 300 tourists by the SDRF after the Gulmarg gondola broke down in May.

The "security and protection of pilgrims remain the first priority", Mr. Mir told the teams, adding, "The yatra is not merely a pilgrimage but symbolises the devotion and faith of hundreds of devotees who trek arduous trails and severe weather conditions to reach the cave shrine."

The special teams were inducted at a time when Pahalgam witnessed a terror attack in April 2025, which left 26 dead.

Govt. ratifies 8.25% EPF interest rate for FY26

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The government has ratified 8.25% rate of interest on employees' provident fund (EPF) deposits for the financial year 2025-26, which is likely to be credited to over seven crore contributing members this month.

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) provides the rate of interest on EPF after it gets ratified by the government through the Finance Ministry. The Finance Ministry has given its concurrence to the 8.25% rate of interest fixed by the Central Board of Trustees (CBT), the apex decision making body of the EPFO, a source said on Thursday.

On March 2, the CBT, in a meeting chaired by the Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, had decided to fix 8.25% rate of interest for FY 2025-26, marking the third consecutive year this rate has been maintained.

Under the new ecosystem developed by the EPFO, the interest on the EPF would be credited into subscribers' accounts immediately, the source said.

SC seeks response from Centre, BCI on advocates' registry

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

Nearly a month after the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant expressed concern over the growing number of lawyers with dubious degrees, the Supreme Court on Thursday sought responses from the Centre, the Bar Council of India (BCI), State Bar Councils, and the University Grants Commission on a plea seeking the creation of an "authoritative national database" of enrolled advocates and a code of conduct governing lawyers' use of digital platforms.

The petition, filed by the Bar Association of India, said these "structural crises" in the governance of the legal profession have previously been acknowledged by the top court and the BCI. A Bench comprising Chief Justice Kant and Justice V. Mohana described the proposals as "innovative", but observed that any exercise to create a comprehensive national database would require the participation of law universities.

Appearing for the bar body, advocate Prashant Kumar suggested placing on record a supplementary policy paper outlining how the proposed measures could be implemented.

Mr. Kumar drew the court's attention to the increasing instances of lawyers using social media in a manner that amounts to solicitation, in violation of the BCI Rules.

The Chief Justice remarked that genuine members of the Bar are generally mindful of professional ethics and conduct themselves responsibly, but acknowledged that "nasty comments" are frequently made by persons claiming to be lawyers.

He said the remedy lay in mentoring young legal professionals and helping them find their footing.

DGCA calls for safety review of uncontrolled airstrips

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has called for an immediate review of the operational conditions at uncontrolled airstrips across the country.

Expressing concern over accidents at such airstrips in the recent past due to inadequate safety standards for aircraft operations, the DGCA said several uncontrolled airstrips were being utilised for the landing and departure of aircraft. "It is also noted with concern that, in the past, certain accidents and incidents have occurred at and in the vicinity of such airstrips, highlighting the critical importance of maintaining adequate safety standards for aircraft operations," the aviation regulator said in a safety advisory issued to owners and operators of uncontrolled airstrips.

Official sources said runways that did not have a functional Air Traffic Control tower were categorised as uncontrolled airstrips.

In January, a plane carrying Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar had crashed at an uncontrolled airfield.

The tragic accident in which Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra Ajit Pawar and four others were killed on January 28, 2026, occurred at Baramati, which is an uncontrolled airfield. The aircraft involved in the accident was a Learjet 45, owned by M/s VSR Ventures Pvt Ltd.

Under the provisions of Section 4 of the Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR), the DGCA prescribes the minimum safety requirements to be complied with by operators of airstrips used for aircraft operations.

"It has come to the notice of DGCA that a number of such airstrips are not being maintained in accordance with the prescribed standards, thereby adversely affecting the safety of flight operations," the advisory said.

Periodic inspections

Consequently, all such airport and airstrip operators were advised to undertake an immediate review of the operational conditions of their facilities and ensure strict compliance. The operators were advised to carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of critical infrastructure, including runways, taxiways, aprons, visual aids, markings, drainage systems, boundary fencing, and access control arrangements. "Any deficiencies affecting operational safety should be rectified without delay," the DGCA said.

PM to hand over ₹2,400-cr. incentives to employees

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will disburse ₹2,400 crore worth incentives under the Pradhan Mantri Viksit Bharat Rojgar Yojana (PM-VBRY) here on Friday. Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya told presspersons here on Thursday that 15 lakh beneficiaries will receive the incentive as Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

He added that Mr. Modi will interact with a few first-time employees and employers benefiting under PM-VBRY. The total outlay for the scheme is ₹99,446 crore, and is targeted to create 3.5 crore jobs in two years. He said first-time employees will get benefits worth ₹15,000 and employers will receive up to ₹3,000 per month per new employee. The scheme is to boost employment in the manufacturing sector, he said.

TH CROSSWORD + 14824

(set by Dr. X)

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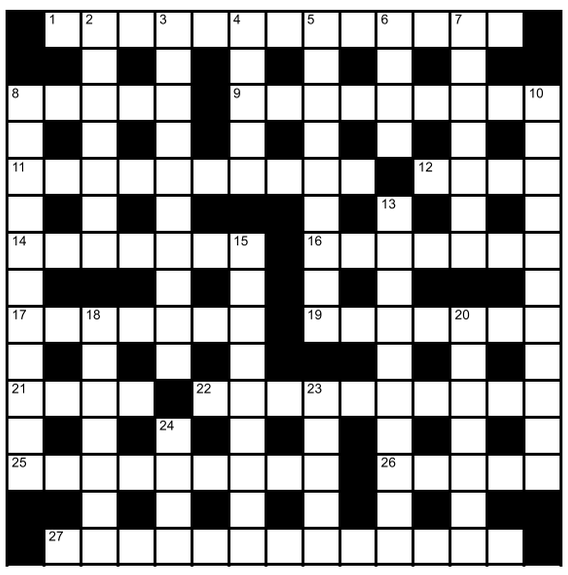
SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Start to secure line frantically, return to save new climber (7,6)
8 Daughter sent back substandard flag (5)
9 What happens when you're having fun in liaison, ensnaring married female with fibs (4,5)
11 Plainly enthralled by marijuana, stylish lady enters pool (5-5)
12 Write yarn about catching mythical creature (4)
14 Mental disability in males after a transient ischaemic attack (7)
16 Cockney thief's remarkable feat, stealing each jewel finally (3,4)
17 Trendy type embracing husband briefly (2,5)
19 Rescue Liberal arrested by brute (7)
21 One beginning to butcher old mountain goat (4)
22 How people at a funeral might be making a profit (2,3,5)
25 Be proud in enclosure after winning bronze medal at centre (5,4)
26 Polish male crushed by English goal (5)
27 Memorable times, say, dancing after wine with character on date (3-6,4)

Down

2 Connoisseur at opening tucking into exquisite frozen dessert (4-3)
3 Character helping to smuggle Ecstasy, say (10)
4 Praise leader of elected group, returning after winning vote (5)
5 Thinks about developing antiserum (9)
6 Unpleasant smell at home repulsed fellows (4)
7 Be taken aback by extremely elderly European's malevolent glare (4,3)
8 Immoral acts of perverse padre on six tapes (11)
10 Obstinate lass finally kissed after quarrel (5-6)
13 One's living in fear, having trouble with ultimately nasty Mob (5,5)
15 Case of abhorrent lodger throttling Dutch escort (9)
18 Discover hole around bottom of pipe resulting in leak (7)
20 Lady came out, dropping learner in school (7)
23 Handle a little hitch day before hosting fifty (5)
24 I perform with Latin superstar (4)

SUDOKU

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

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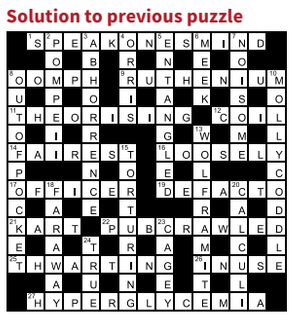
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Qualities of Vaishnavas

In Parasara Samhita, sage Parasara says a Vaishnava has certain external symbols. He wears a tulsi garland and a Nalinakshamala. His shoulders are decorated with symbols of the chakra and conch. His forehead is adorned with urdhva pundra. The white mark in this urdhva pundra is made by using white clay, which is found in sacred sites. Vaishnavas usually apply the urdhva pundra in 12 places on the body. It represents Lord Narayana's feet, elaborated M.A. Venkatakrishnan in a discourse.

When the symbol is applied in 12 different places, 12 names of the Lord such as Narayana, Madhava, Govinda are chanted. These external symbols are reminders that we must keep to the right path. But while the symbols are a means of imposing self-discipline, we must have certain qualities for us to identify ourselves as Vaishnavas. Foremost among these is sympathy for others. When asked how to identify a Vaishnava, Nanjeeyar replied, "Check if you are one. Introspect." When two Vaishnavas meet, they must fall at each other's feet, regardless of age, jnana or family background. Vishnu remains between them, and receives their pranams to each other. Two Vaishnavas who attended Manavala Mamunigal's discourses on Sri Vachana Bhushanam were always quarrelling with each other. On the way to the temple, Mamunigal noticed two street dogs fighting. He said to the two disciples, "Looking at the way they are fighting, I think these dogs plan to come to my Sri Vachana Bhushanam discourses." The two men were ashamed, for they knew that Mamunigal was indirectly telling them to stop fighting with each other. So, they fell at his feet and promised never to quarrel again.

A ND-NDE

INBRIEF

Tata Motors to raise CV prices from July by up to 2.5%

Tata Motors Ltd. on Thursday announced a price increase of up to 2.5% across its commercial vehicle range, effective July 1. "The price increase is being undertaken to partially offset the impact of rising commodity prices and other input costs," the company said in a statement. The price increase will vary depending on the model and variant, the company said. The current price range of Tata commercial vehicles is from ₹3.7 lakh to about ₹1.3 crore.

IRDAI forms working group on Artificial Intelligence

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has constituted a working group on Artificial Intelligence (AI) to set direction on governance frameworks, best practices and safeguards for the insurance sector to pursue innovation, around the emerging technology, while ensuring policyholder data protection. The seven-member working group, with IIIT Hyderabad Director Sandeep K. Shukla as Chairperson, will study AI's impact, including potential challenges and risks, and assess implications for insurers, policyholders and the insurance ecosystem. An assessment of the impact of frontier AI tools, prescribing a framework for implementing reasonable security controls to mitigate risks from AI driven automated attacks as well as examining need for sector-wide stress tests form part of the terms of reference. The working group will assess adoption, usage, maturity and deployment and existing level of AI governance in the insurance sector; and carry out structural assessment of the inventory of AI systems used by regulated entities. It is required to suggest an AI governance framework for ethical, transparent and explainable adoption of AI tools, including for claims and fraud preventions, IRDAI said.

Revised pact with U.K. could save $500 million for Indians

The agreement on social security, effective July 15, will save Indian firms and workers there about $500 million worth of social security payments they otherwise would have had to pay in the U.K.

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Shot in the arm: There are more than 900 Indian companies at present operational in the U.K., an official said. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

The agreement on social security that India and the U.K. have signed and that will come into force on July 15 will save Indian companies and workers there about $500 million worth of social security payments that they otherwise would have had to pay in the U.K., according to sources in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The original Agreement on Social Security, also referred to as the Double Contribution Convention (DCC), was signed in July 2025. It exempted companies in the U.K. from paying social security for the temporary Indian workers they employed for a period of three years, as long as they paid social security in India during that period.

On Wednesday, both governments announced that the DCC would come into effect on July 15 along with the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between India and the U.K.

As per the revised agreement, the social security exemption limit has now been increased to five years, which will cover about 90-95% of the Indian workers in the U.K. and stands to significantly reduce costs for Indian companies operating in the U.K. "We have more than 75,000 workers from India working in the U.K. and there are more than 900 Indian companies that are at present operational in the U.K.," a Commerce Ministry official explained on condition of anonymity since the matter is confidential until July 15.

"On the basis of their minimum salary levels, the savings to Indian companies in the U.K. employing temporary Indian workers will come to more than half a billion dollars," the official added.

Imbalances rectified

The issue that had arisen was that, in the absence of a DCC, companies employing Indian workers had to pay social security for these workers in India as well as in the U.K. Most of these workers were in the U.K. for up to a period of five years. However, the benefits from social security in the U.K. accrue only after 10 consecutive years of contribution.

"This meant that most of the Indian workers there were paying double social security, and also were not able to get any benefit from the U.K. social security system," the official added. "Now, with the exemption increased from three to five years, this covers about 90-95% of the temporary Indian workers in the U.K."

Companies will need to obtain a certificate from the Indian government confirming that social security was being paid here, which they can submit to the U.K. government in order to avail of the exemption.

The CETA was also signed in July last year and was supposed to be implemented by early May 2026.

However, a fresh U.K. regulation on steel import tariffs temporarily – which had not been part of the CETA negotiations – brought the trade deal proceedings to a halt as both countries scrambled to find a solution without having to redo the CETA itself.

"If you look at this steel measure in detail, 85% of our steel exports to the U.K. was out of this," a second official explained. "Out of about $890 million of steel export that we do to the U.K., only $137 million was getting affected."

"We have arrived at a deal on this steel measure, which has taken care of our concerns," they added. "It was finalised only yesterday afternoon [hours before the deal was announced]. India will not lose any market access, and will have a decent market access in the affected portions. We are satisfied with the overall deal. We are happy that our concerns on steel have been addressed."

The two officials would not reveal details of what concessions India has obtained regarding the steel tariffs as the matter was still extremely sensitive for the U.K., which was still negotiating with other countries on the matter.

However, they said that the leeway granted to India would be in the form of a mix of country-specific quotas, residual quotas and access under authorised-use schemes.

The details will be available on July 1, when the U.K.'s tariffs come into effect.

Decision on fuel price cuts will be in line with global situation: Govt.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The government is aware of the decline in crude oil prices, and an appropriate decision on the corresponding change in fuel prices would be taken in line with the evolving global situation, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary at the Union Petroleum Ministry, told reporters at the bi-weekly inter-ministerial briefing on Thursday.

"Crude prices had [earlier] touched $120 per barrel and is now coming down," she said, adding, "The government is seized of the matter and appropriate decisions regarding retail prices would be taken in line with the evolving international situation." To queries about India continuing to purchase oil from Russia and Iran, the senior official maintained that "techno-commercial" viability and reliability of supply would be the governing factors for India's refineries for making purchases from any geography.

Brent crude futures had breached the $120 per barrel-mark on consecutive days towards the end of April. However, in the run-up to the peace deal between Iran and the U.S., which was signed early Thursday, oil prices touched their lowest level in more than 3months.

MSMEs hit by curbs on dispensing diesel

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that consume 200 to 600 litres of high speed diesel (HSD) a day have been hit by the recently imposed procurement ceiling.

According to V. Rangaswamy, president of the Coimbatore District Small Industries Association (CODISSIA), MSMEs in the manufacturing, healthcare, commercial, and educational sectors do not have space or resources for bulk purchase and storage of HSD. Hence, they make daily or weekly purchases from the local authorised retail outlets.

The present procurement ceiling of 200 litres a day introduced through a notification issued on June 11 is inadequate even for a single day, he said.

The government should introduce higher procurement limit for verified institutional consumers and permit registered MSMEs, and other essential service providers to procure up to 600 litres per day upon submission of GST registration certificate, factory licence, or Udyam registration certificate, he added.

MoU opens door for Iran to stake claims in Strait of Hormuz

ANALYSIS

M. Kalyanaraman
CHENNAI

Choppy waters: The MoU does not address key aspects such as sequencing of ships leaving the Gulf, says Bimco's Larsen. REUTERS

The Iran-U.S. memorandum of understanding (MoU), as described by U.S. officials and media reports, contains two significant shipping-related provisions. While it promises relief from sanctions on Iranian oil sales, it also opens the possibility of Iran asserting a formal role in managing transit through the Strait of Hormuz and potentially charging fees for passage. Before the conflict, Iran did not exercise such a right, and merchant vessels transited the strait without mandatory tolls.

The agreement marked the beginning of a 30-day transition period during, which a few large commercial vessels and sanctioned tankers operated by the National Iranian Tanker Company have taken routes hugging the Iranian and Omani coasts to exit the strait, avoiding the traditional central shipping channel which previously handled about 130 vessel transits daily.

Under the MoU, the United States will lift its blockade during this period, while Iran will remove technical obstacles to navigation, including mines. Sanctions relief and U.S. Treasury waivers will allow Iran to resume oil exports.

Jakob Larsen, Chief Safety & Security Officer at Bimco, a body of global shipowners, said in a statement: "Iran and the U.S. have now agreed to permit transits through the Strait of Hormuz, but significant safety and security risks still persist. The central part of the Strait is mined and un-navigable, and only the inshore traffic zones close to Oman and Iran are reportedly free of mines. Due to the risk of congestion and navigational incidents in the inshore traffic zones we still consider it risky for ships to commence transits at this point and advise shipowners to continue doing thorough risk assessments and appeal to all parties to put the safety of seafarers first."

"The MoU also raises several questions and does not offer sufficient information regarding key aspects such as safe routes, measures to separate traffic, sequencing of ships leaving the Gulf, reporting procedures, ship security procedures, procedures for naval protection and emergency response," he said, adding Bimco expects an international coordination body to be established shortly to facilitate transits.

What Iran has achieved

The agreement provides for a 60-day period during which Iran will permit ships to pass through the Strait of Hormuz without tolls while negotiations continue on the nuclear issue. Notably, free passage is guaranteed only for this 60-day period.

Iran has previously indicated its intention to eventually collect service charges for transit. The MoU places the future management of ship passage through the Strait of Hormuz on the negotiating table, while recognizing Iran as a central stakeholder. "Iran has been handed the authority to conduct a dialogue with Oman and discussions with other Persian Gulf states regarding the management of the strait," said Phil Belcher, marine director of Intertanko, the global association of tanker owners.

Speaking at a Lloyd's List webinar, he warned that "the sole arbiter of what is happening in the strait is going to be Iran," noting that international shipping has long been guided by the principle of free and unfettered passage, including through territorial waters where the right of innocent passage is expected to apply.

The MoU further states that any future transit arrangements in the Strait of Hormuz will conform to applicable international laws. A key legal framework is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), under which straits such as Hormuz should allow free transit passage not subject to tolls, although vessels enjoy transit rights rather than unrestricted high-seas navigation rights.

However, the legal picture is complicated. The United States has not ratified UNCLOS, while Iran has signed but not ratified the convention.

Some of the Persian Gulf nations have, in the past, vehemently opposed any toll. International shipping interests, including India, have also opposed tolls.

Shipping interests are concerned that any arrangement granting Iran a greater role could establish precedents for other strategic waterways, including the Malacca-Singapore Straits or even the English Channel which is only 22 miles at its narrowest point, which means it doesn't have a high seas passage running through. Shiv Halbe, chief executive of the Maritime Association of Shipowners, Shipmanagers and Agents (MASSA), says the issue is ultimately less about laws than what the global shipping industry considers commercially acceptable.

Although Iran had previously argued that tolls could help finance post-war reconstruction, the MoU provides for a separate, substantial reconstruction fund alongside renewed oil revenue. More consequential than any future fee structure is the formal recognition of Iran as a stakeholder in the Strait of Hormuz – an outcome consistent with Tehran's view of the strait as a strategic guarantor against future attacks.

GENEVA

IAEA ready to help define 'concrete steps' to implement U.S.-Iran deal

REUTERS

The International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi said on Thursday that the agency was ready to begin defining the "concrete steps" needed to implement a U.S.-Iran deal to end the West Asia war. Under the terms of the deal, Iran will dilute its enriched uranium stocks, the UN's nuclear watchdog said. AFP

TEHRAN

Iranian missile programme not part of talks with U.S., says Baqaei

REUTERS

Iran said on Thursday that its missile programme would not be part of future negotiations with the United States, after the two sides agreed a framework deal for ending their war. "Our missiles do not like at all to be talked about by anyone," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei said on Iranian state television. AFP

TAIPEI

Taiwan hopes for $14 bn U.S. arms sale 'as soon as possible', says Lai

REUTERS

Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te said on Thursday he hoped the United States would approve a $14 billion arms sale "as soon as possible", reiterating that the democratic island "rejects unification" with China. Meanwhile, China warned Taiwan that "seeking independence by relying on the U.S. is a dead end". AFP

DUBAI

UAE bans social media for children under 15, joining the growing trend

REUTERS

The United Arab Emirates announced a social media ban for children under 15 on Thursday, joining a growing group of countries including Australia, Britain and Canada to take similar measures. Social media platforms will have to monitor and disable accounts created by under-15s or risk being blocked, a resolution said. AFP

Trump defends Iran deal from critics he calls 'fools'

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

Donald Trump during the signing of a deal with Iran to end the West Asia war, inside Chateau de Versailles, on Wednesday. AFP

U.S. President Donald Trump lashed out at critics of his agreement with Iran on Thursday, calling those who accused him of offering concessions to end the war "fools", ahead of negotiations in Switzerland on implementing the deal.

Oil prices tumbled after Mr. Trump and his Iranian counterpart separately signed their accord to end the West Asia war, with the Strait of Hormuz to reopen but two months of negotiations lying ahead.

In a sudden development after uncertainty over when the deal agreed earlier this week would be formally signed, Mr. Trump put his name to it in thick black ink at a candlelit dinner with French President Emmanuel Macron at the Palace of Versailles outside Paris on Wednesday.

Mr. Macron – for whom the signing at the palace, which hosted the signing of the treaty that ended the First World War, was an immense coup following his hosting of the G7 summit – shouted "bravo" as Mr. Trump signed.

"These fools, who think I haven't been tough enough on Iran, when the Stock Market Just Hit A RECORD HIGH, and Oil prices are 'tumbling' down, are either jealous, bad people, or stupid," Mr. Trump posted on social media hours after signing the deal.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian also signed the agreement, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei said, adding that "now it is time to test the implementation of the agreement".

The deal should bring an end to the current U.S.-Israeli conflict with the Islamic republic, which saw five weeks of all-out war until a ceasefire early April and led to shipping being greatly restricted in the Strait of Hormuz, causing a spike in energy prices.

Ukrainian drones set a Moscow refinery ablaze; flights disrupted

The refinery is one of Russia's biggest and produces more than a third of the Moscow region's fuel; Russia says that its air defences overnight shot down 555 Ukrainian drones; 'If Ukraine is going to burn, Moscow will burn too,' says Zelenskyy

Associated Press
MOSCOW

Ukraine struck a major Moscow oil refinery on Thursday for a second time in a week, sending huge plumes of black smoke over the capital and disrupting flights at its airports in one of its biggest drone attacks since Russia's invasion over four years ago, officials said.

Ukraine has repeatedly targeted Russian oil facilities, aiming to cut Moscow's revenue for the war and make Russians feel the consequences of the invasion. Some areas have reported fuel shortages.

Pledged from West

The attack by dozens of drones came hours after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he had held "an important coordination call" with the presidents of the U.S. and France and had won key pledges of further support from this week's G7 summit.

Critical hit: Smoke rises from an oil refinery following a Ukrainian drone attack in in Moscow on Thursday. REUTERS

"If Ukraine is going to burn, your Moscow will burn too," Mr. Zelenskyy said, adding that the attack was part of Kyiv's effort to bring Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table. "It is time to end the aggression, time to end this war."

Mr. Zelenskyy was expected to hold talks in Brussels later Thursday with NATO and EU leaders, including about the possibility of a continental system to defend against ballistic missiles.

Thick, black smoke and occasional flames spewed from the Moscow Oil Refinery amid its red-and-white smokestacks on the southeastern edge of the city, about 15 km from the Kremlin. Sooty, black rain fell on cars, according to local video.

'Fire contained'

The refinery is one of Russia's biggest, according to its official website, and produces more than a third of the Moscow region's fuel. It was last attacked by Ukrainian drones on Tuesday, catching fire, but officials said the blaze was swiftly put out.

Thursday's fire at the refinery was "largely contained," Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said, adding that remaining hotspots were being extinguished. The attack also temporarily halted flights from four Moscow airports, transport and aviation authorities said.

In the greater Moscow region, a drone hit a residential building in the town of Zhukovsky, according to Gov. Andrei Vorobyov. Buildings elsewhere were damaged by drone debris, injuring 17 people, including two children, he added.

The Russian Defence Ministry said that its air defences overnight shot down 555 Ukrainian drones over multiple regions, with almost 200 intercepted as they were approaching Moscow. That was roughly double the number of drones that Russia launched at Ukraine overnight, according to the Ukrainian air force.

Cuban govt. approves economic reforms to boost private sector

Agence France-Presse
HAVANA

The Cuban Communist Party on Wednesday approved a package of reforms aimed at opening up more sectors to private investment as the island, under pressure from Washington, undergoes a major economic crisis.

State television reported "the party's Central Committee approves the new proposals for economic and social transformations," which include attracting more capital from Cubans abroad and reducing the size of the state, after an extraordinary plenary session wherein around 20 reform proposals were discussed.

Earlier, the government-led reforms won the backing of influential former President Raul Castro.

The Cuban government's series of reforms are fast-track measures for desperate times, as the country grapples with widespread shortages of basic needs.

President Miguel Diaz-Canel presented the measures as the most substantial in years.

Hegseth blasts NATO allies, says U.S. will review forces in Europe

Agence France-Presse
BRUSSELS

U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth told NATO on Thursday the Pentagon will review its force presence in Europe within six months, as he lashed out at allies over defence spending and their response to the Iran war.

"This will be a real review. It will be designed to ensure that NATO is moving fast and irreversibly toward Europe leading, stepping up to take primary responsibility for the defence of Europe," Mr. Hegseth told a meeting of NATO Defence Ministers in Brussels. "It's a review that some countries will fail, and others will pass with flying colours."

Pete Hegseth

The Pentagon chief said the move was also aimed at ensuring U.S. "access, basing and overflight are clearly delineated and assured" after some European nations imposed restrictions on U.S. forces during the Iran war.

"It was shameful. These allies, they put America's sons and daughters, our sons and daughters, at risk," he said. "There's no excuse for that."

Mr. Hegseth said going forward that Washington paying its dues to cover NATO organisational running costs – roughly some $790 million in 2026 – would be "contingent" on allies reaching spending targets. "Where other allies do not spend with urgency, our dues contributions will go down," he said.

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No.OHPC:TECH:C&P:43/2025-26/ 5765 Date: 16.06.2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER No.02/2026-27

Sealed Tenders are invited in two part i.e. (i) Techno Commercial bid & (ii) Price bid in separate sealed envelopes from the eligible bidders **(Producers, refurbishers or recyclers registered with SPCB / CPCB having valid authorization as applicable under E-Waste management Rules 2022 and subsequent orders/letters issued from time to time)** having PAN and GST Registration Certificate for the work as mentioned below.

Description of Services	Cost of Tender papers (Non-refundable) in ₹	EMD (Refundable)
Disposal of Old & Unserviceable Computers, Peripherals & Other Electronic Items (E-Waste) on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"	6,000.00 +18% (GST) = 7080.00	12,500/-

For details of the tender documents, terms & conditions and corrigendum etc. please visit our website - **www.ohpcltd.com** from **Dt. 23.06.2026.**

C & P Head

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Cochin Port Authority

COCHIN PORT AUTHORITY
Chief Engineer's Office
Cochin-682009

E-TENDER NOTICE

No. T9/T-2098/2026-C Dt.19.06.2026

On behalf of UT Administration of Lakshadweep, CoPA invites online Bids for **"Project Supervision Services for the projects at Kadmath & Kalpeni, Lakshadweep islands** (Re-Tender)"

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA-DEPARTMENT OF SPACE
CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP, SDSC –SHAR
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Brief E-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tender Notice No. SHAR / CMD / E / H 2687208 / 2026-27 **Date: 15/06/2026**

On behalf of President of India, Item Rate tenders are invited through e-tendering for the following works:

Sl. No.	Brief Name of work	Value (Rs)
1	**Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 18 Nos. of 11kV / 433V outdoor Transformers. (Electrical work).**	**420.88 Lakhs**

Last date for sale (Tender documents can be downloaded) up to **03/07/2026 14:30 hrs**. For eligibility criteria and other details, interested tenderers may please refer to the detailed bilingual (Hindi-English) Notice Inviting Tenders (NIT) on the website **https://www.isro.gov.in/Tenders.html** and tender free view at **https://www.tenderwizard.com/isro** .

Sd/- GROUP HEAD, CMG/ SDSC SHAR

Iran deal sparks anger among Republican hawks

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump's deal with Iran has opened a rare breach with Republican hawks, who warn that the agreement falls far short of the sweeping victory he promised and could leave Tehran richer, stronger and still able to threaten the region.

The memorandum of understanding, signed by Mr. Trump in France, is aimed at ending months of conflict, reopening the vital Strait of Hormuz and stabilising energy markets after a war that drove up oil prices and raised fears of a wider West Asia crisis.

But the terms have alarmed some of the same Republicans who spent years denouncing Democratic former President Barack Obama's 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran as dangerously weak.

They have voiced concerns that Mr. Trump is offering Iran sanctions relief, access to oil markets and the prospect of a $300 billion reconstruction fund while failing to secure firm commitments on uranium enrichment, ballistic missiles or Tehran's support for armed proxies.

Republican Senator Bill Cassidy wrote on X that former President and Republican icon Ronald Reagan would be "rolling over in his grave," calling the agreement "the worst foreign policy blunder in decades".

"Before the war, the strait was open, Iran was being crushed by sanctions, and 13 service members were still alive," he said.

Signs protesting the Iran war and its impact on fuel prices during a protest outside of the U.S. Capitol in Washington DC. AFP

"Now, 13 Americans are dead, families have paid billions at the pump, sanctions will be lifted, and the bombing has stopped."

Mr. Trump has defended the deal as a practical way to reopen one of the world's most important energy chokepoints, through which about a fifth of global crude normally passes. He said the agreement was not final and warned that the United States could resume strikes if negotiations fail.

"It's a memorandum of understanding, and if I don't like it, we'll go back to shooting at them, dropping bombs on their head," Mr. Trump told pressmen on Wednesday at a Group of Seven summit in Evian, in eastern France.

Republican Senator Ted Cruz warned urged Trump not to "suddenly come in with massive buckets of cash to let them rebuild and become a threat to America again".

Senator Lindsey Graham said the deal opened the Strait of Hormuz, suspended hostilities and created space to test whether diplomacy could curb Iran's nuclear ambitions.

MAHATRANSCO
Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER CPD/29 - 2026-27

Tenders are invited through e-Tendering in SRM Two Bid system from the registered vendors for Supply of following:

Tender No. & Description of Material	Estimated Amount (in Rs. Lakhs) / Tender Fee (in Rs.)	Due Date & Time (Hrs.) for Submission & Opening of Tender
SP/T-16/0626_TKC1 RFx 7000040352 (3rd Call) for Work of Replacement of existing 0.4 ACSR Deer/ Zebra conductor along with hardwares by High Performance Conductor (HPC) along with hardwares of 1) 220kV Bhosari-I- Bhosari-II, 2) 220kV Bhosari-II - Telco, 3) 220kV Bhosari-I - Century Enka, 4) 220kV Century Enka-Khadki, 5) 220kV Khadki-VSNL, 6) 220kV VSNL-Lonikand-II & 7) 220kV Bhosari-I - Lonikand - II along with strengthening of bays at respective substation & allied equipment, hardware at associated substations under EHV PC O&M Zone, Pune.	**Rs. 9243.83 Lakhs** (Incl. GST) **Rs. 7833.76 Lakhs** (Excl. GST) / 25,000.00+GST	08.07.2026 18:00 Hrs / 08.07.2026 18:05 Hrs

Contact Person: Office of the Executive Engineer (TKC1)
CPA, C.O. MSETCL, 1st Floor, Prakashgad Building, Bandra (E), Mumbai. Tel. No.: 022-69852717
Email id: cecpa@mahatransco.in, secpa@mahatransco.in, eetkc1cpa@mahatransco.in, eepc@mahatransco.in
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Sd/-
Executive Engineer (P&C)

NARROW VICTORY

Ghana edges Panama through an injury-time winner

REUTERS

Ghana scored a dramatic 1-0 victory over Panama in their opening World Cup Group L clash in Toronto on Wednesday. Caleb Yirenkyi bundled in the winning goal in the fifth minute of stoppage time, sending thousands of Ghanaians in Canada's largest city into a frenzy and settling an otherwise attritional battle.

WINNING START

Diaz shines as Colombia battles past debutant Uzbekistan

AP

Colombia beat debutant Uzbekistan 3-1 in their opening World Cup Group K game on Wednesday, thanks to an inspired performance from Luis Diaz. He provided an assist, a goal and also hit the post as the Colombians resisted the battling Uzbeks. The win put Colombia top of a group that also has Portugal and DR Congo.

BLACK CAPS' DAY

Phillips' maiden ton, Henry's strikes put Kiwis in command

REUTERS

Matt Henry captured the prized wickets of Joe Root and Harry Brook as New Zealand built on Glenn Phillips' maiden Test century on the second day of the second Test at the Oval. **The scores:** New Zealand 391 in 96.2 overs (Mitchell 44, Blundell 51, Phillips 100, Jamieson 41) vs. England 222/6 in 59 overs (Gay 53, Root 46).

EXCITING CONTEST

Dercksen leads South Africa's chase; Sana's allround effort in vain

GETTY IMAGES

South Africa held its nerve to clinch a two-wicket win over Pakistan in an ICC T20 World Cup match in Birmingham on Wednesday. **The scores:** Pakistan 126/9 in 20 overs (Fatima Sana 55 n.o., Marizanne Kapp 3/23) lost to South Africa 127/8 in 16.5 overs (Annerie Dercksen 52, Fatima Sana 3/16); **Toss:** Pakistan; **PoM:** Dercksen.

Ghosting in: Kane takes advantage of slack marking by Croatia to head in England's second. REUTERS

England beats Croatia after a brief stutter

Kane puts the Three Lions ahead twice in the first half only for the 2018 finalist to draw level before Bellingham and Rashford settle the game

FIFA WORLD CUP

Agence France-Presse
ARLINGTON

Harry Kane scored twice in the first half as England eventually saw off Croatia 4-2 to launch its World Cup title assault in Texas on Wednesday.

Jude Bellingham, immediately after half-time, and substitute Marcus Rashford with five minutes to go ensured a winning start for Thomas Tuchel's side after Croatia had fought back to level at 2-2.

The prolific Kane twice put England ahead in the first half – one a retaken penalty – only for Martin Baturina and Petar Musa to hit back for Croatia.

With both sides shaky at the back, the second half threatened another goal glut, Bellingham needing just two minutes to put England ahead again. Tuchel's side never looked back after that at the impressive air-conditioned home of Dallas Cowboys.

THE RESULTS

Group K: Uzbekistan 1 (Fayzullaev 60) lost to Colombia 3 (Munoz 40, Diaz 65, Campaz 90+9).
Group L: England 4 (Kane 12-pen, 42, Bellingham 47, Rashford 85) bt Croatia 2 (Baturina 36, Musa 45+5); Ghana 1 (Yirenkyi 90+5) bt Panama 0.
Group A: Czechia 1 (Sadilek 6) drew with South Africa 1 (Mokoena 83-pen).

Stat attack

0 For the sixth time in the World Cup, Ronaldo had no shots on target

1 England registered its first 4-2 win in a World Cup match since the 1966 final (vs. West Germany)

2 Kane is the second England player to score in three editions (2018, 2022, 2026) after Beckham (1998, 2002, 2006)

2 Rashford became the first Englishman to net two goals as a substitute in the World Cup

2 Diaz is the second Colombian with a goal and an assist in a World Cup game after James Rodriguez (vs. Japan, 2014)

4 Perisic joins Messi as the only players to have assisted a goal across four World Cups

4 Cannavaro is only the fourth (after Beckenbauer, Blokhin and van Basten) to win the Ballon d'Or and take part in the World Cup as a player (Italy) and coach (Uzbekistan)

5 Kane has now scored the most penalties in World Cup history (excluding shootouts)

24y 285d Saka is the fourth youngest to win 50 England caps after Rooney (23y 159d), Owen (23y 179d) and Sterling (24y 180d)

Compiled by **ANIRUDH VELAMURI**

Stars steal the show in opening act

Ayon Sengupta
ATLANTA

Lighting it up: Messi produced a sensational hat-trick against Algeria while Mbappe, Haaland and Kane scored a brace each in their respective opening encounters. AP & GETTY IMAGES

The World Cup has opened like an old Broadway theatre suddenly finding new light. Some curtains have risen on unfamiliar faces, some scripts have been torn up before the second act, and yet, at the centre of the stage, football's great names have refused to fade into the background.

This was supposed to be a tournament stretched wide by expansion, vulnerable to mismatches. But the new arrivals and outsiders have proved they have not come as decoration.

But every World Cup also needs its constellations. It needs the players whose names pull millions towards a match before the kick-off. And in that sense, too, this tournament has been blessed early.

Evergreen

Lionel Messi has once again made time look negotiable. Messi, who will turn 39 next Wednesday, no longer moves like a storm sweeping across the grass. He is more like a watchmaker now, measuring space in tiny, impossible units, appearing where the game needs a key rather than a hammer. Argentina's win over Algeria carried the calm of champions who still know their old compass works. Messi's hat-trick pulled him level with Miroslav Klose as the World Cup's all-time leading scorer.

Hours earlier, France's Kylian Mbappe had briefly surpassed the Argentine after striking twice against a resolute Senegalese defence.

He remains football's lightning strike with his sudden, explosive movement that is almost impossible to contain once he gathers momentum.

For Norway, returning to the World Cup after 28 years, Erling Haaland attacks the game like a door waiting to be kicked open. His football is not ornate. It's an avalanche, all speed, mass and certainty.

The striker scored twice in a 4-1 victory over Iraq, becoming the focal point of a Norwegian side many regard as the country's most talented generation. His movement stretched the Iraqi defence, his finishing punished every mistake, and his presence has transformed Norway from an outsider into a genuine threat.

Harry Kane, meanwhile, offered England reassurance. Against Croatia, in a 4-2 win that could become a marker for what this team hopes to be, Kane scored twice and equalled Gary Lineker's England World Cup scoring record of 10 goals. He finished with seven shots, three on target, created two chances and even produced a goal-line clearance in stoppage time, showing the world that England's ambitions are built on something stronger than hope.

But not every great name has enjoyed the same beginning. Cristiano Ronaldo, who joined Messi as the only player to feature in six World Cups, struggled to impose himself in Portugal's 1-1 draw against DR Congo.

Lacklustre

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner looked flat, unable to summon the electricity that has so often been the antidote to Portuguese anxiety.

This contrast has made the opening week of the World Cup more intriguing. The tournament is bigger than ever, but the examination remains the same.

Messi, Mbappe, Haaland and Kane have passed the first test with distinction. Ronaldo, for now, still has work left on his paper.

Saturday's matches

GROUP D
USA vs. **Australia**, 00.30 a.m.
Turkiye vs. **Paraguay**, 8.30 a.m.

GROUP C
Scotland vs. **Morocco,** 3.30 a.m.
Brazil vs. **Haiti,** 6 a.m.

GROUP F
Netherlands vs. **Sweden** 10.30 p.m.

The day and time(s) pertain to India

Brazil badly needs a win over Haiti

Ayon Sengupta

Brazil enters its second Group C game with many questions to answer, despite avoiding defeat in its opener. The 1-1 draw against Morocco was a reminder that reputation alone will not carry teams through in this World Cup. And for the first time since the quarterfinal defeat to France in 2006, Brazil was outshot in a World Cup match, facing 14 attempts while managing only 12 of its own.

It ended a run of 22 consecutive World Cup games in which the Selecao had enjoyed the advantage, underlining why Carlo Ancelotti may need to bring in wholesale changes.

For Haiti, the challenge is of a different magnitude. The Caribbean nation waited 54 years to return to the World Cup after its only previous appearance in West Germany in 1974. Many believed its best chance of reaching the knockout rounds rested on getting something from the opening match against Scotland, but John McGinn's deflected winner condemned Sebastien Migne's side to a narrow 1-0 defeat.

Brazil sits 80 places above Haiti in the FIFA rankings. Haiti's task is to ensure it does not feel that way on the pitch, while for Brazil, a win is a must.

Czechia and South Africa stay alive after a dour stalemate

Ayon Sengupta
ATLANTA

Super quick: Czechia's Sadilek slots it in in the sixth minute for the tournament's fastest goal so far. REUTERS

World Cups are never won in the second group match, but they can certainly be lost there. That reality hung heavily over South Africa and Czechia as they looked to keep their tournament alive here on Thursday.

South Africa looked strangely unsettled in the opening exchanges, and Czechia deservedly struck the fastest goal of the tournament.

Adam Hlozek chased down a loose ball on the right and fed it to the edge of the area, where Michael Sadilek exchanged quick passes with Filip Sojka before calmly sliding his effort beyond Ronwen Williams.

It was another early setback for Bafana Bafana, who had also fallen behind in the opening stages of their defeat to Mexico.

South Africa's breakthrough finally arrived late in the second half when it was awarded a penalty by American referee Tori Penso, the second woman to officiate in a men's World Cup match, after Pavel Sulc was adjudged to have handled the ball inside the area.

Teboho Mokoena stepped up and calmly sent Kovar the wrong way, restoring parity and breathing renewed life into South Africa.

Both sides sensed an opportunity and pushed for a winner, but urgency failed to compensate for a lack of precision in the final third.

The draw solved little, but it ensured that neither South Africa nor Czechia left Atlanta with its dreams shattered.

Dennis Amiss — the man who introduced helmet to cricket

CRICKET

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LEEDS

Dennis Amiss begins with an apology.

"I have a funeral to attend, so I am afraid I have to leave at 11 o'clock," he says at the picturesque Edgbaston Golf Club in Birmingham on a slightly windy, but glorious early English summer morning.

It is only 10. There is plenty of time, then.

Some 45 minutes and a nice cup of English tea later, time isn't enough, actually.

Fascinating tales

The 83-year-old has so much to tell. So many fascinating tales and insights into cricket.

After all, he is the first batter to score an ODI hundred. He is the first batter to wear a helmet. He was part of Kerry Packer's World Series Cricket that revolutionised cricket.

He scored double hundreds against ferocious fast bowlers, got lessons from Bishan Singh Bedi on playing spin, and was an England selector.

Bedi helped him out on England's tour of India in 1972-73. "It happened on our first tour with Tony Lewis as captain and you had the four great spinners – Bedi, Chandrasekhar, Prasanna and Venkataraghavan – and the wickets turned and we had not come across pitches like that against such great bowlers," Amiss, who scored 3612 runs from 50 Tests with 11 hundreds and as many fifties, tells *The Hindu*.

Amiss. P.K. AJITH KUMAR

"And we were going to Pakistan after the Indian tour. I was left out for the last Test."

Bedi came up to him at Mumbai's Brabourne Stadium, the venue of the last Test.

"Why were you not batting well, he asked me," recalls Amiss. "At the beginning of the season, we thought you would be the main batter. And I said, 'Well, you know, you bowl well at me and you have got me out. The only thing is I can't practise because the nets are in the middle."

Bedi asked Amiss to leave it to him. "I will tell you what to do," says Amiss.

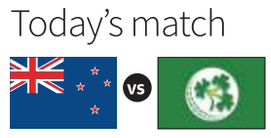
"He came back later and said, 'Pras, Venkat, and I will bowl at you, but not Chandrasekhar.' It was very kind of Bish, but I think that he was chastised for that."

How did he get the idea of wearing a helmet while batting?

"At Packer's World Series, there were 16 bowlers who could all bowl at 90 miles an hour and I was at a shop while talking to Tony Greig," says Amiss.

"There were motorcycle helmets which were then adapted for cricket. Tony told me that Packer approved the idea".

Today's match



Southampton, 11 p.m. IST
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 4
New Zealand 4 | Ireland 0

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIOHOTSTAR

Smriti keeps me calm, says Shafali

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LEEDS

Smriti Mandhana got a welcome fifty for India in the opening match against Pakistan at Edgbaston. Her opening partner Shafali scored a fifty against the Netherlands at Headingley that was even more welcome.

The younger one of the most feared opening duos in women's cricket needed that knock as much as her team. For India to have a strong campaign in the ICC T20 World Cup, Shafali's quick runs at the top of the order would be extremely handy.

She is a fearless batter. She is a bit restless, too, and would love to hit every ball for a six. But her senior partner would have none of it. And Shafali listens to Smriti's advice. She admitted as much after their 115-run stand helped India post a comfortable victory against the Netherlands.

"She keeps me calm," said Shafali. "She asks me to play along the ground. She has the best seat where she could tell me what is right or wrong with my shots. I also tell her about her batting."

Playing together for so long has helped. "We have been playing with each other for so many years, we both know who needs to be on strike for a specific bowler. We also know how to rotate the strike," said Shafali.

Shafali and Smriti. GETTY IMAGES

She said it felt good to have a big partnership after failing to get one in the series in England prior to the World Cup. "We were both talking about it," she revealed. "After the previous match, I worked a lot in the nets and tried to mentally control myself. We have many crucial matches coming up and we both are ready to tackle them."

And, yes, she is enjoying being the golden arm for the team. "I would like to contribute as much as I can," she smiled. "We just have to lift that World Cup".

INBRIEF

India storms into final of World team snooker c'ship

India outclassed defending champion Hong Kong China 3-1 to storm into the final of the World team snooker championship at Guangdong (China) on Thursday. In the title clash, India will take on the winner of the other semifinal between China-A and Korea.

The results: Semifinals: India bt Hong Kong China 3-1 (Pankaj Advani bt Cheung Ka Wai 74-1; Aditya Mehta bt Wang Yuchen 67(67)-9; Advani & Mehta lost to Yuchen & Wan Nansen Sin Man 59-68; Advani bt Yuchen 88(74)-0).

Quarterfinals: India bt China 'B' 3-2 (Advani bt Zhou Jinhao 66(66)-3; Mehta lost to Ma Hailong 0-136(136); Advani & Mehta bt Hailong & Xu Jianhao 70-55; Advani lost to Hailong 0-98(94); Mehta bt Jinhao 63(58)-30).

Indian table tennis team for Asian Games named

G. Sathiyan and Sreeja Akula will spearhead the Indian table tennis team's campaign in the men's and women's sections respectively at the Asian Games, to be held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from September 20 to 28. As reserves in men's section, Ankur Bhattacharjee and Ronit Bhanja will remain on standby. Swastika Ghosh and Manika Batra are reserves in the women's category.

The team: Men: G. Sathiyan, Harmeet Desai, Manav Thakkar, Manush Shah, Payas Jain.
Women: Sreeja Akula, Yashaswini Ghorpade, Diya Chitale, Sutirtha Mukherjee, Syndrela Das.

Veteran cricket journalist Qamar Ahmed passes away

Qamar Ahmed, one of the most respected cricket journalists from Pakistan, passed away in Karachi on Thursday. He was 88. Qamar, who had played first-class cricket, covered more than 400 Test matches across the world for newspapers and magazines and also worked for the *BBC*. Among his many achievements, Qamar had witnessed Sunil Gavaskar's 10,000th Test run in 1987, Anil Kumble's 10 for 74 in 1999, the 1000th and 2000th Test matches.

Asian fencing championships in New Delhi from today

C.A. Bhavani Devi will spearhead India's 24-member squad in the 26th senior fencing Asian Championships, which will kick off at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Friday. The continental event, scheduled from June 19 to 24, will feature 32 countries and serve as a direct qualifier for the upcoming Asian Games. This is the first time that India is hosting a continental-level fencing tournament. As the host nation, India is fielding a full-strength squad. Leading the charge is Bhavani, who made history at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 by becoming the first-ever Indian fencer to qualify for the Games. The 32-year-old from Chennai went on to win bronze at the 2023 Asian Championships.

BCCI mulls early start to IPL from next year: Saikia

In its bid to beat the extreme May heat in most parts of the country, the BCCI is contemplating an early start to the IPL, eyeing a March 10-May 15 window for future editions starting next year, said Board secretary Devajit Saikia. However, he made it clear that due to international calender constraints, the number of matches will remain 74 and not be increased to 94. The IPL usually gets underway in the last week of March and winds up towards the end of May. Saikia said an early IPL would protect the interest of both players as well as the paying public.

LIVE TELECAST

FIFA World Cup: Unite8 Sports 1, 2 & Z5 App, 6.30 a.m. 12.30 a.m. 3.30 & 6 a.m. (Saturday)
Tri-series: Sri Lanka-A vs Afghanistan-A, Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 10 a.m.
Bangladesh vs Australia: 2nd T20I, FanCode, 1.30 p.m.
England vs New Zealand: 2nd Test, day 3, Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 3.30 p.m.
Women's T20 World Cup: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 11 p.m.

Milestone man Manpreet in no mood to slow down

The Indian midfielder is now eyeing the upcoming World Cup and Asian Games to further burnish his credentials as one of the fittest players in world hockey in a hectic year

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

Focused: With age, I know I have to work extra hard to keep up with everyone else, says Manpreet.
FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

Having crossed the milestone of 413 international matches and becoming the highest-capped Indian hockey player, Manpreet Singh is in no mood to slow down.

With his landmark coming in India's first Pro League victory of the season against reigning world champion Germany on Wednesday, the Indian midfielder is now eyeing the upcoming World Cup and Asian Games to further burnish his credentials as one of the fittest players in world hockey.

"This year is very important for us. The Pro league matches are already on and playing England and Pakistan will be very useful because they are in our group in the World Cup, for which we will be back here next month," Manpreet said during an interaction with select media on Thursday.

"England has been doing well so those games will be important. Then there will be Asian Games soon after which is the ticket to LA Olympics.

"As for fitness, there is no alternative. World hockey today is at a level where if you are not at peak fitness all the time, you cannot survive.

"With age, I know I have to work extra hard to keep up with everyone else and I have worked a lot on my fitness over the years because if I don't I won't be able to remain in the team.

"It's really that simple and something the coach has also repeatedly made clear – your fitness levels will decide your spot in the side," he added.

There had been a lot of talk around the milestone in the last few months but Manpreet insisted it did not matter. "My focus has always been on maintaining my fitness. It is a big honour, playing 413 matches over 15 years, and I am proud of it but it doesn't change anything on field.

"The number of caps or captain's band doesn't really matter.

"My focus has always been on how to improve as a team and I will continue doing that. It doesn't mean I stop listening to others," he declared.

Minakshi makes it to 51kg quarterfinals

BOXING

Press Trust of India
GUIYANG (CHINA)

India's Minakshi advanced to the 51kg quarterfinals in the boxing World Cup (Stage 2), on Thursday.

Minakshi, the reigning 48kg World champion and current World No. 1 in that division, is transitioning into the Olympic 51kg class in the ongoing event. She registered a 5-0 unanimous decision victory over Poland's Natalia Kuczewska.

Abhinash Jamwal (65kg) lost 0-5 to Kyrgyzstan's Mirzokhid Imamnazarov.

So far, five Indians – Nikhil (55kg), Deepak (70kg), Minakshi (51kg), Prachi (57kg), and Saneh (65kg) – have advanced to the quarterfinals.

Jyoti (48kg) and Jugnoo (85kg) have already assured medals for the country by progressing into the semifinals.

Minakshi will square off against Kazakhstan's Alua Balkibekova, Saneh will face Poland's Kinga Krowka, Prachi will take on Chinese Taipei's Shih Yi Wu while Nikhil (55kg) will clash with Azerbaijan's Amin Mammadzada.

WC-winning coach Parreira hospitalised

Press Trust of India
RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazil's World Cup-winning coach Carlos Alberto Parreira has been hospitalised in his fight against cancer.

The 83-year-old Parreira, who oversaw the Selecao's run to the 1994 World Cup title, was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2023. Hospital Samaritano Barra said in a statement it won't provide details about Parreira's health or when he arrived for treatment.

Parreira also coached Brazil in the 2006 World Cup and won the 2004 Copa America and the 2005 Confederations Cup with the team.

He also guided Kuwait (1982), the UAE (1990), Saudi Arabia (1998), and South Africa (2010) in the World Cup finals.

Indian women put it across Uruguay

Press Trust of India
AUCKLAND

India bounced back after conceding an early goal to defeat Uruguay 3-2 and finish at the top of Pool A in the FIH Women's Nations Cup New Zealand, on Thursday. India recorded a third consecutive victory, having earlier defeated USA and Japan.

USA finished second and joined India in the semifinals. India will take on the winner of the contest between Chile and Korea in the last-four stage on Saturday.

The contest also marked a memorable moment for Neha, who completed her 200th appearance for India.

The result: India 3 (Deepika 24-PC, 56, Deepika Soreng 43) bt Uruguay 2 (Chiara Appennino 13-PC, Manuela Vilar 55).

Gurnoor validates selectors' decision to fast-track him into national side

CRICKET

N. Sudarshan
LUCKNOW

Intelligent: Gurnoor feels yorkers are very useful, especially when bowling against good hitters. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Well begun is half done.

Cricket careers do not necessarily conform to this saying, for they are long, arduous and years-long projects. But Gurnoor Brar has certainly begun well, and made a fine first impression.

In his opening two international outings, the 26-year-old has taken three wickets each. Importantly, he has bowled with good pace and bounce, and showcased variety, validating the selectors' decision to fast-track his entry into the National team.

"Results don't matter to me, preparation does," Gurnoor declared after India's 170-run victory over Afghanistan in the second ODI here on Wednesday.

"[What matters is] whether I can repeat this every day. I want to do better and I know that I can. Hopefully, in the coming matches, I will do better."

The two matches against the Afghans were Gurnoor's first taste of competitive action in nearly five months. He was with Gujarat Titans – also captained by Shubman Gill – for the entirety of the IPL but did not get a game.

"There is a very good atmosphere at GT," he said. "There is [Ashish] Nehra sir, [Kagiso] Rabada, [Mohammed] Siraj, Ishant Sharma... so, you get to learn a lot.

"Like everyone, I want to play. I was waiting for my chance there. But at the same time, I was also learning things. Instead of IPL, by god's grace, I got this opportunity to play for India and show my skills."

Gurnoor's USP is his hit-the-deck style, but over the past week, he has shown that there is more to him, including fuller-length deliveries and yorkers.

"It's not just about bowling fast, fast, fast," the Punjab pacer explained. "Many batters like pace, especially when there is not much in the wicket. So it is about planning.

"According to me, every fast bowler should work on yorkers. At the back end of the innings, yorkers are very useful, especially when you have good hitters. The management and the bowling coach back us a lot. And with that, we can bowl more freely".

Abhay & Velavan start with a win

Sports Bureau

India's top men's pair of Abhay Singh and Velavan Senthilkumar got off to a winning start in its title defence at the third Asian doubles squash championships, at Sarawak (Malaysia) on Thursday.

The top-seeded duo eased past South Korea's Oh Seojin and Min Woo Lee 11-7, 11-10 in a Pool-A contest.

Rahul Baitha and Suraj Chand defeated Singapore's Samuel Quek Wei Yi and Justin Yap 11-3, 11-3 but lost to Japan's Naoki Hayashi and Ren Makino 8-11, 11-8, 6-11 in Pool-B.

In mixed doubles, second seeds Velavan and Joshna Chinappa thumped Cordelia Hsu and Pan Hong Rui (Taipei) 11-2, 11-3 in Pool-B and in women's doubles, second-ranked Joshna and Rathika Seelan won all three outings.

Neeraj returns to 'natural technique' in his first outing of the year

ATHLETICS

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

Neeraj Chopra who will make his first competitive public appearance in almost nine months on Friday, admitted it had been a long, introspective hiatus with several changes, declared he was fit and raring to go and confirmed that the Asian Games was definitely part of his plans for the year ahead.

Speaking during a virtual media interaction ahead of his season opener at the Doha Diamond League, Neeraj was candid enough to acknowledge that it was a last-minute decision to participate.

"I am a little nervous talking to so many people after such a long time! We started throwing one and half months ago and took our time. I talked to the Doha organisers and asked them if it was possible if I let them know in a very short period, like one week before (the event). They said yes and then we decided after my last session, let's compete in Doha," Neeraj explained.

Neeraj. DIAMOND LEAGUE

> I had some injury before Tokyo, we worked on it and I competed but I don't think it was a good decision

His last outing was at the Tokyo World Championships in September 2025, where Neeraj finished a disappointing eighth, and admitted in hindsight it was perhaps not the best decision. "I had some injury before Tokyo, we worked on it and I competed but I don't think it was a good decision. I knew I had a problem but I still went ahead because it was the last competition of the season.

"As athletes, there is always some niggle we struggle with, we try to save that injury and we feel another one. So then I had in my ankle, then somewhere in the shoulder. Then I sat with my team, my physio and we worked on every part."

Asked about his training so far and the split from the legendary Jan Zelezny after just one season, Chopra insisted he was now in a good space.

"Jan Zelzny was a great athlete and he was a really good coach also but we worked on few specific things. I'm happy that I could break the 90m mark with him.

"After Tokyo, I had to stay in one place for the season and that was not possible for me. So we decided that maybe I need to work with my ideas and now I work with my Indian coach (Jaiveer Chaudhary).

"I'm working on my natural technique. He is my senior, I started javelin with him.

"Now we are working on what I had originally when I started. We are not working on anything specific or very deep.

" I have a good team around me, I feel very good," he said, revealing that the Asian Games were part of his calendar for the year.

SNAPSHOTS

Ashmita, Anmol enter quarterfinals

MACAU: Anmol Kharb and Ashmita Chaliha advanced to the women's singles quarterfinals while the country's challenge ended in other sections at the Macau Open Super 300 badminton on Thursday.

Other results (pre-quarters): Women: Kim Min Sun (Kor) bt Rakshitha Sree Santhosh Ramraj 21-15, 21-9; Kim Min Ji (Kor) bt Shriyanshi Valishetty 21-16, 21-16; Park Ga Eu (Kor) bt Isharani Baruah 21-19, 23-21.
Men: Dong Tian Yao (Chn) bt Tharun Mannepalli 24-22, 21-15; Hu Zhe An (Chn) bt Rounak Chouhan 21-13, 21-17.
Mixed doubles: Li Hong Yi & Huang Ke Xin (Chn) bt Ishaan Bhatnagar & Shruti Mishra 19-21, 22-20, 21-16.

Aryan makes CWG grade

AHMEDABAD: Aryan Nehra smashed his two-year-old men's 1500m freestyle record to rewrite the 'best Indian time' and win gold at the National aquatics on Thursday.

The results (winners only): Men: 1500m freestyle: Aryan Nehra (Guj) 15:14.88 (NMR, Old 15:29.76, 2023); **400m medley:** Shoan Ganguly (Kar) 4:24.80; **4x100m medley relay:** Tamil Nadu (MJ Praveen Kumar Praveen, Danush Suresh, B. Benedicton Rohit, Adhithya Dinesh) 3:44.74 (NMR, Old 3:45.09, 2025). **Women: 100m freestyle:** Dhinidhi Desinghu (Kar) 56.57 (NMR, Old 56.78, Dhinidhi, 2025); **400m freestyle:** Aditi Hegde (Mah) 4:25.31; **200m backstroke:** Pratyasa Ray (Odi) 2:20.22.

MRF Limited receives FIA 3-star environmental accreditation

CHENNAI: MRF Limited has been awarded the prestigious three-star level of the FIA Environmental Accreditation Programme, marking a significant milestone in the company's continuing presence in global motorsport. The certification follows an audit conducted under the FIA Environmental Accreditation framework. The FIA audit recognised MRF's structured approach to responsible manufacturing practices across its motorsport tyre operations.

WORLD CONTINENCE WEEK

15TH – 21ST JUNE '26

WORLD CONTINENCE WEEK 2026
Do not suffer in silence. Seek support, Regain control

A Space Marketing Initiative
MSN
Research for Better Medicines

Why Leakage Should Not Be Dismissed

Dr. Gautam Banga
Urologist

Urinary leakage should never be dismissed as inevitable, trivial, or merely embarrassing. Although many people experience occasional leakage, it is not simply a normal part of ageing or something that must be tolerated without question. In many cases, leakage represents a reversible problem, a manageable chronic condition, or an indication that a broader health assessment may be beneficial.

When symptoms are dismissed, opportunities for early intervention are often lost. Patients may assume that nothing can be done and continue coping in silence, adapting their lives around a condition that could potentially be improved. This can lead to unnecessary physical, emotional, and social consequences that affect overall quality of life.

In clinical practice, even a brief conversation can create an important turning point. Recognition and validation are powerful first steps. When patients feel heard and understood, they are more likely to discuss symptoms openly and engage in treatment recommendations. Depending on the cause, management may include pelvic floor muscle training, bladder retraining, lifestyle modification, medication review, weight management, or referral for specialist evaluation.

Importantly, the first step does not need to be complicated. Simply acknowledging that urinary leakage deserves attention can change the course of care. Education helps patients understand that treatment options exist and that improvement is often achievable.

Dismissal solves little and frequently prolongs suffering. Informed attention, on the other hand, can lead to practical solutions, improved confidence, and better health outcomes. When leakage is taken seriously, patients gain access to support, guidance, and opportunities for meaningful improvement.

Urinary Health, Under the Microscope

Dr. Harbans Singh
Urologist

Urinary health deserves the same clinical attention and seriousness given to any other chronic symptom domain. While symptoms such as incontinence, urgency, frequency, and nocturia are common, they should never be dismissed as inevitable consequences of ageing or simply accepted as part of daily life. Instead, they often provide important clues about underlying metabolic, neurological, urological, or lifestyle-related conditions that require evaluation.

A thorough clinical history frequently offers more valuable information than assumptions based solely on age, gender, or medical background. Patients may hesitate to discuss urinary symptoms due to embarrassment, social stigma, or the belief that nothing can be done. As a result, many symptoms remain hidden unless healthcare professionals actively and sensitively enquire about them during consultations.

From a healthcare communication perspective, urinary health benefits greatly from clear and precise language. Many patients are unfamiliar with terms such as stress incontinence, urge incontinence, overflow incontinence, or mixed urinary symptoms. When symptoms are accurately described and properly understood, diagnostic pathways become clearer and treatment decisions more effective.

Urinary symptoms can affect sleep quality, work productivity, physical activity, travel, and social engagement. Their impact often extends far beyond the bladder itself. By encouraging open discussion, improving patient education, and promoting early evaluation, clinicians can identify treatable causes and improve outcomes. Urinary health may be invisible in routine conversation, but it remains highly visible in the quality, confidence, and independence of everyday life.

The Subtle Signals of Bladder Trouble

Dr. Parag Gupta
Urologist

Bladder problems rarely announce themselves dramatically at the beginning. More often, they emerge as subtle but persistent changes that can easily be overlooked or explained away. A person may notice the need to urinate more frequently, wake several times during the night, experience sudden urgency, or occasionally leak urine when coughing, laughing, or exercising. Individually, these symptoms may seem minor, but together they often signal an underlying issue that deserves attention.

Because these changes typically develop gradually, many people dismiss them as a normal part of ageing, a consequence of a busy lifestyle, or simply something they must learn to live with. Unfortunately, this delay in seeking advice can allow symptoms to progress and become more disruptive over time.

From a clinical perspective, early recognition is important because urinary symptoms are often easier to manage before they become severe. A comprehensive evaluation may include reviewing fluid habits, medications, bowel function, mobility, medical conditions, and lifestyle factors. Pelvic floor strengthening, bladder training, behavioural modifications, and targeted medical therapies can all play valuable roles in improving symptoms.

Patients should also be reassured that bladder symptoms are neither a personal failing nor an unavoidable consequence of getting older. In many cases, the bladder is providing useful information about changes occurring elsewhere in the body.

The bladder speaks through symptoms, not judgment. Listening carefully to these early signals can lead to timely intervention, better symptom control, improved quality of life, and the prevention of a subtle problem becoming a substantial long-term burden.

Issued in public interest by
MSN
Research for Better Medicines

No More Leaks
#Breakthesilence

The Hidden Side of Urinary Health

Dr. R L Nayak
Urologist

Urinary health has a hidden side because many symptoms remain private until they become impossible to ignore. Individuals experiencing urgency, frequency, leakage, or nocturia often keep these concerns to themselves for months or even years. Embarrassment, misconceptions about ageing, and limited awareness of treatment options frequently prevent people from seeking timely medical advice.

Yet the hidden burden of urinary symptoms extends far beyond the bladder. Many patients quietly adapt their daily lives by planning activities around restroom access, restricting fluid intake, avoiding travel, or limiting social interactions. These adjustments may reduce confidence, affect relationships, and gradually diminish quality of life. In some cases, altered habits can even contribute to dehydration, poor sleep, and reduced physical activity.

The hidden side of urinary health also includes underdiagnosis. Patients who do not volunteer symptoms may never receive appropriate evaluation, allowing potentially treatable conditions to persist unnecessarily. As a result, healthcare professionals play an important role in initiating conversations and creating an environment where patients feel comfortable discussing sensitive concerns.

Awareness efforts should therefore focus on normalizing discussion and encouraging early evaluation. Most urinary symptoms have identifiable causes, and many can be improved through lifestyle measures, behavioural interventions, medications, or specialist care.

A compassionate clinical approach can uncover concerns before they become major burdens. What remains hidden is not always severe, but it is often influential. Urinary health deserves greater visibility because its effects reach beyond physical symptoms, influencing emotional well-being, social participation, independence, and overall quality of life.

Why the Bladder Deserves Attention

Dr. Rohit Kumar
Urologist

The bladder is a relatively small organ, yet it has an extraordinary influence on daily life. When functioning normally, it receives little attention. However, when symptoms develop, the bladder can quickly become a constant source of concern, affecting sleep, work, travel, exercise, and social interactions. Its impact often extends far beyond the physical act of urination.

Symptoms such as urgency, leakage, nocturia, and increased frequency may appear straightforward on the surface, but they frequently reflect a complex interaction of bladder function, pelvic floor support, neurological control, lifestyle habits, medications, and coexisting medical conditions. Understanding this complexity is essential for effective evaluation and treatment.

Senior clinicians recognize that bladder symptoms deserve attention because they may signal underlying conditions that are both identifiable and treatable. Urinary tract infections, overactive bladder, pelvic floor dysfunction, diabetes, neurological disorders, and medication-related effects can all contribute to symptoms. Early recognition often leads to more effective management and better long-term outcomes.

Unfortunately, many patients do not mention urinary concerns unless specifically asked. Embarrassment, misconceptions about ageing, or the belief that symptoms are unavoidable frequently prevent open discussion. Routine enquiry during consultations can therefore uncover issues that might otherwise remain hidden.

The goal is not to medicalize every urinary symptom but to identify those that affect health, function, and quality of life. A bladder that receives appropriate attention often allows individuals to regain confidence, sleep better, remain active, and return their focus to the more important business of living well.

Continence and Confidence: The Link We Ignore

Dr. Sarbartha Pratihar
Urologist

Continence and confidence are closely connected, yet this relationship is often overlooked in both clinical practice and public discussion. When individuals begin to fear urinary leakage, the impact frequently extends beyond the bladder itself. Many reduce physical activity, avoid social gatherings, hesitate to travel, or become reluctant to participate in activities they once enjoyed. Over time, these behavioural changes can significantly affect independence, self-esteem, and overall quality of life.

The loss of confidence associated with urinary symptoms may persist even when the physical symptoms are relatively mild. Some patients develop a constant awareness of restroom locations, while others avoid situations where immediate access to a toilet may not be guaranteed. This gradual restriction of daily activities can create a burden that is often greater than the symptom itself.

From a clinical perspective, restoring continence is only one part of successful management. Equally important is restoring freedom, confidence, and the ability to engage fully in everyday life. Patients should be reassured that improvement is often achievable through practical measures such as pelvic floor muscle training, bladder retraining, fluid management, weight reduction, medication review, or treatment of underlying medical conditions.

Senior clinicians frequently observe that confidence returns gradually as symptoms improve and patients gain reassurance that their condition is manageable. This emotional recovery can be just as meaningful as the physical improvement. A conversation about continence is therefore also a conversation about confidence, independence, and quality of life. Addressing both dimensions helps ensure truly patient-centred care and more satisfying long-term outcomes.

From Embarrassment to Empowerment

Dr. Vikas Agarwal
Urologist

The most effective continence awareness efforts help individuals move from embarrassment to empowerment. Embarrassment often keeps urinary symptoms hidden, preventing people from seeking advice or exploring treatment options. Empowerment, by contrast, encourages understanding, action, and confidence. This transformation is one of the most important goals of patient education and awareness initiatives.

The journey toward empowerment frequently begins with validation. Patients need to hear that urinary symptoms are common, medically relevant, and often treatable. Many people feel isolated in their experience, believing they are alone or that nothing can be done. Reassurance based on accurate information can help replace fear and uncertainty with a more constructive outlook.

Education is the next step. Understanding symptom patterns, potential causes, lifestyle influences, and available treatments allows patients to participate actively in their own care. Whether symptoms involve urgency, frequency, nocturia, or leakage, clear explanations help individuals make informed decisions and set realistic expectations.

Empowerment also requires practical guidance rather than vague reassurance. Pelvic floor muscle training, bladder retraining, fluid management, medication review, behavioural strategies, and treatment of underlying conditions can all contribute to improvement when appropriately recommended. Patients are more likely to engage with these measures when they understand their purpose and potential benefits.

Senior clinicians play an important role in normalizing conversations about urinary health while maintaining professionalism and respect. When shame is replaced with knowledge and support, many patients discover that their symptoms are far more manageable than they feared. That shift from embarrassment to empowerment is the true value of awareness and patient-centred care.

The Silent Language of the Urinary Tract

Dr. Atul Jain
Urologist

The urinary tract often communicates through a silent language that can be easy to overlook. Unlike many medical conditions that announce themselves with obvious pain or dramatic symptoms, urinary disorders frequently present through subtle changes in daily habits and bodily function. Urgency, increased frequency, nocturia, and occasional leakage may seem minor at first, yet they can provide valuable clues about underlying health concerns.

Because these symptoms often develop gradually, patients may normalize them or assume they are an inevitable consequence of ageing, childbirth, lifestyle changes, or stress. This tendency can delay diagnosis and treatment, allowing manageable conditions to progress unnecessarily. In many cases, the challenge is not the absence of symptoms but the failure to recognize their significance.

Senior clinicians understand that careful questioning often reveals more than waiting for a direct complaint. A patient may not describe having urinary incontinence but may mention carrying spare clothing, avoiding long journeys, restricting fluid intake, or waking several times each night. These details may appear incidental, yet they frequently point toward clinically meaningful issues requiring further evaluation.

The urinary tract speaks through patterns rather than pronouncements. When healthcare professionals take time to explore these patterns, they can uncover conditions such as overactive bladder, pelvic floor dysfunction, urinary tract disease, medication-related effects, or systemic illnesses.

The language is silent only when no one translates it. Once properly interpreted, urinary symptoms can guide effective diagnosis, targeted treatment, and meaningful improvements in quality of life. Listening carefully to these subtle messages is often the first step toward restoring comfort, confidence, and overall well-being.

This is a patient awareness initiative by MSN labs. The views and opinions expressed here are based on the expertise of the doctors and is not endorsed by MSN labs. Reader's are advised to seek to necessary medical advice from a qualified medical practitioner.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA - "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
Bid Identification No.CCE NHC KJR - 03 / 2026-27
(E-mail address :- senhkeonjhar@gmail.com)
Letter No.969, dt.10.06.2026

1.	No of the work	:- 1 number Building work
2.	Estimated cost	:- Rs.168.95 Lakhs
3.	Class of Contractor	:- 'B' Class & 'A' Class
4.	Period of completion	:- 10 (Ten) Calendar Months
5.	Date and Time of availability of Bid document in the portal	:- 11.00 Hours of 20.06.2026 to 16 Hours of 04.07.2026.
6.	Last date / Time for receipt of bids	:- 16.00 Hours of 04.07.2026
7.	Date of opening of Bid from Portal	:- 11.30 Hours on 06.07.2026
8.	Name of the address of the Officer Inviting Bid	:- Chief Construction Engineer, N.H. Circle, Keonjhar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://tendersodisha.gov.in"
Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer, N.H.Circle, Keonjhar.
34001/365/2627
OIPR-34001/34048/1/26-27/0001

SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED
e-Procurement Tender Notice (Paper Notification)
TGSPDCL intends to float tender for procurement of (a) HT ERS Kits (b) LT ERS Kits (c) Disposal of 7.5 MVA PTR on e-procurement platform.
For further details of each item above, please visit www.tgsouthernpower.org, www.tender.telangana.gov.in, www.auction.telangana.gov.in.
Phone: 040-23431360, 1033, 1035, 1026
Sd/-
CHIEF ENGINEER (P&MM)
TGSPDCL, Hyderabad
DIPR R.O. No. : 233-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/2026-27, Date: 18-06-2026

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT
Mr. N SELVA KUMAR
PH: 9820350726
selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in
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DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS KATHUA
E- mail: sspkathua@jkpolice.gov.in Fax/Phone No.: 01922-234010

LOOK OUT NOTICE

On 31-05-2026, one person namely Yash Paul S/O Badri Nath R/O Dollian Jattan Tehsil Marheen District Kathua lodged a written report at P/S Rajbagh stating therein that his daughter namely Mansi Devi, age 20 years went missing from home on 30-05-2026. The complainant tried his best to search his daughter but all in vain. On this, missing report vide DD No. 11 dated 31-05-2026 has been entered at Police Station Rajbagh.

During the course of investigation, best efforts were made to locate missing individual, whereas she is still un-traced.

As such Description Roll/Photograph of said missing individual is being shared with the appeal that anybody having clue/information about her whereabouts may inform us accordingly. The informer will be rewarded suitably:-

DESCRIPTION ROLL

• Name	Mansi Devi
• Father	Yash Paul
• Permanent Address	Dhollian Jattan
• Present Address	Dhollian Jattan
• Tehsil	Marheen
• Police Station	Rajbagh
• Age	20 years
• Height	5 feet
• Complexion	Wheatish
• Built	Slim
• Face	Oval
• Eyes	Black
• Languages known	Hindi/ Dogri

PHOTOGRAPH

Any information related to the whereabouts of the subject may be communicated on following contacts:-
1. DPO Kathua- 01922-234010 (Phone/Fax)
2. dpokathua@jkpolice.gov.in (Mail ID)
3. PCR Kathua- 01922-234311(Phone/Fax)
4. Police Station Rajbagh 9103007512

Sd/-
Sr. Superintendent of Police,
Kathua
DIP/J-3921/26 Jun 18 2026

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
Tender No.: 18-CEE-C-SECR- 2026
Date: 12-06-2026

Name of Work: "Electrification work with 1x25 KV, 50HZ, A.C., single Phase in connection with **(i)** Construction of Y-Link line from Durg direction line to Dallirajhara line at Maroda Yard and **(ii)** Construction of Centralized sick line and associated developmental work at Bhilai in Raipur division over S.E.C. Railway".
Tender Value: Rs. 92,61,220.27 (Rupees Ninety Two Lakh Sixty One Thousand Two Hundred Twenty and Paise Twenty Seven Only), **EMD: Rs. 1,85,200/-** (Rupees One Lakh Eighty Five Thousand Two Hundred Only).
Date & Time of Tender Closing: At 15:30 Hrs. on **07/07/2026**, **Date & Time of Tender Opening:** At 15:45 Hrs. on **07/07/2026, Completion Period: 12** (Twelve) Months from the date of issue of LOA.
Website particulars & notice board location: For further details/related to e-tender document, eligibility criteria & the complete details for the above work, please refer/download tender document which is availabe on our website **http://www.ireps.gov.in**.
Asst. Exe. Elect. Engineer (Con)
S.E.C.Railway, Raipur
CPR/10/213
South East Central Railway @secrail

DELHI TRANSCO LIMITED
NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER
Delhi Transco Ltd, a Government of NCT of Delhi Undertaking, invites online tender for the work :
Tender No. T25P131644: Special repair to control room building at 220 Kv S/Station Okhla.
For complete details of the tender please visit following websites :-
https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in (Tender ID No. 2026_DTL_293284_1) and **www.dtl.gov.in** with Unique No. DTL-0049-120626
Last date for bid submission:- **22.07.2026, 13:00 Hrs**.
All Corrigendum / Addendum / Amendments / Date of Extension / Clarifications etc. to this e-tender will be hosted on the above website only. Bidders should regularly visit website to keep themselves updated.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
TENDER NOTICE NO: CAO/C/BSP/26-27/10
Dated: 12.06.2026 (Open Tender) (Single Packet System)

Name of Work: "Execution of Boring, Casting of RCC Piles and Lateral Load testing of Piles in Major Br. No. 06, 54, 59 and 66 and other miscellaneous allied works in BSP-SKT section in connection with BSP-JSG 4th line."
Tender Value: Rs. 85,44,635.99/-, EMD: Rs. 1,70,900.00/-, Cost of Tender Document: NIL, Completion period of Work: 03 (Three) Months, from the date of acceptance letter.
Date & time of Tender Closing: Up to **15:00** Hours on **07/07/2026, Date & time of Tender Opening: 15:30** Hrs. on **07/07/202**6.
For further details related to tender document eligibility criteria and the complete details for the above work please contract office of the Chief Administrative Officer/Con/ S.E.C.R/ Bilaspur, Pin: 495004 or Dy. Chief Engineer (Con)/S.E.C. Railway/ Bilaspur-Pin: 495004 or Dy. Chief Engineer/Con/I/S.E.C. Railway/ Raipur-Pin: 492009, Chief Project Manager/West/ Construction/ South East Central Railway Nagpur-Pin: 440001 or refer on our website **www.ireps.gov.in**.
Dy. Chief Engineer/Con
S.E.C.Railway/Bilaspur
CPR/10/217
South East Central Railway @secrail

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

OPEN TENDER, ELECTRICAL (GENERAL) BRANCH
The Divisional Railway Manager (Electrical General), West Central Railway, Jabalpur for and on behalf of President of India invites applications on prescribed tender form for the following works **NIT No. :** JBP-L-T-No-45-2025R, dtd 29.05.2026, **Name of work with location :** Remodeling of receiving yard at NKJ to increase CSR/CSL of lines in receiving yard at NKJ, **Approx cost of the work (In Rs.) :** Rs. 6055940.36, **Earnest money (In Rs.) :** Rs.121100.00 , **Completion period (In years) :** 06 Month, **Date & Time for submission of tender (Upto 15.00 hrs.on) :** 22/06/2026, **Date & Time for opening of tender (at 15.30 hrs. on) :** 22/06/2026, **NIT No. :** JBP-L-T-No-15-2026R, dtd 15.06.2026, **Name of work with location :** Provision of a dedicated and reliable 24x7 WS for drinking water. sanitation and platform washing, coach watering and other passenger use under ADEN/HQ/JBP sub division, **Approx cost of the work (In Rs.) :** Rs.3,17,64,373.81, **Earnest money (In Rs.) :** Rs.635300.00, **Completion period (In years) :** 12 Month, **Date & Time for submission of tender (Upto 15.00 hrs.on) :** 10/07/2026, **Date & Time for opening of tender (at 15.30 hrs. on) :** 10/07/2026, **NIT No. :** JBP-LT-No-17-2026R.dtd 15.06.2026, **Name of work with location :** JBP- Yard Remodeling - Extension of ARMV siding, ART siding and stabling line no.3 to accommodate full length train, **Approx cost of the work (In Rs.) :** Rs.6739515.00, **Earnest money (In Rs.) :** Rs.134800.00, **Completion period (In years) :** 06 Month, **Date & Time for submission of tender (Upto 15.00 hrs.on) :** 08/07/2026, **Date & Time for opening of tender (at 15.30 hrs. on) :** 08/07/2026, **NIT No. :** JBP-L-T-No-09-2026R. dtd 15.06.2026, **Name of work with location :** Construction of 10 units RB-V Quarters (G+5) in Rail Saurabh colony (phase-I) at Jabalpur under ADEN/HQ/JBP sub division, **Approx cost of the work (In Rs.) :** Rs.5485693.82, **Earnest money (In Rs.) :** Rs.109700.00, **Completion period (In years) :** 12 Month, **Date & Time for submission of tender (Upto 15.00 hrs.on) :** 07/07/2026, **Date & Time for opening of tender (at 15.30 hrs. on) :** 07/07/2026, **NIT No. :** JBP-L-T-No-12-2026R. dtd 15.06.2026, **Name of work with location :** JBP Div. Renovation of Highmast including shifting of transformer in circulating area with shifting of DG SET, **Approx cost of the work (In Rs.) :** Rs.13205925.51, **Earnest money (In Rs.) :** Rs.264100.00, **Completion period (In years) :** 12 Month, **Date & Time for submission of tender (Upto 15.00 hrs.on) :** 09/07/2026, **Date & Time for opening of tender (at 15.30 hrs. on) :** 09/07/2026, **All Above Tenders Cost of tender form (In Rs.) :**0.00, **All Above Tenders Address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased. :** Sr. DEE/Genl./Jabalpur Complete details of tender notice available on the Railway website https:ireps.gov.in/ Complete tender form can also be down loaded form above website.
Sd./-
Sr. Div. Electrical Engineer (Genl.), West Central Railway, Jabalpur
स्वच्छ भारत अभियान एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) MECHANICAL DIVISION CENTRAL KASHMIR

e-NIT No:- R&B/MDCK/NIT/02 of 2026-27, Dated: 17-06-2026
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders are invited in two-cover system (Technical and Financial) on item rate basis from experienced contractors/firms/companies/JV partners registered with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways or other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work: -

S. No	Name of Work	Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit (in Rs)	Estimated cost (Rs.)	Time of Completion (in Months)	Tender Opening Authority	Position of Funds
1	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of HVAC System at New High Court Rakh-i-Gund Aksha Bemina	Rs 20,000	**10,021,564**	50,10,78,245	18 Months	Chief Engineer, R&B Central Kashmir	Available with intending department

Position of AAA: Administrative Approval accorded by Department of Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs vide no. 3456-JK (LD) of 2021. Dated: - 04.05.2021 for an amount of **Rs 908.20 crores**
Position of TS: Accorded by Chief Engineer, Mechanical & Hospitals Engineering Department, Kashmir vide order no. MHED/K/TS/109. Dt:-15.09.2025 Pre-bid meeting shall be held in the office of Chief Engineer, R&B CENTRAL KASHMIR on 27-06-2026 (12:00) hrs
The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental **website http://jktenders.gov.in** as per below schedule :

S.No	Particulars	Dated		
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	17-06-2026		
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From	17-06-2026	(19:00 hrs)
		To	08-07-2026	(18:00 hrs)
3.	Bid Submission Start Date	From	17-06-2026	(19:00 hrs)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To	08-07-2026	(18:00 hrs)
5.	Date and time of opening of Technical bid (online)	**09-07-2026** at/after **12:00** hrs in the office of Chief Engineer, R&B Central Kashmir		
6.	Date and time of opening of Financial bid (online)	To be notified after technical bid		

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
R&B Mechanical Division
Central Kashmir
DIP/K-2317/26

ازعدالت ایڈیشنل سپیشل موبائل مجسٹریٹ گاندربل
باجلاس Ms Mahoor
بلال احمد شیخ ولد غلام رسول شیخ بنام طارق احمد ڈار ولد حبیب اللہ ڈار
ساکنہ ناگہ بل U/s 138 NI Act ساکنہ امداکدل لال بازار سرینگر، نزد ید بلالیہ یتیم ٹرسٹ
وارنٹ گشتی عام زیر دفعہ 512 ض ف بخلاف:
طارق احمد ڈار ولد حبیب اللہ ڈار ساکنہ امداکدل لالبازار سرینگر، نزد ید بلالیہ یتیم ٹرسٹ
حکم بنام: اہلکاران پولیس یونٹی آف جموں وکشمیر بذریعہ آئے پی پی
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں ملزم/ملزمان کو بار ہا بذریعہ وارنٹ گرفتاری بلا ضمانتی طلب کیا گیا ہے۔ اول ملزم کی دستیابی نہ ہوئی ہے اور وارنٹ ہذا بذریعہ تعمیل آئی ہے کہ ملزم دیدہ دانستہ طور پر گھر سے فرار ہوکر روپوش ہوگیا ہے۔ جس سے ملزم کی دستیابی بطرق معمول ممکن نہ ہے۔
لہٰذا ملزم کے خلاف کاروائی زیر دفعہ 512 ض ف بعمل لائی جاکر تمام اہلکاران پولیس جموں وکشمیر کو بذریعہ وارنٹ ہذا حکم واختیار دیا جاتا ہے کہ ملزم/ملزمان متذکرہ بالا جہاں کہیں بھی اندر حدود یوٹی ہو تو اس کو فوراً گرفتار کر کے عدالت ہذا میں پیش کریں۔ وارنٹ ہذا تا دستیابی ملزم کار رہے گی۔ تحریر
۱۔ وارنٹ ہذا بغرض تعمیل ایس ایس پی گاندربل کو مرسل ہوئے۔
۲۔ وارنٹ ہذا بغرض تعمیل آئی جی پی کشمیر کو مرسل ہوئے
۳۔ وارنٹ ہذا بغرض تعمیل ایس ایچ او کو مرسل ہوئے۔
۴۔ وارنٹ ہذا بغرض اشاعت گورنمنٹ پریس سرینگر کو مرسل ہوئے۔
دستخط ومہر:
ایڈیشنل سپیشل جوڈیشل موبائل مجسٹریٹ گاندربل
DIPK-2267/26

ازعدالت ایڈیشنل سپیشل موبائل مجسٹریٹ گاندربل
باجلاس Ms Mahoor
محمد عبداللہ صوفی ولد حاجی عبدل رحمان بنام ارشد احمد گنائی (عرف الطاف) ولد غلام محمد گنائی
ساکنہ گوٹلیباغ گاندربل (مستغیث) ساکنہ فتح پورہ گاندربل (نزد یک جامع مسجد) (ملزم)
U/s 138 NI Act
وارنٹ گشتی عام زیر دفعہ 512 ض ف بخلاف:
ارشد احمد گنائی (عرف الطاف) ولد غلام محمد گنائی ساکنہ فتح پورہ گاندربل (نزد یک جامع مسجد) (ملزم)
حکم بنام: اہلکاران پولیس یونٹی آف جموں وکشمیر بذریعہ آئے پی پی
معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں ملزم/ملزمان کو بار ہا بذریعہ وارنٹ گرفتاری بلا ضمانتی طلب کیا گیا ہے۔ اول ملزم کی دستیابی نہ ہوئی ہے اور وارنٹ ہذا بذریعہ تعمیل آئی ہے کہ ملزم دیدہ دانستہ طور پر گھر سے فرار ہوکر روپوش ہوگیا ہے۔ جس سے ملزم کی دستیابی بطرق معمول ممکن نہ ہے۔
لہٰذا ملزم کے خلاف کاروائی زیر دفعہ 512 ض ف بعمل لائی جاکر تمام اہلکاران پولیس جموں وکشمیر کو بذریعہ وارنٹ ہذا حکم واختیار دیا جاتا ہے کہ ملزم/ملزمان متذکرہ بالا جہاں کہیں بھی اندر حدود یوٹی ہو تو اس کو فوراً گرفتار کر کے عدالت ہذا میں پیش کریں۔ وارنٹ ہذا تا دستیابی ملزم کار رہے گی۔ تحریر
۱۔ وارنٹ ہذا بغرض تعمیل ایس ایس پی گاندربل کو مرسل ہوئے۔
۲۔ وارنٹ ہذا بغرض تعمیل آئی جی پی کشمیر کو مرسل ہوئے
۳۔ وارنٹ ہذا بغرض تعمیل ایس ایچ او کو مرسل ہوئے۔
۴۔ وارنٹ ہذا بغرض اشاعت گورنمنٹ پریس سرینگر کو مرسل ہوئے۔
دستخط ومہر:
ایڈیشنل سپیشل جوڈیشل موبائل مجسٹریٹ گاندربل
DIPK-2266/26

Gill — steering India's fortunes

While the larger goal for the classy 26-year-old will be the 50-over World Cup next year, the more enervating battles on the horizon for the young captain would be acquitting himself well in the home and away series lined up as part of the World Test Championship

SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

R. Kaushik

Gill has become a more complete and rounded batter equally felicitous off front foot and back, on off-side and on, against pace and spin

In the 55-year history of men's One-Day International Cricket, there have been only 12 double-centuries, three of them from one individual alone. In no more than a handful of the 4,980 ODIs to date, including game two of the three-match series between India and Afghanistan on Wednesday, has more than one double-centurion figured. Lucknow threw up a rare, but not first, instance of three men who have scored more than 200 in a single ODI innings being part of the same playing XI.

Until Sachin Tendulkar first touched the 200-mark, against South Africa in Indore in February 2010, no one had managed a tryst with the coveted landmark. Several had got frightfully close, not least Saeed Anwar who smashed 194 in the Independence Cup league fixture against Tendulkar's side in Chennai in 1997. It needed the genius of Tendulkar – fittingly, most will aver – for that record to be set straight.

Indian domination

Suppositions that once the Promised Land had been reached, the floodgates would open have remained unfounded, because in the 16 years since, there have been only 11 further scores of 200 or more. Indians have accounted for six of those 11 – with Virender Sehwag following his hero into the record books before a currently active threesome joined that exclusive club.

Rohit Sharma, the former skipper, is in a league of his own with three 200-plus knocks including a gargantuan 264, the highest individual score in an ODI innings, against Sri Lanka at the celebrated Eden Gardens. Just when Rohit might have started to feel lonely, Ishan Kishan, unexpectedly, broke through with a phenomenal 210 against Bangladesh in Chattogram in December 2022. A month later, it was the turn of Shubman Gill to create his own slice of history, in Hyderabad against New Zealand.

Such is the embarrassment of batting riches at India's disposal that, until recently, they haven't been able to find a place in the larger squad, let alone the playing XI, of prodigal son Kishan, who owes his current No. 3 position to the hamstring injury that has temporarily put Virat Kohli out of commission.

Rohit's a past master whose deeds are well chronicled. On Wednesday, he showed glimpses of his best form with a sparkling 48 that was cut short by a Rashid Khan googly that homed in on his stumps via the inside edge. The reasonable gathering at the Ekana International Stadium which had braved a scorching June sun was gutted at Rohit's dismissal because clearly, and especially with Kohli not around, most of them had come to watch the graceful right-hander in action. They had to make do with just an appetiser, but little did they – or anyone else – know when Rohit made his slow walk back to the dressing room that the main course was just ahead of them.

Gill and Kishan are the best of mates, an odd couple because the former is a very serious sort of individual while Kishan, despite becoming a little more controlled in the last couple of years, is a fun-loving free spirit who livens up the atmosphere wherever he goes.

Insiders have spoken with admiration and respect of how Kishan was the livewire even when he wasn't a part of the playing group, ensuring that any air of negativity was effortlessly and immediately dissipated without treading on toes or ruffling feathers. Kishan is now a less visibly playful version of his previous self, but clearly, he is still the entertainer who carries the reputation of being an excellent mimic – and no one, we have been informed, absolutely no one is excluded from his mischief-list.

Kishan's remarkable return

Kishan's reintegration with the national side in January after more than two years in the international wilderness is one of the great stories of modern-day Indian cricket. Since his return to the limited-overs set-up, he has reiterated his value time and again, providing the impetus in the T20 World Cup that India so desperately needed in the early stages and then holding his own even towards the business end when Sanju Samson walked away with all the encomiums.

He showcased his leadership skills, honed in domestic cricket with Jharkhand whom he steered last season the T20 Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, when he was the stand-in captain in IPL for Sunrisers Hyderabad with Pat Cummins awaiting the green signal from Cricket Australia and has been irrepressible with the bat, the clincher coming in the form of his second ODI hundred when, alongside Gill, he annihilated the over-matched Afghan outfit.

Gill is in one of those extended purple patches that defy logical explanation. Oh wait, the logical explanation is that he has worked terribly hard at ironing out kinks and adding to his repertoire, thereby becoming a more complete and rounded batter equally felicitous off front foot and back, on off-side and on, against pace and spin. He has also become a fitter, more driven and intense version of himself though a chronic neck injury, which has already reared its ugly head from time to time, will come back to haunt him going forward as well.

From the time he made his Test debut in Melbourne in December 2020, bang smack in the middle of the Covid pandemic, it was clear that the world was Gill's oyster provided he stuck to the straight and the narrow. At the Under-19 World Cup in New Zealand in January 2018, Gill had showcased his fluency, batting at a level way above the rest of his peers; Gill was identified then as one for the future, with the caveat 'if he continued to progress along expected lines'.

By then, there already had been numerous instances of Under-19 'stalwarts' losing their way when they graduated to the senior ranks, for one reason or the other. Why, even Gill and India's captain at the aforementioned World Cup, Prithvi Shaw, himself is now on the outer looking in, this despite celebrating his Test debut in October 2018 with a sparkling century against West Indies in Rajkot. So, if there was an asterisk against Gill's name, it wasn't so much because one doubted his skills and his mental fortitude, but more as a matter of cautionary routine.

Conviction

Gill initially blew hot and cold, but he was never going to fade away into oblivion, he was never going to self-destruct, that much was apparent. That he sought, and got, the No. 3 slot in the Test batting line-up in the Caribbean in July 2023, showed that he had the courage of conviction to approach the think-tank (of captain Rohit and head coach Rahul Dravid) and ask for what he thought was his best spot. It took him a few innings to start firing, but once he made a century in Visakhapatnam against England in February 2024, the classy right-hander was up and running. In grand style.

Within the decision-making rungs, Gill had already been identified as the leader-in-waiting – Prince is the moniker that has stuck to him – and Ajit Agarkar's panel wasted little time in naming him Rohit's successor in the five-day game when the Mumbaikar called it quits last May.

In his first series as skipper, Gill responded with spectacular prolificity. Armed with the more complete game we alluded to earlier, he racked up runs for fun; a mountainous 754 runs from five Tests, and four centuries (he hadn't scored a Test hundred outside Asia before previously) was evidence enough that he could separate Gill the batter from Gill the captain.

The 2-2 scoreline with a young side minus the retired trio of Rohit, Kohli and R. Ashwin held out the promise that he would grow into a tactically more astute skipper, a promise affirmed by the growing strides he made as a strategist as the Test series unfolded.

Just about the only blip, and it is a big one, is his unexpected recall and equally abrupt ouster from the T20I set-up. Some might say it is only a matter of time before Gill breaks back into the shortest format, given his outstanding run in IPLs historically and especially this year, when he finished the second highest run-getter behind Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. But how will the selectors find a place for him in a top order where apart from Samson and Kishan and Sooryavanshi and Abhishek Sharma, a host of others are jostling for attention?

Never mind. For now, Gill is the Test and ODI captain, and that's where his focus should be. This month alone, following his grand run in the IPL which yielded 732 runs, Gill's scores against Afghanistan read 126, 84 not out and now 154, a ridiculously unhurried, untroubled, unprepossessing contribution in the Lucknow cauldron when he smashed 22 fours and two sixes to ensure he didn't have to expend too much energy running between the wickets.

The first of these three big scores came in the one-off Test in New Chandigarh; the two other efforts have come in the ODIs, both earning him Player-of-the-Match awards. It won't be fanciful to assert that the only reason he doesn't have a hat-trick of international hundreds against Afghanistan in the last fortnight is because the visitors simply didn't put enough runs on the board in the truncated (25-overs-a-side) first ODI in Dharamsala last Saturday.

With due respect to the Afghans, India's tougher challenges are ahead, both immediately and in the not-so-distant future. While the larger goal will be the next 50-over World Cup, in Africa in less than a year and a half's time, there are other enervating battles in store.

India are languishing mid-table in the World Test Championship, their reputation as tigers at home in tatters following dramatic meltdowns against first New Zealand and then South Africa. Two-Test tours of Sri Lanka and New Zealand lie in wait before the year is out; India need victories and points as much as they need their captain to set the tone as lead batter. Those two sojourns, as well as the five-Test home face-off against Australia from January, will go a long way towards shaping Gill's leadership legacy even at this early stage of his captaincy stint.

Sole point of focus

The World Cup will be the sole point of focus once the Australia series is done and dusted. Only Kapil Dev and Mahendra Singh Dhoni have held aloft the ODI World Cup trophy. It was close but no cigar for Rohit at home in 2023.

Gill has a ways to go before he can start dreaming about World Cup glory as player and captain, but who can blame him if that idea has started to take the faintest of forms?

THE GIST

- In his first Test series as skipper in 2025, Gill piled up 754 runs from five matches, a tally that included four centuries
- Following his superb run in the IPL with 732 runs this season, Gill's scores against the visiting Afghanistan have read 126, 84 not out and 154
- Gill needs to set the tone as the lead batter in the two-Test tours of Sri Lanka and New Zealand before taking on the Australians at home over five matches

Gill and Kishan are an odd couple because the former is a very serious sort of individual while the latter is a fun-loving free spirit

Beyond 'depression' and 'anxiety': how young Adivasis describe distress

Mental health systems frequently assume that emotional suffering will present itself in clinically recognisable forms. But in many Adivasi communities, distress may be communicated through stories, metaphors, or withdrawal from social life. When professionals fail to understand these expressions, the communities begin to appear 'silent'

Sachin Barbde
Christianez Ratna Kiruba

The 2015-16 National Mental Health Survey estimated that 7% of adolescents aged 13-17 years, experience mental health problems. PHOTO: SETUWORKS

Dumbi, a tall, muscular teenager, walks silently outside his village, which consists of about 70 houses, mostly of the Adivasi Ho community, in Jharkhand. He lost his father when he was in Class 5. Now 16, and as an elder brother to three siblings, he has to both study and provide economic support to the family.

For Dumbi, football had earlier been a major source of joy. Friends regularly invited him to matches in nearby villages. But over time, he stopped playing almost entirely. The burden of caring for the family at the age of 15 made him sullen and withdrawn, and also led to his habit of drinking locally-brewed liquor, as a coping mechanism.

Mental health is gaining ground in our everyday conversations, thanks to increased awareness, battles to beat stigma and a growing number of people with lived experience who are talking about it. The people at the forefront of these conversations, however, remain primarily urban-centric and from privileged socio-economic groups. Young people from Adivasi communities remain missing from most of these conversations.

India has the largest population of indigenous communities in the world. And yet, information about the mental health of these communities is scarce.

Globally, mental health problems affect nearly one in seven adolescents aged 10-19 years, with anxiety, depression, and behavioural disorders among the most common conditions. India has one of the world's largest adolescent populations, but mental health support for young people remains deeply inadequate. The 2015-16 National Mental Health Survey estimated that 7% of adolescents aged 13-17 years, experience mental health problems, though most are unlikely to receive any formal care.

Deep inequities

Evidence from rural and Adivasi communities in mental health research remains remarkably limited despite these communities constituting around 9% of India's population. What makes this lacuna even more concerning is that Adivasi communities continue to face deep social, economic, environmental, and health inequities, with the most affected being young people.

The available research suggests that the burden may be substantial and widely neglected. A survey among Adivasi adolescents in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Meghalaya reported a 16% prevalence of mental disorders, more than double the national estimate for adolescents. Another survey among adolescent girls in rural Adivasi blocks of Jharkhand found that 12% experienced symptoms of emotional or behavioural distress.

These numbers, however, reveal only part of the story.

Poverty and mental health

For many young Adivasi people, family responsibilities begin at an early age. Financial insecurity is the norm rather than the exception. The most basic of needs including clothing and school costs are difficult to meet, a reality that Adivasi children understand from a very young age. But this premature awareness frequently comes at the cost of adolescence itself, quietly compressing what should be a carefree period with constant worry, restraint, and emotional burdens they are inadequately prepared for. When this is compounded by the loss of one or both parents, it often places adolescents under intense emotional and psychological stress.

What appears in these children externally as "maturity" is often chronic anxiety and emotional exhaustion. These experiences rarely enter formal mental health statistics and go unrecognised by the system, but they shape the emotional worlds of Adivasi adolescents every day.

Migration intensifies this burden. Seasonal migration has long existed among Adivasi communities as a response to chronic poverty and land insecurity. What often remains invisible are the emotional costs of this transition: loneliness, uncertainty, grief, interrupted education, substance use, fractured social ties, and a growing sense of disconnection from both village and city life.

Yet distress is not always expressed in ways recognised by formal mental health systems.

In recent work with Adivasi adolescents in rural Jharkhand, researchers found that young people, caregivers, teachers, and community health workers often described distress through local idioms, bodily complaints, silence, irritability, social withdrawal, or changes in behaviour rather than psychiatric labels such as "depression" or "anxiety".

This has important implications.

Expression of distress

Mental health systems frequently assume that emotional suffering will present itself in clinically recognisable forms. But in many Adivasi communities, distress may be communicated through stories, metaphors, behaviour, or withdrawal from social life. When professionals fail to understand the expressions, communities themselves begin to appear 'silent'.

The problem, therefore, is not merely that Adivasi youth do not seek help. It is also that systems often do not know how to hear them.

There is another quiet transformation taking place in villages: the erosion of intergenerational spaces. Ajay, a young community facilitator in one village from Jharkhand, reflected recently that earlier, evenings were spent sitting with elders, listening to stories and experiences. "That was our learning space," he said. "Now most young people spend time outside villages on their smartphones ."

This reflects the weakening of informal spaces where emotions, identity, memory, and belonging were once shared collectively.

What is needed

India's response to mental health among Adivasi youth cannot be limited to expanding psychiatric services into rural areas, though accessible care remains essential. A more meaningful response requires strengthening community spaces, reducing social and economic precarity, listening to local languages of distress, and creating systems where they can speak without fear or shame.

Mental health among Adivasi youth is not only a medical concern. It is also a question of dignity, justice, cultural continuity, and whether young people are allowed to imagine a future beyond survival.

Until India learns to pay heed to these quiet forms of suffering, many a youth like Dumbi will continue walking silently at the margins of our collective attention.

With inputs from Yadav Leyangi, Pankaj Pan, Savitri Banra and Kamala Pan.

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THE GIST

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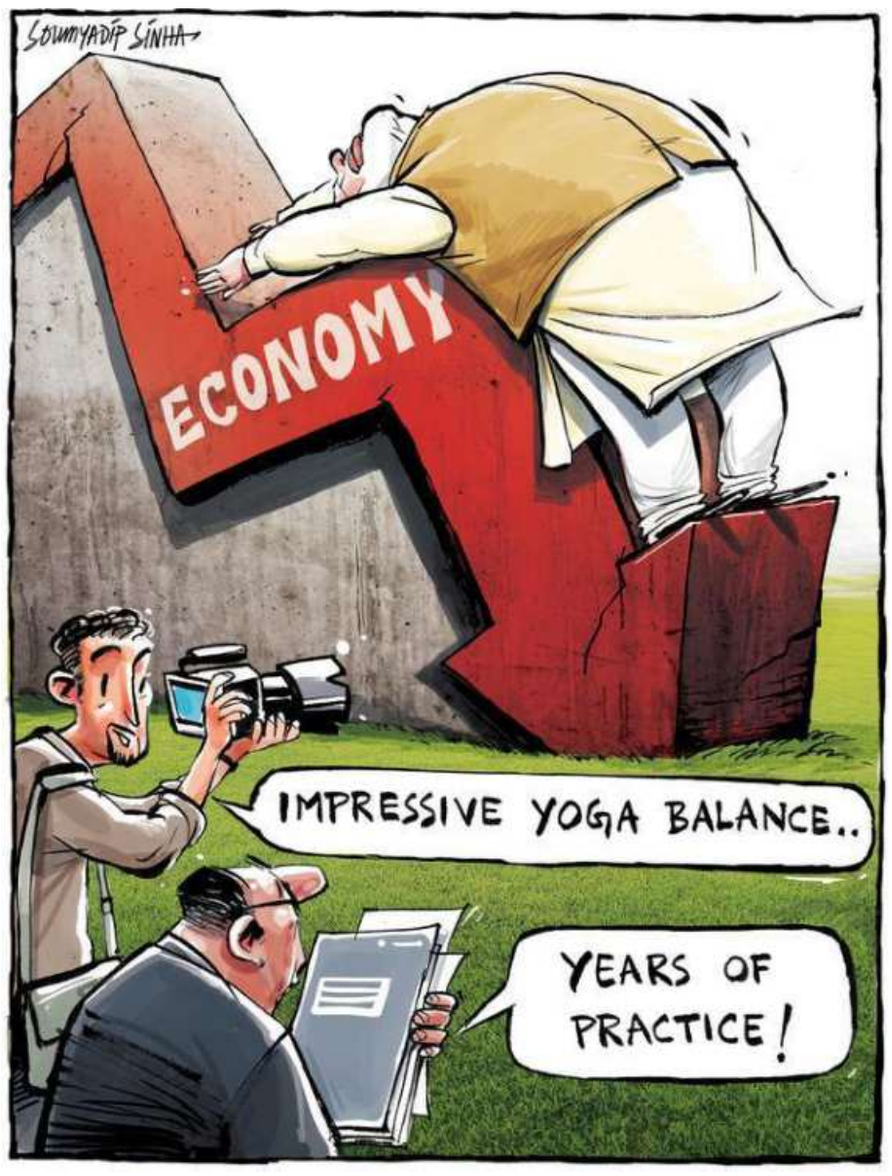
- For many young Adivasi people, family responsibilities begin at an early age. Financial insecurity is the norm rather than the exception. The most basic of needs including clothing and school costs are difficult to meet
- A more meaningful response requires strengthening community spaces, reducing social and economic precarity, listening to local languages of distress, and creating systems where they can speak without fear or shame

HUMERUS



Children with vitiligo deserve freedom from stigma and the burden of misinformation

Sabaresh Pandiyan

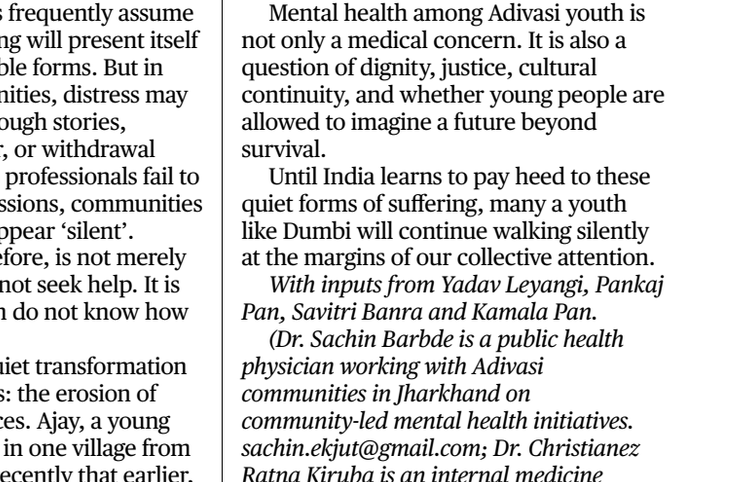
When a child walks into a classroom, their biggest worry should not be whispers, stares or insensitive jokes about their skin. Yet, for thousands of children living with vitiligo - a chronic condition where patches of skin tend to lose pigment - this is a reality.

Vitiligo is a medically harmless, non-contagious condition. Misunderstandings and stigma about it, however, persist. While children may have completely normal health even with the condition, what is often overlooked, is the impact it has on their mental well-being.

Self-esteem dents

Childhood is a period of development, where self-esteem is developed, confidence is built and a social identity is created. Children suffering from vitiligo tend to be very conscious of their appearance at an early age.

Unlike adults, children may not fully understand the condition themselves, and therefore are less equipped to navigate the curiosity it invokes, or dispel misconceptions and the social scrutiny that comes with it.



The true burden of vitiligo is rarely found in the skin itself: it is found in the silent stigma that children face. GETTY IMAGES

Many children tend to feel 'different' from their friends and peers. Sometimes this can lead to non-participation in school events and a preference for clothing that covers their entire body, even in the hot weather, to avoid drawing attention and unwanted questions.

Bullying and name-calling is one of the significant concerns faced by children with vitiligo, followed by exclusion from peer groups, and repeated questioning or comments, even they are harmless. This takes a psychological toll and the result could be that the child withdraws socially.

This heightened awareness about their appearance may lead to chronic stress as well as anxiety, causing the child to experience loneliness, mood changes, and to exhibit symptoms of depression. Adolescents are significantly more vulnerable as during their teenage years, they are more susceptible to concerns of appearances, belonging and acceptance.

What needs to change

Widespread awareness in the community is what matters most when it comes to vitiligo, since the greatest challenge faced by children with the condition is misinformation.

The condition is often assumed to be caused by poor hygiene or believed to be contagious: neither fact is true.

Simple initiatives inside the classroom can make a difference, as when children understand that vitiligo is an autoimmune disease and poses no health risk to others, the stigma and fear related to it will reduce substantially.

Teachers and parents play an important role here in identifying signs of emotional distress, declining academic performances or reluctance to attend school. It is very important to provide children with emotional support and to demonstrate that vitiligo must not define a person's ability, future or worth.

The true burden of vitiligo is rarely found in the skin itself: it is found in the silent stigma that children face. Our collective goal must be that no child feels different, or less worthy, due to the skin they live in.

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