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IN BRIEF



Death toll climbs to 3 in Rohini building collapse

NEW DELHI
The death toll rose to three on Thursday after rescuers in an overnight operation pulled out two more bodies from the rubble of a four-storey under-construction building that collapsed in north-west Delhi's Rohini Sector 16 on Wednesday. » **Page 2**

After arrest, Sena corporator checks into hospital

THANE
Soon after he was arrested for allegedly assaulting two doctors at a civic-run hospital, Shiv Sena corporator Ramesh Mhatre was hospitalised for chest pain, officials said on Thursday. » **Page 4**

India, Australia move to deepen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific

Amid geostrategic uncertainties, Prime Minister Modi, his Australian counterpart, Albanese, adopt declaration to expand maritime security ties and defence collaboration; the countries also seal pacts on civil nuclear energy and critical minerals

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

India and Australia on Thursday adopted a Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation, committing to significantly deepen military engagement, strengthen defence industrial collaboration, and expand maritime security cooperation amid growing geostrategic uncertainty in the Indo-Pacific region. The two countries also sealed pacts on civil nuclear energy and critical minerals sectors.

The declaration, adopted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart, Anthony Albanese, outlines an ambitious road map to elevate defence ties through closer strategic consultations, enhanced

interoperability between the armed forces, expanded military exercises, and greater collaboration in defence science, technology, and industrial supply chains.

A statement released by the office of the Australian Prime Minister mentioned that, under the declaration, the two sides agreed to hold regular consultations on defence-related developments in the Indo-Pacific affecting their shared interests, increase the complexity of bilateral and multilateral military exercises, accelerate efforts to improve interoperability and information sharing between their armed forces, and expand aircraft deployments from each other's territories.

The agreement also envisages deeper personnel



Tactical ties: PM Narendra Modi being greeted by his Australian counterpart, Anthony Albanese, in Melbourne on Thursday. AP

exchanges through education, training, and liaison appointments, while exploring opportunities to cooperate in recruiting skilled personnel for their respective defence workforces.

Mr. Modi emphasised the importance of a free and stable Indo-Pacific and highlighted the growing

engagement between the two countries in the defence domain. "The Indo-Pacific is not just the confluence of two oceans. It also symbolises the shared aspirations of like-minded democracies like India and Australia," he said.

The agreement on civil nuclear energy to facilitate the commercial supply of

uranium from Australia to India to fuel nuclear power projects came nearly 12 years after the two countries inked a historic civil nuclear cooperation pact.

"Today, we have signed an important agreement in the field of nuclear energy. This will open the way for uranium supplies from Australia to India and give new impetus to our clean energy objectives," Mr. Modi said.

He also announced the launch of the Australia-India Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies, and Supply Chains and said both sides will also work together on a critical minerals corridor.

Modi hails Australia's social media ban on minors, signals curbs

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday praised Australia's ban on social media access for teenagers, in the clearest indication so far that the Union government is mulling similar curbs. "I have followed you closely, and the way you have legislated and worked to protect society in IT and social media is inspiring the world," Mr. Modi told Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in remarks open to the press.

Australia's Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act, 2024, requires social media platforms to detect and block access to children below the age of 16. Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw, had confirmed discussions for similar curbs in India dur-

Digital control

Several countries are following Australia's footsteps to curb social media use by children

Malaysia: under-16s barred from owning social accounts

Indonesia: minors blocked from 'high-risk' platforms

France: Bill passed to ban social media use by under-15s



ing the AI Impact Summit earlier in February.

'Right way to go'
"Certainly there is a need for protecting our children, protecting our society... we are in a conversation regarding age-based restrictions with the various social media platforms... the right way to go about this," he said.

CONTINUED ON
» **PAGE 12**

Four Indian nationals detained last year, pushed into Bangladesh return home

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Four people from Birbhum in West Bengal, detained by the Delhi Police last year and pushed into Bangladesh, were brought back to India on Wednesday after a year-long legal battle. The group of returnees included Sweetie Bibi, her two minor sons, and Danish Sheikh, who were picked up by the police along with two others from the national capital in May last year over suspicion of being infiltrators and later pushed across the border into Bangladesh.

In December 2025, Sunali Khatun, wife of Mr. Sheikh, and her minor son had returned to India after the Supreme Court inter-



Sweetie Bibi, one of the four returnees, in Malda, West Bengal, on Wednesday. PTI

vened. Ms. Khatun was pregnant at that time and her father had argued that if his daughter gave birth in Bangladesh, the child would have no claim to an

Indian citizenship. After her return, Ms. Khatun gave birth to a child in a State-run hospital in West Bengal in January. Trinamool Congress MP

Samirul Islam on Thursday applauded the Indian judiciary for its help in bringing back the remaining four, who returned through the border in Malda district. He said while there is no problem with the deportation of illegal migrants, Indian nationals should not be subjected to injustice and harassment.

'Such a long time'
"They stayed there [Bangladesh] for over a year. Even Bangladesh had written letters that Indians who were pushed back illegally must be taken back, but it took such a long time," Mr. Islam, former chairperson of the West Bengal Migrant Welfare Board, told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

SC considers reference of provision to furnish reason during arrests

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday indicated that the Meghalaya government's appeal against the grant of bail to Sonam Raghuvanshi, accused of murdering her newlywed husband Raja Raghuvanshi, may have to be referred to a larger Bench in view of conflicting decisions of coordinate Benches on whether the grounds of arrest must be furnished to an accused in writing.

Appeal against bail
The State was appealing against a June 29 order of the Meghalaya High Court, which had upheld a trial court's decision granting bail to Ms. Raghuvanshi saying that the police had failed to effectively communicate the grounds of her arrest. "Basically, the issue is whether written grounds of arrest are mandatory or not... We will decide whether the matter requires to be referred to a larger Bench. There is a conflict arising from different coordinate Bench judgments," the Bench comprising Justices Manoj Misra and Shree Chandrashekhar said.

The Bench directed Solicitor-General Tushar Mehra, appearing for the State, to file written submissions along with photocopies of the documents furnished to the accused so that it could examine the exact nature of the information communicated at the time of arrest. The matter has been posted for further hearing on July 14.

Monsoon has covered the entire country, a day later than normal, announces IMD

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The southwest monsoon covered the entire country on Thursday, a day later than its normal date, after advancing into the remaining parts of the north Arabian Sea, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Punjab, India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials said.

The nationwide coverage came 35 days after the monsoon reached Kerala on June 5. While the advance was slower than in recent years, the July 9 date is not unusual historically.

Since 1971, the monsoon has covered the country on dates ranging from June 16 in 2013 to August 15 in



Water traffic: Children having fun in a waterlogged road after a heavy spell of rain in New Delhi on Thursday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

2002, according to IMD data.

The monsoon's progress has accelerated over the past week, accompanied by widespread heavy rain across several parts of the country. Delhi and the Na-

tional Capital Region received significant rainfall overnight and on Thursday, causing waterlogging and traffic disruptions in several areas.

The recent wet spell, however, does not necessari-

ly indicate how rainfall will evolve through the rest of the month.

The IMD has forecast below-normal rainfall for the country as a whole in July, defined as less than 94% of the long-period average, even as some parts of northwest and north-east India, east-central India, and the eastern peninsula may receive normal to above-normal rainfall. July receives the highest rainfall among the monsoon months and is critical for agriculture.

India's current monsoon rainfall deficit stands at 15%, a sharp improvement from 38% on June 30.

CONTINUED ON
» **PAGE 12**

For some, Forum is a religion

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10 SEPT





A ND-NDE

Respond to hotel plea challenging eviction notice: HC to Centre

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday sought the Centre's response to a petition filed by Sir Sobha Singh and Sons Private Limited, owner of the Ambassador Hotel, challenging a show-cause notice issued to it seeking eviction from the 7.58-acre Sujjan Singh Park premises.

Issuing a notice to the Centre, the court granted it three weeks to file a reply in the matter.

The counsel for the petitioner submitted that an eviction order could be passed on July 10, the date when the matter is listed for hearing before the Estate Officer of the Land and Development Office.

The counsel urged the court to direct the Estate Officer to decide the issue of maintainability of proceedings under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act before proceeding further on the matter.

The court, however, refused to interfere with the manner in which the proceedings are being conducted, stating, "They are the statutory authorities. They will take care of it themselves."

In the petition, Sir Sobha Singh and Sons Pvt. Ltd. challenged in the court the show-cause notice dated June 11 issued by the Estate Officer under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971.

'No jurisdiction'

The petitioner contended that the show-cause notice must be quashed as the Estate Officer has no jurisdiction to proceed in the matter and it is not an "unauthorised occupant".

The petitioner stated that it holds a registered "government grant" dated October 8, 1945 with respect to the land. It added that the government's attempt to "re-enter" in 1960 after determination of the perpetual lease was declared "wrong and illegal" by a court in 2009.

The petitioner also stated that although the Central government's appeal against the decision was allowed by the appellate court on June 9, the petitioner's subsequent appeal is pending in the High Court. The matter will be heard next on August 17.

Death toll climbs to 3 in Rohini building collapse

Building owner's husband, construction worker among deceased; rescue operation almost over; debris being cleared, cause of incident under probe; police: FIR lodged against unknown persons

Shrimansi Kaushik
NEW DELHI

The death toll rose to three on Thursday after rescuers in an overnight operation pulled out two more bodies from the rubble of a four-storey under-construction building that collapsed in north-west Delhi's Rohini Sector 16 on Wednesday.

According to the police, the deceased have been identified as Ram Dua, 62, husband of building owner Manju Dua; and Kafe Mohammad alias Nurul, 24, a worker at the site. On Wednesday, Ram Kishan, 42, a biker who was passing through the area when the building collapsed, died after coming under debris.

The police have registered an FIR in connection with the incident against unknown persons under Section 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. "The rescue operation is almost over. Removal of debris is still going on. The cause of the collapse is under investigation," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Shashank Jaiswal.



Remains of the day: Residents and security personnel at the site of the building collapse in Rohini's Sector 16 on Thursday. PTI

The building was under construction for the past one year and nearing completion, officials said. "As the work was almost over, the number of workers at the site was fewer than usual," an officer said.

Comprised two flats

The building comprised two Delhi Development Authority flats measuring 26 sq. metres each, an official said. "The family had been staying at the site for

the past 50 years. Over a year ago, they decided to raze the house and rebuild it from scratch. Ram Dua was supervising the construction," the official said.

During the day, family members of the deceased waited outside the Baba Sahab Ambedkar Hospital's mortuary for the bodies to be handed over to them after the post-mortem.

Kafe's family came all the way from Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich. Safiya Begum said her son was the eldest of five siblings. "We learned about the incident

at 1.30 a.m. when the police called. We rushed to Delhi," she said. Her husband, Shaan Mohammad, is a daily wage worker.

The family said Kafe had joined work at the site only two days ago. His cousin, Saddam alias Ravi, 32, was rescued on Wednesday. "At the time of the collapse, Saddam and Kafe were working on the second floor," a relative said.

Kishan's wife Renu held back tears as she recollected the events of the previous day. "He had lunch and left, only to never come back again," she said.

Ms. Renu said her brother-in-law did not know how to break the news to her and lied that her mother-in-law was injured in the incident. "When I reached the spot, I realised it was my husband," she said.

Relatives and friends recalled Ram Dua as a lively individual who was fond of making reels. They said in the last reel he posted on Instagram, he said: "Ameer hun, amar nahi, mujhe bhi marna hoga (I am rich, not immortal. I will also die)."

BJP, AAP spar over waterlogging after rain lashes Capital

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh at the PWD control room at ITO on Thursday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The BJP and the Opposition Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) clashed over waterlogging after heavy rain lashed the city on Thursday.

Public Works Department Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh highlighted that Minto Bridge, Zakhira, Dhaula Kuan, and Moolchand – areas known for severe waterlogging – witnessed smooth traffic. "This has been possible because of months of preparation and tireless efforts of our engineers and emergency teams," he said.

He added that the department deployed 754 permanent pumps at 167 locations and 305 temporary pumps at 273 locations to prevent waterlogging.

CM Rekha Gupta also inspected drainage arrangements at Shalimar village in Shalimar Bagh, her Assembly constituency.

According to the India Meteorological Department, Delhi received 72.6 mm of rainfall in the 24 hours ending at 8.30 a.m., and 32.4 mm between 8.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m.

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, however, said his government had addressed waterlogging at Minto Bridge and alleged that the BJP was now taking credit for it. He alleged that the city is getting flooded even after short spells of rain.

"This time, even Sadar Bazar has been submerged," AAP Delhi chief Saurabh Bharadwaj said.

'Visible changes'

In response, Mr. Singh said waterlogging earlier led to blocked roads, stranded vehicles, and hours of inconvenience, but the BJP assured the people that this would change.

"Today's rainfall has shown that when preparation meets commitment, results are visible on the ground," he said.

SRDC renamed Indraprastha Virasat Punarvikas Nigam

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Thursday renamed the Shahjahanabad Redevelopment Corporation

(SRDC) as the Indraprastha Virasat Punarvikas Nigam (IVPN), with a renewed focus on heritage conservation alongside urban development.

The decision was taken

at the corporation's annual general meeting chaired by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. She said redevelopment of Chandni Chowk and other heritage sites in the 370-year-old walled city

would be prioritised with improved infrastructure. Plans include better parking, public facilities, a tourist assistance centre, and upgraded civic infrastructure. Officials said de-

tailed redevelopment plans would be prepared for key areas, including Jama Masjid and Yamuna Bazar, while ensuring the preservation of Old Delhi's historical character.

DDA removes over 57,000 MT of silt from stormwater drains

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Vehicles navigating a waterlogged stretch following a heavy spell of rain on GT Karnal Road on Thursday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has removed over 57,000 metric tons (MT) of silt from stormwater drains across the city as part of its pre-monsoon desilting drive – over 70% higher than last year's 33,380 MT, the authority said on Thursday.

Desilting has been completed in the East, South and North zones while work in the Narela, Rohini, and Dwarka zones is in its final stages, it said.

According to officials, the city was divided into six operational zones to facilitate planning, supervision, and execution.

The DDA has set up a Central Flood Control Room, along with flood control rooms in all engineering zones, and deployed mobile pumping

units at vulnerable locations to ensure quick removal of accumulated rainwater, officials said.

The authority added that preventive measures have been undertaken at waterlogging-prone locations, including cleaning of drains, strengthening drainage infrastructure, and coordinating with

other agencies.

Desilted material is being promptly disposed of and vulnerable stretches are under regular monitoring, officials said. The exercise is being carried out under the supervision of Lieutenant-Governor Tarunjit Singh Sandhu as part of the city's monsoon preparedness plan.

TRIPURA RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
(Department of Power Government of Tripura)
PNle-T No.F. 6(569)/TREDA/NCES/2025-26/2771 Date 08/07/2026

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER

On Behalf of Tripura Renewable Energy Development Agency (TREDA), Joint Director, TREDA invites e-tender for the work of Solarization of grid connected Small Bore Deep Tube Well (SBDTW) based 1-3 HP capacity AC Water Supply Pumps under Jal Jeevan Mission including 5 (five) years Warranty / Guarantee and Annual Maintenance Contract including insurance coverage on turn-key basis in Tripura vide DNle-T No. F. 6(569)/TREDA/NCES/2025-26/2770, dated 08/07/2026.

The tender papers may be downloaded from e-procurement portal <https://tripuratenders.gov.in> and the deadline for submission of online e-bid is 29/07/2026 up to 3:00 PM.

(D S DAS)
Joint Director

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

Mrs. UPPU SHANTHA KUMARI
89 YEARS
W/o Thiru. UPPU SHOBHAN BABU (ACTOR)
Expired on 09.07.2026 at 5:30 pm
Funeral on 10.07.2026 4 pm at
No 23, Drift Wood Avenue
Akkarai, ECR, Sholinganallur
Chennai - 600119
Deeply mourned by
Son:- UPPU KARUNASESH & FAMILY

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OUAT-CT-PURCH - No.10789 / OUAT, Date: 09th July, 2026

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited from reputed stockist/dealers in single bid system for empanelment of suppliers for supply of gases / gases with cylinder-regulator to different offices at Bhubaneswar and other locations of OUAT throughout Odisha. Firms having valid GST, PAN and supply network in India, preferably in Odisha may download the tender document from our official website www.ouat.ac.in and submit their offer along with all required documents through speed post or courier so as to reach the Registrar, Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneswar by dt. **31.07.2026 (up to 5.00 PM)**. For details of important information, terms and conditions, requirements, opening of bids, etc. please refer to the tender document available at www.ouat.ac.in.

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O.U.A.T., Bhubaneswar-751003
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DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS JAMMU
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email:sspjammu@kpolice.gov.in

Hue and Cry Notice Rule No. 712/191

SHO P/S Nagrota, Jammu has intimated that accused person namely Mohan Lal S/O Shambu Mal R/O Pujari Mandir A/P Jagti Nagrota is evading his arrest/wanted in case FIR No. 183/2011 U/S 325 RPC of P/S Nagrota, since the commission of crime. Despite repeated raids/efforts the accused could not be traced/still absconded.

It is therefore requested that Hue and Cry Notice of above mentioned accused is being published for the information of Police establishments / Public in general having any clue related to the whereabouts / present location of above named accused, kindly communicate the same on the below mentioned contact / Telephone numbers.

Description Roll :-
Name : Mohan Lal
S/O : Shambu Mal
Address : Pujari Mandir A/P Jagti Nagrota
Age : 30 years
Height : 5' 6"
Complexion : Wheatish
Eyes : Black

Contacts/Telephone Numbers:-
1. DPO, Jammu : 0191-2547807, 0191-2561578
2. SSP Jammu Mail I.D : sspjammu@kpolice.gov.in
3. PCR Jammu : 0191-2605949
4. SP Rural Jammu : 0191-2605949
5. SDPO Nagrota : 0191-2673666
6. SHO P/S Nagrota : 0191-2673025

DIP/J- 5293/26, Jul 8 2026 For Sr. Superintendent of Police Jammu

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

No.:IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-22/2015/2026-27 **Date:09-07-2026**

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK KPP Portal Only)

Item Rate Tenders under two cover bid system are invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Contractors (Civil) who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the following work as per the schedule given below:

Name of the work: Providing and laying of Effluent Network at Devanahalli General Industrial Area, Phase-2, Devanahalli Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District.

• Last Date & Time for Receipt of Tenders **27-07-2026** upto **4:00 pm**.

Applicants May download bidding documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/- Engineer-In-Chief
KIADB
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SRCC, The Hindu in School to launch writing mentorship programme

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



The Economics Society of Delhi University's Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC), in partnership with *The Hindu in School*, has announced the launch of a writing mentorship programme.

The two-week-long, free-of-cost initiative will be conducted from July 27 to August 9. It is aimed at unlocking the writing, research, and analytical potential of participants.

The programme is open to all students of Classes 11

and 12 irrespective of prior writing background. Students will stand to acquire research techniques, data analysis skills and mastery in writing, and gain industry exposure.

Perks of the programme include six-month subscription of *The Hindu* ePaper for the top 20 men-

tees, certification of participation, a printed copy of *The Hindu Teen Digest*, publication opportunities, as well as direct interaction with distinguished professionals from leading corporations and universities across the world.

Students can register for the event at: <https://unstop.com/workshops-webinars/writing-mentorship-programme-2026-srcc-udu-1699773>.

The deadline for registration is July 16.

Applications are invited from qualified candidates for appointment to the following class I& II posts on regular basis:-		
Post	Pay Scale	No. of vacancy
Accounts Officer Gr.1	Rs.50000-160000	2 Nos. UR
Asst. Exe. Engineer (Civil)	Rs.50000-160000	3 Nos(1 SC, 1 OBC, 1 UR)
Asst. Exe. Engineer (Elc/E&C)	Rs.50000-160000	2 Nos. (1 OBC, 1 UR)
Asst. Engineer (Electrical)	Rs.40000-140000	1 No. SC
Programmer	Rs.40000-140000	1 No. SC
Asst. Engineer (Civil)	Rs.40000-140000	3 (1 SC, 2 UR)
For more details visit: www.cochinport.gov.in/Careers		
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THE HINDU
India's National Newspaper

‘Govt. can sell E20 petrol at ₹70 per litre’

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday hit out at the Central government, claiming that as per the current international rate of crude oil, one litre of E20 petrol can be sold at ₹70 and non-E20 petrol at ₹82.

Mr. Kejriwal also said that before the U.S. attacked Iran, there were times when the crude prices were very low but petrol prices were not reduced. “The government may argue, as I have heard Union Minister Hardeep Puri saying, that oil companies suffered losses during the war in the Middle East and they now need to recover those losses. This argument is completely wrong,” the AAP chief said at a press conference.

🌤️ Timings			
DELHI			
FRIDAY, JUL. 10			
RISE	05:31	SET	19:22
RISE	01:02	SET	15:14
SATURDAY, JUL. 11			
RISE	05:32	SET	19:22
RISE	01:49	SET	16:26
SUNDAY, JUL. 12			
RISE	05:32	SET	19:22
RISE	02:45	SET	17:36

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	29	26
Safdarjang	29	26
Palam	29	26

Delhi Palam Today
31°C Morning will be pleasant. Day will be slight warm. Spell of light rain and thundershower may occur.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
33°C Temperature to rise. The weather will be warm and windy. Night also will be comfortable. Mostly dry weather to occur.

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‘M.P. govt. ignored State’s interests in Narmada pact’: Cong. demands White Paper

People of M.P. have the first right over Narmada, says State unit chief, demands a debate in the Assembly over the issue; BJP alleges Opposition ‘spreading misinformation, misleading people’

Press Trust of India
BHOPAL

Opposition Congress and the State unit of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Thursday hit out at the Madhya Pradesh government over the Narmada project agreement, saying the Mohan Yadav-led dispensation overlooked the State’s interests and “meekly surrendered” before the Centre. The Congress also demanded a White Paper and a debate in the Assembly over the issue.

Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday reached an agreement in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah regarding the resolution of decades-old issues on displacement and land compensation within the Narmada project. The agreement settled pending payments through a one-time settlement.

Addressing reporters at his residence, State Con-



Home Minister Amit Shah, Minister of Jal Shakti C.R. Patil, CMs Devendra Fadnavis, Bhupendra Patel, Bhajanlal Sharma and Mohan Yadav in New Delhi. FILE PHOTO

gress president Jitu Patwari alleged that the government “surrendered” under the Centre’s pressure and ignored the interests of farmers, citizens and the State’s legal rights. He said the Narmada river traverses 1,312 km, with over 1,000 km flowing through Madhya Pradesh. “The people of Madhya Pradesh have the first right over Narmada *maiya* (mother). Yet, the State has suffered the most due to the Sardar Sarovar project,” he said. Of the 230 villages likely to be affected, 178 are in Madhya Pradesh and only 19 in Gujarat, he claimed.

He claimed that based on these losses, the previous State government had raised a claim of ₹7,669 crore under an earlier agreement. “The government has surprisingly agreed to pay around ₹550 crore to Gujarat,” he alleged. “The Congress demands a White Paper on the entire matter and a discussion in the Assembly,” he said.

CPI(M) State secretary Jaswinder Singh said the State government had sought ₹7,669.86 crore from Gujarat under the 2013 land acquisition law, while the latter had offered

only ₹281 crore under the 2001 land acquisition law.

He claimed Mr. Yadav was under such pressure over the agreement that the State had even given up the ₹281-crore compensation offered by Gujarat.

‘M.P. saved ₹1,268 cr.’

The BJP, however, rejected the allegations and said an opinion given by the Attorney General of India in February 2026 had fixed the State’s share of rehabilitation expenditure at 31.98%. BJP media department chief Ashish Agrawal said the State would have had to pay around ₹1,500 crore to Gujarat under that formula. He said the meeting in Delhi unanimously reduced the State’s share to 16.17%. “The State will now have to pay only ₹231.80 crore,” he said. Mr. Agrawal accused the Congress of “spreading misinformation and misleading” people, claiming that the agreement saved Madhya Pradesh around ₹1,268 crore.

Integrating AI into governance



Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren launching a “transformative road map” to accelerate the State’s digital transformation and establish it as India’s leading public governance-led AI State, advanced digital infrastructure and citizen-centric innovation during a National Stakeholders’ Consultation on Vision 2050, in New Delhi on Thursday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Pawar’s meeting in Shinde’s office sparks war of words between allies

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Veteran leader Sharad Pawar holding a party meeting in Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde’s office here has turned into a flashpoint between Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) [NCP (SP)], with both the Opposition allies on Thursday targeting each other over the development.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader

Sanjay Raut said his party was “disturbed and hurt” with Mr. Pawar’s meeting in Mr. Shinde’s office, and stressed that such acts “lower the credibility” of a senior leader like him. He added that the meeting amounted to “glorification of traitors”.

The NCP (SP) hit back, accusing Mr. Raut of adopting “double standards” and reminding him that Mr. Pawar’s meetings with him and Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray

were earlier hailed as “political statesmanship”.

Stating that politics runs on arithmetic and not emotions, the NCP (SP) also said if a single meeting between Mr. Pawar and Mr. Shinde could unsettle the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi, then it reflects that its foundation is weak.

Meanwhile, the BJP also criticised Mr. Raut, saying his comments have exposed the “deep divisions within the Opposition alliance”.

Banks’ merger does not shield tenant from eviction: SC

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday held that the amalgamation of a tenant bank with another does not exempt the transferee bank from eviction under the

Delhi Rent Control Act if the landlord’s written consent was not obtained.

Putting an end to nearly a four-decade-long legal battle, a Bench ordered the Punjab National Bank (PNB) to deliver “a peaceful and vacant possession of

the premises” by January 31, 2027, at Connaught Circus here to the owner, the British Motor Car Company Ltd. The dispute dates back to 1947, when the landlord leased a prime commercial space in Pratap Building, Connaught Circus, to Hin-

dustan Commercial Bank (HCB). Following a Reserve Bank of India-backed scheme, the HCB was amalgamated with the PNB in December 1986. This led to PNB taking over the possession of the premises.

The landlord initiated

eviction proceedings on the ground that the transfer of possession to the PNB amounted to assignment or parting with possession without its written consent, attracting Section 14 (1)(b) of the Delhi Rent Control (DRC) Act.

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Telangana HC grants bail to Minister's son in POCSO case

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Thursday granted conditional bail to Bandi Sai Bageerath, son of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, in connection with a case registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

He was granted bail after 51 days in judicial custody at Cherlapally Central Prison following his arrest by the Cyberabad police on May 16. The High Court directed him to execute a personal bond of ₹1 lakh with two sureties.

It also ordered him to cooperate with the ongoing investigation and not leave Telangana without the court's permission.

The case was registered on May 8 after the mother of a minor girl lodged a complaint alleging that her daughter had been sexually assaulted by the accused.

Three more dead in Wayanad debris slip; Pinarayi defends tunnel project

Two of the three victims identified, one from Himachal Pradesh and another from Bihar; search intensified for two people still missing, say authorities; Opposition leader claims clearance for tunnel project was secured through legitimate channels

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

The intensive search and rescue operations at Kalladi in Wayanad's Meppadi panchayat entered its final phase on Thursday evening, following the recovery of three more bodies. Despite torrential rain and a heavy influx of debris, rescue teams pushed through, on the third day of the challenging mission, bringing the confirmed death toll from Tuesday's disaster to six.

According to officials supervising the operations under the State government and the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority, the mission is nearing completion, with only two people still reported missing. Fire and Rescue Services personnel said they would intensify searches in the Meenakshi river to trace them.



Rescue operations under way at Kalladi in Wayanad, where a debris slip on July 7 claimed the lives of six persons. K. RAGESH

Two of the three victims recovered on Thursday have been identified as Rahul Sharma, an engineer from Himachal Pradesh, and Mohammad Imran, an excavator operator from Bihar.

Meanwhile, seven injured workers remain hospitalised, with several under observation in the intensive care unit.

The disaster unfolded

near the Meenakshi Bridge at Kalladi on July 7, where continuous rainfall reportedly triggered a subterranean erosion creating hollow underground cavities.

After visiting the site to review rescue efforts, Minister for Public Works (PWD) P.K. Basheer said the rescue squads encountered a challenging situation as the continuous rains hindered the debris

clearance. Experts had already warned of secondary landslips if large-scale removal was carried out fast, he said, adding that only the safest measures would be adopted.

Additionally, Mr. Basheer announced the Centre's assurance on possible financial assistance for the construction of the Bairakuppa bridge, with the foundation stone expected to be laid this November.

Pinarayi blames DDMA Agriculture Minister T. Siddique who camped at the spot to coordinate the rescue efforts clarified that the residents of the nearby Chooralmala region would not face transit or connectivity issues. Wayanad District Collector has been directed to list local families to streamline the distribution of special food rations and uninterrupted medical care.

Meanwhile, Leader of the Opposition Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the State government, terming the disaster "a result of grave administrative negligence." He made strong remarks against Chief Minister V.D. Sathesnan and the Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) after visiting the affected areas.

Accusing the disaster management authorities of failing to respond to extreme weather warnings, Mr. Vijayan defended the environmental clearances obtained for the proposed ₹2,243-crore twin-tube tunnel road project, asserting that they had been secured strictly through proper and legitimate institutional channels.

"The propagation that environmental clearance was secured through external pressure is an insult to the judiciary," he asserted.

Oppn. on mission to criticise Sanatana dharma: Adityanath

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW



U.P. CM Yogi Adityanath

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday in Banda hit out at Opposition parties Samajwadi Party (SP) and Congress, saying they have made it their life's mission to criticise Hindu traditions and Sanatana dharma and do not want to see a Viksit Bharat.

He said the money the current Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government spends on the development of temples and beautification of Dhams was earlier spent during the SP's tenure on "constructing boundary walls for graveyards".

Foundation stone laid "Certain individuals disrespect the nation's heritage. They have dedicated their lives to criticising Hindu traditions and Sanatana. Their vision does not encompass a prosperous and developed Bharat. They have a preference for graveyards, which explains their opposition to the development of the Ram Mandir, Kashi Vishwanath, Maa Vindhyavasini Dham, Chitrakoot, and Naimisharanya Dham. Leaders from the SP and Congress find it difficult to accept the developmental initiatives undertaken by BJP representatives," said Mr. Adityanath while inaugurating and laying the foundation stone for 229 development projects valued at over ₹710 crore in Banda.

The U.P. CM urged the citizens of the State to reject

those with negative mindsets that oppose progress. He also reflected on the time when Bundelkhand faced significant challenges.

"Upon assuming the role of Chief Minister, the Prime Minister advised me that my initial visit should be to Bundelkhand, emphasising the need for action in the region. When I arrived here nearly nine and a half years ago, I observed that backwardness had become synonymous with the area. Migration and water scarcity had emerged as defining characteristics of Bundelkhand. The mining mafia, land mafia, sand mafia, forest mafia, and dacoits instilled such fear that even farmers were hesitant to enter their fields," he said.

He added in Bundelkhand there was no connectivity, irrigation, drinking water, security, or employment. "Even FIRs were not registered at police stations. Bundelkhand was struggling for its very existence, but today it brings immense satisfaction to see its progress. Everyone can clearly see the transformation in Banda compared to nine years ago," said the U.P. CM.

Native village in the dark on Keralite's death in Sri Lanka

The Hindu Bureau
ALAPPUZHA

The news of Sarathchandran Unnithan's death in the prison riots in Sri Lanka has barely reached his native village of Keezhcherimel, near Chengannur, in Alappuzha of Kerala, where many remain unaware of the tragedy.

Even the local police and authorities have little information about the 73-year-old or the circumstances surrounding his death. According to local residents, it has been more than four decades since Unnithan and his family moved to Chennai and severed most of their ties with their ancestral village.

Unnithan arrived in Sri Lanka on March 2, 2025, and was arrested for allegedly possessing ganja

"We have had no connection with him or his family for decades. The only address we know is Fousi-

ya Lodge, Stringer's Street, Broadway, Chennai," said one of his relatives in Chengannur.

Whereabouts unknown The elderly relative, who declined to elaborate further, said she could barely remember details about the family or their present whereabouts.

According to available information, Unnithan arrived in Sri Lanka on March 2, 2025, and was arrested for allegedly possessing ganja. He was later lodged in the Negombo prison, where he died during the riots.

According to relatives, Unnithan moved permanently to Chennai after

marrying a woman from Andhra Pradesh. He last visited his native village in 2018. One of his siblings continues to live in the village, though local residents said he rarely maintained contact with the family. They, however, said that Unnithan was believed to have some connections in Thiruvananthapuram.

INBRIEF



A.P. Minister Lokesh calls for deeper ties with South Korea

Andhra Pradesh's Minister for Human Resource Development, IT and Electronics Nara Lokesh on Thursday concluded the fifth day of his South Korea tour with meetings aimed at attracting investments in electric vehicles, semiconductors, electronics, renewable energy and digital infrastructure, while proposing measures to strengthen economic ties between Andhra Pradesh and South Korea. He projected Andhra Pradesh as a preferred destination for Korean investments.

TTD halts special darshan ahead of Brahmotsavams

With Tirumala set to host two Brahmotsavams this year owing to the occurrence of 'adhika masam', the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has unveiled an extensive crowd management plan, suspending almost all special darshan categories during the annual festival and directing all the departments to complete preparations well ahead of schedule. The decision was taken at a high-level review meeting chaired by TTD Additional Executive Officer Ch. Venkaiah Chowdary on Thursday.

HC tells TDB to aid appraisal of Sabarimala valuables

The Kerala High Court has directed the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) to extend all necessary assistance to former Judge of Kerala High Court K.T. Sankaran to carry out the appraisal of valuables, including gold offerings made at the Sabarimala temple that were kept in 80 sacks labelled "Kaniponnu" in the Aranmula strong room. The court also directed the board's standing counsel to apprise it of the procedure proposed for the safe custody of valuable offerings received from devotees so that they can be appraised periodically and a comprehensive inventory maintained in digital form.

Heavy rain brings down 150-year-old clock tower at Kozhikode railway station

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

Heavy rain triggered the partial collapse of the 150-year-old heritage clock tower onto Platform No. 2 at the Kozhikode railway station in Kerala on Thursday morning. No casualties or injuries were reported, as timely precautions taken by security personnel ensured the area had been cordoned off before the incident. However, train operations on the route remained disrupted.

The iconic clock tower, an architectural landmark of the old station building, gave way, sending debris and roofing sheets crash-



Heavy rain triggered the partial collapse of the 150-year-old heritage clock tower onto Platform No. 2 of the station. K. RAGESH

ing onto Platform No. 2 and the overhead traction wires.

According to railway sources, minor cracks were detected on Wednesday itself on the vintage structure, which is now

under an extensive redevelopment. Acting promptly, RPF personnel moved passengers away from the premises. RPF officers said the building section was scheduled for controlled demolition later on Thursday.

Suresh Gopi faces flak as top SRFTI official accused of abuse walks scot-free

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Suresh Gopi, BJP MP and Chairperson of the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI), is facing criticism from the survivor and the SRFTI Students' Union for delay in taking action against a top official of the institution who had been found guilty of sexual harassment and multiple serious misconducts under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH) by an internal committee back in May 2026.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, the survivor, who was

Delay raised serious concerns about the institute's accountability, students' union says

linked to the institute, said the authorities had not taken any action or communicated with her after the internal committee's report found him guilty.

Termination sought "I want the immediate termination of this person as per the rules. I have not yet talked openly about the serious findings in the report. Mr. Gopi or no one else from the institute has

answered my questions on why no action has been taken even after two months....," she said.

She also expressed concern that the accused was appointed as a non-official member of the Organising Committee (South Zone) of the recently concluded Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF), 2026, with his name being published on the MIFF website.

Both the SRFTI and the MIFF function under the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

The students' union said in a statement that the continued delay raised serious concerns about the institute's accountability.

AIDS prevention society launches drive to improve HIV diagnosis in Karnataka

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

More than 56,000 people in Karnataka are estimated to be living with HIV without knowing their status, the highest such number among States in the country. This is posing a major challenge to the State's HIV control programme despite free testing and treatment services being widely available, with the changing nature of sexual networks adding to the complexity.

As per estimates from the Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society (KSAPS), 56,406 people are unaware of their HIV-positive status, making ear-



Over 56,000 in Karnataka are estimated to be unaware of their HIV status.

ly diagnosis and linkage to treatment a key public health priority. While over two lakh people are already receiving treatment, officials said, the focus is now on identifying those

who remain outside the healthcare system.

KSAPS Project Director Padma Basavanthappa told *The Hindu* that one of the biggest hurdles is the changing nature of sexual networks, with increasing numbers of people meeting partners through dating apps.

No voluntary testing Ms. Basavanthappa said the problem was compounded by the reluctance of people to voluntarily undergo HIV testing. "People still do not walk into testing centres on their own. Many believe they are not at risk, while others avoid testing because they fear stigma and discrimina-

tion," she said, pointing out that awareness about HIV transmission also remained inadequate.

To address the gap, KSAPS has launched the Mobilisation for AIDS Suraksha campaign. As part of the campaign, initiated by the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), KSAPS has introduced a BreakFree QR code that links users to a confidential self-risk assessment, near-by HIV testing centres and counsellors.

The self-assessment tool asks users a series of questions to determine whether they may be at risk and guides them to appropriate services while protecting their identity.

Karnataka to revive digital initiative to combat fake news

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government is all set to revive the Information Disorder Tackling Unit (IDTU) to curb the spread of fake news.

The unit, championed by Minister Priyank Kharge, had a trial run in 2024 but was later put on the back burner. Now, with Mr. Kharge taking charge as Home Minister, the unit is all set to become a full-fledged wing under the State's Cyber Command Unit.

Speaking in Belagavi on Thursday, Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said fake

news was causing several problems in society, including law and order disturbances.

The IDTU initiative had earlier raised concerns over whether the government should label news reports as 'fake' and conduct fact checks, prompting it to onboard independent fact-checking websites for the task. Despite this, the initiative was discontinued after the pilot phase.

These units will monitor social media and news articles daily, identify potential threats, and have them fact-checked before publication on IDTU's flagship portal.



Home truths: Sari Juang (left) and her sisters, Sasmita and Ratni, sitting outside their modest hut at Kodipasa village in Odisha's Keonjhar district. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Gone girls

The death of 14 girls from the Juang community, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group, from Odisha at a seafood processing plant in Tamil Nadu's Tiruvallur has brought to the fore the socio-economic realities of marginalised tribal populations despite decades of targeted interventions. **Satyasundar Barik** visits the Juang villagers who lost their daughters to understand what went wrong in the development journey

When the MGR Chennai Central-Bhubaneswar Superfast Express pulled into the Bhubaneswar railway station on the morning of June 27, Sari Juang, along with her two younger sisters, had just cheated death by a mile. The over 1,500-km journey back to their home State followed a deadly ammonia gas leak at their workplace - a seafood processing plant in Tamil Nadu's Tiruvallur - on June 21.

Sari and her sisters Sasmita and Ratni were witness to the death and destruction caused by the gas leak that tore through the seafood plant, killing their co-workers, mostly women and minor girls from Odisha. Of the 17 migrant workers who died, 14 were from Odisha - all in their teens and from the Juang community - two from Assam, and one from Jharkhand. Some of the workers are still undergoing treatment in hospitals in Tamil Nadu.

According to survivor accounts, the gas leak occurred outside the workers' residential quarters during night, exposing them to toxic fumes while they were asleep. Following initial investigations, officials said labour contractors specifically hired women and even minor girls from the Juang tribal community - a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) from Odisha - after luring them with the hope of steady income and advance payments to their families.

By the time Sari reached her village, Kodipasa in Banspal block of Keonjhar district, two of her closest friends had already been cremated.

The Juang community lives in scattered hamlets across the hill districts of Keonjhar, Angul and Dhenkanal, and survive on shifting cultivation and forest produce. The women and girls of Kodipasa leaving their home and travelling the length of the country wasn't usual until recently. "Because of low literacy and non-exposure to the outside world, Juangs are not familiar with migration," said an official of the Tribal Welfare Department. And yet at least 20 girls - three more girls from the village are on ventilator support in Tamil Nadu hospitals - from one village made the journey to the southern State drawn by the promise of a good income, ₹15,000 per month, for each worker.

'No other option'

"What choice did we have?" Sari retorted. "We are four sisters and two brothers. Our father died years ago. Whatever little our mother earns is not enough to feed all of us. Beyond subsidised rice [provided under the public distribution system], we have nothing," she said. The sisters, aged 18 and below, had set out to Tamil Nadu to earn enough money to build a liveable house in Kodipasa.

Keonjhar is also the home district of Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Mahi, whose government has announced an ex gratia of ₹10 lakh for the families of the deceased. A little away from Sari's home, Basang Juang, 50, pointed to a newly laid tin roof funded by ₹9,000 sent home by her daughter, Phulamani, 18, who was among the first five Juang girls who died in the gas leak incident.

"My daughter used to travel 10 km every day to Keonjhar town to work as a construction labourer. Even that work was irregular. So, she chose to travel to Tamil Nadu," said Basang.

Two huts away lived Sujani Juanga, in her mid-teens. Her family includes an alcoholic brother, an intellectually challenged sister, and another sister who returned home after marriage. Their mother earns a living working odd jobs. Before she succumbed to the ammonia leak, Sujani had managed to send home ₹4,000 in two instalments.

The poverty and distinct cultural practices of the Juangs led to their identification as a PVTG. To address their development needs, the Juang Development Agency (JDA) was established at Gonasika in Keonjhar in 1978, with a mandate to serve 5,490 people across 32 habitations. Sari's village, Kodipasa, is one of these hamlets.

Nearly five decades on, the presence of a dedicated agency, however, seems to have brought lit-



My daughter used to travel 10 km every day to Keonjhar town to work as a construction labourer. Even that work was irregular. So, she chose to travel to Tamil Nadu

BASANG JUANG,
mother of a victim

tle change to the lives of the people. While infrastructure has improved with blacktopped roads reaching Kodipasa over the past decade, the socio-economic conditions of the villagers remain largely unchanged.

The Odisha SC and ST Development Department highlights the establishment of the Kodipasa Ashram School, a residential institution, as early as 1955. Decades later, its impact appears limited. Most boys and girls leave the village soon after appearing for their Class 10 examinations, migrating to other States in search of work.

"The primary source of livelihood for all Juang families in Kodipasa is daily wage labour," said Saibani Juanga, a village elder. "Only one boy had enrolled in college, only to drop out later. We have no alternative means of livelihood except construction work. It is physically demanding, wages are low and irregular, and migration to other States remains the most practical option for our children," said Saibani.

According to the latest report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India on 'Functioning of Micro Project Agencies for development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in the State', the literacy rate among villages covered under JDA was 38.18%, decades after focused intervention efforts began.

Fifteen kilometres away, in Rimulighat hamlet of Bansapal block in the district, grief hangs heavy at Sudhar Juang's home. The ammonia leak claimed the life of his 19-year-old daughter Champabati, the first earning member of her family to travel beyond Odisha. Their one-room mud house shelters six members. Champabati had migrated with the hope of improving her family's condition and completing the half-constructed concrete house sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Rural). Her story echoes that of many Juang girls who died, and those who returned.

Sula Juang, 21, a friend of Champabati, said, "There are 35 Juang families in Rimulighat, and their financial and social conditions have been worsening. Once we cross 16, we are expected to take care of ourselves. Where will the money come from for clothes, shoes, or even basic necessities? Families are unable to bear the cost. Leaving home is the only option for us even if the workplaces are unsafe."

Champabati's parents said they want to work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), which has now been replaced with a new scheme. But there isn't any work, they said, adding that this is why their daughter was forced to go to Tamil Nadu.

Odisha is home to 64 different tribes, constituting 22% of the State's population and 9.17% of the

country's tribal population. In terms of the number of both Scheduled Tribe communities and PVTGs, Odisha has the highest number of ethnic groups among all States, said A.B. Ota, former Director of the State-run Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI).

Some fund facts

During the 5th Five-Year Plan (1974-79), the Centre decided to focus on development of vulnerable tribal groups and identified 75 such groups in India. Out of the 75 PVTGs identified in the country, 13 groups belong to Odisha with a population of 2.94 lakh. As many as 20 micro-project agencies or State-level tribal welfare bodies, including three new ones, have been functioning since 1976-77 across 14 districts of the State.

The PVTGs receive grants under Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Scheme under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution and Conservation-cum-Development Plan (development of infrastructure, education and health). Besides, regular welfare development programmes of State and Centre are also implemented for the PVTGs.

The Odisha PVTG Empowerment and Livelihood Improvement Programme (OPELIP), an externally aided project with the objective to achieve enhanced living conditions and reduced poverty of PVTGs, was implemented between 2016 and 2024 with an outlay of ₹711.25 crore. Of this, ₹319.29 crore was a loan from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Apart from this, the Central government came up with the PM-JANMAN Mission with an allocation of ₹24,104 crore for holistic development of PVTGs between 2023-24 and 2025-26. Odisha, with 13 PVTGs, has been a major beneficiary.

Additionally, the ST and SC Development Department has proposed to implement OPELIP-II with an estimated ₹2,422.13 crore from IFAD that includes a loan of ₹734.86 crore. The proposal has, however, not received a final go-ahead from the Finance Department.

According to CAG, during 2019-2024, the 17 micro-project agencies received ₹387.93 crore under different schemes and spent ₹424.62 crore from the available funds of ₹461.44 crore, including an opening balance of ₹60.31 crore and interest of ₹13.20 crore.

"Perhaps, Sari did not have any idea about the massive funds being spent on her and the villagers. Otherwise, she would have demanded her share of the funds and settled down in her village peacefully," said Pravakar Juang, secretary of Juang Samaj Sangh, Keonjhar.

The CAG observation points out that of the 64,214 households in 1,679 villages under 17 micro-project agencies in PVTG areas, there were no data about ownership of land land vis-a-vis 10,005 households (as of March 2024). Of the 54,209 households for which data existed, 40,829 (75%) had ownership over homestead or agricultural land and the remaining 13,380 (25%) did not have any ownership.

PVTGs have lagged in almost all development indicators. During 2015, their literacy rate was below 30% in four micro-project areas. In Tumba development agency, the literacy rate among women was less than 10%.

The audit agency points out that 11,493 projects with an estimated cost of ₹267.79 crore were approved by respective districts for execution by 15 micro-project agencies under MGNREGS during 2019-2024. Out of the sanctioned works, these agencies had taken up 5,223 works (45%) and incurred expenditure of ₹93.64 crore (35%) as of March 2024.

The unutilised amount of ₹174.15 crore included ₹115.02 crore towards the labour component, which could potentially have created income sources through wages for the benefit of the marginalised communities.

Juangs not alone

While the death of 14 Juang girls has drawn attention to the condition of the community, the situation is no better among other PVTGs.

In Andrah village of Malkangiri district, Nanda Sisa, a young member of the Bonda community, describes how migration has become the new normal for his community youth.

"COVID-19 was a major disruption in the lives of young Bondas who aspired to pursue higher education. Now, once they cross 16 years of age or complete matriculation, Bondas begin looking for places where they can earn quick money," said Nanda.

While girls board buses to work in prawn processing plants in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, boys take up jobs such as security guards or in the apparel sector. "The impact of this regular migration is visible. At least 10 Bonda girls from Andrah have married outside the community in other districts. Traditionally, Bondas have lived within the Bonda Hills, maintaining a close-knit community," he said.

An 'Evaluation of Bonda Development Agency', conducted by the SCSTRTI, attributes the rise in migration to the lack of livelihood opportunities. "Many have not received the Record of Rights for land ownership. There has been little monitoring by the Bonda Development Agency officials and no sustained handholding support at the village level," the report noted. According to the study, 221 Bondas migrated from seven sample villages during 2019-20. Dambaru Sisa, a former MLA from the Chittrakonda Assembly constituency and a member of the Bonda community, said migration has risen in recent years.

"Bondas have broken barriers in education, with some even becoming doctors and engineers. However, their numbers are minuscule. The majority of Bonda children drop out of school and migrate to other States for work," said Dambaru.

Similar accounts of migration reverberate in Niyamgiri Hills, spread across Rayagada and Kalahandi districts, where Dongria Kandh, a PVTG, resides.

Umi Daniel, an expert on migration, said, "Migration is not bad. However, girls aged below 18 working in hazardous sites and unsafe environments is certainly a cause for concern. The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979, which mandates registration of workers, is hardly implemented in the State."

In the aftermath of the Tiruvallur tragedy, Odisha's Labour Department has filed complaints with eight police stations across Keonjhar seeking a thorough probe into circumstances under which the 14 girls died and demanded action against labour agents, who mediated to take girls and boys to other States. In the police complaints, the department said it has facilitated the safe return of 58 migrant workers. Of the 24 migrant workers from Telkoi block of Keonjhar working at the seafood facility, 11 were minors. According to the FIRs lodged in the case, the minor girls had been hired in the names of adult women whose identification documents were used without their knowledge.

As Sari tries to make sense of the changed circumstances, she is unable to decide whether she will travel to Tamil Nadu for work again. For now, she is in her village. Life, as she knew, has changed but the reasons to leave home have not. satyasundar.b@thehindu.co.in



Homes left behind: Parents of Champabati Juang; (right) Basang Juang pointing towards the new tin roof of her home laid with the help of ₹9,000 sent by her daughter, Phulamani. Both Champabati and Phulamani died in the gas leak incident in Tamil Nadu. BISWARANJAN ROUT





At the Delhi International Film Festival (DIFF) and International Film Festival of Delhi (IFFD) films and discussions alone are not the focus. The two festivals arrive with the complete shebang: Met Gala-esque red carpet photo points for stars, business networking

Delhi's dream factory

As the footfall at multiplexes declines, independent clubs are creating a community-based film-watching experience in the city



crowd-pullers such as *Dhurandhar* 2 (2026). Film-goers also look towards the Lodhi Tirumvirate: India Habitat Centre (IHC), Alliance Française de Delhi and India International Centre

A large, modern building with a glass facade and a large, open courtyard area with trees and a walkway. The building features a prominent glass facade with a grid-like pattern of windows. The courtyard is filled with lush greenery, including tall palm trees and various shrubs. A wide, paved walkway leads through the courtyard towards the building. The overall atmosphere is bright and airy, with natural light filtering through the glass and foliage.

For the Lodhi Triumvirate, a recent rise in footfall is a common denominator. Filmmaker Nausheen Khan, whose documentary *Land of My Dreams* (2023) was screened in IIC in 2024, described these cultural embassies as “extremely crucial” at a time when “spaces for dissent are shrinking everywhere”. Recalling the screening, she speaks of a full hall followed by a long post-film discussion with an “extremely engaged” audience, adding that such conversations remain vital for non-fiction cinema dealing with contemporary political realities.

Delhi's alternative film culture is also sustained by Kriti Film Club, The Big Hoom Club and Toto Circle, and semi-underground venues including NIV Art Centre and Mool. Apan Singh's fillum.in, which lists all the non-theatrical screenings across Delhi has been a major catalyst in this transformation.

STEP OUT



For Nidhi Sharma, the Himalayas are less a physical landscape than a space for memory and introspection. In *Echoes of Silence*, the artist brings together 20 landscape works inspired by her memories of the mountains, transforming forests, skies and mountain ranges into meditative spaces shaped by colour and stillness. With Uma Nair as curatorial advisor, the exhibition explores the relationship between nature and emotional landscapes. *Echoes of Silence* will be on view from July 11 to 15, at the Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre.



Poetry becomes a space for memory, and identity in *All That's Left Behind*, the 2026 collection by Indian poet and broadcaster Aditya Tiwari. Moving through themes of queerness, displacement, love and loss, the poems turn everyday objects into markers of personal history. At the book launch, he will be in conversation with writer and politician Anish Gawande, discussing the ideas and experiences that shape the collection. *On July 10 at 6.30pm at Kunzum GK2. Registration details are available on Simon & Schuster India's Instagram page.*

Behind closed doors



8

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Upcycle the future

Something meaningful
One of the event's highlights is the Repair Fest (July 12-17) which will bring together some of India's most skilled repair artisans and master darners who will undertake repairs of textile items brought in by visitors. "This is our largest edition so far and the first to occupy the entire Dilli Haat, INA," says the spokesperson, who adds that planning for the event has been underway for several months.

The Repair Fest will bring together master darners who will undertake repairs of textile items brought in by visitors

A photograph of two women in a market stall. The woman on the left, wearing a dark green tunic, is adjusting the collar of a bright yellow sweater worn by the woman on the right. The woman on the right is also wearing blue trousers and a red scarf. They are standing in front of a stall with various items on display, including a shelf with small boxes and a table with more goods. The background shows a red brick archway.

Weave The Future is on from July 12 to 17 at Dilli Haat, INA



A perfect storm

A combination of natural calamity and human failure laid Wayanad low

The fragile hills of Kerala's Wayanad district turned into the theatre of yet another weather-induced disaster when a heavy downpour, on July 7, triggered what looked like a debris slide at the entrance to the under-construction twin tunnel at Kalladi in Meppadi panchayat, in the vicinity of Chooralmala, which was wrecked by massive landslides two years ago. Six workers were confirmed dead. The Kerala government has suspended construction work until the completion of a comprehensive probe into the causes and whether the work complied with the conditions set by the Expert Appraisal Committee under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) while granting environmental clearance for the project. Ever since the great floods of 2018, Mep-padi panchayat, which is over 7,000 ft above sea level, has witnessed severe climate-induced ca-tastrophes. Landslides hit the Puthumala area in 2019, within hours of an equally lethal landslide across the hills in Kavalappara in Malappuram district. Environmentalists, therefore, made an impassioned plea against the ₹2,100 crore (ap-proximately) 8.73-km-long twin-tube tunnel road, linking Anakampoyil in Kozhikode to Mep-padi, flagging it as a recipe for disaster. It was in-stead fast-tracked, citing the need for accelerated mobility for the people of Wayanad, which does not have tertiary care facilities. In April this year, the Supreme Court cited the project's 'national importance' and rejected the Wayanad Prakrithi Samrakshana Samithi's plea to halt it. The group is planning to seek a review of the order.

As with all major disasters, this, too, appears to have stemmed from a heady mix of failures. Kerala Public Works Minister hurriedly pointed to the company executing the construction on behalf of the contractor, Konkan Railways, alleg-ing that it ignored the department's June 20 dea-dline to remove excavation debris from the area. The company fell back on the rainfall data and the region's landslide susceptibility. Security camera visuals suggest an avalanche-like flow of debris down the slope of the hill that was being bored. Whether a mudslip in the upper reaches caused the debris to cascade down will only be known after a geomorphological probe. On the face of it, the State's disaster management ma-chinery was not up to the job. The synoptic con-ditions in the area on the eve of the present disas-ter were eerily similar to those on the eve of the 2024 calamity. Wayanad has a fragile ecology, and any infrastructure project must involve met-iculous ecological and climate-resilience plan-ning and uncompromising execution. As it in-vestigates the lapses, the State should review the project's social and environmental costs and en-sure that climate-induced catastrophe in Waya-nad is prevented, not just responded to.

Far from over

Iran and the U.S. must address the trust deficit for their talks to progress

It took only 20 days for the U.S.-Iran memo-randum of understanding (MoU), which promised to extend the ceasefire by 60 days and launch talks about outstanding issues, in-cluding Iran's nuclear programme, to start unra-velling. On Tuesday night, the U.S. carried out sweeping air strikes in Iran after three tankers were attacked in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran struck American bases in Kuwait and Bahrain after which Mr. Trump declared that the ceasefire was over. While he is known for making exaggerated claims, the current crisis poses the biggest chal-lenge to the peace process since the June 17 MoU. The crisis did not emerge overnight. From the outset, the agreement had three major sticking points – Israel's war in Lebanon; Iran's access to its frozen funds and the status of the Strait of Hor-muz. Tehran sees Israel's refusal to withdraw from southern Lebanon, along with Washing-ton's push for a parallel trilateral framework in-volving the U.S., Lebanon and Israel, as violations of the spirit of the MoU. And, despite talks, Iran has yet to get access to its frozen funds. Finally, Iran appears determined to assert control over the Strait. It has opened a "safe passage route" along its coast, while the U.S. is backing an al-ternative route along Oman's coast.

Iran fears that the U.S. is trying to strip away the leverage it established over the Strait during the war by promoting an alternative route. The U.S. does not want Iran to emerge as the sole cus-todian of a strategic waterway. These conflicting positions trigger skirmishes, further undermin-ing the MoU. What Mr. Trump, who senses strat-egic defeat, is trying to do is to mount economic and military pressure on Tehran to change its po-sition on the Strait. He can continue his air cam-paign, but his years-long maximum pressure and 40 days of bombing have done little to alter Iran's negotiating positions. If he returns to war over Hormuz, Iran's stance on its nuclear programme – still unaddressed – would only get hardened. If war resumes, it would be bad news for the whole West Asia region and the entire global economy. Mr. Trump is at a strategic dead end, and instead of digging deeper, should stick to his way-out road map – the MoU. An obstacle in the peace process is the complete absence of trust. Mr. Trump's public tirades and abuses against Iran's leadership and hyperbolic threats, which are de-tached from ground realities, are not helping his cause. Equally, if Iran continues targeting com-mercial vessels, it risks being seen as an aggressor rather than a victim. Both sides should address the trust deficit, resolve the sticking points in the MoU and begin serious talks about the outstand-ing issues for a final settlement.

Manipur is one of the States covered under Phase III of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls being implemented by the Election Commission of India (ECI) currently. The SIR has already drawn adverse criticism from civil society organisations and the Opposition, particularly after the recent Bihar and West Bengal elections, due to its hasty, disproportionate and summary deletion of voters from voters' lists, resulting in the disenfranchisement of large sections of politically "undesirable" communities and voters. Concerns have been expressed by informed citizens about the lack of transparency and often blatant bias of the State and the ruling party in relation to the SIR, and its relationship with the planned delimitation, the 2029 elections and perhaps even an oddly timed Census. These concerns apply to Manipur as well. In addition, there are features of the situation in Manipur that are little known outside – and even within – the State, making the implementation of the SIR in Manipur even more egregious.

Fractured social fabric

First, Manipur has been in the throes of an intense ethnic conflict involving the majority Meiteis (54% of the population, inhabiting the dense Imphal Valley), the Kuki-Zo peoples (15%, inhabiting the surrounding hills) and, more recently, the Manipuri Nagas (26%, mainly in the northern part of Manipur). It has resulted in over 260 deaths in pogroms, attacks, and retaliatory violence; displaced some 60,000 people within and outside Manipur; led to the burning of hundreds of villages and places of worship; and witnessed unimaginable atrocities, including beheadings, dismemberment, and rapes as forms of collective punishment, disproportionately inflicted on the Kuki-Zo.

It has led to a demand by the Kuki-Zo for a 'Separate Administration' for themselves – and an equally stout opposition by the Meiteis to it – while many Manipuri Nagas led by the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah), or NSCN-IM, remain committed to their decades old demand for integration of Naga-inhabited areas in a sovereign 'Nagalim'. Many are backed by political, militant and proscribed insurgent groups of diverse persuasions.

Three years after the start of the conflict, not a single case of violence has been brought to book through the courts. An Inquiry Commission



Gautam Mukhopadhyaya

Former Ambassador of India to Myanmar, Afghanistan and Syria, and engaged in issues facing the northeast of India

Manipur's Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls risks deepening exclusion amid ethnic conflict, displacement, and identity challenges

formed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has yet to present its report. Thousands of internally displaced persons languish in camps with little relief.

Ethnic divisions have worsened and spread. Long-standing Naga-Kuki hostilities have been added to the three-year-old Meitei-Kuki conflict marked by the burning of villages (mostly Kuki), ambushes, and recently in May, the killing of three Thadou-Kuki pastors, and, in retaliation, tit-for-tat hostage-taking and the horrific killing of six Nagas in Kuki custody that has in turn set off a full economic blockade of Kangpokpi district. In response, State and central security forces have appeared passive, paralysed and at times, biased.

The conduct of the State government has been widely viewed as partisan, but the role of the Centre and even courts cannot be said to be above board. Conducting the SIR under these conditions, under a pretence of normalcy, is inexplicable.

Narratives driving electoral exclusion

Second, unlike the rest of the country, where the SIR is being driven by the central government through the ECI with the partisan support of the ruling party, in Manipur the demand to "cleanse" the State of alleged "illegal migrants" – a code word for Kukis – is in line with perceptions of politically radicalised Meiteis and Manipuri Nagas, who together constitute about 80% of the population. These allegations have no basis in Census figures for over a century, and are based on recent distortions of history, fake narratives and loud propaganda that feed directly into the SIR exercise. They create a very negative environment for a fair SIR, particularly in mixed areas, that is itself, *ipso facto*, biased against certain communities.

Third, there are several features peculiar to the Kukis themselves that lend themselves to their victimisation by the SIR. The first reason is that close to 50,000 Kuki-Zo remain displaced and scattered in Manipur and outside. There does not seem to be any provision in place for their fair enumeration.

The second reason is that together with their displacement, many are known to have lost many of their identity, residence, election, education and other documents that could have helped establish their voter credentials. There are visual records of Kuki-Zo educational certificates, Aadhaar cards, and driving licences in Imphal being destroyed after the violence of May 2023.

Building a durable India-Australia partnership

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Australia this week has been big on substance and high on optics. The choreography is familiar now given the warmth in the relationship: a forward-leaning leadership interaction, a massive diaspora event and a joint statement packed with deliverables and road maps. The Australian government sees India as central to its economic diversification strategy. Its new economic road map and packed ministerial calendar for India underwrite this intent. The elite consensus seems bipartisan and the convergence only growing.

Turning convergence into alignment

Yet, the harder part for most strategic relationships is drawing the line between convergence and alignment. The two might sound like synonyms, but they are not. Convergence is two countries arriving at similar conclusions about the world for their own reasons. Alignment is what happens when those separate conclusions are built into matching capabilities, institutions and habits of engagement. India and Australia have achieved a great deal of the first. The real test of this visit, and of the years after it, is whether it endures by delivering the second.

The convergence is not in doubt, and it is easy to see why it has deepened. Both countries are hedging against overdependence in a global order in transition. Australia's dependence on China, and its alliance dependence on an unpredictable Washington, have come under visible strain. This year's Lowy Institute Poll found trust in the United States at a record low of 31%, with a narrow margin of Australians saying that Canberra should distance itself from Washington under U.S. President Donald Trump. India is running its parallel diversification across energy suppliers, defence platforms and critical minerals processing, driven by a similar instinct.

New Delhi wants to limit its exposure; the Iran and Ukraine conflicts have driven home that any single-point dependency, however longstanding, is now a liability. No country can single-handedly balance China or hedge against American unpredictability. Together, and alongside partners such as Japan, they improve their odds. That is genuine convergence.

This visit has produced tangible evidence of that strategic lock-in. A Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation delivers a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Australia's Maritime Border Command and the



Shruti Pandalay

Inaugural India Chair at The Lowy Institute, Sydney, Australia

Beyond warm optics and deepening convergence, India-Australia ties face the challenge of converting trust into alignment

Indian Coast Guard and adopts an India-Australia Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap to address shared threat perceptions. These are practical mechanisms that deepen interoperability without altering the basic character of the relationship: India remains a trusted security partner, not an ally. On energy security, Australian uranium has been legally available to India since the bilateral 2014 civil nuclear agreement, but it never actually moved commercially, largely because India's own nuclear liability law made foreign suppliers nervous about exposure.

That changed with the SHANTI Act last December, which reformed that liability regime. The agreement on uranium has operationalised a deal lying dormant for a decade. The summit also launched the Australia-India Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies and Supply Chains (PACTS), while reaffirming the complementarity to the Australia-Canada-India Technology and Innovation Partnership as focusing on building resilient technology partnerships through flexible minilateral arrangements. These are examples of alignment beginning to take institutional form.

There are focus areas, there are problems

But for alignment to be durable, convergence must translate into operational overlap. This is most consequential in the Indian Ocean, a region where Australian and Indian interests overlap most naturally. Both are Indian Ocean states with real stakes in the region's sea lanes. India's Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region has emerged as a key hub for maritime domain awareness, even as Australia pays closer attention to its western seaboard and Indian Ocean approaches. The two navies have converged on similar risk assessments of shadow fleets, threats to undersea cables and coercive activity below the threshold of conflict.

The new Coast Guard MoU and Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap narrow the gap between strategic intent and operational cooperation. Yet, Australia's most consequential force-structure decisions, from AUKUS (trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the U.S.) to its broader defence posture, remain oriented towards the Western Pacific, while India's strategic planners continue to divide attention between continental threats and maritime challenges. The shared ground is real; it is simply narrower than the political convergence sometimes suggests.

Economically, the pattern is similar. Trade has

The third reason is that customary naming systems – where names are derived from the last syllable of complex parental names, nicknames often substitute formal names, and names are converted from tribal names to English orthography – create vast scope "logical discrepancies", making people far more vulnerable to exclusion than in States such as West Bengal. Possibly, more than 90% of Kuki-Zo people are unlikely to be able to produce a single, consistent spelling of their own names, let alone maintain consistency across generations.

The fourth reason is that by some historical anomaly, Manipuri tribals, both Kuki-Zo and Naga, do not enjoy Sixth Schedule status, although they enjoy some measure of autonomy under Article 371C and very weak Autonomous Councils.

This served them well during periodic bouts of violence and displacement, most recently during the Naga-Kuki violence of the 1990s, which again disproportionately affected the Kukis. Village chiefs and local authorities were then able to certify the identities of villagers under their jurisdiction. Such arrangements are unlikely to be recognised in the present exercise and prevailing atmosphere.

Finally, the Kuki-Zo leadership appears, for some reason, unaware of the nature, motivations, and implications of the SIR exercise. They seem to believe, perhaps naively, that as Indian citizens who have lived here all their lives and in possession of necessary documents, including voter ID cards, they have nothing to fear, and that opposing the exercise would amount to an admission of guilt. The dangers of the SIR now appear to be dawning on them, with some Kuki-Zo civil society organisations issuing statements highlighting its shortcomings, although opposition has yet to take a political form.

Safeguarding belonging

A nationwide SIR is now a *fait accompli* following the ruling by the Supreme Court of India in its favour. However, the process can still be made fairer and more sensitive to the risks of exclusion. Unless measures are adopted to limit its potential harm, by 2029 we may see a pathway to statelessness not only for the Kuki-Zo but also for other tribal communities in the Northeast, with their plight obscured amid the broader exclusion and disenfranchisement of Muslims labelled as "illegal migrants".

grown sharply since the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement came into force, but industry voices behind closed doors argue that growth sits disproportionately with large firms. Smaller exporters on both sides remain unaware of how to use it. Track 1.5 dialogues have flagged this as an operationalisation gap.

The knowledge deficit is more obvious when one looks at Australian public consciousness on India. This year's Lowy Poll found only 5% of Australians expect India to be the world's most important power a decade from now, against 54% for China, even as trust in India remains comparatively high. Convergence at the top has not yet trickled down into wider awareness of India's strategic heft.

The diaspora opportunity

The diaspora remains the biggest opportunity to change this, but with a caveat. Indian-origin Australians are now the country's largest immigrant-born community, ahead of the U.K.-born population for the first time. Political leadership has celebrated the diaspora's contribution, and a Centre for Australia-India Relations study finds that Australians broadly recognise it as skilled migrants, students and workers. But recognising the diaspora as a cultural asset, or an electoral constituency, is not alignment. Alignment would require translating that diaspora leverage into a public case for why India matters economically to the average Australian. It would require institutionalising the diaspora's comparative advantage in helping Australian Small and Medium-sized Enterprises navigate Indian regulatory and business culture, and vice versa, rather than leaving that work to individual champions. It would also mean untangling the mobility of Indian professionals from Australia's increasingly fraught migration politics.

Mr. Modi's visit has provided fresh ballast for these conversations about the future of the India-Australia partnership. His message on Australian Pension funds investing in India particularly resonated in the room when he said India would not just treat them as capital but as a marker of strategic trust imposed by Australian families in India. These statements matter because they build the broader public consciousness of India as a trusted partner for the future. Convergence got India and Australia to the table; it is these steps that institutionalise engagement incrementally that build alignment that endures.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trump's truce flips

It is deplorable that the much-hyped ceasefire agreement between Iran and the U.S. is already fizzling out, signalling prolonged military hostilities in the war-ravaged region. It is

equally baffling that the United Nations has remained a silent spectator to the cascading effects of the conflict in West Asia. This only goes to show that peace accords brokered by regional non-state actors are unlikely to foster a

durable ceasefire.
G. Ramasubramanyam,
Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

Students' personal data

The reported sale of CUET and NEET candidates' databases by websites is a serious violation of

students' privacy and a blatant breach of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act. Personal information collected for examinations must never be commercialised without explicit consent. This illegal trade exposes students to

spam, fraud, identity theft, and exploitation by coaching institutes and admission agents. The authorities must investigate these websites and impose stringent penalties. The National Testing Agency and the Government must

strengthen data security measures to restore confidence in the examination system.
Bhushan Manchanda,
New Delhi

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

Should India restart dialogue with Pakistan?



Mani Shankar Aiyar

Former Member of Parliament



Tara Kartha

Former Director at the National Security Council Secretariat

PARLEY

India and Pakistan have not engaged in dialogue since 2016 when talks broke down after the terror attacks at Pathankot and subsequently at Uri. The last 12 years have witnessed major attacks at Pahalgam (2025) and Pulwama (2019) and that apart, there were several smaller terror attacks. Earlier this month, a group of eminent citizens led by Gandhian O.P. Shah drafted a joint appeal to the leaders of India and Pakistan urging them to engage in dialogue. This has led to a public debate on whether India should restart dialogue with Pakistan. Mani Shankar Aiyar, who was a signatory to the letter, and Tara Kartha discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Kallol Bhattacharjee. Edited excerpts:

Should India and Pakistan restart dialogue at this moment, especially since they haven’t spoken to each other at the government level for a decade now?

Mani Shankar Aiyar: It is precisely for that very reason, because we haven’t spoken to each other for the best part of the last 12 years, that it is absolutely necessary that we resume the dialogue as soon as possible. And as regards the time, my own view is that any time is as good as any other time. And all times when we don’t talk are bad for both of us. So I would urge the governments to talk to each other. And until they do, I think people of goodwill on either side of our border should be in touch with each other. I speak as somebody with nearly 40 years of experience of Pakistan and Pakistanis. I have been through several different Pakistani regimes, and it does not seem to me that it matters who is in power in Pakistan. When we engage with them, we engage with Pakistan, and not with a particular individual.

Tara Kartha: Ideally both countries should talk to each other because they are nuclear powers. These are dangerous times, especially since there was an active phase of hostility last year. But my problem is that the present leadership is basically Field Marshal Asim Munir. Let us forget about Shehbaz Sharif [the Prime Minister of Pakistan], for as much as I regard him, I’m sure he is a fine and good politician in his own right, Mr. Munir is in power and he’s even more powerful than General Pervez Musharraf was before him. He holds absolute power; him and a couple of core commanders, such as his ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) chief. It is very important to understand that the rise of Field Marshal Munir began in a very systematic fashion once they carried out the terror strike in Pahalgam. I won’t say after Operation Sindoor;



Tense ties: Army soldiers patrol along the Line of Control between Pakistan and India in the Uri Sector, Jammu and Kashmir in January. IMRAN NISSAR

I’ll say after the Pahalgam attack.

I agree with Mr. Aiyar that it doesn’t matter who you talk to, provided that person is interested in peace. But the question is, what stake does Field Marshal Munir have in peace? In that case, he’ll have to step down for a civilian prime minister. The moment things get peaceful, they’ll tell the Pakistan military to go back to the barracks and that the civilians will take over. So why should he [be interested in peace]? It is a systemic issue. I’m not saying the army can never be talked to. This particular man will not. He is very dangerous.

Is it the correct time to go ahead with the dialogue with Pakistan?

MSA: If we don’t go ahead, we’ll be stuck in the rut in which we are today. There was a mention of one man, Asim Munir, who’s been in power for approximately one year. But we haven’t talked to Pakistan for 12 years. So I don’t see how Asim Munir being there is the biggest obstacle. We could have talked to Nawaz Sharif. We could have talked to Imran Khan. We could have talked to several others.

And if you look at the past, we have had extremely fruitful talks with Pakistani generals but rarely with Pakistani civilians. Let me first



We are currently talking to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu who has been indicted by the ICC for war crimes. If we can talk to every dictator around the world, what’s the problem in talking to the people next door who have the misfortune of being led by an army commander?

MANI SHANKAR AIYAR

run through the Pakistani army men with whom we have had successful interlocations. Ayub Khan was the one who broke the deadlock on the Indus Waters Treaty. It was Zia-ul-Haq who broke the deadlock on Siachen. It was Musharraf, who broke the deadlock on what till then was projected as the single biggest obstacle in India-Pakistan relations, namely the Kashmir question; they arrived at a four-point solution. However, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto signed on the dotted line in Simla and then turned his back on it.

This is a false argument – that just because the Pakistani army is in power we can’t talk to them. We are currently talking to Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu who has been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes. If we can talk to every dictator around the world, including army dictators, what’s the problem in talking to the people next door who have the misfortune of being led by an army commander?

So, the argument is that if the Government of India is in dialogue with several military dictators, then why should it not consider talking to Pakistan led by a military general?

TK: As someone who has been in the security establishment, my problem is how do I deal with terrorism? If a democratically elected government opens the door for dialogue and then gets hit by a terror attack – then the question is how to deal with terror attacks that disrupt dialogue? As a democratically elected government, can you justify dialogue? This is a point that was asked by even Nawaz Sharif who said that a terror attack takes place each time dialogue is attempted.

However, I will agree that a few military generals have shown remarkable good sense. In the recent past, when a BrahMos missile was accidentally fired at Pakistan, the Pakistan army handled it well. While the civilians protested, the Pakistan army took it in their stride and kept quiet. At the moment I am concerned with the timing of this proposal as Mr. Munir is in power. The other issue is that Pakistan is in chaos as

there are daily incidents that are being reported in various parts of the country. It’s in chaos. So right now he wants to talk. He may have every incentive to talk. Why should I talk? If there is even one indication from Pakistan that they are going to close down terrorist camps, I’m sure tomorrow the government will be ready to talk.

But if at all we are to go forward, I would like to see, for example, a talk on climate change. We are both countries that are equally in bad shape when it comes to climate vulnerabilities. I would like a talk on air pollution, as during a particular season of the year, both sides start burning crop residues triggering an environmental crisis. That kind of a functional dialogue, which does not involve any territorial issue, no vested or political interests is purely functional and people-centric.

I find the kind of wishful thinking which one sees in the letter as a little idealistic. It’s a bit over the top.

Does the current Indian government have the political bandwidth to talk to the Pakistani establishment?

MSA: Talking to them doesn’t mean bending our knees before them. If you have the courage to undertake surgical strikes against them, why don’t you have the courage to sit across a table and talk to them? That’s my simple point. And if you won’t do so, as I’m talking to the Government of India, then we will. We’ve got Zoom. But I am going to talk to my numerous friends in Pakistan. The number of my friends in Pakistan is larger than the number of enemies I have in India. And that’s a rather large number.

TK: Before Prime Minister Narendra Modi, we had someone like Atal Bihari Vajpayee who put his career on the line and went to Lahore. Prime Minister Modi tried in 2015 and went to meet Nawaz Sharif and extended an olive branch. But all these have a political cost.

The question is what will we ask of them. If we have a dialogue tomorrow, we will ask them to stop exporting terrorism and they, in turn, will accuse us of doing things in Balochistan etc. whereas the Baloch people have been harassed since 1947. The question is what can India do in terms of the protests happening in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). We should talk to Pakistan if General Munir shows some evidence that he is cutting down on terrorism.



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

NOTEBOOK

How a city’s working class is driven to the margins and made invisible

The workers who collect garbage and keep our cities clean, and the workers who commute via cycles deserve recognition and respect

Suruchi Kumari

Before a story is to take shape through conversations with a part of the city’s population, which the city itself only passively interacts with, it is discussed in a Monday pitch meeting where reporters and editors sit. Once approved, a familiar question follows – “Where will we find these people?”

I encountered this question before working on two separate stories on informal waste workers, and workers who commute by cycle. In both cases, the question did not hold for long. What first sounded like an inquiry about access, over the course of the reporting, began to feel like an assumption that these people are difficult to locate; almost external to the city.

For ‘finding’ people who cycle to work in Delhi, I reached out to Professor Rahul Goel from IIT Delhi, whose work over the years has focused on commuting patterns and mobility. When I asked him, “Where will I find them?”, he directed me to the city’s busiest intersections, where roads from the peripheries meet industrial areas and affluent localities, where many of them work as daily wage labourers, security guards, and helpers.

I met Sandeep at one of those busy intersections on a humid April evening, when he was returning home from his sales job. Aged 23, he had been working for eight years. The break from school to contribute to his household became permanent after COVID-19 hit. Before getting back on his bicycle to ride 8 kilometres more, he said, “*Humlog dikhte nahi hain* (We are invisible).” He said that a cycling network sounds like a fantasy in a city that still doesn’t have footpaths everywhere. The draft Master Plan of Delhi 2041 notes that this “unequal distribution of roads” makes it non-conducive for cycling.

By the time I filed the story, curiosity had begun to feel like ignorance. I started seeing cyclists everywhere – at every intersection, at every signal. They kept to the kerb, and when traffic swelled, even that space was taken over as motorists pushed

forward to gain ground. A car owner I spoke to said, “They slow the traffic down, such a nuisance.” Cyclists are registered only when their presence creates friction.

Similarly, a waste picker becomes visible only when their access to gated colonies is debated. Most residents encounter them every day. They collect garbage from homes and do the work that reduces the burden on municipal systems without formal recognition or integration into the waste economy. They continue to speak of restricted access, allegations of theft, and the absence of dedicated workspaces.

To write about the workforce that sorts much of the city’s waste in March, I first travelled to a *jhuggi* cluster in Bhalswa, in northwest Delhi, a few kilometres from the towering landfill. Days later, while walking to a Metro station in south Delhi, I noticed a large sack of waste stacked beside a road, similar to the one I had seen in Bhalswa. It led me to a corner of my own neighbourhood that I realised I had never seen before. There, too, people were sorting waste sharing similar stories of migration and precarious work. By the time I finished the story, I had met waste workers across the city. Sameer Ali, whom I had never seen before January, moved in the same lanes around 9 pm with his bicycle cart carrying a stack of cardboard. People that our stories set out to look for, unlike responses from government authorities, are not hard to find. They are everywhere, for all to see.

It is tempting to think invisibility is simply a failure to notice. But invisibility is rarely accidental. When a city invests heavily in roads for cars while cycling infrastructure remains largely absent, cyclists do not disappear. A worker rehabilitated to the margins of Delhi, 40-50 kilometres away from the place where she works, is moved away from the corridors of visibility so that her problems with transport or healthcare become easier to overlook.

These workers state that recognition in government policies would give them a life of dignity and respect.

suruchi.kumari@thehindu.co.in

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Pilgrims’ progress



Stormy route: The first batch of pilgrims on the annual Amarnath Yatra cross mountain trails amid rainfall during their journey to the Amarnath cave on the Baltal route, northeast of Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir on July 3. The yatra was almost cancelled due to unpredictable mountain weather, but it resumed again. THE HINDU

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 10, 1976

Eminent scientists’ club suggested

New Delhi, July 9: A proposal to establish a club of eminent scientists from the non-aligned developing countries for making futuristic studies of the development pattern of the Third World is being mooted by some top scientists here.

According to informed sources, the idea is to set up an institution like the “Club of Rome” where eminent scientists from the developing non-aligned countries could continuously



study problems concerning the Third World and projections of growth in various fields such as economic development, population, agriculture and technology.

There is a feeling among scientists in developing countries that projections made by prestigious groups like the “Club of Rome” often tend to ignore realities in the developing countries as they, being supported by the developed countries, look at the problems of developing countries from the perspectives of the developed countries. Some of the projections made by the “Club of Rome” set up with financial support from the developed countries on the pattern of growth and development in the world, are being hotly contested by scientists of the Third World.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 10, 1926

The mission of poets

Calcutta, July 9: “The Mission of Poets” was the subject of an interesting lecture, delivered by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, to-day, at the instance of the Poetry Society. Mrs. Naidu delivered an inspiring address in the course of which she said she would like to destroy all printing presses that printed poetry and to leave it at the mercy of all learned professors to teach the young how to paraphrase, analyse, interpret, and scan poetry. A poet knows that he is not more than a mirror of these intimate secrets of the human heart of which the heart itself is so often unaware.

THE HINDU

428 in metric tonnes. The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel recovered more than 428 metric tonnes of coal during a five-day special operation to check the pilferage and theft of the fossil fuel from mines in Jharkhand and West Bengal, officials said on Thursday. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey* officially made its premiere this week, with critics giving it rave reviews. A quiz on ancient Greek literature

The Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti, formed on 6 February 1956 with Prabodhankar Thackeray, poet and father of Bal Thackeray, among its key members, organised a sustained campaign of strikes and mass demonstrations. Morarji Desai, Chief Minister of Bombay State, ordered police to fire. On November 21, 1955, police opened fire on demonstrators at Flora Fountain, killing fifteen. In the months that followed, as Morarji Desai continued ordering police action, the death toll climbed. It reached 106 before the movement was over. The square was later renamed Hutatma Chowk, using a

“We are all Indians. I do not like what some people say, that we are Indians first and Hindus afterwards or Muslim afterwards. I am not satisfied with that. I frankly say that I am not satisfied with that. I do not want our loyalty as Indians should in the slightest way affected by any competitive loyalty whether that loyalty arises out of our religion, out of our culture or out of our language. I want all people to be Indian first, Indians last and nothing else but Indians.”



Word of the day

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

From Page One

India, Australia move to deepen cooperation

Under the provisions of the energy security framework, India and Australia vowed to strengthen energy security by maintaining a stable, secure and reliable supply of coal, diesel, other liquid fuels and natural gas.

The two countries will implement an India-Australia Maritime Security Collaboration Road Map to strengthen coordination across the Indian Ocean and the wider Indo-Pacific.

Both sides committed to encouraging greater integration between their defence industries, building resilient supply chains and expanding collaboration in defence innovation, advanced science and technology.

The leaders noted that the new declaration builds upon the India-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation signed in 2009 and complements existing institutional mechanisms, including the Foreign Ministers’ Framework Dialogue, the 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue, and the Defence Ministers’ Dialogue.

They also reiterated support for regional institutions, including the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), ASEAN-led regional architecture and the Pacific Islands Forum, describing them as key platforms for addressing regional challenges.

(With inputs from PTI)

Modi hails Australia’s social media curbs

In conversations and public remarks, officials at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) have said that India is exploring a “graded” set of restrictions that would allow some social media access while blocking some categories of content depending on the age cohort of a minor.

It is not yet clear if the government is planning to bring this into action with a law in Parliament or with amendments to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, which have been the main legal way for the government to introduce rules for requirements like labelling AI-generated images.

In April, State governments moved to announce their own respective social media bans. Andhra Pradesh announced that it would pursue a law regulating children’s social media use, as did Karnataka. “Officials have been tasked with studying best practices from countries such as Singapore, Australia, and Denmark to build a robust legal and technological framework [to enforce the law] tailored to India’s needs,” the A.P. government said in a statement.

Monsoon has covered the entire country: IMD

Historical data show no simple relationship between the date of nationwide monsoon coverage and the eventual June-September rainfall. However, some prominent El Niño years associated with deficient monsoons also saw delayed coverage. In 2002, one of India’s most severe monsoon drought years, the monsoon covered the country only on August 15, the latest date in the 1971-2025 record. In 2009, another major drought year, coverage was completed on July 3, while in 2015 it occurred relatively early, on June 26.

The contrasting dates underline that the speed of the monsoon’s geographical advance is not, by itself, a reliable indicator of seasonal rainfall. El Niño can weaken monsoon circulation and affect the amount and distribution of rainfall even after the monsoon has formally covered the entire country.

SC considers reference on grounds of arrest

Appearing for the Meghalaya government, the Solicitor-General submitted that the constitutional requirement had been complied with in the current case, as the written grounds of arrest had been furnished to Ms. Raghuvanshi. According to him, the only defect was a “typographical error” in the arrest memo, which mistakenly referred to Section 403 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) instead of Section 103, which deals with murder.

“This is a very serious offence... I will be able to satisfy Your Lordships that there is no question of any conflict because, in the present case, the written grounds of arrest were supplied. There was only one typographical error,” Mr. Mehta submitted.

Counsel appearing for Ms. Raghuvanshi, however, argued that what had been furnished to the accused was merely a *pro forma* and did not amount to a meaningful fulfilment of the constitutional mandate. This prompted the Bench to enquire whether the arrest memo contained any factual particulars of the case apart from merely referring to the statutory provisions.

“We will consider the matter in detail... Just indicate what exactly was communicated to the accused so that we are in a position to understand what was supplied.” Earlier, the Bench had declined to stay the High Court’s order granting bail to Ms. Raghuvanshi after being informed that she had already been released from judicial custody.

Bishnoi ran decentralised syndicate, wanted ‘S.K.’ killed to instil fear: U.S.

The Department of Justice says Bishnoi’s group ‘enticed impoverished minors in India to join the enterprise’ and members were sent abroad to work for the network; details submitted by the DoJ match threats to actor Salman Khan in Mumbai

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The United States Department of Justice (DoJ) said that between 2022 and 2026, jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi announced his intention “to murder S.K., a well-known Indian actor and television personality” to promote his “enterprise” and instil fear in the public.

Though the name is not expanded in the DoJ’s court records, the initials and details match with the threats against actor Salman Khan in Mumbai during the period. Bishnoi is lodged in a high-security prison in Ahmedabad since 2023.

On Wednesday, the DoJ announced the indictment against three Punjab-linked transnational organised crime syndicates operating across India, Canada,



Behind bars: Lawrence Bishnoi has been lodged in a high-security prison in Ahmedabad since 2023. REUTERS

the U.S., and Europe, including the Bishnoi syndicate. The DoJ said that 37 people have been charged so far. The indictment said that recruitment coordinators for the Bishnoi gang enticed impoverished minors in India to join the enterprise by promising, among other things, money, fame, and protection.

It said that upon being

recruited into the Bishnoi gang in India, new members received minimal compensation for criminal acts committed on behalf of the enterprise. The gang sent loyal members abroad, including to the U.S. and Canada, on student visas and foreign worker visas to assist the enterprise’s criminal operations in those countries,

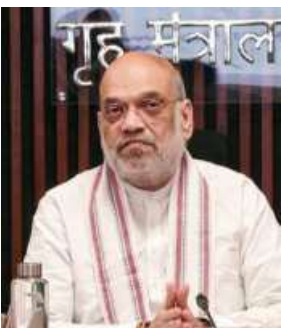
the DoJ said. It added that membership in the Bishnoi organised crime group (OCG) was decentralised. “With the exception of its leaders, Bishnoi OCG members and associates often had limited information on the identities or backgrounds of other Bishnoi OCG members and associates...,” the DoJ said.

Senior gang member
According to the indictment, Sukhraj Singh Kang, a senior India-based member of the gang who coordinated acts of violence in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere, provided key evidence. On January 25, 2025, Mr. Kang spoke to a person he believed was an individual who was owed a debt of between \$100,000 to \$200,000. But the person was a confidential informant working with law enforcement (CI-1). Mr. Kang agreed to assist CI-1

with extorting the debtor in exchange for a fee of \$16,000. Investigators then provided a staged video purporting to show a shooting at the debtor’s residence. Members of the alleged conspiracy believed the video was real and used it to intimidate the intended victim.

In reality, the supposed debtor was an undercover law-enforcement agent (UC-1).

The indictment alleges that, over the following weeks, several accused communicated directly with UC-1, demanding money and issuing threats. Prosecutors say these conversations, in Punjabi and Hindi and sent via WhatsApp and Signal, allowed investigators to document alleged extortion demands, threats against family members and the mechanisms through which money would be collected.



Amit Shah

Report rapid population changes along border areas, Shah tells SPs

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said that information on demographic changes in border areas caused by abnormal factors such as illegal migration should be communicated from the grass-roots to the highest levels at the earliest.

“We are creating a robust system to make the country completely infiltration-free and to ensure that infiltration does not happen at all,” he said.

Mr. Shah made the remarks at the first-ever Land Border Districts’ Superintendents of Police Conference-2026. The meeting was attended by SPs of 119 border districts. Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Director-Intelligence Bureau Mahesh Dixit, and Directors-General of Police of States were also present at the conference.

Mr. Shah said that the government was “moving from an isolated border outpost system towards the creation of an integrated security grid”.

He said that the conference has given an institutional shape to the comprehensive approach towards border security, adding that in the coming days, government will move forward to ensure coastal border security.

He stated that the government is building a strong quadrangular security grid by bringing together concerned border-guarding forces, State and district administrations, relevant stakeholders of Government of India, and local citizens. He further said that India’s border security system, based on the vision of a Smart Border, will become most modern in the world in the coming years.

CID takes over probe into death of rape-murder accused in Baruipur case

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

The last rites of Prabhas Mondal, one of the accused in the sexual assault and murder of a 12-year-old girl in West Bengal’s Baruipur, was performed on Thursday by the local administration after his family refused to accept the body. Mondal was killed in a police encounter on Wednesday.

The investigation of the encounter was handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the West Bengal police. According to police, Mondal had allegedly snatched the service weapon of a police officer, fired one round at the team, and attempted to flee during reconstruction of the crime scene in the early hours of Wednesday.

Preliminary investigation suggested that Mondal had abducted the girl and

West Bengal administration performs last rites after family refuses to accept body

sexually assaulted her before throwing her into a pond. CCTV footage showing him with the victim has also surfaced. Four persons had been arrested in connection with the crime. The others are Anand Sardar, Dibakar Sardar, and Kabir Mollah.

The girl had gone missing on July 4 following which the family filed a missing person complaint. After the body was recovered, violence erupted in the area. A mob attacked police personnel, vandalised police vehicles, and blocked roads and railway tracks.

Many Opposition leaders slammed the encounter saying the Bharatiya Janata Party government led by Suwendu Adhikari was trying to imitate the Yogi Adityanath model of governance in Uttar Pradesh.

BJP Minister Dilip Ghosh, while justifying the police action, criticised people who questioned the encounter. “People should throw eggs at the intellectuals who are trying to defend the criminals... Police will have the same freedom as in U.P., Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, and Assam. There will be zero tolerance for crime and criminals,” he said.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharyya alleged it was a “planned encounter”. “It was clearly designed to divert public attention from systemic governance failures and communal undertones of the grisly crime and its aftermath,” he said.

Modi, Albanese call for dialogue to end West Asia conflict

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese on Thursday made a joint call for a de-escalation of tension and hostilities in West Asia.

“The Prime Ministers expressed concern over renewed escalation of tensions in the Middle East and called upon all parties to exercise restraint, de-escalate tensions, and ensure protection of civilians as well as the uninterrupted flow of energy supplies and commerce. They reiterated the importance of dialogue and diplomacy, and adherence to international law to achieve a peaceful and lasting solution,” a joint statement said. The two leaders also emphasised the importance of the Quadrilateral grouping, comprising the U.S., India, Japan, and Aus-

tralia, as a unit that will deliver “practical and concrete” outcomes in the Indo-Pacific region.

Cultural connect
Mr. Albanese welcomed the repatriation of artefacts of cultural significance to India. “Australia and India share a deep history, and we are building strong people to people links between our two countries,” he said.

Attending an Indian diaspora event with Mr. Modi, the Australian PM said, “Our Indian community has contributed so much to the story of modern Australia. And it’s made our country a better place... Together, we can be a force for peace and prosperity in our region.”

The two leaders expressed concern about the conflict in Ukraine, and said that they “remained concerned” about the conflict in Myanmar as well.

CBI files first chargesheet against four in RHFL case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation has filed the first chargesheet against four accused in the Reliance Home Finance Limited (RHFL) case.

Among those named are, two former senior executives of RHFL, Ravindra Sudhalkar as the then executive director and chief executive officer; and Krishnan Gopalakrishnan Iyer as the then chief risk officer; and former senior executive of Reliance Capital Limited, Dhananjay Bhagwanprasad Tiwari, the then chief credit and risk officer. The CBI alleged that funds borrowed by RHFL were diverted through intermediary and conduit entities to various Reliance ADA Group companies causing wrongful loss to the lending banks and corresponding wrongful gain to the accused persons and related entities.

SC asks civic bodies to act on unauthorised buildings

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said “slackness” by the civic authorities to take effective action against unauthorised constructions in the national capital and its neighbouring regions would not be tolerated.

The Bench linked the clusters of unauthorised buildings in cramped areas of Delhi, Gurugram and in Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh to the recent fatal fire incidents in Delhi’s Malviya Nagar on June 3 and on June 22 at Lucknow.

Senior advocate Ajit Sinha, whom the court had appointed *amicus curiae*, said the fire had blazed through a narrow multi-storey building in the congested Hauz Rani urban village of south Delhi’s Malviya Nagar which operated as a bed and breakfast with a restaurant on the ground floor.

“The final death toll



Firefighters and rescue personnel carry out operations after a fire at a coaching centre in Aliganj, Lucknow. FILE PHOTO

reached 23 and more than 50 people were rescued,” he pointed out.

Mr. Sinha said the fire in a multi-storeyed building in Lucknow’s Aliganj resulted in the death of 15 persons, many of them students.

“We are particularly concerned with the conduct of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi [MCD] with regard to non-compliance of directions issued by the court in 2024 and specific directions of May 20,” the Bench addressed

Additional Solicitor General S.D. Sanjay, appearing for the MCD.

The law officer agreed to file a detailed report before August 4, the next date of hearing.

The court referred to media reports that 93% buildings in Gurugram failed in complying with fire safety norms and asked the executive head of the civic body of the city to be present on the next date of hearing with a report detailing the action taken.

Manipur CM invokes religious teachings in appeal for peace

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh invoked the Bible and the teachings of Gautama Buddha to appeal for peace during his visit to Kuki-dominated Kangpokpi and Naga-majority Senapati district on Wednesday.

He interacted with villagers, including those abducted after the killing of three church leaders on

May 13 and released later, in Kangpokpi and Senapati district, which borders Nagaland.

“You are Christians; the Nagas are also Christians. When you open the Bible, it sends the message of forgive and forget. I am a Hindu and a believer in Gautama Buddha, who preached peace,” the Chief Minister told church leaders said at Kangpokpi Bazaar.

“We should all work for the return of peace in Manipur,” he added.



APPEAL

MASTER SYED HASNAIN, CHRISTIAN, MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITAL NO. 76/123P, 6 YEARS HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED TO HAVE THALASSEMIA MAJOR. THIS IS A TYPE OF LIFE-THREATENING BLOOD DISORDER. THE BEST OPTION FOR HIM WOULD BE TO UNDERGO ALLOGENEIC PERIPHERAL BLOOD STEM CELL TRANSPLANT (PBSCT). THE ESTIMATED COST OF PBSCT AT THIS HOSPITAL IS APPROXIMATELY RS.16,00,000/-

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NDA-ruled States, universities object to centralisation provisions in VBSA

Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya among States to raise concerns over the Centre's powers; universities seek safeguards, parliamentary monitoring; BHU warns that Bill could turn an independent regulator into arm of the Union govt.

Sobhana K. Nair
Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

NDA-ruled States, including Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Meghalaya, have raised concerns over provisions in the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025, warning a parliamentary panel that the proposed legislation would centralise powers over higher education regulation.

The Bill proposes a structural overhaul of higher education in the country, by repealing the statutory Acts governing the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) and replacing them with a single apex body called the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (VBSA).

The Bill is currently under review by a joint parliamentary committee headed by BJP MP D. Purandeswari. *The Hindu* accessed submissions made to the parliamentary panel, which is in the final stages of preparing its report.

Apart from State governments, Central and State universities and institutes have also criticised the Bill, raising concerns over the Centre's expanded powers, the absence of State representation in the proposed regulatory structure, ambiguities in its scope, and the transition process following the winding up of the UGC,



The Bill proposes an overhaul of higher education by repealing the statutory Acts governing the UGC, the AICTE, and the NCTE and replacing them with a single apex body. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

AICTE, and NCTE.

Bypassing States

Some of the strongest objections came from Andhra Pradesh, which is ruled by the Telugu Desam Party, a BJP ally. The State argued that several provisions of the Bill could render its legislative authority over higher education “a dead letter” and sought mandatory consultation before decisions affecting State universities are taken. The State also cautioned against Clause 11 that allows the Regulatory Council to bypass State universities in granting degrees, saying it could lead to “constitutional friction”.

The State government further suggested a clause explicitly preventing the Centre from taking action prejudicial to the autonomy, functioning, and governance of State institutes and universities.

BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh has also raised concerns over what it de-

scribed as limited State representation in the proposed regulatory council.

The Meghalaya government – led by the National People's Party, which is a BJP ally – recommended an explicit provision defining the respective powers of the Centre and the States. It proposed that the Centre be responsible for coordination, standards, accreditation, and quality assurance, while States retain authority over the establishment, governance, administration, staffing, financing, and overall functioning of State universities.

Key vulnerability

Central universities and institutes such as the Banaras Hindu University (BHU), the Central University of Rajasthan and the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), Chittoor, as well as State universities in Assam, Maharashtra, and Jammu and Kashmir, have objected to

provisions that they say could increase centralisation.

Several institutions told the panel that clauses requiring the new regulatory structure to follow directions from the Centre represented the Bill's “most critical vulnerability”.

While some universities cautioned that dismantling the UGC, AICTE, and NCTE simultaneously could cause “significant institutional disruption”, others argued that the Bill concentrated regulatory powers and created the possibility of “arbitrary interventions”. Institutions called for phased implementation, parliamentary oversight of powers exercised by the Centre under the Bill, and mandatory notice and consultation with States before such powers are invoked.

BHU noted that Clause 45 gives finality to the Centre's policy directions and binds the VBSA to them, “effectively subordinating the regulator to the executive”, while Clause 47 empowers the Centre to supersede the VBSA and dissolve it. The university told the panel that these provisions risked turning an independent regulator into “an arm of the government of the day”.

Clause 45 empowers the Centre to issue binding policy directions to the Commission, gives it the final say on what constitutes a policy matter, and allows it to assign additional functions. Clause 47 allows the Centre to suspend or supersede the Commission or its councils for up to a

year. IIIT Chittoor said a possible implication of Clause 45 was the expansion of Centre's influence across the three councils proposed under the structure, which could end up shaping institutional academic operations. SNDT Women's University, Pune, said that without checks and balances, consultation and parliamentary oversight, the provisions could lead to “excessive centralisation”.

Fee escalation

Congress-ruled Telangana said the Bill's structure does not adequately recognise the role of State governments. It sought the deletion of Clause 11, which empowers the Union government-backed Regulatory Council to authorise independent accredited colleges to grant degrees directly, bypassing the State governments. It also argued that the Bill neither empowers the Regulatory Council to regulate fees nor preserves the existing framework, potentially allowing fee escalation.

Telangana's Higher Education Department described Clause 45 as the “single most centralising clause” in the Bill, calling it a “self-judging clause” that gives the Centre the final authority in disputes with councils under the VBSA framework.

The department argued that the provision expanded Central authority over the structure without granting States corresponding powers over matters relating to their own universities.

Cong. alleges forged gram sabha consent for Singrauli mining

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Vikrant Bhuria

Alleging that gram sabha consent for coal mining in Madhya Pradesh's Singrauli district had been obtained through forged resolutions carrying the thumb impressions of deceased persons, the Congress on Thursday demanded a CBI inquiry into what it called *angootha chori* (stealing thumb impressions). The party said the alleged fraud in tribal areas was part of a wider pattern of subversion of environmental and forest safeguards.

At a press conference in New Delhi, All India Congress Committee national coordinator for SC, OBC, Minority and Adivasi Departments K. Raju and Adivasi Congress chief Vikrant Bhuria alleged that fake gram sabha approvals had been used to facilitate mining in the Dhirauli coal block in Singrauli, where, they claimed, an Adani group-linked company was operating. There was no immediate response from the company or the administration.

Cites RTI documents

Mr. Bhuria cited RTI documents and death certificates to claim that the names and thumb impressions of persons who had died years earlier appeared in gram sabha resolutions shown as having been passed in 2021.

He referred to the cases of Brij Bhan Singh, who died in 2014 but was allegedly shown as having given consent in 2021; Phooleswari Singh, who died in 2018 but whose consent

was allegedly recorded three years later; and Jag Bandhan Singh Gond, who died in 2015 but whose thumb impression was allegedly used in 2021.

Mr. Bhuria also alleged that some living residents who were literate and ordinarily sign documents had their thumb impressions affixed instead. Such practices violated the Forest Rights Act and the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, under which gram sabha consent was mandatory in Scheduled Areas before land could be acquired or forest land diverted, he said.

The Congress demanded a CBI probe into the alleged fraud, action against officials and companies involved, and a halt to mining activity in the area until the claims were independently verified.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh amplified the charge on social media, saying that after “*vote chori, seat chori* and *chanda chori*”, the country was now witnessing “*angootha chori*”. In a separate post, he widened the attack on the Narendra Modi government and targeted Union Environment Minister Bhopender Yadav over the abrupt removal of four of his close aides.

UGC-NET leak claims spark Congress call to scrap NTA

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday intensified its attack on the Union government over alleged irregularities in the UGC-NET, demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and the disbanding of the National Testing Agency (NTA).

The Opposition party's attack came after allegations surfaced that the Sociology paper in the UGC-NET held on June 30 had been leaked.

Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh, sharing a media report on social media platform X, said the alleged leak had exposed the hollowness of the government's claim that shifting examinations to a computer-based test (CBT) format would curb malpractice.

“Days after the NEET-UG exam was leaked in May 2026, ‘Mantri Pradhan’ announced that NEET would be conducted in CBT mode from next year, implicitly suggesting that a computer-based examination could not be leaked,” Mr. Ramesh said. “Now there are reports that the UGC-NET Sociology examination appears to have been leaked despite being a CBT,” he added.

He also referred to earlier complaints regarding the UGC-NET English examination, in which questions were allegedly lifted from past papers without change, and charged that the problem lay not in the mode of examination but in a “compromised” Education Ministry and a “deliberately incompetent and incapacitated” NTA.

‘Champat Rai not upset about his resignation’

Press Trust of India
AYODHYA

Ram temple trust treasurer Govind Dev Giri on Thursday said Champat Rai is not upset after resigning as its general secretary in the wake of the alleged donation theft and is fully supportive of the new temple management system being put in place.

“I met Champat Rai ji yesterday mainly to check on his health. He is healthy, solution-oriented and has no misgivings about his resignation,” Mr. Giri said. “He (Champat) is an old veteran who has devoted his life to the country. He is fully supportive of the new (temple management) system being put in place and he isn't upset or angry,” he said.

Examine call records of Ram Temple employees: Akhilesh

Press Trust of India
LUCKNOW

Upping the ante on the Ram Temple donations issue, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday demanded that the call detail records of all those employed in the temple be examined, claiming that 99.9% of them would have links with the BJP.

Talking to reporters here, Mr. Yadav also accused the BJP of placing electoral considerations above religious values.

“All the call detail records (CDR) of those who were working in the temple complex should be examined. The moment the CDRs are scrutinised, 99.9% of them will turn out to be BJP people. You cannot imagine the turmoil that will break out within the BJP then. The exodus



Akhilesh Yadav

has already begun and many people have already started contacting us,” he claimed.

Raising queries over the functioning of the SIT, the former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister said: “What SIT is this? It is merely an attempt to cover up the matter. Who constituted this SIT? We are also hearing that questions have been raised about the SIT itself. One of its members is fac-

ing a cheating case. Tell me, will such a person continue to be part of the SIT?”

The SIT comprising Divisional Commissioner of Lucknow Vijay Vishwas Pant, Inspector-General of Police S. Kiran and Special Secretary (Finance) Neel Ratan was constituted on June 13 to probe the donation theft allegations.

He also alleged that the BJP changes its ideology according to electoral convenience. Later in the day, he said in a post on X: “Only resignation will not do. The entire Trust should be dissolved.” He also demanded a judicial probe into “all land deals and other works carried out under the signatures of those who have resigned”, asserting that “resignation should not become a route to escape scrutiny”.

BJP nominates 3 ex-Trinamool MPs to RS hours after joining the party

Shiv Sahav Singh
KOLKATA

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Thursday nominated three former Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha MPs Sushmita Dev, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray and Prakash Chik Baraik to the Upper House of Parliament.

The development came hours after the three leaders joined the BJP in Kolkata. BJP State president Samik Bhattacharya welcomed the three former MPs by handing over a BJP flag to them at the party office.

Incidentally, Ms. Dev, Mr. Ray and Mr. Baraik joined the party days ahead of the July 24 bypolls to three Rajya Sabha seats in the State.

After the defeat of the Trinamool Congress in the



Former Trinamool Congress MPs Sushmita Dev, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray and Prakash Chik Baraik upon joining the BJP on Thursday. ANI

West Bengal Assembly polls, the three Rajya Sabha MPs who were nominated by party chairperson Mamata Banerjee had quit as members of the Upper House.

‘Accept wholeheartedly’

“The three former MPs have taken a stand and resigned from Rajya Sabha. It is a moment of happiness

for us. We accept the three of them wholeheartedly,” Mr. Bhattacharya said in the presence of the three leaders joining the BJP.

As the BJP has 208 legislators in the 294-member West Bengal Assembly, and the Trinamool Congress legislators are divided into two camps, their election is just a matter of time.

Earlier in the day, Ms.

Dev, a prominent leader from Assam, who left the Congress to join the Trinamool Congress in 2021, said that the BJP was a national party and the party's high command would take a call on her nomination to the Rajya Sabha.

Mr. Ray, a three-term Rajya Sabha member and former party chief whip who was one of Mamata Banerjee's key parliamentary faces, resigned from the Rajya Sabha and as a member of the party after Trinamool lost power in West Bengal.

Mr. Ray had met Home Minister Amit Shah during the latter's recent visit to Kolkata.

Mr. Baraik, who hails from Alipurduar, was nominated by Trinamool Congress to the Rajya Sabha in 2023.

Prashant Kishor has task cut out in Bankipur bypoll

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

Ahead of the byelection in the Bankipur Assembly constituency in Patna, residents say the contest this time will be between the Bharatiya Janata Party candidate and Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor. Mr. Kishor has been busy in the constituency, addressing *nukkad* (corner) meetings and going door to door to meet people.

The byelection will be held on July 30 and the result will be out on August 3. The seat fell vacant after sitting BJP MLA Nitin Nabin was elected to the Rajya Sabha after being

named as the party's national president. Mr. Nabin had won five consecutive times from Bankipur, which has been a BJP stronghold. The party has fielded a young leader, Abhishek Kumar Sinha ‘Bunty’, while the Opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal has repeated its candidate, Rekha Gupta. In the 2025 Assembly election, Mr. Nabin had received 98,299 votes (62.66%) to defeat Ms. Gupta, who got 46,363 votes (29.55%). The JSP's Vandana Kumari had secured 7,717 votes (4.92%).

Both Mr. Abhishek and Mr. Gupta filed their nomination papers on Thursday and Mr. Kishor is expected to file his

BJP chief Nabin has won five consecutive times from Bankipur, which has been a BJP stronghold

nomination on July 11.

“For the past several Assembly elections, I've been voting for the BJP, but now it [the party] has become depressing. I will not vote for the BJP this time but the battle appears to be between Mr. Kishor and Mr. Abhishek,” said Suman Dhari Sinha, a septuagenarian resident of Kidwaiपुर locality in Bankipur. A few yards away from

his home, provision store owner Jyoti Kumar Verma, 50, asserted: “Only the BJP candidate will win. For the past nine Assembly elections [five terms for Mr. Nabin and four terms for his father Nabin Kishore Prasad Sinha], people of the constituency have reposed faith in the party's candidate... this time too, the candidate is local and personally knows everyone in the constituency... there is no match for the BJP.”

Batting for change

However, a young voter of the Dakshin Mandiri locality near Kathpul, Sumit Kumar, 29, asked, “We need change... for

how long will we keep voting for a single party?” He is unequivocal about who he thinks are the main contestants.

“The battle will be between Mr. Kishor and the Mr. Abhishek,” he said.

Bankipur is largely an urban constituency in central Patna with about 4 lakh voters and is dominated by Kayastha and Vaishya (trader) voters, besides a mixed population of other castes.

The BJP candidate is from the Kayastha community while the RJD candidate comes from the Vaishya community. Mr. Kishor belongs to the Brahmin community.

CJP urges students to join Parliament march on July 20

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Cockroach Janta Party announced a peaceful march to Parliament on July 20, the first day of the Monsoon Session, on Thurs-

day. The CJP said the march would begin from Jantar Mantar. It called upon students, parents and citizens from across the country to join the march to seek justice for students and press for Mr. Pradhan's resignation.



TAMIL NADU AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY
COIMBATORE – 641 003
RATE CONTRACT NOTIFICATION – 2026-27

On behalf of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, sealed tenders are invited for the supply of Chemicals, Laboratory apparatus, Scientific Equipments, Consumables, Glasswares - Fragile and Non-Fragile items etc., for the constituent Colleges, Departments, Research Stations, KVAFS and other Centres of the University during the financial year 2026-27. The firms should have three years of experience as on 01.01.2026 as “MANUFACTURER” of the said items, they intend to supply and hold a valid “Manufacturer's License” for such of those items which are marketed under their own approved or patented brand names or trademarks. The term “Manufacturer” also includes manufacturers or their sole agents or their dealer whom they authorize to participate in the tender. The Manufacturer should authorize only one dealer/distributor for participating in the tender. The tender documents can be obtained from the office of the Controller, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore – 641003 on payment of cost of Rs.1770/- (Rs.1500/- + GST @18%) through a demand draft drawn in favour of the COMPTROLLER, TAMIL NADU AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY, COIMBATORE payable at State Bank of India, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Branch, Coimbatore-3, subsequent to the date of publication of this notification. The last date for the issue of tender documents is 27.07.2026 upto 11.00 am. The last date for receipt of filled tenders is upto 4.00 pm on 27.07.2026. The tenders will be opened at 10.00 am on 28.07.2026. If the tender opening date happens to be a holiday, the tenders will be opened on the next working day.

DIPR/2256/Tender/2026

COMPTROLLER

A ND-NDE

An NDRF team on Thursday recovered a body from the debris of a building that collapsed at a waste management plant in Pimpri Chinchwad near Pune, officials said. Nine persons have been rescued so far in a multi-agency operation at the site, they said. A three-storey building located over a waste-to-energy plant at Moshi in the area collapsed after a huge mound of garbage crashed onto it on Wednesday afternoon, trapping around 18 individuals under the rubble. “We suspect that 7 to 8 people are still trapped under the debris,” a senior NDRF official said. PTI

A ND-NDE

INBRIEF



Govt. waives levy on key inputs for electronics manufacturing

The Centre has waived basic customs duty on goods used in manufacture of display assemblies, lithium ion cell and inductor coil module as it looks to promote domestic production of electronic devices like smartphones, laptops, wearables and smart TVs. The finance ministry issued three separate notifications giving effect to the basic customs duty (BCD) waiver on the goods used in manufacture of the three key components used in electronic devices. PTI

Adani to file sworn affidavit in U.S. court this week

Gautam Adani will file this week a sworn affidavit in a U.S. federal court stating whether he is aware of any promise, agreement or benefit linked to the U.S. government's decision to dismiss a criminal indictment against him. District Judge Nicholas Garaufis directed Mr. Adani to file the affidavit by July 15 before ruling on the Justice Department's motion to dismiss the indictment with prejudice. The Adani group did not offer any comment on the issue. PTI

Google appeals Indian ruling over its ads platform

Google has challenged an Indian court ruling that it infringed on a company's trademark rights by allowing rivals to use its name as an advertising keyword, arguing the decision will hurt consumers, documents reviewed by Reuters show. The May decision could reshape the online ads market in a country where Google last year earned \$4.1 billion in gross advertising revenue but where it is also facing a raft of antitrust cases and court battles. Google India's appeal will be heard in the coming days. REUTERS

Life insurers new business premium rises over 13% in June

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Life insurance companies in India reported new business premium rose 13% year-on-year in June to ₹46,490.53 crore. Market leader, State-owned Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) posted muted NBP growth at ₹27,724.62 crore (₹27,395 crore). Private life insurers clocked ₹18,765.90 crore (₹13,722.29 crore). The number of policies/schemes sold by all the life insurers for June stood at 21,51,880 (20,06,322). For the quarter ended June, life insurers new business rose 16.60% to

₹1,09,071.75 crore. LIC logged new business of ₹65,548.88 crore, a 10.33% rise. Number of policies/schemes sold during Q1 was a tad over 2% more at 31,05,635. The private players, on a 12.68% rise in policies/schemes sold at 20,07,797, reported new business for Q1 climbed 27.51% to ₹43,522.87 crore. On June numbers, Emkay Research said while the protection segment saw continued growth momentum aided by GST rate exemption, the savings business was hit by geopolitical tensions stemming from the West Asia conflict and the overall macroeconomic situation.

Dr. Reddy's halts semaglutide supply on quality, shares slide, Torrent recalls product

N. Ravi Kumar
HYDERABAD

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories said it halted commercial supplies of generic semaglutide after an issue with the active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) used in the drug and fresh despatches were likely only to towards late October or early November. "Certain batches of semaglutide were found to be out of specification due to an issue associated with the API. Until the issue is resolved, commercial supplies of the product will be delayed for a certain pe-

riod of time," DRL said. There is no impact on patient safety or on the product's global regulatory filings, the company said. Shares plunge The decision saw the firm's shares plunge almost 6% on the BSE. Meanwhile Torrent Pharmaceuticals announced a voluntary recall of select batches of Semalix injection disposable pens made by Dr. Reddy's on instructions from the latter. Semaglutide is the active ingredient in Novo Nordisk's blockbuster diabetes and weight loss drugs Wegovy and Ozem-

AI poses a relatively lower risk to India's GCC jobs: CEA

Nageswaran says most of India's Global Capability Centres are engaged in cutting-edge work rather than providing low-cost support, which is what AI can easily and cheaply replace

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

India's Global Capability Centres (GCCs) are not just low-cost support in a new form, but are areas where cutting edge work is taking place, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran said on Thursday. As such, these GCC jobs are also at a relatively lower risk of being replaced by Artificial Intelligence (AI), he added. However, the CEA did warn against the dangers of complacency, saying that other countries are already copying India's model. "It is cutting edge and increasingly so," Mr. Nageswaran said while speaking at a session during the Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) GCC Business Summit. "Global banks run their risk systems and trading platforms in Mumbai and Bangalore and elsewhere as well, car makers design their vehicles' embedded systems from Chennai and Pune, semiconductor firms carry out chip design, pharmaceutical companies run clinical analytics here, and consumer firms build and own entire digital products here in India," he added. Mr. Nageswaran said that the intellectual property created in these centers is real, with the patents being filed here, the products shipped from India and global roles increasingly held by people



CEA V. Anantha Nageswaran speaks at the inaugural session of the CII GCC Business Summit 2026 on Thursday. BY ARRANGEMENT

sitting in India. The CEA also sought to answer whether these GCCs would be under threat from the rise of AI and would these GCC jobs be automated soon. "Part of the model is indeed exposed," Mr. Nageswaran conceded. "The work that was routine, repetitive and rule bound is exactly the work that AI does most easily and most cheaply as well. If a centre's value rests only on doing simple tasks at low cost, then the value is under real threat. We should not pretend otherwise." However, he also said that this is not where most Indian centres are today, and that this was not the direction in which they are headed. "Artificial intelligence does not build, deploy or govern itself," Mr. Nageswaran explained. "Someone has to design these systems, train them, test them, correct them and

'India aims to be strategic leader in hosting GCCs'

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said India aspires to become a "strategic leader" in hosting global capability centres (GCCs) of MNCs and become indispensable to the world's knowledge economy. India possesses "every ingredient" required to lead this transformation, she said. PTI

hold them to account. Someone has to decide where they should be used and where they must not be used." "Someone has to carry the responsibility when they fail," he added. "And that work is expanding and not shrinking. And a large and growing share of this kind of work is being done in India." Complacency matters The CEA, however, cautioned against complacency, saying that standing still meant allowing others to catch up. "Other countries are watching us and copying us," he asserted. "Our costs are rising. In some skills, our talent is already scarce, so indispensability is not a title that India can hold on to forever." He added that the move from cost centres to capability centres, and from execution to innovation has to be made by firms and by people, with the govern-

TCS Q1 net rises 4.6% to ₹14,349 crore, board okays interim dividend of ₹12 per share

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (TCS) reported a 4.6% growth in consolidated net profit for the first quarter ended June 30, 2026 to ₹13,349 crore as compared with ₹12,760 crore in the year-earlier period. Consolidated revenue grew 14% YoY to ₹72,275 crore. Annualised AI revenue grew 13.6% quarter on quarter to \$2.6 billion in Q1 FY27. Operating margin was at 24%, while net margin stood at 19.2%. During the first quarter, the company had a Total Contract Value (TCV) of \$9.5 billion. Workforce strength at the end of the quarter was 5,93,798 as compared with 6,13,069 in the same period last year.

Last Twelve Months (LTM) attrition (IT Services) was 13.6%, the company said in a filing. During the quarter, the company had added 9,279 employees. The board has approved an interim dividend of ₹12 per share. Record date is July 15, 2026 and the payment date is July 31, 2026. "Q1 FY27 reflects continued growth momentum and the strength of our strategic positioning, despite geopolitical and macro-economic headwinds. We delivered a strong order book of \$9.5 billion, including a marquee AI-led transformation deal with SKF, while continuing to add clients across key revenue bands and scaling our



Workforce strength at the end of the quarter was 5,93,798

AI business to a \$2.6 billion annualised revenue run rate," said Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director K. Krithivasan. "Q1 was characterised by strong growth across several services. We won multiple AI-led transformation deals with our dual commitment to AI-led optimisation as well as innovation-led outcomes," said Aarthi Subramanian, Executive Director, President and COO. Samir Seksaria, Chief Financial Officer, said, "In Q1, we rolled out annual wage hikes, strengthened our partnership ecosystem, and targeted investments to enhance long-term competitiveness." Commenting on the results Shubham Rathore, Principal Analyst, Gartner said, "TCS's resilient first-quarter performance, featuring an 8.5% year-over-year growth in net income to ₹13,849 crore, showcases the firm's capacity to maintain profitability through disciplined execution."

British insurer Aviva to get full ownership of Life JV in India

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Aviva is on course to becoming the first foreign insurer to hold 100% stake in an insurance joint venture in India with the British insurer announcing plans to acquire the remaining 26% stake in Aviva Life Insurance Company India from its joint venture partner. It has signed an agreement to purchase the 26% in Aviva India from its local joint venture partner Dabur Invest Corp. This will take Aviva's ownership of Aviva India to 100% and will give Aviva full control over the strategic direction of the business, the insurer



India now allows 100% FDI in insurance.

said on Thursday. The decision comes in the backdrop of India notifying the government's decision to permit 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in insurance from the earlier limit of 74%.

SBI AMC is as competitive as any private firm: Singh

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Asset manager SBI Funds Management wants to differentiate itself from other PSUs as it was as aggressive and competitive as private sector firms, said joint CEO D.P. Singh. He was briefing the media on the ₹11,675 crore initial public offering (IPO) which is fully offer for sale. The price band is fixed at ₹545 to ₹547/share. Promoters SBI and Amundi India Holding will sell 10% stake. The quarterly average mutual fund assets under management is about ₹1,251 lakh crore.

**TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS - TIRUPATI**
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER
TENDER NOTICE

ADV No.17/03/CE/TTD/2026-27 & NIT No.27/SE-I/TTD/ 2026-27
Dt:07-07-2026

Name of work:1) Construction of S.V. Temple and Prakaram with 3 storied Rajagopuram at S.V. Diyakshetram at Parvathipuram, Parvathipuram Manyam District, Andhra Pradesh. **Amount:₹40.00 Lakhs; Time for Completion:18months.**

NOTE: For full details, log on to the Website <https://www.tirumala.org>.

TTD-40021(31)/1/2026-PRO SEC(Adv.No.107) Date:09-07-2026
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY
RE - E-TENDER NOTICE

Re-Tender No. 04/2026-27/SE/PPD/KCH
AMRUT-2.0-Kochi Corporation-Providing underground sewerage networks and allied works in the erstwhile Division 54 of Kochi Corporation for the newly proposed SMLD STP at Elankulam

Cost of tender form : Rs. 21,052/- (inclusive of GST)
EMD : Rs. 500,000/-

Date and time of Opening Tender : 04/08/2026 3.30 pm
Last date of receipt of tender : 03/08/2026 3.00 pm
Phone : 8547638502 E-mail: seppdregionkochi@gmail.com

**The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd**
(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking),Sankarungulam,Kollam 691583
Phone : 0476-2612115 to 217, E-Mail : mkml@kmml.com

TENDER NOTICE

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

Sl No	Tender Id	Items
1	2026_KMML_859547_1	1) Fabrication & supply of Condensing Column cooler
2	2026_KMML_859525_1	1) Supply, Erection and Commissioning of Vertical Steam Turbine
3	2026_KMML_859767_1	1) Supply of Computer server
4	2026_KMML_859705_1	1) Global Tender for the Supply of High Purity Magnesium Metal

Chavara 09.07.2026
Sd/- Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd

**TAMIL NADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED**
Unit-1, Kagitapuram - 639 136, Karur District, Tamil Nadu
Unit-2, Mondipatti - 621 306, Trichy District, Tamil Nadu

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Tender No.	Description	Due Date
262713 002358	Procurement of Segmented Bow Spreader Roll Assembly for Winder # 3 at TNPL Unit-I.	24.07.2026
262723 001443	Procurement of CATIONIC ROSIN for Board Machine (CCK) of TNPL Unit-II.	24.07.2026

Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPL Website and NIC Portal only.
Detailed Terms & Conditions are available in tender document at our websites:
www.tnpl.com, www.tenders.tn.gov.in, www.tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app
DIPR/ 2246 /TENDER/2026

**भारतीय वानिकी अनुसंधान एवं शिक्षा परिषद**
INDIAN COUNCIL OF FORESTRY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION
(एनएचआर, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार का एक स्वायत्त निकाय)
(An Autonomous Body of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India)
प०आ० न्यू फॉरेस्ट, देहरादून - 248006 (उत्तराखण्ड)
P.O. New Forest, Dehra Dun - 248006 (Uttarakhand)

विज्ञापित संख्या 03/निदेशक, व०००अनु०००, जोरहाट, असम/2026-भा०वा०अ०शि०००
Advt. No. 03/Director, RFRI, Jorhat, Assam/2026-ICFRE

भारतीय वानिकी अनुसंधान एवं शिक्षा परिषद देहरादून के अन्तर्गत 7^{वें} वेंतन आयोग के वेलन स्तर 15 के वेलनमान में निदेशक, वर्षा वन अनुसंधान संस्थान, जोरहाट, असम का पद प्रतिनियुक्ति के आधार पर भरने हेतु आवेदन आमंत्रित किए जाते हैं।
Applications are invited for filling up the post of Director, Rain Forest Research Institute, Jorhat, Assam in the pay scale at Level-15 of 7th CPC Pay Matrix on deputation basis at Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Dehradun
उपरोक्त पद हेतु इच्छुक अभ्यर्थी भा०वा०अ०शि००० की वेबसाइट <http://www.icfre.org> में दिने गये विस्तृत विज्ञापन के अनुसार आवेदन कर सकते हैं। आवेदन प्राप्त करने की अन्तिम तिथि 24.08.2026 है।
The interested candidates may apply for the above said post as per detailed advertisement available at ICFRE website <http://www.icfre.org>. The last date of receipt of applications is 24.08.2026

सचिव, भा०वा०अ०शि०००
Secretary, ICFRE

Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Ltd.
Gandhi Block, Swasthya Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur-302005 (Raj.)
Phone No: 0141-2228066, 2228064, Website: <http://rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in>
E-mail: edpsrmc@rajasthan.gov.in

Ref. No. :- F.02 (445)/RMSC/PROCUREMENT/DRUG/NIB-07/2026-27/4606 Dated :- 06/07/2026
Corrigendum - II in NIB - 07/2026-27

In Reference to NIB No. F.02 (445)/RMSC/PROCUREMENT/DRUG/NIB-07/2026-27/4384 Dated :- 02.06.2026 UBN No. MSC2627GLRC00025
Corrigendum-II is issued for date extension in bid. All details may be seen on <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> <https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in> & <https://www.rmsh.health.rajasthan.gov.in>.
Director (Proc.)
Raj.Samwadi/C/26/6457
RMSC

**VISAKHAPATNAM PORT AUTHORITY**
VISAKHAPATNAM

E-Tender Call Notice: 2026_VPT_281806_1, Dt. 23.06.2026.

On behalf of the Members of Board of VPA, E-Tender is invited in Single Stage two steps system from the experienced bidders meeting the pre-qualifying criteria for the work mentioned below through online bidding on the Website <http://www.etenders.gov.in>
SUB: UP GRADATION OF THE EXISTING 80 BEDDED GOLDEN JUBILEE HOSPITAL TO A 300 BEDDED MULTI-DISCIPLINARY SUPER SPECIALITY HOSPITAL AT VISAKHAPATNAM PORT ON DESIGN, BUILD, FINANCE, OPERATE AND TRANSFER (DBFOT) BASIS" – Due Date of Opening :06.08.2026
SECRETARY

**RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD.**
CHINABRA THERMAL POWER STATION, CHINABRA

E-TENDER NOTICE No. 4109 (RVU2627GLOB00737)

Online tenders are invited for "Supply of spares for BOMABA Make LPBP Stop and Control Valves". Tender details are available on websites <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> (for e-tender), www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvunl & www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in.
Raj.Samwadi/C/26/6570 RVUN/PR-4424 Addl. Chief Engineer (O&M)

Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Ltd.
Gandhi Block, Swasthya Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur-302005 (Raj.)
Phone No: 0141-2228066, 2228064, Website: <http://rmsc.health.rajasthan.gov.in>
E-mail: edpsrmc@rajasthan.gov.in

Ref. No. :- F.02 (441)/RMSC/PROCUREMENT/DRUG/NIB-03/2026-27/39829 Dated :- 30/06/2026
Corrigendum - I in NIB - 03/2026-27

In Reference to NIB No. F.02 (441)/RMSC/PROCUREMENT/DRUG/NIB-03/2026-27/4494 Dated :- 24.06.2026 UBN No. MSC2627GLRC00028
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Regd.Office:- Jan Path, Vidyut Bhawan, Jyoti Nagar,Jaipur
Office of the Superintending Engineer (PM Surya Ghar)
Old Power House Premises, Near Ram Mandir, Bani Park, Jaipur
Email: sepsmsuryaghar@jvnl.org / sepsmgby@gmail.com

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WASHINGTON

Trump says 11 jets downed during India-Pakistan hostilities last year



U.S. President Donald Trump has repeated his claim of settling the conflict between India and Pakistan, adding that 11 jets were shot down during the four-day hostilities in May last year. India has consistently denied any third-party intervention. India launched Operation Sindoor in response to the Pahalgam terror attack. PTI

DHAKA

Landslide kills 7 children, teacher at Rohingya camp in Bangladesh



At least seven children and a teacher were killed in a landslide caused by monsoon rains at a Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh's southeastern Cox's Bazar. Four of the children were killed at the scene of the landslide, while others died at the local hospital after they were rescued, officials said. PTI

LONDON

Total Eclipse singer Bonnie Tyler, queen of the 80s power ballad, dies



Welsh singer Bonnie Tyler, best known for her powerful, haunting love song *Total Eclipse of the Heart*, has died aged 75 in hospital in Portugal, her family announced on Thursday. With her distinctive husky voice, tousled mane of blonde hair and black eyeliner, Tyler was instantly recognisable as the queen of 1980s power ballad. AFP

SAN FRANCISCO

OpenAI launches ChatGPT Work, delving into workplace automation



OpenAI on Thursday unveiled ChatGPT Work, an agent in its popular chatbot designed to execute tasks across different applications and files, marking the startup's latest push into workplace automation. The launch reflects intensifying competition to build and sell AI tools for professional use. REUTERS

U.S., Iran exchange more attacks across West Asia, threatening deal

Iran reports U.S. strikes around the perimeter of Bushehr nuclear plant as U.S. officials say they hit about 90 Iranian military targets; new fighting erupted hours before the burial of Khamenei; Tehran officials report that U.S. attacks killed 17 people

Agence France-Presse
MASHHAD

New fighting erupted between the United States and Iran hours ahead of the burial of long-time Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on Thursday, with Tehran targeting U.S. allies in the region and American strikes hitting the perimeter of an Iranian nuclear power plant.

The renewed hostilities, triggered by tensions over the Strait of Hormuz, sparked concerns of a return to full-scale war after an April ceasefire and a June U.S.-Iran accord ended five weeks of conflict.



Mourners carry a banner against Donald Trump as they gather on the day of Khamenei's burial in Mashhad on Thursday. REUTERS

This was the second day in a row that the decades-old foes exchanged attacks, with Iranian officials reporting the U.S. attacks had killed 17 people.

— where the military said it had intercepted eight missiles launched from Iran.

The fighting came with Iran preparing to bury Khamenei, who was killed alongside close family members on the first day of the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran on February 28, in his hometown of Mashhad.

‘Effort to overshadow’

The United States targeted the perimeter of Iran's only civilian nuclear plant with a strike on Thursday, Iranian state media reported, citing the deputy governor of Bushehr province.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said the U.S. attacks

targeted civilian infrastructure, including railway bridges, and described the strikes as a “gross war crime”.

U.S. military officials said Thursday's strikes hit approximately 90 Iranian military targets, including air defence systems, missile and drone storage sites.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards accused the United States of an “effort to overshadow” Khamenei's funeral with its attacks.

In a sign of the security tensions, at least one fighter jet escorted the plane carrying Khamenei's coffin to its final burial in Mashhad.

Ukrainian drones hit more Russian oil facilities and set two oil tankers ablaze in the Sea of Azov on Thursday, a day after U.S. President Donald Trump pledged to grant Kyiv a licence to manufacture the Patriot air defence systems to protect its cities.

A top Ukrainian official, meanwhile, cautioned that it could take a year or more for the country to produce Patriot interceptor missiles.

A Ukrainian drone strike triggered a fire at an oil depot in the western Russian city of Tver, according to acting Governor Vitaly Korolyov.

Oil reservoirs also were set ablaze by drones in Vyazniki, in the southern



People queue to refuel their cars at a petrol station in Moscow as Ukrainian strikes on its facilities crimp domestic supply. AFP

Stavropol region, said Governor Vladimir Vladimirov, forcing the evacuation of several apartment buildings near the facility.

In the Sea of Azov, Ukrainian drones set two oil tankers on fire, according to Rostov Governor Yuri Slusar, who said one of the ships was still burning and its crew evacuated.

The attack was the latest in a series of strikes on oil tankers in the area in recent days, part of Ukraine efforts to cut fuel supplies to the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia illegally annexed in 2014.

Russia's Defence Ministry said its defences downed 73 Ukrainian drones during the past day.

Ebola death toll in Congo reaches 600, as new cases surge

Associated Press
KINSHASA

New suspected cases of Ebola have been reported in parts of Congo that were previously unaffected, the government said on Thursday, as the death toll in the country's latest Ebola outbreak reached 600.

According to the Congolese Health Ministry, suspected cases have now been recorded in the provinces of Tshopo and Haut-Uele, signalling the continued spread of the disease beyond the epicentre in Ituri.

A Congolese government report, published late Wednesday, said two new cases were suspected

in Kisangani, in Tshopo province. The Minister did not say how many cases were suspected in Haut-Uele. The total number of confirmed cases across the country has now reached 1,759.

According to the report, one of the two suspected cases in Tshopo was linked to the Nia-Nia health zone in Ituri province, where the first cases were reported, while the other case “has no apparent geographical connection to known outbreaks.”

Last week, clinical trials for treatment began after researchers launched a highly anticipated study in the hope of fighting the deadly virus.

Civic protest



Protesters chant slogans during a demonstration by the 'March and March' movement, calling upon the government to enforce tougher measures against illegal immigration and to deport undocumented foreign nationals, in Mtwalume, South Africa on Thursday. AFP

Syria welcomes U.S. announcement of removal from blacklist

Agence France-Presse
DAMASCUS

Damascus welcomed a U.S. announcement that it would remove Syria from its list of “state sponsors of terrorism”, a move that one economist said opened the door to economic recovery and foreign investment.

“A dark page in Syria's history has been turned,” Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani wrote on X.

The United States announced on Wednesday that it would remove Syria from its blacklist of countries it accuses of supporting terrorism, a designation it placed on Syria nearly five decades ago



Asaad al-Shaibani and which had curbed investment in the country.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry called the move “an important development in the course of Syrian-American relations”.

The move will be effective in 45 days unless lawmakers take the unlikely step of blocking it.

Shoe factory fire kills at least 28 people in southeast China

Reuters
BEIJING

At least 28 people were killed in a fire at a shoe factory in southeastern China on Thursday, state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported, after flames engulfed the multi-storey building, trapping workers on the rooftop.

The fire broke out at around noon local time in the city of Jinjiang in Fujian province at footwear manufacturer Huiteng.

A total of 239 people were at the factory when the fire broke out, *Xinhua* said. It said 213 were evacuated, two of whom died after being taken to hospital for treatment. Another 26 people previously re-



Firefighters at the scene of a footwear factory fire in Jiangtou village in southeastern China's Fujian province on Thursday. AP

ported missing at the scene were confirmed dead.

Jinjiang, in the coastal Fujian province, is a major footwear and clothing manufacturing hub and is often referred to as China's “shoe capital”.

Preliminary findings indicate the fire started on the ground floor of the fac-

tory, a local official told CCTV. Shoe-making materials stored in the building were highly flammable and could cause a blaze to spread rapidly, the official said.

People in charge of the company and “other relevant personnel” have been taken into custody.

Sri Lankan universities close and shift to online classes as dengue cases top 65,000 in the island

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's University of Colombo has decided to move some lectures online amid the persisting dengue surge on the island, authorities said. The decision comes after the University of Moratuwa and the University of the Visual and Performing Arts temporarily closed their campuses, as the country confronts one of its worst outbreaks of the vector-borne disease.

The National Dengue Control Unit has reported a total of 65,034 dengue cases this year, with capital Colombo accounting for about a fifth of the cases. As many as 45 dengue-re-



Prevention push: A municipal worker fumigates a residential area during a dengue prevention campaign in Colombo. AFP

lated deaths have been recorded as of Wednesday.

Since May this year, the University of Colombo has recorded a total of 71 cases, cumulatively, among its students, according to Vice Chancellor Professor Indika Mahesh Karunathilake.

“The Faculty of Arts saw more cases of fever, some of which could even be viral or chikungunya. The students were concerned, so we decided to shift to online lessons. The decision is not entirely to do with the current spread,

As many as 45 dengue-related deaths have been recorded in country

but it is to allow students to rest and recover. We are giving other faculties the option of hybrid lessons,” he told *The Hindu*.

As the number of dengue cases across the island rose last month, authorities appointed a military-led team to monitor the outbreak, while hospitals reported overcrowding of patients. “The tri-forces and police have helped us intensify inspection, including through drone cameras, clean up campaigns, fogging operations

and awareness,” a senior official with the Unit told *The Hindu*. “We need to wait for about two weeks, considering the incubation period and life cycle of the vectors for a realistic assessment. While we are doing our best, the situation is still challenging,” the official said, comparing the current outbreak to the one seen in 2017, Sri Lanka's largest. That year, a total of 1,86,101 cases were reported.

Public health officials have linked the current outbreak to the debris from Cyclone Ditwah, which hit Sri Lanka in December 2025, claiming over 600 lives and leaving behind a long path of destruction.

BACKING HIS MEN

We are not influenced by anyone, says FIFA refereeing chief Collina



REUTERS

The FIFA chief refereeing officer Pierluigi Collina has strongly dismissed allegations of external influence on officiating. “With a high number of matches played in a short period, it is normal that some things do not go as expected. Unfounded allegations have no place. Nobody can question the integrity of the match officials”.

NEW DAWN

Jorge Jesus to take over as the Portugal coach after its WC exit



REUTERS

Jorge Jesus is set to be appointed Portugal coach after Roberto Martinez stepped down in the wake of its World Cup exit, according to sources. The 71-year-old Portuguese will replace Spaniard Martinez, who left the job after Cristiano Ronaldo's side slumped to a 0-1 last-16 defeat to Spain.

BANTER

I expect you to go out on a rowing trip: Haaland on Rooney's promise



REUTERS

Norway striker Erling Haaland playfully reminded Wayne Rooney to honour his promise after the former England captain had joked that he would row down the River Mersey if Norway eliminated Brazil from the World Cup. “Rooney, I expect you to go out on a rowing trip,” Haaland said with a grin on his latest vlog on YouTube.

ROAD TO RECOVERY

Henderson undergoes surgery after suffering freak arm injury



AP

England midfielder Jordan Henderson has undergone surgery on his broken arm after a freak injury he suffered following the team's World Cup last-16 win over Mexico. Henderson was taken to hospital after having left the field on a stretcher. “Surgery done. Let's get ready for the big one on Saturday,” he wrote on social media.



No way past: Spain is yet to concede a goal. AFP

Will Belgium find chinks in Spain's ironclad defence?

Agence France-Presse
LOS ANGELES

Belgium will meet Spain in the World Cup quarterfinals on Friday with the daunting task of breaching the European champion's watertight defence for the first time at the tournament.

By beating Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal 1-0 on Monday, Luis de la Fuente's side became the first team in history to record six consecutive World Cup clean sheets.

Spain has not shown the attacking flair of France but it is playing the careful, possession-based football that took it to glory in South Africa in 2010. The prodigiously gifted Lamine Yamal is the team's most potent attacker on paper, but the teenager arrived while still recovering from a late-season injury and has netted just once in five games. But the brutal truth is that Spain does not need

Saturday's match

QUARTERFINAL



Spain vs. Belgium

00.30 A.M.

THE DAY AND TIME PERTAIN TO INDIA

to score many goals to win – it has conceded just six shots on target in its five matches so far.

Belgium, captained by the impressive Youri Tielemans, has had a rollercoaster ride in the knockout phase thus far.

The ongoing World Cup is likely the last hurrah for the remainder of the nation's so-called ‘Golden Generation’, including creative midfielder Kevin De Bruyne, striker Romelu Lukaku and goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

While they have not been at their best, they remain match-winners.

FIFA WORLD CUP

Ayon Sengupta
BOSTON

There is a particular kind of grief in sport that has little to do with defeat. It arrives not when a team loses, but when time finally catches up with the players who once seemed beyond its reach.

This World Cup has felt full of those moments. Luka Modric leaving with Croatia gone. Cristiano Ronaldo, who for so long bent matches to his will, walking away from another one. Manuel Neuer, for years football's last great illusionist in goal, no longer carrying the same aura of permanence.

These were not just elite footballers; they were part of the architecture of the sport.

Every major tournament had them somewhere in the frame. Modric gliding through the midfield with that strange combination of delicacy and defiance, Ronaldo summoning goals and drama with the force of habit, Neuer redrawing what a sweeper-goalkeeper could be.

Their brilliance



Fading away: Veterans Modric, Ronaldo and Neuer did not have the happy ending they would have hoped for at the start of the tournament. AFP & GETTY IMAGES



stretched across so many summers that it began to feel normal. But sport, with its occasional cruelty, has a way of reminding us that permanence was never part of the bargain. This World Cup has exposed the mortality of men who once seemed immune to it.

The legs do not always obey. The recovery takes a little longer. The moments still come, but not always on command. The body, eventually, begins to negotiate with the mind. And so, one by one, the stars who seemed to live outside

time have begun to look mere mortals.

Perhaps that is why Lionel Messi's presence feels so affecting. He is still here, still resisting and still playing as if he has found a private loophole in the laws of ageing.

Around him, Argentina carries the urgency of men who know exactly what this moment means.

It recalls, in its own way, those late-career years of Sachin Tendulkar, when Indian cricket seemed to understand that every innings, every tour, every

knock might be one of the last chances to honour a figure who had towered over its imagination for a generation.

Then came Roger Federer, making tennis look too graceful to be real; Rafael Nadal with his fury, faith and wounded endurance; Novak Djokovic, the last great disruptor who has also now reached the stage where each tournament is shadowed by the thought of how many more are left.

And now football's old Gods, too, are being claimed by time.

Muchova, Noskova set up all-Czechia finale

N. Sudarshan
LONDON

If you are an on-court artist in tennis, Wimbledon is your greatest canvas.

On Thursday, Karolina Muchova painted her best portrait yet by beating seventh seed Coco Gauff 6-2, 1-6, 7-6 [12-10] and entering her maiden singles final at the All England Club.

A first appearance in the summit clash is coming rather late for the 29-year-old from Czechia. A French Open finalist in 2023, a two-time US Open (2023 and 2024) and a one-time Australian Open (2021) semifinalist, Wimbledon was an anomaly.

In fact, she had exited in the first round in each of the last four editions. But that dismal record now stands emphatically corrected, as the tenth seed battled past a spirited Gauff, even saving a match-point in the nerve-wracking deciding set tie-break.

On Saturday, Muchova will take on compatriot Linda Noskova, who overcame Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk 6-4, 6-4. It will be a first women's singles final at SW19 between compatriots since Serena Williams met sister Venus in 2009.



Dream run: Muchova prevailed in a high-quality contest to reach her maiden Wimbledon final. AFP

Muchova played a relatively clean first set, with her stylish and soothing tennis the ideal balm to many a burning eye in the furnace-like Centre Court.

For the second stanza, Gauff brought her own exotic brush and started painting a picture which was aesthetically a notch lower but first-rate nonetheless.

Third set was where their top levels matched. The quality amplified, like it happens with two pairing frequencies at reso-

nance. At 4-4, Muchova erased two break-point opportunities. At 5-5, she went 0-30 down, but wriggled out by executing an advancing forehand, an inside-out winner and another unreturnable from the backhand wing.

Gauff was largely clinical on her serve and exhibited incisive fore-court play as the contest slipped into an inevitable super tie-break.

Once there, Muchova went 6-3 up by combining a dipping pass, low volley,

service-winner down the ‘T’, Boris Becker-style diving drop-volley and an ace.

Gauff clawed her way back to 6-6, with her response highlighted by two excellent forehand winners.

At 8-8, Muchova was put off by a time-violation warning for a late serve and ended up committing an unforced error.

On the ensuing match-point, Gauff drilled a powerful serve that Muchova could only block, but instead of slapping the ball

away, the American attempted an indecisive drop and dumped it into the net.

A beautiful lob earned Muchova her first match-point but Gauff snatched it away with a looping cross-court pass. The Czech, who seemed slightly bothered by hip issue, regained her focus and unleashed a superb forehand winner. A contest-ending two-fisted backhand soon followed.

In boys' singles, India's Arnav Vijay Paparkar lost to United States' Jordan Lee 2-6, 5-7 in the quarterfinals. But the 18-year-old, for whom this is the first year at Slams and also the last year in juniors, was overall satisfied.

“I am happy with the experience,” he told *The Hindu*. “I lost in the first round in Australia, then made the third round at French [Open] and now the quarters here.

“I will soon be full time on the professional circuit and I hope to get into the top-1000 in six months,” added the Pune lad, who is currently ranked No. 1645.

Other result: Girls' doubles (quarterfinal): Victoria Barros & Nauhany Leme Da Silva (Bra) bt Maaya Rajeshwaran & Thea Frodin (USA) 3-6, 6-4, [10-6].

Brook and Salt on song as England seals series win

Press Trust of India
BRISTOL

India's winless run was extended to six matches on Thursday after England skipper Harry Brook and Phil Salt powered the host to a nine-wicket win in the fourth T20I here. The victory, which was achieved with 37 balls to spare, helped England take an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-match series.

Chasing a modest 159, England suffered an early jolt when left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh dismissed Jos Buttler in the third over. But, Brook (79 n.o., 35b, 8x4, 4x6) and Salt (59 n.o., 42b, 9x4, 1x6) sent the Indian bowlers on a leather hunt during their unbroken second-wicket partnership of 146 off 70 balls.

Earlier, Shreyas appeared to be batting on a different surface as he came up with a superb knock (80 not out, 49b, 4x4, 5x6) to steer his side to 158 for seven.

Shreyas, who struck five sixes and four boundaries, held the innings together even as wickets tumbled around him. The other Indian batters paid the price



All guns blazing: Salt and Brook sent the Indian bowlers on a leather hunt during their match-winning partnership. REUTERS

for being too aggressive on a bouncy wicket.

The captain added 53 with Shivam Dube (22), but with wickets falling regularly, Shreyas was forced to assume the role of sheet-anchor. He cut loose in the 18th over, smashing leg-spinner Adil Rashid for two sixes and a four as 20 came off it. That over, however, proved to be an exception as the England bowlers executed their plans superbly.

Sam Curran conceded just four in the penultimate over while Jofra Archer (two for 20) finished the in-

nings with a tight final over in which two wickets fell, including the run out of Axar Patel.

The extra bounce again took a toll on the Indian top-order as Archer removed Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (15) for the second time in as many innings before new-ball partner Josh Tongue (two for 36) dismissed Ishan Kishan (4) within the PowerPlay.

The scores: India 158/7 in 20 overs (Shreyas 80 n.o., Archer 2/20, Tongue 2/36) lost to England 159/1 in 13.5 overs (Salt 59 n.o., Brook 79 n.o.). **Toss:** India.

Former India captain accuses HI secretary of threats and intimidation for asking questions



The midfielder has been as instrumental as Haaland in Norway's run to its maiden quarterfinal; next up for him is a tough test against England

Motivated: The fire to excel still burns for the peerless vaulter. REUTERS

Bholanath, however, dismissed all allegations. "Nothing of that sort has happened, I have no idea why she is saying all this. But I completely deny all of it," he said when contacted.

The blip in Stockholm — his first defeat in three years — came shortly after his wedding, but it was a result Duplantis insisted had made him “more motivated and more hungry”.

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\$ ND-ND

Why more Indian couples are being diagnosed with secondary infertility

Analyses of India's National Family Health Survey data show secondary infertility rose from roughly 19.5% in the early 1990s to about 28.6% by 2015-2016 – close to a doubling in a single generation; there are multiple factors that are contributing to this including age-related issues and changes in the body between the first and the second child

Richika Sahay Shukla

A few weeks ago, a couple sat in my consulting room looking almost apologetic. They already had a bright six-year-old waiting at home. “We feel silly taking your time, doctor,” the mother said. “We have one child. Everyone keeps telling us to just be grateful.” And then, quietly, she started to cry.

I have heard that phrase – “at least you have one” – more times than I can count. It is almost always meant kindly. It almost always lands like a door being shut. And it is one of the reasons the couples I see struggling to conceive a second time carry their grief so silently.

Understanding the condition

The condition has a name: secondary infertility – the difficulty conceiving or carrying a pregnancy after you have already had a baby. For years it was brushed aside as a non-problem. The numbers say otherwise.

Analyses of India's National Family Health Survey data show secondary infertility rose from roughly 19.5% in the early 1990s to about 28.6% by 2015-2016 – close to a doubling in a single generation. It is now one of the most common reasons a “previously fertile” couple walks in, bewildered. “We didn’t even try the first time,” they say. “Why is it so hard now?”

Part of the answer is the calendar. A generation ago, most couples finished their families in their twenties. Today a first baby often arrives at the age of 31 or 32 – after the degree, the

job, the EMI, the move to a rented flat in a city.

By the time life finally feels “ready” for a second child, the mother may be aged 36 or 38, and fertility, unfairly, does not wait for our life plans. Egg numbers and quality fall with every passing year; clinics in cities including Delhi/NCR, Bengaluru, Mumbai and others, have reported a sharp rise in women seeking help only after the age of 35.

But age is just one thread. In the years between the first and second child, bodies change. Weight creeps up. The thyroid quietly slips. As many as one in five Indian women now lives with Polyendocrine Metabolic Ovarian Syndrome (PMOS), which tends to worsen with time. A Caesarean section may have left adhesions; an old, untreated infection may have scarred a fallopian tube. And – this matters – the problem is very often on the man’s side. Sperm counts fall with weight, stress, smoking and even the polluted air so many of us breathe. Yet in my experience, Indian men will wait years longer than their wives before agreeing to a simple semen test, convinced that “we already have a child, so it can’t be me.”

Layered over all of this is something



Growing concern: Secondary infertility is the difficulty conceiving or carrying a pregnancy after you have already had a baby. GETTY IMAGES

newer: our phones. Social media has, in many ways, been a gift for fertility awareness. Couples now arrive far better informed than a decade ago; the taboo is finally cracking; brave women share IVF journeys that once would have been whispered about. But scroll through any feed and you also meet the other side – an unending stream of “Baby No. 2!” announcements, and picture-perfect siblings.

For a woman in her fourth month of trying, or recovering from a second miscarriage,

that scroll is a slow bruise. The comparison is relentless – and so is the family WhatsApp group where an aunt asks, yet again, when the “good news” is coming. I have also watched social media do harm the other way: glossy reels promising IVF “success in one cycle,” or home remedies that persuade a couple to delay proper testing by a year they cannot afford to lose.

Telling the truth

So what do I tell the couple crying in my room? First, that their pain is real and they are allowed to feel it. Wanting a sibling for the child you adore is not ingratitude; it is love asking

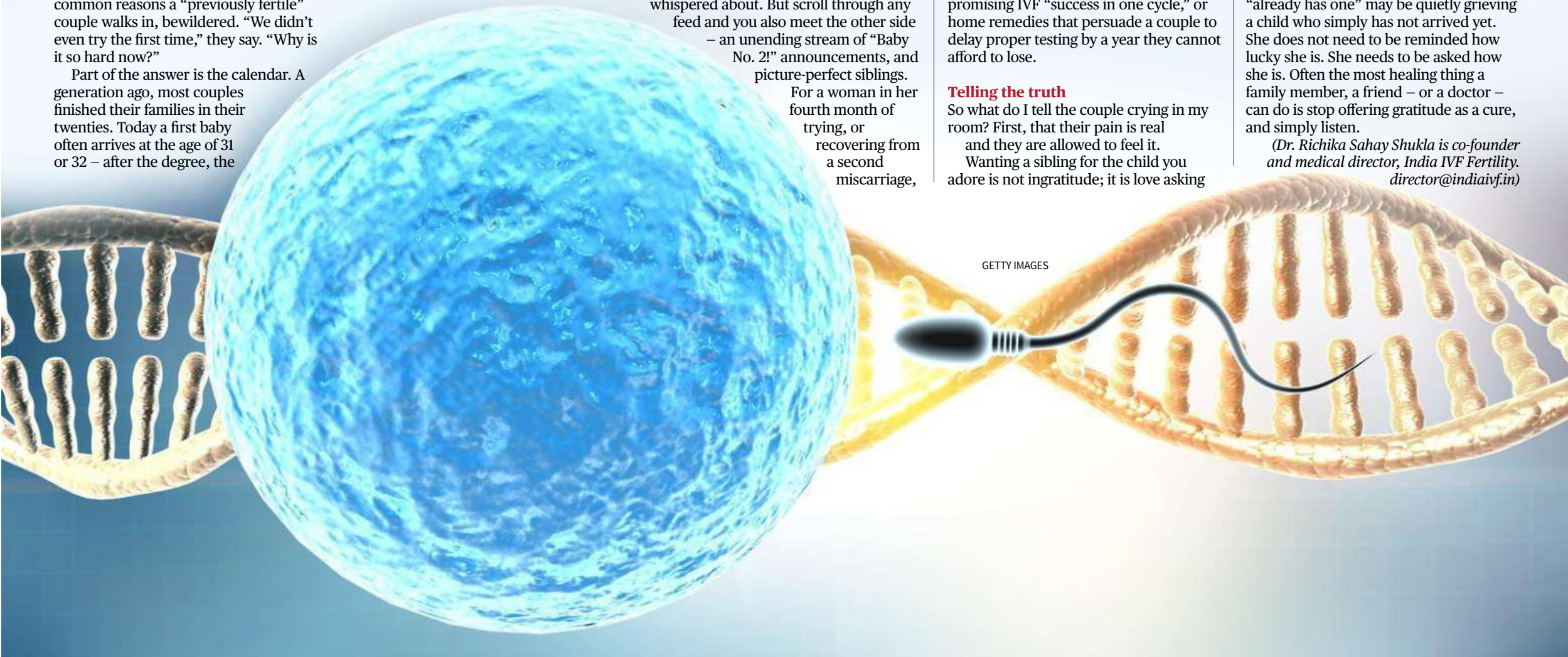
Egg numbers and quality fall with every passing year; clinics in cities including Delhi/National Capital Region, Bengaluru, Mumbai and others, have reported a sharp rise in women seeking help only after the age of 35

for a little more room. Second, that this is a medical condition, not a moral verdict – not a punishment, not *nazar*, not something they did wrong. Third, that timing matters. If a woman is under the age of 35 and has tried for a year, or over the age of 35 and has tried for six months, both partners – together – should be evaluated. Do not let the calendar run, out of politeness.

And I tell them the truth about hope, honestly. Modern fertility care helps a great many couples in exactly this situation, and IVF succeeds for many even in their late thirties and forties. But I will never promise a guaranteed outcome, and I would gently warn anyone against a clinic that does. What I can promise is a clear answer and a plan.

If there is one thing I wish more of us understood, it is this: the woman who “already has one” may be quietly grieving a child who simply has not arrived yet. She does not need to be reminded how lucky she is. She needs to be asked how she is. Often the most healing thing a family member, a friend – or a doctor – can do is stop offering gratitude as a cure, and simply listen.

(Dr. Richika Sahay Shukla is co-founder and medical director, India IVF Fertility. director@indiaivf.in)



Study to contain antimicrobial resistant neonatal sepsis begins in India

Ramya Kannan
CHENNAI

Striking at the heart of antimicrobial resistance, the international NeoSep 1 trial to evaluate life-saving antibiotic combinations for newborns with sepsis has expanded to India, with the first baby being recruited at the Jawaharlal Postgraduate Education Institute of Medical and Research (JIPMER) in Puducherry.

This was followed by recruiting an infant for the study in Pt. B.D. Sharma PGIMS in Rohtak. The next on the list is Lokmanya Tilak Municipal College and General Hospital, Mumbai. Globally, the study, sponsored by the GARDP Foundation in collaboration with the UCL Innovative Clinical Trials Unit; City St George's, University of London (SGUL), and Penta Foundation, is also underway in Vietnam and Pakistan, and will soon start in Malaysia, Bangladesh and Uganda.

According to a GARDP statement, NeoSep1 aims to enrol 3,000 newborns across Asia and Africa by the end of 2028. Earlier, newborns were enrolled in Ghana, Kenya and South Africa.

Life-threatening infection

Neonatal sepsis is a life-threatening bloodstream infection that occurs in babies under 90 days old, often affecting premature or low-birth-weight infants. It is categorised into early-onset (occurring within the first 72 hours of life) and late-onset (occurring up to 28-90 days), according to a book on neonatal sepsis, authored by Meenakshi Singh.

“With underdeveloped immune systems, newborns are especially prone to life-threatening sepsis,” Sally Ellis, Children’s Antibiotics Project Leader for



Addressing a big issue: Neonatal sepsis is a life-threatening bloodstream infection that occurs in babies under 90 days old, often affecting premature or low-birth-weight infants. AP

GARDP, told *The Hindu*, explaining the significance the NeoSep1 has in the context of growing antimicrobial resistance.

“Today, we stand at a tipping point. The antibiotics for newborns that we have relied on for decades are failing against resistant infections, in many hospital settings. This trial, led by GARDP and partners, is about giving neonatologists new tools, and giving babies with sepsis a fighting chance at life,” she adds.

Sepsis is the second most common cause of neonatal mortality, globally responsible for over one million deaths annually. In

India, neonatal sepsis remains a leading cause of neonatal mortality, contributing to approximately 30%-40% of all neonatal deaths despite advances in neonatal care, argues a recent paper ‘Neonatal Sepsis in India: Epidemiology, Risk Factors and Preventive Strategies from a Public Health Perspective’ in the *Journal of Clinical Neonatology*.

The author Ahmed Abdulaziz Almohammadi, writes “In India, neonatal sepsis accounts for an estimated 30%-40% of all neonatal deaths, translating to approximately 2,00,000-2,50,000



Today, we stand at a tipping point. The antibiotics for newborns that we have relied on for decades are failing against resistant infections, in many hospital settings. This trial, led by the GARDP and partners, is about giving neonatologists new tools, and giving babies with sepsis a fighting chance at life

SALLY ELLIS
Children’s Antibiotics Project Leader for GARDP

preventable deaths annually. Despite substantial reductions in under-five mortality over the past two decades, progress in reducing neonatal mortality has lagged, with sepsis representing a persistent and largely preventable cause of death.”

Divergence from global trends

It turns out that causative agents in India show a divergence from global trends. Dr. Almohammadi notes that the microbiological profile of neonatal sepsis in India differs substantially from that of high-income countries, with gram-negative organisms predominating in most Indian studies. *Klebsiella pneumoniae*, *Escherichia coli*, *Acinetobacter* species and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* constitute the majority of bacterial isolates, often demonstrating multidrug resistance. Group B Streptococcus (GBS), which is the leading cause of neonatal sepsis in developed countries, accounts for only 2%-5% of cases in India.

This makes the NeoSep 1 critical – to evaluate and produce a profile that is India

specific, addressing the circumstances that can contribute to, or ameliorate the condition in India. It is pioneering the use of a Personalised Randomised Controlled Trial (PRACTical) design, which will evaluate and rank multiple antibiotic regimens for newborns with sepsis. This approach will help clinicians choose effective treatments best suited to their local context, GARDP spokespersons say.

The goal of the trial is to identify one or more safe, effective, and affordable treatments that can reduce the high number of newborn deaths caused by drug-resistant sepsis, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Part 1 of the NeoSep1 trial, conducted in South Africa and Kenya in 2023, assessed and validated the appropriate dose for fosfomycin and flomoxef for use in newborns, in combination with other antibiotics.

Nishad Plakkal, Principal Investigator of the NeoSep1 trial in India and Head of the Department of Neonatology at JIPMER, explains: “the study is a pragmatic trial and allows clinicians to make the diagnosis of sepsis as they normally would. However, to ensure the inclusion of infants with a high probability of infection, we use a sepsis severity score that we derived from an earlier global observational study (NeoOBS). Our microbiology team cultures the baby’s blood (and sometimes spinal fluid) to help identify the organism causing sepsis, typically within a day or two. They also identify antibiotic-resistant infections.”

Dr. Plakkal explains that the primary outcome, or the main question the study is designed to answer, is death within 28 days; while secondary outcomes will include death within 90 days, need for additional antibiotics, length of hospital stay, and re-admission.

(ramya.kannan@thehindu.co.in)