



CAUVERY BASIN DISTRESS

CWMA tells States to maintain *status quo*

STATES » PAGE 6

FOSTERING MULTIPOLARITY

Jaishankar meets Wang, stresses stable ties

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TWO-YEAR WINDOW

Trump warns of 200% tax on drug imports

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LOST FAITH

Time to trust States as NEET's promise fails

The protests reflect a deeper crisis: Stalin

OPINION » PAGE 9

SPORTING CARNIVAL

23rd Commonwealth Games from today

SPORT » PAGE 17



IN BRIEF



Govt. ready for discussion on paper leak: Rijiju

NEW DELHI
Amid repeated disruptions, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Wednesday told the Lok Sabha that the government was ready for a discussion on the NEET paper leak. » **Page 13**

Ram Temple trust defers CEO selection

LUCKNOW
The Ram Temple trust on Wednesday deferred the appointment of its first CEO by a month following the overwhelming number of applications for the post. It has received 5,200 applications, officials said. » **Page 4**

Police summon Pandian over missing CMO files

BHUBANESWAR
Odisha Police on Wednesday summoned V. Karthikeya Pandian, a close aide of former CM Naveen Patnaik, to appear before a team investigating the disappearance of two files from the CM's Office during the previous BJD regime. » **Page 4**

Delhi HC seeks govt. response on police actions during CJP march

Petitioners warn against unchecked police action, flag use of lathis with nails, electric batons, pellet guns during the July 20 protest march; allegations can't be dismissed as 'isolated incidents', says court; it orders preservation of CCTV, video footage

Soibam Rocky Singh
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Centre and the Delhi Police to respond to a batch of public interest litigation (PIL) petitions alleging that the police used excessive force against students and other protesters during the Parliament march called by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) on July 20.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.K. Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia observed that the allegations could not be brushed aside as "isolated incidents", and ordered that all relevant material, including CCTV footage and videography, related to the march be preserved in accordance with the standard operating procedures of the Delhi Police.

Appearing for one of the petitioners, senior advocate N. Hariharan alleged that the protesters were subjected to "brutality to the largest extent" by the state machinery. "There are videos of several people in civil clothes carrying lathis, lathis with nails, electric batons, and pellet guns. There is not a whisp-



Staying put: CJP protesters at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Wednesday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

er that anybody in the march was violent," he submitted.

Mr. Hariharan further alleged that some policemen could be seen molesting women. "There are policemen molesting women, using baton... It is so ghastly," he said, seeking the registration of FIRs against identifiable officers, and a high-level inquiry into the incident. According to him, more than 90 people had suffered injuries, with the number continuing to rise.

Senior advocate Gopal

Sankaranarayanan, appearing in one of the petitions, alleged that a large number of police personnel were deployed without nameplates and they used batons not authorised by the Delhi Police. Warning against unchecked police action, Mr. Sankaranarayanan submitted, "If constitutional courts do not intervene, it would amount to giving the police a licence to get away with anything because they have the sanction of their political masters."

Additional Solicitor-

General S.V. Raju alleged that the agitation had turned violent, with the protesters throwing stones and injuring police personnel. Lawyers representing the petitioners, however, said the police action was unwarranted and brutal, warning that the courts must step in to hold the police accountable.

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DON'T WASTE OUR TIME: CJI
» **PAGE 12**

Ministers meet Wangchuk as govt. steps up outreach

NEW DELHI
The Centre on Wednesday moved up a notch its engagement with protesters against the NEET paper leak, with Union Ministers J.P. Nadda and Jitendra Singh meeting activist Sonam Wangchuk, who responded from hospital with a statement that he was willing to call off the hunger strike if the government gave an assurance that no punitive action would be taken against the protesting students. » **PAGE 12**

Rahul seeks to mollify allies, put pressure on govt.

NEW DELHI
Opposition needs to step up pressure on the government, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi said on Wednesday as he reassured INDIA bloc allies that the Congress believes in better coordination between them. His remarks came as several allies were reportedly upset over not being kept in the loop about the Congress's dharna at the Prime Minister's residence. » **PAGE 13**

10 more deaths raise Assam flood toll to 41

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

The Assam government on Wednesday said the ongoing wave of floods in some eastern districts of the State has been the worst in 60 years, affecting more than 6.5 lakh people and claiming 41 lives in less than a month.

According to a late-night bulletin by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), floodwaters claimed the lives of 10 people across five districts during the last 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the number of flood-affected districts reduced from 16 to 11 during this period.

"The floods have affect-



People wading through a waterlogged road in Golaghat, Assam, on Wednesday. PTI

ed 6,53,164 people across 939 villages and crops on 24,897.27 hectares of land. The district authorities have set up 106 relief camps, where 24,418 people have taken shelter," an ASDMA spokesperson said.

CONTINUED ON
» **PAGE 12**

SC declines stay on 6 MPs' 'merger' with Shinde camp

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to grant interim stay on Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's decision to recognise the "merger" of six Shiv Sena (UBT) MPs with the rival Shiv Sena faction led by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

However, the apex court agreed to hear the chal-

lenge to the Speaker's decision after two weeks.

A Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe sought Mr. Birla's response on a petition filed by Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Arvind Sawant, who challenged as "ex facie unconstitutional, illegal and perverse" the July 18 circular issued by the Joint Secretary of the Lok Sabha Secretariat recognising the purported merger.



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DU faces backlash for statement on protests

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Democratic Teachers' Front (DTF) on Wednesday criticised the Delhi University administration's statement on social media regarding the ongoing student protests at Jantar Mantar, alleging that the university had failed to acknowledge the violence faced by students, choosing instead to discredit the movement.

"We see the pain and anxiety of our students. It is unfortunate that vested interests are exploiting their fears instead of easing them. The need of the hour is to calm the situation and reduce their distress so that they can focus on what truly matters: their studies and their future," the university posted on its social media account on X.

In a press release, the DTF stated that the university's response came a day after "the most brutal violence unleashed by the Centre to intimidate protesters and silence the demand for accountability." "The statement is dishonest, masking its apathy as empathy," the teachers' body said. It objected to the use of the words "vested interests", saying DU sought to delegitimise a "massive protest".

BJP, Oppn. take divergent view of police action on protesters

Monday's march was 'not peaceful' and its organisers must be held accountable, says Delhi Minister; BJP MP says Centre acted with 'sensitivity'; AAP highlights instances of women being 'assaulted'; cadre standing with Rahul: Delhi Cong. chief

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders on Wednesday defended the Centre's handling of the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protest, with MP Banisuri Swaraj saying the government had acted with "sensitivity" and remained open to dialogue. Her party colleague and Delhi Minister Parvash Sahib Singh said Monday's march to Parliament was "not peaceful" and its organisers must be held accountable for "outright lawlessness".

'Students are a priority'
Addressing a press conference, Ms. Swaraj said the government's priority is to protect the students and ensure that their future remains uncompromised. "A safe future for children is the top priority of the [Narendra] Modi government," she said.

Referring to the alleged NEET paper leak, Ms. Swaraj said the government acted swiftly after receiving information that the examination may have been compromised.

She said the Centre had consistently sought a dia-



Security officials using tear gas during the ongoing protest near Jantar Mantar on Wednesday. PTI

logue with the CJP and that Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda had invited representatives of the agitation for talks.

On allegations of police excesses, Ms. Swaraj said around 118 police personnel were also injured during the protest march and urged those with evidence of misconduct to cooperate with the investigation.

"Policemen are also sons and daughters of this country, and they too deserve sympathy," she said.

Mr. Singh shared a video on X purportedly showing a mob chasing and assaulting a Rapid Action Force (RAF) man.

"A protester kicks an RAF man to the ground, after which the mob surrounds and assaults him.

This is not a peaceful protest. It is outright lawlessness. Those who organised and backed these protests must be held accountable for putting the lives of citizens and security personnel at risk," the Minister said.

Dismissing the BJP leader's claims, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) instead demanded action against Delhi

Police over "use of excessive force against protesters" during the march. The party claimed that DCP-rank officers were caught on camera assaulting women during the protest.

Delhi AAP chief Saurabh Bharadwaj said several videos have surfaced showing senior police officers assaulting and misbehaving with women protesters. "However, no FIR has been registered and no officer has been suspended," he added.

'Must resign'
Delhi Congress president Devender Yadav, meanwhile, led a demonstration to the BJP headquarters, demanding Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation over the alleged paper leaks.

Congress workers

marched towards the BJP

office and condemned the

detention of Leader of the

Opposition in Lok Sabha

Rahul Gandhi during a de-

monstration outside the

Prime Minister's residence

on Tuesday evening.

"Each Congress worker

is standing with Rahul

Gandhi in his fight to pro-

tect the future of students,"

Mr. Yadav said.



Voicing dissent: A protester holding up a placard at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Wednesday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

FIR count in CJP protest rises to 10

Shrimansi Kaushik
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has registered 10 FIRs against unidentified persons in connection with the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) protest at Jantar Mantar, an officer said on Wednesday. The FIRs were registered under various Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections, including assaulting public servant, rioting and unlawful assembly.

The police issued a release stating that an Assistant Commissioner of Police, Jai Prakash, sustained an injury to his forehead during stone pelting at Jantar Mantar around 4.30 p.m. "When protesters resorted to stone pelting, one of the stones hit the ACP on the forehead. He has been shifted to the hos-

pital for treatment," the statement read.

Meanwhile, some lawyers alleged that 22 individuals, including five minors, were picked up from Nizamuddin on Wednesday evening for violating Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Suraksha Sanhita, which prohibits the assembly of five or more persons, and released later at night.

When reached for response, DCP (South East) Hemant Tiwari said the order had been put up inside the Hazrat Nizamuddin police station and that residents had been informed through meetings held with community representatives. "I agree that it should have been put up on social media as well," said the DCP.

Commuters rail as metro station closures disrupt their schedule

Ekka Kant Kohli
Suruchi Kumari
NEW DELHI

Large-scale disruptions were reported by metro passengers on Wednesday after the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) closed the entry and exit gates at 16 stations for seven hours as part of restrictions around the Cockroach Janta Party's ongoing protest at Jantar Mantar.

While the DMRC announced the closures at stations along the Violet, Yellow and Blue Lines around 11.30 a.m., many passengers, including students and office-goers, said they had boarded trains before receiving the information. Others reported they never received any notification.

Tarun Atrey, a shopkeeper who runs a stall at Dilli Haat, said, "People have to go to work, hospitals, appointments and exhibitions. You can't stop people from living their



The DMRC announced the closures around 11.30 a.m., but many passengers said they did not receive any notification. R.V. MOORTHY

lives." He could not attend an exhibition to sell his wares at Patel Chowk because of the restrictions.

"I did not face any issues in the morning when I got off at the INA metro station, which was open," said Mr. Atrey, adding that he was unaware of the closure. He ended up wasting an hour and eventually returned to INA.

'Missed NEET coaching'
Priyanshu, a Class 12 student preparing for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), said he missed his coaching class

due to the restrictions. "I was on my way when I found out that Rajiv Chowk, Central Secretariat, Janpath and Jor Bagh metro stations had been closed. I had no choice but to change my route completely and take the Pink Line from Majra metro station. By the time I reached, the class was over."

"The closures caused thousands of people to converge on the nearest open stations, where the crowd became so dense that it felt like a stampede could happen at any moment," he added.

'Fit cause', 'valid demand': Haryana musicians back protesting students

Ashok Kumar
GURUGRAM

Prominent singers and rappers from Haryana have come out in support of students protesting at Jantar Mantar over alleged examination paper leaks and seeking the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi to listen to their grievances.

Singer and lyricist Gulzaar Chhaniwala, who has 2.5 million followers on Instagram, posted a video on the platform, saying, "Today, as an ordinary citizen, I want to make a humble request to you with folded hands. Whenever you have asked the people of this country for support, they have stood with you completely. Today, we hope that you will deliver justice to them."

"Please listen once to what is on their minds. These are all students. A wrong has been done to them, and that is why they



Singer and lyricist Gulzaar Chhaniwala urged PM Narendra Modi to listen to the students. @GULZAARCHHANIWALA/INSTAGRAM

are in this situation today, fighting for their rights. In a democratic country, why do we have to face so many difficulties just to fight for our rights?" Mr. Chhaniwala said, adding, "We have listened to 'Mann ki Baat' all these years. Today, please listen to our Mann ki Baat and give us justice."

Symbolic gesture

In a symbolic gesture of support, Hisar-based rapper and hip-hop artist

Dhanda Nyoliwala, who has 4.7 million followers on Instagram, changed his profile picture to an image of climate activist and educator Sonam Wangchuk bearing the slogan 'stand for truth'.

Faridabad-based artist Abhishek Baisla, popularly known as MC Square, who has 1.4 million Instagram followers, also expressed solidarity with the protesters. In a video over a minute long, he said, "What has been done to students near Parliament is wrong. That should not have happened. People can have different opinions, but I think their demand is very valid. How long does it take to accept their demand? It does not take even a little time. The government should consider this."

'Students ignored'

Referring to the July 20 protest march in Delhi, during which several students were injured in police action, Mr. Baisla said, "They are only seeking the

resignation of the Education Minister, and it is a fit case for resignation. Only students are being ignored and beaten up. Everyone can see this."

He also announced that he was putting his upcoming music releases on hold. "We cannot celebrate so long as students are being mated out this treatment."

Singer and actor Dev Kumar also appealed to the Prime Minister, saying he could not go to Jantar Mantar due to health reasons but stood with the students.

"The country stood with you whenever you gave any directions. The country supported you when you sought support. Students have come to tell you what is in their hearts, but you are not able to listen to them; I do not know the reasons. Poor students and the country suffer immensely because of paper leaks. Listen to what is in their hearts, Modiji. They are your own children," he said.

Volunteer doctors come to aid of protesters

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

At one end of Jantar Mantar, protesters on Wednesday raised slogans. At the other, volunteer doctors worked beside ambulances, treating a steady flow of people with swollen limbs, cuts, fever and dehydration before sending them back into the crowd.

Amid chants and speeches from the protest stage, healthcare professionals from Delhi and neighbouring States have been running makeshift medical assistance points, owing to what they described as a sense of duty.

Some moved through the crowd with backpacks stocked with medicines, bandages and oral rehydration salts, while others waited inside ambulances stationed near the protest venue, ready to respond. A doctor volunteering at the site said she arrived with an ambulance after watching videos of Monday's protest.



SRINAGAR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Bemina, Bye Pass Near SKIMS Medical College, Srinagar, Kashmir 190018
TEL: 0194-2493191, Fax: 0194-2493180, Email : vcsda.jk@nic.in

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
No: 01/RFP/EE of 2026-2027
Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), Housing and Urban Development Department, Government of Union Territory, Jammu & Kashmir (hereinafter called "SDA or Authority") wants to Selection of Developer for Development and Monetization of 3.No Land Parcels of Srinagar development Authority (SDA), at Sangarmall, Srinagar, in Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

S.No	Particulars	Details
1	Developer for Development and Monetization of 3.No Land Parcels of Srinagar development Authority (SDA), located at Sangarmall, Srinagar, in Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir	Selection of Developer for Development and Monetization of Land Parcels of Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), in Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
2	Download of REF Document	Complete REP documents can be downloaded from the Website: http://jktenders.gov.in (8th of July to 30th of July 2026)
3	Last Date for Submission of REF	30th of July 2026 (05.30 pm)
4	Address for Communication	Office of Executive Engineer, Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), Bemina Bye pass, Near SKIMS Medical college, Housing and Urban Dev. Department, Government of UT of J & K
5	REP Application Downloading Start Date	8 th of July 2026
6	Last date for sending pre-REP Queries	15 th of July 2026 upto 4.30 pm
7	Pre Bid meeting date	16 th of July 2026 upto 1.30 pm
8	Last date for submission of REF online	30 th of July 2026 (upto 5.30 pm)
9	Opening of REP	31 st of July 2026 (12.00 noon)
10	Meeting, if decide by Authority from eligible Applicants	To be intimated to eligible Applicant/s

No: SDA/EE/1570-73
Dated: 21.07.2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Srinagar Development Authority

DIPK-NB-1154/26, Jul 21 2026



SRINAGAR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Bemina, Bye Pass Near SKIMS Medical College, Srinagar, Kashmir 190018
TEL: 0194-2493191, Fax: 0194-2493180, Email : vcsda.jk@nic.in

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
No: 02/RFP/EE of 2026-2027
Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), Housing and Urban Development Department, Government of Union Territory, Jammu & Kashmir (hereinafter called "SDA or Authority") wants to Selection of Developer for Development and Monetization of 1.No Land Parcels of Srinagar development Authority (SDA), at Old Bus Stand, Batamalo, Srinagar in Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

S.No	Particulars	Details
1	Developer for Development and Monetisation of 1 no of land parcels of Srinagar development Authority (SDA), located at Old Bus Stand, Batamalo, Srinagar, in Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.	Selection of Developer for Development and Monetization of Land Parcels of Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), in Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.
2	Download of REF Document	Complete REP documents can be downloaded from the Website: http://jktenders.gov.in (8th of July to 30th of July 2026)
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9	Opening of REP	31 st of July 2026 (12.00 noon)
10	Meeting, if decide by Authority from eligible Applicants	To be intimated to eligible Applicant/s

No: SDA/EE/1574-77, Dated: 21.07.2026

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Srinagar Development Authority

DIPK-NB-1155/26, Jul 21 2026



HIMACHALPRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG
Office email-eejsvjaisinghpur@gmail.com
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

On line bids on item rate basis are invited by the **Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division, Jaisinghpur, Himachal Pradesh** on behalf of the Governor of Himachal Pradesh in electronic tendering system in twocovers for the under mentioned works from the Eligible Contractors/ Firms enlisted with Himachal Pradesh Jal Shakti Vibhag through e-tendering process:-

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1. KEY DATES SHALL BE AS UNDER:-

A	Date of online publication	21.07.2026 at 05:00 Hrs IST (GMT+ 5:30 Hrs)
B	Downloading of e-bid Documents	From 21.07.2026 at 05:00 Hrs IST (GMT+ 5:30 Hrs) To 03.08.2026 at 12:00 Hrs IST (GMT+ 5:30 Hrs)
C	Date of submission of e-bid	From 21.07.2026 at 05:00 Hrs IST (GMT+ 5:30 Hrs) To 03.08.2026 at 12:00 Hrs IST (GMT+ 5:30 Hrs)
D	Physical Submission of Original Bid Security (in case of offline deposit of Bid security)	Upto 11.30 Hrs IST (GMT+5:30 Hrs) on —03.08.2026
E	Date of opening of bids:	
1)	Cover-1 Eligibility Criteria & Technical bid	On-03.08.2026 at 12:30 Hrs IST (GMT+530 Hrs)
1)	Cover-2 Financial Bid	Shall be intimated separately
F	Site Visit	Between 11.00 Hrs IST (GMT+5:30 Hrs) dated 21.07.2026 to 1700 Hrs IST (GMT+5:30 Hrs) dated 25.07.2026-along with the Assistant Engineer/Concerned Junior Engineer Jal Shakti Sub Division Jaisinghpur, Lambagaon
G	Pre Bid Meeting	On dated 27.07.2026 at 11.30 A.M. IST (GMT+5:30 Hrs) in the office of Chief Engineer Jal Shakti Zone Dharamshala. The queries of the bidders shall be submitted upto 27.07.2026 till 4.00 PM. No queries will be entertained afterwards.

Last Date of filing/uploading the tender through e-tendering is 03.08.2026 up to 11:30 AM & opened on same day at 12:30 PM . The tender forms and other detailed terms and condition can be obtained from the website
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Jal Shakti Division, Jaisinghpur

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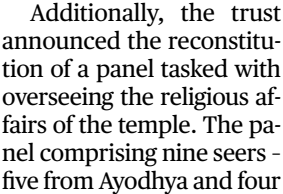
The Punjab government on Wednesday introduced Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a mainstream subject from Classes 1 to 12. Punjab has become the first State in the country to do so, Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains said. The Punjab School Education Board will roll out the curriculum in a phased manner under the 'Sarbait.AI' project, making it one of the country's largest Statewide AI education missions and positioning Punjab as a national leader in future-ready learning. Mr. Bains, along with former Delhi Minister Manish Sisodia, launched the project in the presence of education experts, technology partners, and senior officials. PTI

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday refused to change its decision to order a stay on the bail granted to Shiv Sena corporator Ramesh Mhatre, who is accused of assaulting doctors at a civic hospital in Dombivli. It also ordered preservation of the CCTV footage of the July 6 incident and Mr. Mhatre's own hospital stay after his arrest. "Let him be inside for some more time," the court said. Mr. Mhatre, who had surrendered on Sunday, submitted to the court that he was a 73-year-old man suffering from several ailments and the police did not need his custody. PTI

He termed it a blatant violation of Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

State budget presented by Finance Minister Swapan Dasgupta on June 22.

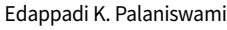
“The committee formed to select the CEO demanded additional time of one month in view of the huge number of applicants for the post. The trust has ac-



Briefing mediapersons after the meeting, Mr. Mohan and treasurer Govind Dev Giri said the members also reviewed arrangements for the expected rise in the number of devotees during the ongoing Shra-

'Cooperating with probe'
Officials said since the final report of the SIT has not been received, the matter wasn't discussed in the meeting. They added that the finance committee of the trust was also asked to reconsider the standard operating procedure with the State Bank of India in view of safety loopholes that came to light following the theft probe. The trust said it has been fully cooperating with the probe and expressed hope that all those responsible would be brought to justice.

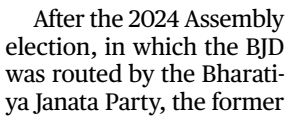
Addressing mediapersons later, Mr. Krishnamurthy said, "Six former legislators [including C. Vijayabaskar and M.R. Vijayabhaskar] had betrayed the



AIADMK and the people who elected them by resigning from their Assembly membership and joining the ruling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK)."

Mr. Sundaram also said more youngsters were joining the AIADMK and that efforts were under way to strengthen the party.

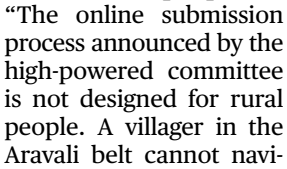
Senior IAS officer Rajesh Verma, then Principal Secretary to the CM, and Manoj Mishra, former IT Secretary, were asked to provide information regarding the disappearance



CM briefed
Meanwhile, Commissioner of Police (Bhubaneswar-Cuttack) Suresh Dev Datta Singh briefed CM Mohan Charan Majhi on Wednesday about progress in the investigation into the missing files, an officer said.

The killing of Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati and several others in 2008 had triggered large-scale communal riots between Hindus and Christians in Kandhamal district. It remains one of the worst incidents of anti-Christian violence recorded in the State.

Formed on May 25, the high-powered committee has been tasked with conducting an independent review of the Centre's report on the definition and



Ms. Rawat added that the committee should paste public notices in local languages at panchayat

“Twenty-one days is an entirely inadequate window to hear from the diverse communities living deep within the Aravalli belt. Getting these communities to participate in any meaningful way will be a manual, time-intensive process – there are no shortcuts and decent coverage of voices within this

"Most of the licensed mining leases running today across the States of Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat are blatantly flouting rules and norms, causing deep damage to the health and livelihoods of local communities. No written submission can capture the everyday suffering being endured by the people dependent on the good health of the Aravalis for their existence," said Diwan Singh, convener, Ridge Bachao Andolan.

“The second-largest number of foreigners deported or expelled is from Myanmar, followed by Nigerians,” Assam Accord Implementation Minister Atul Bora said in reply to a question from Congress MLA Abdur Rahim Ahmed.

To another question from Raijor Dal chief and Sibsagar legislator Akhil Gogoi, the State govern-

Mr. Bora said 1,572 foreigners staying illegally in Assam were sent back to their home countries from 2025 to June 30, 2026 while 117 others were expelled during this period.

"We are sending back illegal foreigners to Bangladesh in accordance with a communication from the Ministry of Home Affairs on May 2, 2025," he said.



PM Narendra Modi with NCP(SP) chief Sharad Pawar in New Delhi on Wednesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Pawar, PM discuss NEET paper leak, farmers' issues

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Amid murmurs of a possible unification of the two NCP factions and the speculation that the united entity would join the ruling NDA, Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) chief Sharad Pawar, along with his MP daughter Supriya Sule met Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Wednesday.

After the meeting, Mr. Pawar said they [he and Ms. Sule] discussed the students' demands regarding the NEET paper "leak", farmers' problems, water management and issues concerning the education sector with the PM. "The Honourable Prime Minister gave assurances of positive and concrete measures on all these issues," Mr. Pawar said in a post in Marathi on X.

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI/HYDERABAD

The spiralling agitation over the NEET issue saw protests and counter-protests by Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) across the country on Wednesday, with clashes and tense face-offs at many places, a day after Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and other Opposition leaders were forcibly removed from a dharna outside the Prime Minister's residence.

While Congress leaders and workers were angry over the police "high-handedness" and "ill-treatment" of party leaders, who were detained and later released on Tuesday night, the BJP protested against what it said was "unruly and anarchist behaviour" of Mr. Gandhi and the Opposition leaders.

Leaders and workers of



Congress workers staging a protest demanding resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, in Jaipur; (right) police detaining a protester in Patna on Wednesday. PTI & ANI

both parties, led by their State chiefs at many places, tried to march to each other's offices but were stopped by police, which detained many of them.

Two injured

In Telangana capital Hyderabad, two persons, including a woman police constable, were injured following violent clashes between the BJP cadres and the ruling Congress near

the former's State headquarters.

In Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, Congress and BJP workers clashed as they came face to face during their protests, triggering tension. Both parties accused each other of violence and provocation.

Workers of the Congress came to blows in Patna when cadres of the ruling party took out a procession, ac-



curring the Opposition of unleashing "anarchy".

The BJP march, led by State president Sanjay Sarangi, proceeded to the gates of the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee headquarters, with party workers carrying posters and banners against Mr. Gandhi. Police intervened after Congress workers armed with bamboo sticks confronted the BJP procession, leading to a clash. Several

persons from both sides were injured, but there was no official word on the number of injured persons.

BJP and Congress workers also came face-to-face at Shaheed Chowk in Jammu near J&K Congress' headquarters, prompting massive police deployment and barricading.

A confrontation between the two parties was seen outside the residence

of Jalna MP and Congress leader Kalyan Kale. On receiving information about the BJP protest, Congress workers rushed to Mr. Kale's office and staged a counter-protest.

Detained, evicted

In Maharashtra, Congress leaders led by State president Harshwardhan Sapkal were detained, forcibly evicted and bundled into police vans during a march towards the State BJP office in Mumbai. Mr. Sapkal alleged that the Narendra Modi government had undermined democratic values and failed to address recurring examination irregularities, including NEET paper leak.

He demanded that PM Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah apologise over the incident.

In Bengaluru, the Congress workers staged a protest outside the BJP State office. The Karnataka

BJP took out a counter-protest march towards the Congress office.

A large number of BJP leaders and workers, led by Rajasthan unit president Madan Rathore, took out a march to the Congress office in Jaipur. Mr. Rathore said Mr. Gandhi's dharna was unacceptable and "a childish act".

BJP leaders and workers, including Manipur Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh, staged a sit-in protest in Imphal against Mr. Gandhi, accusing him of politicising the students' issue.

The Uttar Pradesh units of BJP and Congress also held separate protests in Lucknow. The BJP marched to gherao the Congress office in Mall Avenue. The Congress, too, set out on a march to gherao the CM's residence, claiming ill-treatment of Mr. Gandhi and other Congress leaders.

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उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम (नगरीय)
(उपग्रह सरकार का उपकरण)
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प्रधान कार्यालय: टी.सी. 38-वी, विमूक्ति खण्ड,
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L.No. 782/M-14/193
Dated: 21.07.2026

ई-निविदा सूचना (2nd Call)
उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम, की ओर से
अयोध्या नगर द्वारा मुख्यमंत्री वैश्विक
नगरीय योजना (CM-VNY) योजनागत
नगर पंचायत महानगर, जनपद मधुरा में
कार्यालय भवन के निर्माण कार्य अनुमानित
लागत रु. 185.02 लाख (जी.एस.टी. रहित
एवं लेबर सेस सहित) हेतु सी. एण्ड डी.एस.
में पंजीकृत टेकेंडरों से दिनांक 05.08.2026
के अग्रदूत 17:00 बजे तक अत्यवकाशीन
ई-निविदा आमन्त्रित की जाती है। उक्त कार्य
हेतु ई-निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक 22.07.2026 से
दिनांक 05.08.2026 के मध्य उत्तर प्रदेश
सरकार की e-procurement वेबसाइट
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06.08.2026 को 14:00 बजे परियोजना
प्रबंधक, यूनिट-17, सी. एण्ड डी. एस.,
उ.प्र. जल निगम (नगरीय), मधुरा में खोली
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पृथक से कोई प्रकाशन नहीं किया जायेगा।
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अवलोकन करते रहें।

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(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
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Bengaluru-560 009. Phone No. 080-22265383
website : www.kiadb.in e-Mail: cdco1@kiadb.in
No.IADB/ENGG/PMC/EPTND-EP-06/2254 /2026-27 Date: 22.07.2026

**SHORT-TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
FOR PROVIDING PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CONSULTANCY SERVICES**
(Through KPP Portal Only)

KIADB is inviting tender under Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Consulting Firms under two cover system for the following works:
Name of the work: (1) **Project Management Consultancy Services for the work of Formation of 15m Wide Road, 18m Wide Road, 24m Wide Road, 30m Wide Road & 45m Wide Road, Construction of RCC Side Drain, Construction of Spur Culvert & Construction of Box Culvert at Dobaspet 5th Phase Industrial Area, Nelamangala Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District.** (2) **Project Management Consultancy Services for the work of Formation of Industrial Layout, Including Construction of Flexible Pavement Roads, RCC Side Drains, RCC Chambers, RCC Storm Water Drains, RCC Cross Drainages, Laying of HDPE Pipes for Water Supply Works etc., at proposed Chintamani Industrial Area, Phase-I, Chikkaballapura District.**
Last Date and Time for Receipt of Tenders: **10.08.2026 up to 4:00 pm**
Applicants may download bidding documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>
Sd/- Engineer-In-Chief, K.I.A.D.B

BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD
(A Statutory Body under the Ministry of Power, Government of India)
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
BBMB invites online tender (Tender ID-2026_BBMB_284424_1, dated 22.07.2026) for Appointment of an IRDAI-Registered Direct/Composite Insurance Broker for Providing Insurance Broking and Risk Management Consultancy Services to BBMB for a Period of Two (02) Years from the Date of Award of the Brokerage Assignment. For detailed tender, please visit CPP portal and BBMB website www.bbmb.gov.in
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**GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
PUNJAB WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD**
BID NO. ETENDER/EE/PWSSD/ROPAR/34/2026/Date:21.07.2026
Executive Engineer, Pb. W/S & Sew., Divn. Ropar on the behalf of Chief Executive Officer, Pb. W/S and Sew. Board Chandigarh invites online bids for the following:-

Sr. No.	Items	Amount / Time Limit
1	Providing Sewerage System Construction of MPS & STP Construction of Roads and Making Sewer house connections at Naya Gaon Distt. S.A.S. Nagar (Phase 1 Part II)	As per DNIT

Closing date & Time → 06.08.2026 upto 3.00 P.M.
Opening date & Time → 07.08.2026 upto 01.00 P.M.
Prebid Meeting Date → 30.07.2026 at 09.00 A.M.

For detailed log onto <https://leproc.punjab.gov.in>.
Note: Any Corrigendum(s), to the Tender/RFP Notice shall be published on the above website only.

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

1796/12/2026-27/13552

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
Main Administrative Building, Sector-96, Noida, G.B. Nagar (U.P.)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.in

E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors / firms for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website www.noidaauthorityonline.in & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these website for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.
A) Fresh Tender Work:

S. No.	Jobs No.	Name of the work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
1	03/GM/Civil/SM/E&M-3/2026-27	Hire charges for CCTV Camera Surveillance Security System for different Festival in one year at different location of Noida.	49.22
2	38/GM/SM(WC-1)/2026-27	P/F of and Repair of Dustbins at various Markets and Toilets in Work Circle-1 to 5 Area, Noida.	34.39

The above tenders can be uploaded from dated 23.07.2026 to 06.08.2026 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-Qualification shall be opened / downloaded on dated 07.08.2026 at 11.00 AM.
B) Re-Tender Work:

S. No.	Jobs No.	Name of the work	Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs)
3	23/GM/SM(WC-1)/2026-27	S/o Labour for Cleaning & Operating Dharam Kanta Sector-145, Noida.	41.55
4	26/GM/SM(WC-1)/2026-27	M/o Drain (Re-construction of RCC drain in O & N Block & culvert in different location in Sector-12), Noida.	59.92

The above tenders can be uploaded from dated 23.07.2026 to 29.07.2026 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-Qualification shall be opened / downloaded on dated 30.07.2026 at 11.00 AM.
General Manager (Civil), NOIDA
CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO.- T-SEE/GSU-ABSS-2026-27-01.
CAO/CON/RSP/MHX for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-Tenders for the following works. The last date of online E-tendering is 18.08.2026 up to 15:00 hrs. All information and tender documents related to E-tender is available on website-www.ireps.gov.in.
1. Name of works : Balance work of - 1) HLP extension- raising & surfacing, approach road around the pond, boundary wall, circulating and parking area & other misc. works at Ram Dayalu Nagar. 2) PF surfacing, boundary wall, Ramp for FOB, approach road, circulating & parking area & other misc. works at Dalsingh Sarai. 3) Boundary wall, widening of approach road, toe wall, 6m wide FOB with ramp, circulating & parking area & other misc. works at Karhagola Road. 4) PF Surfacing, approach road, boundary wall, ramp for FOB, circulating and parking area & other misc. works at Mansi. 5) HLP extension- raising & surfacing, boundary wall, PF shed, coping block, circulating and parking area, passenger amenities & other misc. works at Mahesh Khunt. 6) Boundary wall, passenger amenities, circulating & parking area, & other misc. works at Lakhminia. 7) Boundary wall, ramp for FOB, extension of circulating and parking area & other misc. works at Bhagwanpur. 8) PF Surfacing, PF shed & other misc. works at Sonpur. 9) PF raising & surfacing, Ramp for FOB, approach road, boundary wall, utility shifting and extension of circulating area and parking area & other misc. works at Dighwara. 10) VIP lounge, pathway, drain, staff toilet, 6m wide new FOB and ramp for existing FOB & other misc. works at Shahpur Patoree. 11) PF Surfacing, boundary wall, ramp for FOB, circulating & parking area & other misc. works at Khagaria. Provision of 1) 2nd entry building, Circulating area, drain, parking area, boundary wall, PF surfacing, & other misc. balance works of 1st entry at Hajipur. 2) 2nd entry building, Shifting of AEN HQ & AEN Line office, shifting of IOW office & store, circulating & parking area, drain & other misc. works at Sonpur. 3) 2nd entry building, Parking area, drain, approach road, boundary wall, PF surfacing, ramp for FOB & other misc. works at Naugachia. 4) Provision of Building, PF surfacing, Ramp for FOB, approach road, boundary wall and circulating area, parking area & other misc. works at Sahabpur Kamal. 2. Advertised Value (In Rs.): ₹1775306033.08, 3. Earnest Money (In Rs.): ₹35506100.00
The above tender notice is available on website www.ireps.gov.in. RIGHT OF RAILWAY TO DEAL WITH TENDER: Railway Administration reserves the right to postpone/modify or to cancel any one or all the tenders without assigning any reason.
Dy. Chief Project Manager/
Gati Shakti/ECR/Sonpur
PR/0592/SEE/GS/T/26-27/88

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-OPEN TENDER NOTICE NO.- S&T/SEE/E-OT/26-27/24 Date: 17.07.2026
The DRM (Sig. & Telecom)/SEE for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-Tenders for the following works. The last date of online E-tendering is 12.08.2026 up to 12:00 hrs. All information and tender documents related to E-tender is available on website-www.ireps.gov.in.
1. E-Tender No. : S&T/SEE/E-OT/26-27/24. 2. Name of Work : HAJIPUR JN. ~~~Muzaffarpur Jn.~~~HJP-MFP-~ Interlocking of 08 Nos. of L.C. Gates having TVU more than 20000 in HJP-MFP section under Sonpur division. 3. Approx Cost (In Rs.): ₹5,38,88,768.50, 4. Earnest Money (In Rs.): ₹10,77,800.00, 5. Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.) (Non-refundable) : ₹0.00, 6. Completion period : 09 (Nine) Months from date of issue of LOA.
The above tender notice is available on website www.ireps.gov.in. Uploading date 17.07.2026. RIGHT OF RAILWAY TO DEAL WITH TENDER: Railway Administration reserves the right to postpone /modify or to cancel any one or all the tenders without assigning any reasons.
Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer/
ECR/Sonpur
PR/0591/SEE/S&T/T/26-27/40

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE NO.:
N-235-62 TeleTender08-2026
Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/ Tele/HQ, N.E. Railway, Gorakhpur for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender for the following works from the contractors having sufficient experience as per eligibility criteria mentioned in tender document. **Tender No.:** N-235-62TeleTender08-2026; **Name of work:** Augmentation and improvement/Upgradation of Telecom infrastructure by Supply, Installation, Testing, Commissioning of IP based Intercom Exchanges & Telecom Equipment's along with LAN cabling including associated works related to Fire Alarm System, Lightening Arrestor, Power Supply and Replacement of old analog PCSTE Conference system with Digital Audio Conference System in Head Quarter Gorakhpur, N.E. Railway.; **Tender Value:** ₹2,11,86,266.95 (Rs. Two Crore Eleven Lakh Eighty Six Thousand Two Hundred Sixty Six & Ninety Five Paise only); **Bid Security:** ₹4,23,700/-; **Validity of offer:** 60 days; **Date & Time of closing and opening of Tender:** Dated 13.08.2026, Time 15:30 hrs.; **Completion Period:** 06 (Six) Months. For any changes of tender, please check on internet website for Corrigendum of the original tender notice. Detailed tender notice, documents, Eligibility criteria, terms & conditions are available at website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>. **Note:** The Tenderer's/bidder's must upload all relevant attachments/ Format/ Annexure along with their bid.
Dy. Chief Signal & Telecom Engineer/ CPRO/Signal-73 Tele/HQ, Gorakhpur
DO NOT SMOKE BIDI/CIGARETTE IN TRAINS

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Notice of Invitation E-Tender
Divisional Railway Manager, N.W. Rly, Bikaner for and on behalf of President of India invites sealed open tender for the following works on the date shown as below. **Tender No.:** Snt-BKN-2026-27 -13, **Name of Work with its Location:** Telecom work for provision of CCTV system for the Lifts and Escalators at various stations and at SSET/MC/LGH office area of Bikaner Division. **Approx. Cost of Work:** ₹292929.42; **Bid Security:** 165900. **Date & Time for submission of Tender & opening of tender:** Up to 15.00 hrs. of 13.08.2026, **Website from which complete Tender details can be seen & download:** www.ireps.gov.in **1059-PS/26**
Follow us at [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/NWRailways) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/NWRailways) [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/NWRailways) [WhatsApp](https://www.whatsapp.com/NWRailways) [Telegram](https://www.telegram.com/NWRailways)

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE
DEATH ANNIVERSARIES
22nd ANNIVERSARY

Smt. SUSILA SUBRAMANIAM
W/o. Late K.P. Subramaniam
07-05-1928 - 23-07-2004

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K.S. MOHAN, UMA MURALI, SHWETHA, SHRADHA & APSARA

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MINISTRY OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT
& ENTREPRENEURSHIP
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



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विकसित भारत - समृद्ध बिहार



श्री सम्राट चौधरी

माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, बिहार

के कर-कमलों द्वारा

राष्ट्रीय कौशल प्रशिक्षण संस्थान
(महिला), पटना के स्थायी परिसर

का

शिलान्यास

विशिष्ट अतिथि

श्री जयन्त चौधरी

माननीय राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार), कौशल विकास और उद्यमशीलता
एवं शिक्षा राज्य मंत्री, भारत सरकार

श्री विजय कुमार चौधरी

माननीय उपमुख्यमंत्री, बिहार

श्री बिजेन्द्र प्रसाद यादव

माननीय उपमुख्यमंत्री, बिहार

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति

जिले के माननीय सांसद, माननीय सदस्य, बिहार विधान मंडल
एवं अन्य सम्मानित जनप्रतिनिधिगण

अध्यक्षता

श्री अरुण शंकर प्रसाद

माननीय मंत्री, युवा, रोजगार एवं कौशल विकास विभाग-सह-श्रम संसाधन एवं प्रवासी श्रमिक कल्याण विभाग

स्थान : सिकंदरपुर, बिहटा, पटना

दिनांक: 23 जुलाई 2026

समय: 12:15 बजे अपराह्न



NEET’s promise has failed; it’s time to trust States

The unprecedented protests by students across the country following the NEET question paper leak are not merely about one compromised examination. They reflect a deeper crisis of confidence in a system that was projected as the ultimate guardian of merit. When lakhs of students lose faith in the fairness of the process that determines their future, the nation’s conscience is shaken.

Tamil Nadu was the first State to raise the red flag against NEET – not because of irregularities in its conduct, but because of the very philosophy behind a single, high-stakes national examination deciding the future of every aspiring medical student. The problem was structural, not procedural. Recent events have vindicated that concern.

The Union Government introduced NEET with three principal promises. First, that it would reduce the burden of multiple entrance examinations. Second, that it would eliminate the scourge of capitation fees and commercialisation of medical admissions. Third, that it would improve standards by ensuring only the most meritorious students entered medical colleges, thereby producing better doctors.

On every one of these counts, NEET has failed.

Instead of reducing inequality, it has merely shifted the centre of learning from schools to coaching centres. Merit is no longer measured through sustained academic performance but by the ability to master coaching-centric test-taking techniques. This has disproportionately benefited those who can afford expensive coaching while disadvantaging rural students, government school students, first-generation learners, and those studying in State Boards and regional languages.

Countries such as the U.S., Canada, Australia and Germany admit students through school performance, standardisation methods, and holistic evaluation –



M.K. Stalin

Former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and President, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)

not through a single nationwide entrance examination. Where entrance tests are used, they are generally one component among several, not the sole determinant.

NEET’s own experience further exposes the myth of merit. The qualifying threshold for undergraduate admissions remains remarkably low. For postgraduate and super-speciality admissions, qualifying percentiles have repeatedly been reduced to zero percentile and, in some cases, even negative marks, simply to fill expensive private college seats. If merit truly governed the system, such extraordinary relaxations would never become necessary. Instead, the reality is stark: poor students must compete at the highest level for limited government seats, while those with financial means can access private medical education with far lower benchmarks. That is not meritocracy; it is privilege institutionalised.

Equally misplaced is the belief that NEET has curbed commercialisation. The coaching industry has flourished into a multi-thousand-crore enterprise, with families spending enormous sums over several years to prepare their children. The burden that NEET promised to eliminate has merely changed form – from capitation fees to coaching fees. Simultaneously, deemed universities and private self-financing medical colleges have found new ways to commercialise medical education. Instead of demanding donations upfront, many have increased tuition fees and other charges, making medical education increasingly unaffordable.

Tamil Nadu’s outlook

Tamil Nadu recognised these concerns early. We constituted the Justice A.K. Rajan Committee, which concluded that NEET neither improved medical education nor ensured social justice. Acting on its findings, the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly unanimously passed legislation

seeking exemption from NEET. The Governor withheld assent. The Union Government declined to engage meaningfully with the substance of the State’s concerns.

If States are trusted to establish institutions, recruit faculty, maintain standards, and fund medical education, they must also be trusted to determine admissions consistent with their own educational systems and social justice policies.

The solution lies in strengthening school education, restoring confidence in School Board assessments and allowing States to formulate admission policies suited to their constitutional responsibilities and local realities. Statistical harmonisation can fairly compare marks awarded by different Boards. States that seek exemption from NEET should be allowed to do so. Diversity in admissions need not compromise standards; it can strengthen both equity and excellence.

Another aspect requiring urgent reconsideration is the All India Quota (AIQ). This judicially created system diverts State-funded medical seats to a central pool, weakening federalism, and social justice. It disproportionately burdens women as they are unlikely to relocate to another State for postgraduation, fails to address regional disparities effectively, and deprives States of the benefits of their investments.

The recent student protests must serve as a wake-up call – not merely to improve examination security but to fundamentally rethink the entire framework of high-stakes national entrance examinations. The Union Government must hold consultations with an open mind rather than treating uniformity as an end in itself. India does not need greater centralisation. It needs greater trust in its States, its schools and its students.

The future of medical education deserves a fairer and more federal approach.

A budget without a proper government

In Puducherry, Ministers are yet to be assigned clear portfolios

STATE OF PLAY

Amir Hyder Khan Abdoul

Within weeks, the Puducherry government will present its first Budget since the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) returned to power. A maiden Budget is more than a statement of accounts; it is a government’s first declaration of priorities – a blueprint for development, welfare, infrastructure, and governance for the coming year.

Yet Puducherry approaches this constitutional exercise under extraordinary circumstances. Even though more than two months have passed since Chief Minister N. Rangasamy of the All India N. R. Congress (AINRC) took oath on May 13, the Union Territory (UT) still has no portfolio allocation. Every Minister has taken the oath of office, but none has been assigned responsibility for a department. Moreover, the Legislative Assembly has also not been designated a permanent Speaker. The Budget, thereby, risks becoming the first casualty of an incomplete government.

Every department contributes to the Budget. Ministers review expenditure, approve new schemes, defend departmental priorities, and remain accountable before the Assembly for the money they seek. In their absence, a fundamental question arises: who is making these decisions? The prolonged delay has naturally fuelled speculation that the issue is no longer administrative but political.

The continued delay in portfolio allocation, the absence of a permanent Speaker, and uncertainty surrounding other key institutional appointments have only



strengthened the perception that power-sharing within the NDA remains unresolved. Neither the AINRC nor the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have explained why a sworn-in Cabinet continues to function without responsibilities.

The Speaker’s position illustrates the problem. Puducherry continues under a Protem Speaker even as the Budget session draws near. A permanent Speaker is not a ceremonial appointment postponed at convenience. The office safeguards legislative procedure, presides over debates, interprets Assembly rules, and ensures that the Budget receives proper scrutiny.

The continued delay sends the wrong signal about the government’s preparedness.

Absence of governance

Puducherry’s governance structure has always been more complex than that of a full-fledged State. The elected government shares executive space with the Lieutenant Governor, whose constitutional powers have frequently been subjects of dispute. Successive governments have experienced friction with the Raj Nivas over appointments, administrative authority, and policy implementation. Mr. Rangasamy himself recently criticised sections of the bureaucracy, remarking that many officers posted to Puducherry treat the UT as a

temporary “vacation posting.” If the Chief Minister himself believes bureaucratic accountability is weak, the absence of Ministers exercising political oversight becomes even harder to justify.

Meanwhile, governance cannot be suspended. Traffic congestion continues to worsen across the city. Power disruptions remain a recurring public complaint. And with the northeast monsoon only months away, drainage and flood preparedness deserve immediate review. Every one of these sectors requires Ministers to make decisions and answer to the public.

The Opposition parties in the Assembly have also been remarkably subdued. A government entering its first Budget without portfolios and a permanent Speaker amid persistent administrative uncertainty should ordinarily face sustained legislative pressure. Instead, criticism has been sporadic and fragmented. Democracy depends not only on governments willing to govern but also on Oppositions willing to scrutinise.

Supporters of the government may argue that coalition consultations take time. That explanation may have been acceptable immediately after the election. It is considerably less convincing after more than two months. Citizens are not interested in internal negotiations over portfolios; they want to know who is responsible for transport, education, health, electricity, finance, and public works.

Before deciding where public money should go, the NDA government must first answer a simple question: has it finished deciding who is responsible for governing?

The author is an architect and urban policy researcher based in Puducherry.

Are children with special needs enrolled in schools in India?

The number of children with special needs in schools has remained fairly stagnant over the past eight years

DATA POINT

Nitika Francis

The Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) 2025-26 report has raised concerns about Children With Special Needs (CWSN) enrolled in schools, whose numbers have remained stagnant over the past eight years despite initiatives to get more of them enrolled. As per the data, there were 21.66 lakh CWSN in schools, a number that has remained fairly constant over the years (**Chart 1**). While one could argue that the overall number of children enrolled in schools has also remained fairly the same, the other question to be answered in this context is whether all the CWSN in the country are getting enrolled in schools.

The 2011 Census said that there were 32.5 lakh disabled children in India, just under the age of nine. If one were to include persons with disability in the 10-19 age group, the number increases to 78.7 lakh. The number of CWSN in schools in 2025-26 were not even 30% of the 2011 Census data. Moreover, their numbers would have surely grown since.

In the absence of Census data and estimates of children with disability released by the government in recent years, *The Hindu* used the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) data on disability and the government’s population estimates in the Report of The Technical Group on Population Projects to estimate the number of CWSN in the country.

The estimate showed that the number of CWSN in India could have grown from 92.3 lakh to 98.8 lakh between 2018-19 and 2025-26. These estimates when compared with CWSN in schools showed that, only 22% of the children seem to have been enrolled in schools (**Chart 2**).

This is a conservative estimate since the population estimates

could be calculated, as explained above, only for the 5-14 age group. This was compared with the total number of CWSN enrolled across primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary stages, which would include those who are at least a year or two older than 14.

Moreover, the number of CWSN shrinks significantly as they move up different stages of schooling. The shrinking is more pronounced among CWSN than the overall number of students enrolled. **Table 1** shows the proportion of children in upper primary, secondary and higher secondary stages compared with their numbers in the stages before.

Nearly 75% of CWSN who have enrolled in primary school are in upper primary, data showed. This reduced to 48% between upper primary and secondary, and 46% between secondary and higher secondary levels. As the table shows, these shares are higher for the overall number of children.

The data also showed that the gender distribution remained worryingly the same despite minor fluctuations in the number of CWSN enrolled. Only about 43 of every 100 CWSN enrolled in schools are girls (**Chart 3**). However, the number of girls with special needs dropping out of schools seem to be lower than boys. The number of girls with special needs in upper primary level, for instance, is about 80% of those in primary level.

Shashank Pandey, lawyer and founder of the Politics and Disability Forum, who works on political representation of Persons with Disabilities said that underreporting of the numbers cannot be ruled out. He told *The Hindu* that at times the schools that provide data for the UDISE reports are not updated with the 21 categories of disabilities now recognised by the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and still categorise students based on the eight categories provided in the 2011 Census.

Left behind

The data were sourced from the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) reports , the NFHS, and Census 2011



Towards inclusivity: CWSN take part in the Special Olympics organised by Junior Chamber International (JCI) in Visakhapatnam in August 2025.

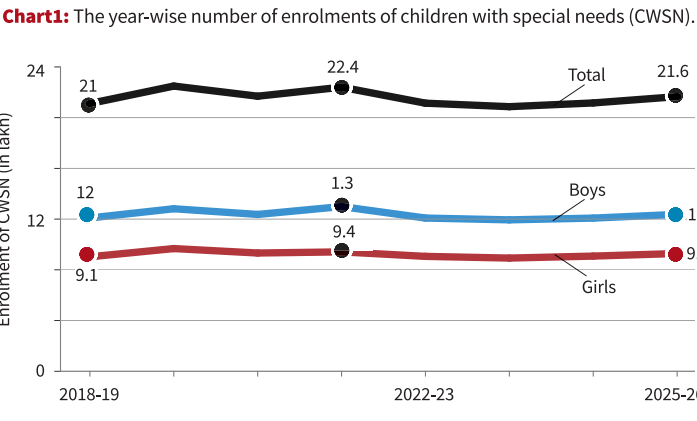


Table 1: The share of boy and girl children with special needs at the primary level and their proportion in the higher levels in 2025-26

Level of schooling	CWSN boys	Overall boys	CWSN girls	Overall girls
Primary (in absolutes)	57,87,800	72,34,75,000	48,12,787	68,75,41,000
Share of primary in upper primary (%)	73.9	61.5	80.1	62.6
Share of upper primary in secondary (%)	48.3	60.3	51.3	60.8
Share of secondary in higher secondary (%)	46.1	72.7	51.4	78.2

The Hindu used the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) data on disability and the government’s population estimates in the Report of The Technical Group on Population Projects to estimate the number of Children with Special Needs to arrive at estimated number of CWSN

Chart 2: The year-wise estimated number of CWSN versus the number of CWSN enrolled in schools

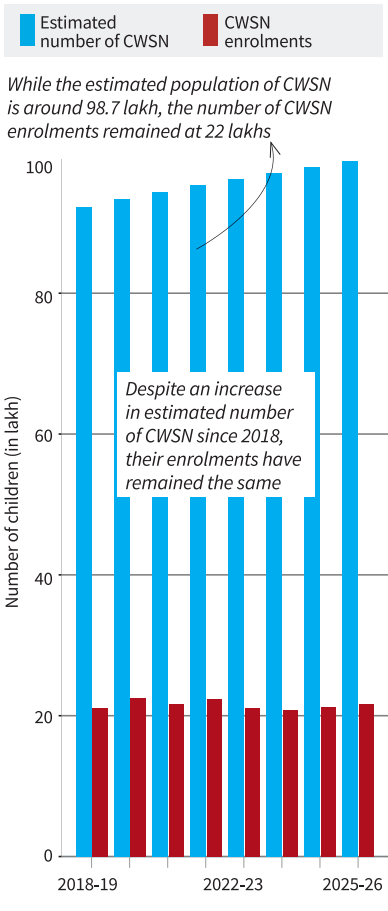
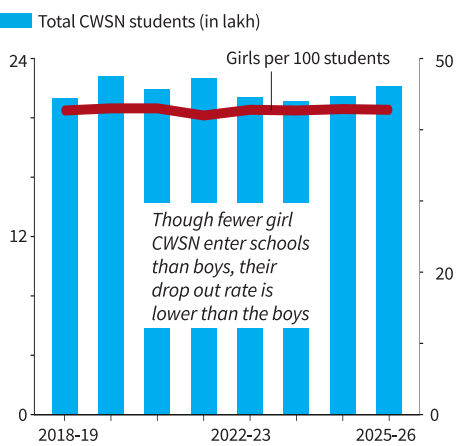


Chart 3: The number of CWSN enrolled in schools and the share of girls in the total enrolments



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 23, 1976

European passport: colour & symbol stand in the way

Brussels, July 21: The majority reportedly likes a delicate shade of lilac but the British are a little miffed over that. The French and Germans don’t like the symbols. The others have proposed to go on the cover. And there is the matter of language. Such touchy issues as the colour of the passport, what to stamp on top and the tongues in which to print it keep intervening in the long time quest for European unity.

Foreign Ministers of the nine Common Market countries have been struggling this week with the problems related to what is called a ‘uniform’ passport. The passport would be issued by each country individually, but would look the same for everybody.

Government heads of nine countries, which have a total of 260 million people, agreed at a summit last week to create the first popularly elected European Parliament. There is a European Parliament now but its 98 members are appointed and have little power.

As another part of the effort to convince West Europeans of progress towards unity, 106 young women have been hired to stand at border crossings and hand out leaflets extolling the accomplishments of the Common Market.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 23, 1926

The golden car festival at Tuticorin

Tuticorin, July 21: The Golden Car Festival of our Lady of Snows will be celebrated this year on the 5th of August. It will be a great occasion in Tuticorin, especially because this festival comes after a lapse of nearly two decades. The Church of our Lady of Snows is one of the few churches in Southern India which can be legitimately called historical. The immense popularity which it has gained not only among Catholics but, strange to say, also among Hindus and other non-Catholics, is due to the miraculous statue which it enshrines as also to its always being associated with the name of St. Francis Xavier, at whose intercession the miraculous statue was presented to the Church by the Spanish Convent nuns at Manila in the year 1555. The magnificent car which will be drawn through all the principal streets in Tuticorin is very huge in dimension, 50 ft, in height and gold gilt all over.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Compensation for persons killed in Sikkim tunnel blast

5 in ₹ lakh, per person. The National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (NHPC) has announced an ex gratia payment of ₹5 lakh to the next of kin of each person killed in the tunnel blast at its under-construction Teesta Stage-VI Hydroelectric Project in Sikkim. Rescue operations are continuing round the clock. Of the 25 personnel trapped in the tunnel, 13 bodies have been recovered so far. PTI

Hamlets in flood-hit Kargil where water supply was restored

22 The administration restored drinking water supply in 22 most flash flood-affected areas of Kargil district through temporary arrangements, while permanent restoration of damaged infrastructure is under way on a war footing, officials said. The recent floods caused extensive damage to infiltration galleries, collection chambers, pipelines and headworks. PTI

Number of deaths in Congo due to the Ebola outbreak

999 At least 999 people have died in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Ebola outbreak, with 2,473 cases recorded since it was declared on May 15. Health officials say it is the fastest Ebola outbreak on record, with no approved vaccines for the Bundibugyo virus. Around 80% of new cases are linked to unknown transmission chains. PTI

The population figures in Cuba in 2025

9.4 million. Cuba's population fell to 9.4 million in 2025, down from 9.7 million a year earlier and just over 10 million in 2023, extending a downward trend driven by an unprecedented wave of migration amid the country's prolonged economic crisis. Cuba also has Latin America's oldest population, with people aged over 60 accounting for 27% of its residents. AFP

Sri Lanka's export earnings in January-June 2026

9.012 in \$ billion. Sri Lanka's export earnings crossed USD 9.012 billion during the first half of 2026, marking the first time that the exports have exceeded USD 9 billion mark in the January-June period. The total was more than 8% higher than the same period last year. PTI
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Are pellet guns being used at protests?

Pellet guns are used by police and military worldwide as a non-lethal crowd-control measure. They were last known to have been used during the 2024 farmers' protest along the Punjab-Haryana border. Though police denied their use, farmer leaders had alleged that several people were injured.

EXPLAINER

Vijaita Singh

The story so far:

At least one of the 80 protesters injured in police action during the march to Parliament on Monday (July 20), called by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) sustained pellet gun injuries. The victim identified as Shaikh Irshad Mansoori (25), a resident of Gurugram, underwent surgery at a government hospital to remove the pellets lodged under his eye. Most pellets were lodged in the upper part his body.

Another video of a woman being stunned by a “shock baton,” also emerged on Tuesday (July 21). The use of pellet guns and shock batons against civilian protesters, appears to be the first in Delhi.

What are pellet guns?

Pellet guns, whose technical name is ‘pump action guns’, are a form of non-lethal crowd-control method used by police and military worldwide. The other popular measures are tear gas, water cannon, pepper spray and taser guns among others.

Pellet guns are also popular in hunting and pest control. Intended to immobilise an individual, they are effective over short ranges of up to 500 yards but when fired from close quarters can be lethal, particularly when sensitive parts like the eyes are hit. The pellets can penetrate soft tissues.

What happened during the July 20 protest in Delhi?

There are standing instructions to open minimal fire at protesters and if necessary “below their waist.” A cartridge of a pellet gun contains a few hundred pellets made of lead, which disperses a few hundred metres when fired. Pellets can be of various shapes either like ball bearings or irregular. They are manufactured at the Ordinance Factory, Ishapore.



While Delhi Police has denied its use against protesters, pellet guns are part of the RAF's gear. ANI

While the Delhi Police have denied its use against protesters, pellets guns and shock batons are part of the gear of the Rapid Action Force (RAF) –the anti-riot unit under the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)– which was deployed alongside police personnel on July 20 and continues to be deployed near the Jantar Mantar protest site.

On Monday, the victim Shaikh Irshad Mansoori was hit near Palika Bazaar by a RAF official. His friend said that there are around 30-40 injuries on his face and across his body. Four of them, including one in the neck, had penetrated deeply, which is why he underwent surgery.

Originally from Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Mansoori works at a private company in Gurugram and was attending the protests in solidarity. He also had some visa-related work in New Delhi, which he was supposed to finish after the protest.

What is the first known usage of pellet guns?

Pellet guns were first deployed in Jammu

and Kashmir after Kashmir Valley's summer unrest of 2010 that claimed the lives of 112 protesters in police firing. The then Congress-led government at the Centre deployed pellet guns as a “non-lethal” measure to avoid civilian fatalities.

After violent protests broke out in the Kashmir Valley post July 8, 2016 – when the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) commander Burhan Wani was killed in an encounter with security forces – several people were blinded due to injuries inflicted by pellet guns, used by the CRPF as a crowd control measure.

Why were its specifications changed?

In 2016, the BJP-PDP government faced severe criticism for using pellet guns, with several political parties asking for its complete withdrawal. Due to the use of pellet guns, 13 people were killed in 2016 and more than 250 were injured, while some lost their vision.

In 2017, a year later, the first batch of less lethal “plastic bullets” were dispatched to the Kashmir Valley. The

plastic bullets were tested at the Terminal Ballistics Research Laboratory (TBRL) in Chandigarh and could be fired from the weapons that the security forces already possessed. Instead of metal, this round of ammunition had a plastic head.

In 2016, 1,022 CRPF personnel were also injured in stone-pelting by protesters. Of these, 956 were injured in the Valley between July 8 and 16 during the unrest.

What is the last definitively known use of pellet guns in the country?

They were last known to have been used during the 2024 farmers protest at Khanauri and Shambhu barriers along the Punjab-Haryana border. Though the police denied using pellet guns, farmer leaders had alleged that several persons were injured.

In 2023, they were used against protesters in the ethnic-strife torn Manipur, leading to a massive public outrage.

What about shock batons?

Shock batons are also a part of the RAF personnel gear.

In 2021, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), through the Border Security Force (BSF), prescribed Qualitative Requirements (QRs) for handheld ‘Shock Batons’ intended for self-defence and operational use by security personnel. It said that the equipment should be light weight, with a maximum weight of 1 kg and a length of 450 mm to 700 mm, ensuring ease of carriage and handling. It must be constructed from high-impact resistant material, capable of functioning reliably in temperatures ranging from -20°C to +50°C and offering a minimum level of water resistance.

The shock baton should have a service life of at least five years and be powered by a rechargeable battery. Additional requirements include the capability to deliver at least 1,000 quarter-second shock bursts on full charge, thereby ensuring sustained operational effectiveness in field conditions.

THE GIST

At least one of the 80 protesters injured in police action during the march to Parliament on Monday, called by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) sustained pellet gun injuries.

Pellet guns were first deployed in Jammu and Kashmir after Kashmir Valley's summer unrest of 2010 that claimed the lives of 112 protesters in police firing.

Where does the law stand on internet shutdowns?

What questions arise following the internet shutdown in Delhi during the CJP protest?

Rizmi Lia M.

The story so far:

Mobile internet services were shut down in parts of Central Delhi during the ‘Chalo Sansad’ protest organised by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP). Thousands of people gathered on the opening day of the Parliament's Monsoon Session, to demand the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan following the NEET paper leaks and irregularities in the CBSE school examination process. The internet shutdown, which remained in place until the evening, drew condemnation from the Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) and the Software Freedom Law Centre, India (SFLC).

What is an internet shutdown?

According to web rights advocacy organisation Access Now, an internet shutdown is defined as “an intentional

disruption of internet or electronic communications, rendering them inaccessible or effectively unusable, for a specific population or within a location, often to control the flow of information.” They take many forms, from full network disruptions to slowing down internet speed or blocking platforms.

Most internet shutdowns are ordered when large numbers of people are expected to gather for political reasons, peaceful demonstrations, violent protests or religious celebrations, according to the International Federation of Journalists.

Under Section 20(2)(b) of the Telecommunications Act, 2023, telecommunication services may be suspended only on the occurrence of a public emergency or in the interest of public safety, on the grounds specified in that provision, and for reasons recorded in writing. “A protest, by itself, is not a lawful ground for suspending internet services. Under Section 20(2) of the Telecommunications Act, 2023, a

suspension may be ordered only during a public emergency or in the interest of public safety, and only for specified purposes such as maintaining public order. The order must be reasoned, published, limited in area and duration, and issued by the competent authority under the Telecommunications Suspension Rules, 2024. The government must also consider whether less restrictive measures would be sufficient,” said Apar Gupta, Advocate and Founder of the Internet Freedom Foundation.

Which law governs internet shutdowns?

Internet shutdowns in India were earlier governed by Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017. These have now been replaced by Section 20 of the Telecommunications Act, 2023 and the Telecommunications (Temporary Suspension of Services) Rules, 2024.

Despite the updated legal framework, a review by the Digital Defenders Network found that several shutdown orders issued by State governments since late 2024 continue to invoke the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and the 2017 Rules.

For instance, the Secretary, Home Department, Uttar Pradesh, issued an internet suspension order applicable to the district of Bareilly on October 2, 2025, invoking Section 7 of the Telegraph Act read with Rule 21(1) of the 2017 Rules.

By continuing to rely on these outdated provisions, some States appear to have bypassed the procedural safeguards introduced under the 2024 Rules.

The current suspension order accessed by *The Hindu* as released by the Ministry of Home Affairs, was imposed across 150 cell sites according to an Industry source. It stated that the order was imposed under Clause (b) of Sub-section (2) of Section 20 of The Telecommunication Act, 2023 read with 2024 Rules.

Where does India stand in terms of internet shutdowns?

India continues to record one of the highest numbers of internet shutdowns in the world. Access Now's 2025 report recorded 65 shutdowns across 12 States and Union Territories.

Jammu & Kashmir has recorded the highest number of internet shutdowns in the country, with about 449 since 2012, followed by Rajasthan (115) and Manipur (62), as per the SFLC Internet Shutdown

Tracker. India has recorded about 24 shutdowns in 2026 (as of July 22).

What limits has the SC placed?

In *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India* (2020), the Supreme Court held that access to the internet is closely connected to the freedoms of speech and trade under Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(g).

The Court held that any shutdown must be backed by law, pursue a legitimate objective, be necessary and proportionate, and be the least restrictive measure available. Orders must also be limited in scope and duration, accompanied by detailed reasons, published and reviewed by a competent committee. The Court observed that “complete broad suspension of telecom services, be it the internet or otherwise, must be considered by the State only if ‘necessary’ and ‘unavoidable’.

Can orders be challenged in court?

Yes. A shutdown may be challenged before a High Court under Article 226 or, in an appropriate case, before the Supreme Court under Article 32. Courts can examine whether the order was lawful, proportionate and properly limited in area and duration.

“Indefinite suspensions are unlawful. The government must publish its orders and provide reasons capable of judicial review. Under the 2024 Rules, a suspension order cannot remain in force for over 15 days,” Mr. Gupta said

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The death we misunderstand: reflecting on literary depictions of drowning

From ancient epics to contemporary fiction, drowning has been a recurring literary obsession — and an overlooked human catastrophe. In today’s digital world, perhaps literature can rescue drowning from spectacle by presenting it as a preventable tragedy and a matter of social justice

Lopa Ghosh

This year, an image that seized the digital world was that of a speedboat capsizing in the rough seas off Phu Quoc, Vietnam – a few terrifying minutes of unspeakable tragedy, repeated endlessly across news feeds. Stories of drowning have piled up elsewhere too: children dying on their way to school, cars swept away by rivers in spate, farmers and fishermen swallowed whole, a woman taken by the sea while clutching an idol of her favourite god.

According to the World Health Organization, 3,00,000 people die by unintentional drowning every year. Since the publication of WHO’s first global report on drowning in 2014 we are only just beginning to recognise this barely understood public health crisis.

And yet, since days of yore, literature has been obsessed with drowning. From the Mesopotamian epic poem The ‘Epic of Gilgamesh’, Homer’s ‘Odyssey’, Ganga’s drowning of the seven sons she bore with King Shantanu in the Mahabharata, and Shakespeare’s Ophelia in ‘Hamlet’, to modern depictions such as Sylvia Plath’s ‘The Bell Jar’, literary texts have been replete with incidents of drowning.

With the uneasy conscience of a public health advocate, I find myself asking, has literature been guilty of aestheticising this terrible death? Or has it, in fact, been slipping us powerful diagnostic clues and decoders that we have chosen to ignore?

The face of drowning

I turn first to Shakespeare’s Ophelia, Hamlet’s beloved, who dies by drowning. Ophelia’s wondrous death is described by Gertrude as a beautiful tableau: “Her clothes spread wide and Mermaid like...” decked in fantastic garlands of crow flowers, nettles, daisies and long purples, she sank.

The feminist literary critic Elaine Showalter in her seminal 1985 essay, “Representing Ophelia,” reminds us that Ophelia’s unintentional drowning is the textual archetype of woman as madness or madness as woman. Elizabethan culture would have diagnosed Ophelia’s condition as an excess of female love-melancholy, or erotomania. Male melancholy, of the kind associated with Hamlet, is linked to intellectual and imaginative genius. A women’s melancholy, by contrast, is biological and dangerous. Such is the power of this scene that in 1942, phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard categorised death by drowning as a truly feminine death – a passive, beautiful immersion in the softness and fluidity of water.

A violent death

Over time, Ophelia has been resurrected again and again. Her visibility in painting, theatre and popular culture – from Odilon Redon’s ‘Ophelia Among the Flowers’ to Bob Dylan’s ‘Desolation Row’ – stands in inverse relation to her invisibility in critical texts. The English Pre-Raphaelites were obsessed with her death. John Everett Millais’s Ophelia –sensuous, floral, every botanical detail luminous – turned her into the very face of drowning and irreversibly shaped the idea that it is silent, calm, and painless.

But drowning is a horribly violent



Deadly depths: According to the World Health Organization, 3,00,000 people die by unintentional drowning every year. PTI

death. It is respiratory impairment caused by submersion or immersion in liquid. We do not often hear the violence because drowning is literally silent. Physiologically, when a person is drowning, it is almost impossible to scream or make any sound because the airways collapse and the lungs flood with water.

That silence has been appropriated for centuries by great literary works as a political and narrative tool. Drowning is often the death given to those pushed to the margins. Consider Maggie Tulliver in George Eliot’s novel, *The Mill on the Floss*. Maggie dies in a flood while trying to rescue her brother Tom. It is not a suicide, but it performs a similar narrative function. Maggie is a problem the novel’s social world cannot solve: her errant sexuality compromises her and it is difficult to return her to any respectable future. Her drowning in the flood is an erasure. Contemporary fiction set in the Global South has often offered a counterpoint to the elegant drowning of Ophelia. Most recently, in Megha Majumdar’s *A Guardian and a Thief*, a work of climate fiction set in dystopic future where Calcutta has been overcome by famine and lawlessness, drowning becomes collateral damage in a world of climate precarity. As a starving mob clamours for rice, a ferry overturns and hundred drown.

A fearful phantom

The one recent novel that situates drowning within an epic sweep and presents it as an elusive, little-understood, and fearful phantom is Abraham

Verghese’s *The Covenant of Water*. Set in Parambil, a fictional Kerala town, traversing three generations of an Orthodox Christian family, drowning is a lived experience, a daily threat, and also a family curse in this health-humanities text par-excellence.

In Big Ammachi’s family, men die by drowning. It is a curse and a mysterious ‘condition’ to which one family member, usually a male, succumbs generation after generation, until Mariamma, a gifted doctor, diagnoses it as a medical ailment which can be treated. From what is perceived as a dark curse, we come into the light and are granted a diagnosis and cure.

Yet what is most riveting in this tale, is the inexplicability and suddenness of these drownings – such as that of 10-year-old JoJo who drowns in an irrigation ditch after falling from a coconut tree. The ditch is so shallow that Ammachi’s spine jars when she jumps into it to save her little boy. These deaths are documented on a crumbling parchment. JoJo’s father, Big Appachen, cannot inscribe the details of his son’s death into this family document because he himself had never attended school which was across the river. Fear of drowning kept him unlettered. Big Ammachi delicately scribbles the cause and year of death next to JoJo’s name – Death in an Irrigation Ditch, 1908. Ironically, this fragile family parchment shines as a death register more detailed and accurate than the records on drowning available in many countries.

Lack of accurate data, hurried burials, weak death registration systems and the

unreliability of verbal autopsies are among many reasons why global data on drowning remains severely underreported.

The viral body

In contemporary literature, drowning continues to be a persistent literary trope partly because drowning is more common than we assume. But also because this death is like the element in which it occurs – water itself: a metaphor for power and also a canvas for sublime aesthetics.

In the new visual culture of the digital age, shaped by the voyeuristic pleasure of witnessing dying moments livestreamed, literature’s long work of interpreting drowning has been overtaken by CCTV footage and mobile phone recordings. Ophelia’s drowning has been replaced by algo-feeding images of a man flashing his phone atop a bottomless construction pit – the phone light slowly fading away as the man sinks while bystanders record a video of his drowning.

Drowning has been released from its historical role as metaphor and transformed into spectacle. The beautiful drowned woman of literature has given way to the viral drowning body. Yet as public health begins to recognise that data alone cannot tell the whole story and looks for clues in people’s lives, perhaps literature can rescue drowning from spectacle – not by aestheticising death, but by restoring it as a preventable tragedy and a matter of social justice and accountability.

(Lopa Ghosh is an author and global policy expert.)



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

What is the origin of “red tape”? (T. Malavika, Bangalore)

The complaint that most people have against all government organisations is that there are too many bureaucratic procedures to be followed. There are so many rules that nothing ever gets done quickly – everything happens in slow motion. This is what we mean by red tape; official rules which make it impossible for things to get done quickly. Here are a few examples:

My leave application has been held up by red tape.

Vijay says he knows how to cut through the red tape.

Why “red” and not some other colour? The idiom owes its origin to the practice begun by government officials in England in the 17th century. They were in the habit of tying official documents with a ribbon that was red in colour – some people argue that the ribbon was closer to pink than red! The expression “red tape” was introduced by Charles Dickens and made popular by Thomas Carlyle. By the 19th century the idiom began to mean “official sluggishness”. If you have a ‘red tape mind’, you apply rules blindly.

What is the difference between “battle” and “war”? (M. Deepa, Chennai)

The word “war” is normally used to refer to the duration of fighting between two factions – it could be two countries, states, etc. A war may last a few days or a few years. We talk about the Hundred Years War, etc. Usually in a war we have very heavy casualties. A “battle”, on the other hand, is usually fought between two armies or two groups. A battle doesn’t usually last as long as a war. A war can consist of several battles. An army may lose several battles, but ultimately win the war. During World War II, Germany won many battles, but ended up losing the war.

What is the difference between “its” and “it’s”? (P. Mahadevan, Mysore)

The word ‘its’, which is normally used in informal writing, is the abbreviated form of “it is”. For example, we can say, “It’s a wonderful day”, “It’s a boy” to mean “It is a wonderful day” and “It is a boy”. “It’s” is also used as a short form of “It has”. Here are a few examples.

It’s been a lovely day. (It has been a lovely day).

It’s been hard work. (It has been hard work).

The word “its” is used to indicate possession – just like the word “hers”. For example:

The little baby fell off its chair.

How do you pronounce the word “xenophobia”? (M. P. Chinnaraj, Erode)

The “x” is pronounced like the “z” in “zen” and “zip”. The first syllable “xeno” rhymes with the words “men” and “hen”. The first “o” is like the “a” in “China”, while the second is like the “o” in “so” and “no”. The final “ia” is like the “ea” in “dear”, “near”, and “fear”. The word means extreme fear or dislike of people from other countries. If you hate foreigners, then you could say that you are xenophobic. Here are a few examples.

Malathy is too xenophobic to go abroad.

Bala’s xenophobia prevented him from meeting some interesting people.

Published in *The Hindu* on May 15, 2001

THE DAILY QUIZ

A quiz on the Commonwealth Games, as the 2026 edition begins in Glasgow today

V.V. Ramanan

- QUESTION 1
- Of the 22 editions held so far, which country has hosted the most Games?
- QUESTION 2
- Which city was confirmed in 2022 as the host but pulled out because of cost factors and which Asian country also backed out leading to Glasgow agreeing to do the honours?
- QUESTION 3
- How many core sports and medals are on offer at the Glasgow Games?
- QUESTION 4
- Who was the first Indian to

- win a Gold medal at the Games and how many medals has India won since its debut in 1934?
- QUESTION 5
- This Indian won 15 medals at the Games and his sport has given India the most gold (63) and total tally of medals (135). Name him and sport.
- QUESTION 6
- Which Olympic medallists will carry the Indian tricolour and bear the ceremonial baton at the Glasgow 2026 opening ceremony?
- QUESTION 7
- In which sports are Nayan Moni Saikia, Pranati Nayak, and Ronaldo Singh Laitonjam expected to shine for India?



Visual question: Name this mascot for the Glasgow Games and what type of creature is it? REUTERS

- Questions and answers to the previous day’s daily quiz:**
1. On this day in 1992, this Colombian drug smuggler escaped from a luxurious prison—that he had built. Known as La Catedral, the prison was part of a unique deal he had reached with the Colombian government. Name the smuggler. **Ans: Pablo Escobar**
2. On this day in 1933, this American aviator completed the first solo flight around the world. **Ans: Wiley Post**
3. On this day in 1923, this American baseball player became the first pitcher in the MLB to strike out 3,000 batters. **Ans: Walter Johnson**
4. This American author of poetry, prose was born on this day in 1849. She is remembered for her 1883 sonnet, “The New Colossus”, which was inspired by the Statue of Liberty. Identify her. **Ans: Emma Lazarus**
5. This English film director and actor, who is best remembered for several horror films: *Frankenstein* (1931), *The Invisible Man* (1933) and *Bride of Frankenstein* was born on this day in 1889. **Ans: James Whale**
- Visual: Identify this German astronomer born on this day in 1784. He made the first measurement of the distance of a star other than the Sun. **Ans: Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel**
- Early birds:** Neil Lal| Arun Kumar Singh| Dil Bahadur Airee| Pulkit Sathe| Sumana Dutta

Word of the day

Avarice: insatiable desire for wealth

Synonyms: greed, covetousness, rapacity

Usage: History is filled with empires undone by avarice.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/avarice

International Phonetic Alphabet: /əˈvæɪɪs/

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

Rahul reassures INDIA bloc allies of close coordination

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Opposition parties need to step up pressure on the government both within and outside Parliament, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said on Wednesday, even as he reassured all allies at an INDIA bloc meeting that the Congress believes in better coordination between them.

His remarks come a day after the Congress dharna at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's doorstep, with several allies reportedly upset that they were not kept in the loop about that plan.

At a press conference in the evening, when asked about the Opposition's future strategy and whether the Parliament would function or not, Mr. Gandhi said, "This is a decision for the meeting tomorrow morning. There is a meeting of Opposition leaders, it is disrespectful for me to decide for them. What they will decide we will agree with them," Mr. Gandhi said.

Though several Opposition parties were upset that they were not informed prior to the Congress's protest outside the Prime Minister's residence on Tuesday, sources said that none of them aired



Rahul Gandhi

their displeasure at the meeting on Wednesday; instead, a few privately conveyed it to the Congress.

'A sudden plan'

According to sources, Mr. Gandhi reassured the allies that it was not a deliberate move to keep them out of the loop; instead, he said, the decision was taken suddenly and could not be communicated in time.

Mr. Gandhi, according to sources, emphasised that the Opposition has to adapt its strategy to the changed circumstances and go to the people, he added.

Sources said, on Tuesday, the Congress had initially invited several Opposition leaders to come to party president Mallikarjun Kharge's residence at 3 p.m. Though this invitation was later rescinded, it was explained that there had been a change of plans.

The plans for the protest

at the Prime Minister's doorstep were kept secret and were known only to four or five top Congress leaders. All Congress MPs were then asked to gather at Mr. Kharge's residence at 3 p.m. for a "cake-cutting" ceremony for his 84th birthday. Upon reaching there, Mr. Gandhi informed the assembled MPs that they would march to the rear entrance of the Prime Minister's residence, about 100 metres away. Without waiting for a response from them, he had set off on foot, with the MPs following.

Around 5 p.m., the Congress had reached out to other Opposition leaders. Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav was quick to react. He reached the protest site and was detained along with Mr. Gandhi. Sources said many other leaders also attempted to reach the protest site, but could not get there in time due to heavy traffic. The Trinamool Congress MP Sagarika Ghosh was one such leader.

The Left MPs, meanwhile, declined the invitation. According to sources, Left leaders were upset because, at the Monday morning meeting of the INDIA bloc, they had been the ones to suggest a march to the PM's residence.

Govt. ready for discussion on NEET paper leak: Rijiju

Minister says Speaker will hold consultations and decide rules, date, duration of debate; Congress leader seeks adjournment motion to set aside all other business; demands Pradhan's resignation

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Amid repeated disruptions, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju on Wednesday told the Lok Sabha that the government was ready for a discussion on the NEET paper leak, even as Opposition parties insisted that Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resign over the controversy.

The Opposition protests led to repeated adjournments of the House as soon as the proceedings started at 11 a.m. When the Lok Sabha reassembled at noon, Speaker Om Birla asked Mr. Rijiju to make a statement.

Congress leader K.C. Venugopal intervened, saying the Opposition's demand went beyond a discussion and included Mr. Pradhan's resignation.

"Our demand is simple. When the entire nation is feeling the pain of our students, all other business of the House should be set aside and this burning issue should be the top priority for Parliament," Mr. Venugopal said. He demanded that Mr.



Taking questions: Union Minister Kiren Rijiju speaks in Lok Sabha during the Monsoon Session of Parliament on Wednesday. ANI

Asking the Opposition to join the debate in the House, Rijiju says street protests will not yield results

Birla allow an adjournment motion – a parliamentary device where the House adjourns all other business and starts debating the subject for which the motion has been moved.

Responding to him, Mr. Rijiju said the government was ready for a discussion on the issue.

He said the Speaker would hold consultations with floor leaders to decide the rules, date, and duration of the debate.

Disruptions and protest Mr. Birla then said he had heard the views of all sides, as well as the government's willingness to discuss the matter "with an open mind".

He urged the Opposition members to participate in the debate instead of entering the Well of the House and disrupting proceedings.

Amid slogan shouting by the Opposition members, the House was again adjourned till 2 p.m.

The Congress and Samajwadi Party MPs were dressed in black to protest against the alleged paper leak and the police action against demonstrators at Jantar Mantar and elsewhere.

Later, speaking to reporters outside Parliament, Mr. Rijiju said the government was prepared for a "detailed discussion" so that the country could know the steps taken to address the controversy.

The Union Minister accused the Opposition of preferring street protests over a parliamentary debate, saying that issues affecting students and the youth should be discussed in Parliament.

"Street protests will not yield results," Mr. Rijiju said.

Separately, Mr. Pradhan met the Speaker in Parliament House.

The Opposition has been pressing for a discussion on alleged examination irregularities while insisting on Mr. Pradhan's resignation over his handling of the issue.

Opposition and govt. spar over NEET debate in RS

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Repeated adjournments paralysed the proceedings in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday as the Opposition and Centre fought over the rules governing a discussion on the alleged National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) question paper leak. While the Opposition demanded a discussion under Rule 267, which requires the suspension of the day's business, the government said no conditions could be dictated.

Deputy Chairman Harivansh read out a ruling that an adjournment motion could be taken up only in the "rarest of the rare" situations. The Opposition argued that the current situation qualified as the "rarest of the rare", adding Union Education Minister must resign before the debate.

The House witnessed repeated sloganeering followed by multiple adjournments and did not take up any agenda. Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge tried to raise the issue of the police action against protesters, amid sloganeering by BJP MPs.

Leader of the House J.P. Nadda accused the Opposition of destroying dignity of Parliament through "irresponsible behaviour".

Protesting students are not terrorists, Modi must apologise to them: Rahul

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi should apologise, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan must resign and everyone who assaulted the students must be held accountable, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said on Wednesday, a day after his dramatic protest outside the Prime Minister's residence.

"They [the students] are our future. They are not terrorists," Mr. Gandhi said at a press conference.

Claiming that there had been 152 examination paper leaks over the past decade, he alleged that about 7.5 crore students had been affected while "there have been zero convictions". "Somebody or a

Opposition in '100% agreement' with the protesters' demands, including Pradhan's resignation, he says

group of people are destroying our education system, India's biggest asset," he said.

'Legitimate demands'

Mr. Gandhi said the Opposition was "100% in agreement" with the protesters' demands, including Mr. Pradhan's resignation, and described them as "legitimate" and "non-negotiable".

At the start of the press conference, the Congress leader played videos showing police action against students during Monday's "Sansad Chalo" protest.

Referring to the visuals, Mr. Gandhi questioned why students demanding a fair education system were subjected to force. "What have they done to have security forces aiming weapons at them, to be beaten up, to be thrashed? They are protesting peacefully, asking for what this country owes them," he said.

Mr. Gandhi reiterated the Congress's charge that the country's education system had been systematically undermined under the Narendra Modi government. "Our education system, which was known to be one of the best in the world, is now a rigged system," he said.

The Congress leader also accused the government of imposing a heavy financial burden on families through an expensive

coaching ecosystem. Citing party estimates, he claimed that Indian families spend about ₹1.32 lakh crore annually on examinations and coaching, nearly matching the Union government's education budget of ₹1.4 lakh crore, only to be told later that examination papers had been leaked.

Calling Mr. Pradhan "incapable" of handling the education portfolio, Mr. Gandhi said the Education Minister had "failed" and should be relieved of his responsibilities.

Asked about his detention and the alleged manhandling by police, Mr. Gandhi brushed aside the issue. "Yes, I was dragged. But, the policemen whispered into my ears to please remove this government," he said.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday said the Opposition had been "forced" to protest outside the Prime Minister's residence as Narendra Modi "refuses to speak in the House".

"If the PM can speak on the students' issue outside Parliament, why can't he make a statement inside the House," he asked, making an intervention when the Opposition parties pressed for Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation over the examination paper leaks and the police crackdown on student protesters.

The SP chief expressed his anguish after Speaker Om Birla initially did not ask him to intervene on the



Akhilesh Yadav, Rahul Gandhi, and other Opposition leaders protest against NEET paper leak at Parliament complex on Wednesday. PTI

issue. "Has there been a deal," an agitated Mr. Yadav asked the Speaker, adding, "The issue is about students, not Congress, BJP or SP. You allowed them to speak."

Amid speculation of a friction within the Opposition, Mr. Yadav clarified that he merely wanted to place the SP's position on

dav said his reference to a "deal" was aimed at the government's alleged "understanding" with the Chair and not at the Congress. They reiterated that any discussion in Parliament should begin only after the Education Minister resigned.

Inside the House, referring to the police action against protesters, he said students were "brutally assaulted" and that the government must take responsibility. "If you don't listen to students, they will come to the streets," Mr. Yadav said, adding, "Women students' clothes were torn, students were hit with lathis, they were left bleeding. Their limbs were broken. Is this the way to treat our students? Will you tear the clothes of our daughters?"

Why so selective on paper leaks, Nadda asks Rahul

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

Union Minister J.P. Nadda on Wednesday urged the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, not to be "selective" in citing paper leak cases, saying that such a serious issue should not be exploited for political mileage. He said the government was ready for an in-depth discussion in Parliament, which he described as the most appropriate forum to collectively find lasting solutions.

At a late-evening press conference, Mr. Nadda said: "...I appeal that the issue should not be turned into a political matter... This is a grave problem, and it deserves a serious and in-depth discussion."

He said the NDA government was treating the issue with the utmost sincerity. Reacting to Mr. Gandhi's

press briefing earlier in the day, the Union Minister said Mr. Gandhi quoted a figure of about 150 instances of paper leaks.

"These matters require investigation. This is a responsible government; every issue will be thoroughly examined and all the facts will be placed before the people," he said.

'The list is longer'

Mr. Nadda said Mr. Gandhi did not mention paper leaks and related irregularities under governments led by non-BJP parties, including the Congress.

Claiming the list was much longer, he said some of the leaks had happened in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Punjab, Kerala, and Karnataka.

"I want to ask the Leader of the Opposition: why are you being so selective?

This shows that your objective is not the welfare of students... Instead, you want to derive political mileage from students' issues," said Mr. Nadda.

"The Opposition should not keep shifting the goalposts... Children are the country's future and it is the responsibility of both the government and Opposition to safeguard their interests. We should come together to find a permanent solution," he said.

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh termed Mr. Nadda's press conference "a sure sign of the regime's increasing desperation".

"The whole press conference was an unending series of 'what-aboutery'. Mr. Nadda must go beyond such juvenile finger-pointing to first acknowledge the uniquely spectacular nature of Mantri Pradhan's and Pradhan Mantri's failures," he posted on X.

TELANGANA STATE AVIATION CORPORATION LIMITED
GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
E-TENDER NOTICE
TENDER No.34/TGSACL/2026
Invites E-Tender for Hiring Twin Engine Helicopter, VIP configuration on wet lease.
The Helicopter should meet all the DGCA requirement for VIP flying.
Interested bidders may download the tender and relevant details from the Website <https://tender.telangana.gov.in>. Tender download from: 24-07-2026.
Last date of submission: 06-08-2026.
DPR R.O. No. 34/PPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/2026-27
For Joint Managing Director

GOVERNMENT OF HIMACHAL PRADESH,
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE
Disaster Management Cell-HPSDMA,
Program Management Unit
Himachal Pradesh Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness Program
HP Secretariat, Shimla,
Phone-0177 2880320/ E-mail-sdma.hp[at]nicdot.jin
Date 21st July 2026
Request for Proposals (RFP)
The Himachal Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (HPSDMA) invites Request for Proposals (RFPs) under the Himachal Pradesh Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness (HPDRRP) Program for the following:
Sr.1. Empanelment of Travel Management Companies/Firms/Agencies to provide travel management and logistical support for official domestic and international travel, exposure visits, training programmes, study tours, accommodation, transportation, visa assistance, and related services.
Sr.2. Selection of Firm(s) for providing Program Audit Services in respect of Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (CFT) due diligence under the HPDRRP Program.
The detailed RFP document(s) are available on the HP eProcurement Portal (<https://hptenders.gov.in>). Interested agencies may submit their proposals online. Firms are advised to regularly visit <https://hpsdma.nic.in> and <https://hptenders.gov.in> for corrigenda and updates. The last date for submission of proposals is 17th August 2026 respectively up to 2:00 PM for Sr.1 and 13 August 2026 at 02:00 PM for Sr.2.
The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals without assigning any reason thereof.
-sdl/-
Nishant Thakur (HPAS)
Program Director
HPDRRP Program
HP / 0594/2026-2027

GRIDCO LIMITED
(A Govt. of Odisha Undertaking)
Regd. Office : Janpath, Bhubaneswar-751022, ODISHA
PUBLIC NOTICE

GRIDCO Limited
Janpath,
Bhubaneswar,
Odisha-751022

Objections / Response to Appeal/DFR No. 59/2026; 60/2026; & 61/2026 filed by GRIDCO before the Hon'ble Appellate Tribunal for Electricity, New Delhi against OERC Order dated 13.02.2024, 19.09.2024 and 23.03.2023 respectively, for Truing-up of expenses for FYs 2021-22 and FY 2022-23.

1.GRIDCO Limited has filed Appeal/DFR before the Hon'ble Appellate Tribunal for Electricity, New Delhi against Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission ("OERC") Order dated 13.02.2024 in Case No. 128 of 2023 (DFR No. 59 of 2026) for Truing-up of expenses for FY 2022-23; Review order dated 19.09.2024 in Case No. 38 of 2024 (DFR No. 60 of 2026) for Truing-up of expenses for FY 2021-22 & FY 2022-23; and order dated 23.03.2023 in Case No. 79 of 2022 (DFR No. 61 of 2026) for Truing Up for FY 2021-22, with respect to specific findings and observations. Hon'ble Tribunal has directed GRIDCO to issue public notice informing the public at large of the filing of the above appeals. The party respondents are OERC and TPCODL, TPWODL, TPNODL & TPSODL. The Appeal/DFR will be listed on 12.08.2026.

2.Copies of the said Appeals/DFRs may be availed by either (a) downloading the soft copy from website of GRIDCO Ltd.(www.gridco.co.in), or (b) requesting a soft copy by email from Mr. Sanjaya Kumar Mishra, CGM (PP)-I/c, GRIDCO Ltd. (cgm.pp@gridco.co.in).

3.Anyone who intends to file Objections / Responses to the Appeal/DFR may file 3 copies of the same at the Registry, Appellate Tribunal for Electricity, 7th Floor, Core IV, SCOPE Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110003 before the next date of hearing in the matter along with proof of service on the Appellant addressed to Ms. Abiha Zaidi, Advocate on Record, Supreme Court of India, Office: D-40 (GF), East of Kailash, New Delhi 110065, (M) +9810666702, E-mail abiha@saazpartners.com.

4.The above submissions should be supported by an affidavit in the notified format and should carry the full name, postal address and e-mail address, if any, of the sender. Should the objector wish to be heard in person, he must appear before the Hon'ble Tribunal on 12.08.2026 for which no separate notice shall be issued.
Sd/-CGM (PP)-I/c, GRIDCO Ltd.
4001/214/2627
OIPR-4001/405611/26-27/0017

INBRIEF



SC suggests raising retirement age of judicial officers to 61

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed all States and Union Territories to consider raising the retirement age of judicial officers from 60 to 61 years, pending its final decision on whether the age of superannuation should be uniformly enhanced to 62 years across the country. The direction was issued by a Bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohan while hearing a petition filed by the All India Judges Association.

50 OTT platforms blocked in past two years, says Minister

The government has disabled 50 OTT platforms for public access in the country over the past two years for displaying obscene content and for violations of the Information Technology Act and other applicable laws, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said in a written response to a question by Lok Sabha member Sambit Patra. In another response, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs L. Murugan said the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media, Ethics Code) Rules have been notified to put in place an institutional mechanism for publishers of current affairs on digital media and OTT platforms.

Policeman killed in terrorist attack in J&K

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

A policeman on Amarnath Yatra duty was killed after terrorists opened fire from a close range in south Kashmir’s Anantnag on Wednesday. After the attack, the police launched a major search operation across Kashmir and detained 1,200 suspects.

The policeman, identified as head constable Ashiq Hussain of the 3rd Battalion, India Reserve Police (IRP), was manning a busy street on the Anantnag-Kokernag road near Lal Chowk area around 12.30 p.m. when terrorists opened indiscriminate fire reportedly from an assault rifle at him and his colleague, officials said.

The police have not identified any terrorist or group responsible for the attack. According to locals, hundreds of youth were detained in the crackdown in Kashmir, especially in Anantnag, Shopian and Kulgam districts. Srinagar saw the highest number of detentions at 700. Unofficial estimates put the number at 2,500 in the entire Kashmir Valley.

‘Stable India-China ties will help build multi-polar Asia’

Peace and tranquillity in the border areas is pre-requisite for normal ties, says Jaishankar during talks with Wang Yi; Minister raises safety of Indian seafarers during discussion with Sergey Lavrov

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Stable India-China relations will help foster a “multi-polar Asia” and a “multi-polar world”, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said during a meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Manila.

The meeting took place before the Foreign Ministers of the Quad countries, Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S., met on the sidelines of the 59th ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in the Philippine capital and reiterated their support for stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

In a separate meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, held days after four Indian seafarers were killed in a Russian projectile strike in the Black Sea, Mr. Jaishankar expressed “strong concern” regarding the safety of Indian seafarers.

“We believe that a stable and cooperative relationship can best be developed on the basis of mutual res-



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar meets Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Manila on Wednesday. PTI

pect, mutual interest and mutual sensitivity. Such a relationship can make a valuable contribution to a multi-polar Asia and a multi-polar world,” Mr. Jaishankar said in his remarks, highlighting that “peace and tranquillity in the border areas is obviously the pre-requisite for normal ties”.

The comments came against the backdrop of renewed India-China engagement, including the resumption of direct flights, updates to the visa regime, the restart of the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra, and the resumption of border trade. In this context, Mr.

Jaishankar said, “... the steps in normalisation taken over the last few months must be welcomed.” He referred to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping’s meeting in Kazan in October 2024 and recalled that the two leaders had “agreed that differences should not become dis-putes”. He also raised the importance of “predictability of supply chains” and “fair market access”, which need to be addressed.

The India-China ministerial discussion was followed by the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the

Quad countries that reiterated their support for stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The External Affairs Ministry issued a joint press release on cooperation between the Quad members and the ASEAN countries, stating, “As ASEAN Comprehensive Strategic Partners we, the Secretary of State of the United States and the Foreign Ministers of Australia, India and Japan met today in Manila to reaffirm our commitment to strengthening a free and open Indo-Pacific and our unwavering support for ASEAN unity and centrality.”

Mr. Jaishankar held an “in-depth review” of India-Russia bilateral relations with Mr. Lavrov and expressed “strong concern regarding the safety of Indian seafarers in the region”.

“Discussed various aspects of our partnership including trade and investment, energy and connectivity, science and technology and mobility,” said Mr. Jaishankar about his meeting with Mr. Lavrov.

Comply with Bhojshala order, SC tells Centre, M.P.

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Union and Madhya Pradesh governments to comply “in letter and spirit” with its July 14 order requiring the authorities to identify a separate open space near the disputed Bhojshala-Kamal Maula Mosque complex where members of the Muslim community could offer Friday namaz between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. as an interim arrangement. The direction came after the court was informed that the site identified by the administration was nearly two kilometres away.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana said the authorities were under an obligation to carry out its earlier directions in their entirety.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the Madhya Pradesh government noted that the space earmarked for offering namaz was about 900 m away from the disputed site.

Maharashtra rolls out farm loan waiver scheme

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government released a list of 500 eligible beneficiaries from six districts under its farm loan waiver scheme on Wednesday, the birth anniversary of Ajit Pawar, the late NCP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister.

The State Cabinet had approved the scheme, Purnyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Shetkari Karj Mukti Yojana, on June 2 and notified it through a government resolution (GR) issued the same day.

The eligibility criteria were partially revised through another GR issued on July 15.

Beneficiaries will receive SMS alerts for Aadhaar authentication, following which the eligible amount will be transferred to their loan accounts.

The government aims to complete the process for beneficiaries with loans from district central cooperative banks by July 31.

NHPC’s own paper detailed gas fires in Teesta-VI tunnels before fatal blast

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Flammable gas had been encountered repeatedly, and had caught fire more than once inside the headrace tunnels of the Teesta Stage-VI hydroelectric project in the years before the explosion, suspected to be from release of methane, which killed at least 15 workers on Monday, according to a technical paper written by the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited’s (NHPC) own engineers in 2024.

The paper, authored by five NHPC engineers and presented at EUROENGE 2024, the 4th European Regional Conference of the International Association for Engineering Geology, at Dubrovnik, Croatia, sets out the geological difficulties faced in completing the 500 MW project’s two headrace tunnels, each about 13.7 km long. The paper was written well before the accident and does not describe the recent



According to the paper, “flammable gas” was first detected in 2009, during excavation by the project’s original developer. PTI

blast. A headrace tunnel is the component that purveys water from a source to an electric plant’s turbines.

According to the paper, “flammable gas” was first detected in November 2009, during excavation by the project’s original developer, at a tunnel face where it “burst into flame”. After the NHPC resumed work, gas was again reported seeping from the tunnel roof at a separate face, where a detector recorded readings of up to 30% of the minimum concentration at which methane in the air can combust.

Both ‘faces’ (the working end of a tunnel) named in the paper – designated 4A and 4B – were reached through Adit-3, the same access tunnel in which the July 20 blast occurred.

The paper attributes the gas to the rock itself, noting that it was detected at the contact between hard quartzite and softer phyllite. The project’s tunnels pass through young, fractured Himalayan rock in Seismic Zone IV, including carbon-rich phyllite of the kind associated with trapped gas.

The NHPC has said the

July 20 explosion followed a “sudden burst of suspected methane gas” struck during work about 1.5 km inside the tunnel at the Samardung site in Sikkim’s Namchi district, and has announced a detailed investigation. About 25 workers were inside when the blast triggered a landslide that sealed the tunnel, and rescue operations are continuing this week.

The paper also catalogues extensive instability along the tunnels. When the NHPC restarted excavation in 2021, after the project had stood idle for roughly nine years, it found many stretches built by the previous developer had collapsed, with cave-ins in places reaching the surface, and the access adits flooded. The paper, available online, is titled ‘Planning and Methodology Adopted to Deal with Adverse Geological Problems Encountered During HRTS Excavation of Teesta VI Hydroelectric Project (500MW), Sikkim, India’.

Govt. clarifies on FCRA Bill’s designated authority clause

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Amid concerns raised by minority institutions, particularly the Christian bodies, against the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026 (FCRA), the Press Information Bureau (PIB) said on Wednesday that the designated authority would retain the religious character of places of worship.

One key provision in the FCRA Bill, 2026, which was introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 25 but could not be passed following an uproar by the Opposition parties, is the appointment of a ‘designated authority’ to take over, manage, or dispose of assets created from foreign funds when an NGO’s FCRA registration is suspended, cancelled, or not renewed. This authority will have the powers of a civil court and can order the transfer or sale of assets owned by NGOs to the government or any other body.

The Bill is listed for pas-

sage in the ongoing monsoon session of the Parliament.

“The designated authority manages only assets created from foreign contributions, and only once an organisation’s registration has lawfully ceased. Vesting is initially provisional, with full restoration if registration is renewed, and places of worship retain their religious character by law in all cases. The orders of the authority are subject to revision and to appeal before the court of the District Judge,” the PIB said, while responding to a “myth” that the government can seize an NGO’s assets under the 2026 amendments.

Power of courts

Responding to another “myth” that cancellation of FCRA registration always means the organisation has done something wrong, the PIB said, “Not necessarily. Many cancellations and non-renewals are administrative, arising from non-filing of annual

returns, non-renewal before expiry, or failure to maintain designated accounts. The courts remain fully empowered to review any cancellation.”

It added that in 2024-25, approximately 16,200 associations were actively registered and received around ₹22,963 crore in foreign contribution, “hardly the footprint of a prohibition”.

Answering a question about whether the “FCRA is aimed only at NGOs and religious organisations”, the statement said that “comparable global laws cover lobbyists, public relations firms, think tanks, universities and companies, anyone acting at a foreign principal’s direction, regardless of sector”.

On July 10, Home Minister Amit Shah assured the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI), the apex body of the Catholic church in India, that the FCRA Bill is not against the Christian NGOs, which receive a little under 15% of the total foreign donations.

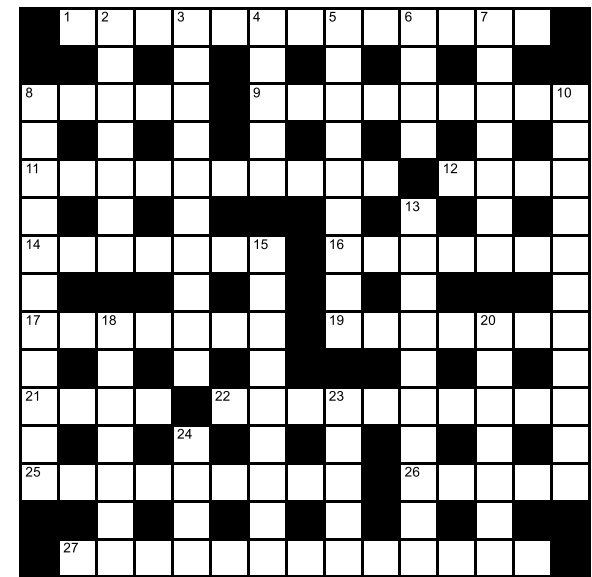


CROSSWORD **14853**

(Set by Dr. X)

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





- 12 Spirits in Japanese bar (4)

14 Holds member overwhelmed by drinks (7)

16 Way to enthal date with excellent stir-fried noodle dish (3,4)

17 Correctly limiting operation by Indigo, ultimately it's a form of market dominance (7)

19 Remarking about hotel's mediocrity (7)

21 Bond in tuxedo at hotel (4)

22 Meeting couple of criminals to secure Ecstasy before start of rave (10)

25 File, one with bugs primarily found in search for potentially harmful software (5,4)

26 Declared independence, inspired by a revolutionary (5)

27 Meme is on mercurial leader of America — accurate to a certain extent (2,4,7)
- Down**

2 First perhaps in viva about noise (7)

3 Extremely sexy maiden and old ruler in snap (7,3)

4 Jog naked after consuming bhag finally (5)

5 Protect pants with stylish fastener (6,3)

6 S. American wood sorrels in ordinary, round bag (4)

7 Online deceiver chats artfully, ensnaring female on island (7)

8 Musicians at centre in Akron playing funny genre of music (4,3,4)

10 One seen at top of each page is boss of company organising marathons? (7,4)

13 Opinion pieces in different dailies about mounting corruption (10)

15 Groom may snore after drinking alcohol heartily! Understood (3,2,4)

18 Old cheat captivating model with a good figure (7)

20 One who disregards forger in building passing francs (7)

23 Sack contains black thread (5)

24 Clone obtained by hi-tech operation (4)

- Across**
- 1 Swilling hooch with boss in empty cubicle? There's no alternative (7,6)
- 8 Controlled bronco finally in event for cowboys (5)
- 9 One disparaging rebellious socialist penning essay on principle of ownership (9)
- 11 Brilliant rounds against member in bridge (10)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Follow path of great men

While the Vedas are the ultimate authority when it comes to understanding what dharma is, this does not mean that other sacred texts are irrelevant. The Vedas were not written by anyone. They consist of what was revealed to sages of yore. Based on the Vedas, smriti texts such as Parasara Smriti, Yajnavalkya Smriti etc were written, said Paravastu Varadarajan in a discourse. We also have the two Itihasas – the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Then come the Puranas. The main Puranas are 18 in number, and were written by sage Vyasa. There are also works by various Acharyas, and the verses of the Azhvars. All of these constitute Sastra. It is clear that the Sastras are like an ocean. It is impossible to study all of them, leave alone mastering them.

There is a story about sage Bharadwaja. He spent 100 years studying the Vedas. When it was time to depart from this world, Bharadwaja prayed for another 100 years to study the Vedas, because he had not fully comprehended them. But at the end of 200 years, he prayed for a further extension of 100 years! At the end of 300 years, he was still not satisfied that he had understood the Vedas. Indra then showed him a hill. How insignificant a fistful of sand would be in comparison with the hill, Indra observed. Bharadwaja's knowledge of the Vedas was comparable to a fistful of sand, while the Vedas themselves were like a huge hill. There is a saying which tells us that the sacred texts are many in number. *Na eko munir yasya vaachah pramaanam* – there is no sage whose word is the ultimate authority. The essence of dharma is hidden like a cave. Therefore, we should simply follow the path of great people (*mahajano*).

INBRIEF



Rupee falls 28 paise to close at 96.53 against U.S. dollar

The rupee depreciated by 28 paise to close at 96.53 against the U.S. dollar on Wednesday, weighed down by surging crude oil prices and heightened geopolitical uncertainty. Forex traders said risk aversion in global markets and a negative trend in domestic equities further dented investor sentiment. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 96.36 against the U.S. dollar and traded in the range of 96.25 to 96.60 during the day. PTI

Dr. Reddy's Q1 net dives 69% to ₹435.6 cr. on lower revenue

Hyderabad-based generic drugmaker Dr. Reddy's Laboratories' consolidated net profit slumped 69% year-on-year (YoY) to ₹435.6 crore in the June quarter amid lower sales of cancer drug lenalidomide and nearly ₹240 crore provision necessitated by recent quality issue around weight loss drug Semaglutide. Total revenue from operations stood at ₹8,099.8 crore (₹8,572.1 crore), showed its results prepared in accordance with Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS).

Coal India arm BCCL posts June quarter loss at ₹68 cr.

Coal India arm BCCL on Wednesday reported a loss of ₹68.09 crore for the June quarter due to lower revenue and higher expenses. However, the company had reported a profit of ₹176.87 crore in the year-ago period, Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. (BCCL) said in a filing with the BSE. Revenue from operations during the first quarter of the current fiscal year declined to ₹3,587.27 crore over ₹3,719.59 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal year. PTI

Centre considering to lift restrictions on airport ownership

The current rules cap airline ownership in airports and are inferred to similarly restrict airport operators from owning airlines

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

The Centre is considering removing restrictions on cross-ownership between airport operators and airlines, a move that could allow airport companies to own airlines and airline groups to acquire stakes in airports, according to people familiar with the matter.

“The Ministry of Civil Aviation is preparing a concept note for consultations with NITI Aayog and other government ministries on the proposed changes,” a person aware of the discussions said, adding that such a proposal would need the final nod from the Union Cabinet.

The proposal comes amid Air India's interest in expanding into the airport business, one person aware of discussions added but senior Air India sources denied it. Air India is jointly owned by Tata Sons, which holds a 74.9% stake, and Singapore Airlines, which owns the remaining 25.1%.

Some existing airport concession agreements impose limits on airline ownership. For instance, the concession agreements for the Noida International Airport and Navi Mumbai International Airport projects provide that no sche-



Myriad of protocols: The ownership restrictions are even tighter for Delhi and Mumbai airports. REPRESENTATIONAL PHOTO

duled airline, cargo airline or their associates may hold more than 26% of the subscribed and paid-up equity of the concessionaire.

The ownership restrictions are even tighter for Delhi and Mumbai airports. Under the original privatisation framework, the aggregate equity held by all Indian scheduled airlines was capped at 10%, while foreign airlines were not permitted to hold any equity in the airport operating companies.

These restrictions also operate in reverse, effectively preventing airport operators from owning or controlling airlines. The Adani Group, which operates eight airports and has businesses spanning ports, power and renewable energy, has so far maintained that it has no interest in entering the airline business amid growing discussions around the dominance of Air India and IndiGo, which have a duopoly

between them.

The discussions come at a time when the Ministry of Civil Aviation has submitted a proposal to the Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee (PPPAC) for the third round of airport privatisation of 11 airports, which too will come before the Cabinet for its nod.

In 2019, the Tata Group, through a consortium with Singapore's sovereign wealth fund GIC, had proposed to acquire a 55.2% stake in GMR Airports, but the deal did not materialise due to a conflict of interest issue involving Tatas' stake in Vistara and AirAsia India.

Since then, Vistara has been merged into Air India, while AirAsia India has been integrated into Air India Express, both of which are part of the Tata Group's airline portfolio.

Queries were sent to Tata Group and Air India, but there was no reply till the time of publication.

Trump's 200% generic tariff threat would imperil Americans: Indian pharma

N. Ravi Kumar
HYDERABAD

U.S. President Donald Trump has given generic pharmaceutical companies a two-year window to establish manufacturing facilities in the United States, warning that products imported after August 2028 could face tariffs of up to 200%.

The announcement, made on Wednesday through a social media post, has significant implications for India, which sends more than a third of its pharmaceutical exports to the U.S. While Indian drugmakers sought to strike a cautious note, they warned that higher tariffs would ultimately increase medicine costs for American consumers.

Mr. Trump said the measure is intended to encourage generic drug production in the U.S. and reduce dependence on overseas supply chains.

“Effective August 1, 2026, all generic drugs being brought into the United States will continue to have a tariff of zero per cent for a two-year period of time, after which the tariff will be raised to 100% for a one-year period of time, and 200% thereafter,” he said. The announcement rattled pharmaceutical stocks. The Nifty Pharma index fell 1.31%, with 18 of its 20 constituent companies closing lower.

“It's not practical to move operations like that to the U.S. overnight. If ta-

Indian companies account for nearly 47% of all generic prescriptions dispensed in the U.S.

riffs are imposed, we will have to raise prices,” said Dr. Reddy's Laboratories CEO Erez Israeli. He added that the company was not planning any immediate changes and noted that policy positions could evolve over time.

‘India most exposed’

According to the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), India is among the countries most exposed to the proposed measure. India exported pharmaceutical products worth \$25.8 billion in 2025, of which \$9.7 billion, or 37.7%, went to the U.S. its largest overseas market.

Indian firms account for nearly 47% of all generic prescriptions dispensed in the U.S., making India the largest supplier of affordable generic medicines.

Despite this dominance, generics' low pricing means India's share of the value of U.S. generic imports is estimated at only about 30%.

The U.S. imported pharmaceutical products worth \$213 billion in 2025, including \$94.1 billion worth of finished medicines sold in retail packs. GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava said many Indian generics could remain competitive despite the tariffs because they are

significantly cheaper than branded alternatives. However, large-scale relocation of generic drug manufacturing to the U.S. would be challenging, given the industry's reliance on global supply chains and imported active pharmaceutical ingredients.

Granules India Executive Director Priyanka Chigurupati said the company's three U.S. facilities position it well to support increased local manufacturing. However, she cautioned that higher generic drug prices could ripple across the healthcare system and affect patient affordability.

Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance Secretary General Sudarshan Jain said Indian companies already have a substantial U.S. presence, with more than 40 facilities supporting jobs, manufacturing and research. India, he said, remains a trusted partner in supplying affordable, quality medicines to American patients. GTRI added that building a fully domestic pharmaceutical supply chain in the U.S. would require significant investment and would almost certainly lead to higher medicine prices.

“The zero-tariff window gives the industry a meaningful runway, and we see this as time we can use productively – to keep strengthening our position across multiple markets rather than relying on any single one,” said Pharmexcil Chairman Namit Joshi.

Economy navigated external uncertainties well: RBI bulletin

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Indian economy has navigated well the external uncertainties and supply chain pressures, underpinned by healthy demand conditions and resilient performance of industrial and services sectors, according to a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bulletin.

“The global economy is dealing with uncertain economic environment, supply chain disruptions and fragmented trading relationships. Amid these uncertainties, India remains among the fastest growing major economies across the globe and has been able to sustain the momentum in economic activities through June,” senior offi-

cials said in RBI Bulletin July edition, which was released on Wednesday.

Highlighting that both industrial and services sector indicators remained firm; they however said the farm sector was witnessing “uneven” southwest monsoon but the impact on food inflation may be mitigated by comfortable food-grain stocks.

BPCL posts ₹3,962-cr. loss in Q1 on war

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

State-owned oil-marketing company Bharat Petroleum posted a loss of about ₹3,962 crore in the June-ended quarter that was marred by elevated crude prices on account of the conflict in West Asia.

Benchmark global crude prices during the pe-

riod stayed elevated as the conflict disrupted the supply route, that is, the Strait of Hormuz that accounts for one-fifth of the global energy trade.

Revenue rises 23%

The Mumbai-headquartered refiner's revenue, though, rose more than 23% year-on-year basis to about ₹1.61 lakh crore.

HPCL posts net loss of ₹12,265 cr. in Q1 impacted by West Asia war

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

State-owned oil-marketing company Hindustan Petroleum posted a net loss of about ₹12,265 crore in the June-ended quarter on supply route disruptions due to West Asia conflict.

Benchmark global crude prices had breached the \$100/barrel mark for a

Benchmark global crude prices had breached the \$100/barrel mark for a prolonged period

prolonged period with the conflict having choked the Strait of Hormuz, which accounts for one-fifth of the global energy trade.

The Mumbai-based refiner's revenue climbed about 21% year-on-year to ₹1.45 lakh crore.

Sales – inclusive of the exports – increased 0.6% from the comparable period last year to 13.12 MMT. Combined sales of petrol and diesel increased 8.1% during the period.

IndianOil is scheduled to publish results July 31.



Net interest income climbed 7.2% to ₹4,684.72 crore.

IndusInd Q1 net rises 47% on lower provisions

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

IndusInd Bank Ltd.'s standalone net profit climbed 46.5% year-on-year to ₹1,002.5 crore in the first quarter (Q1) of FY27 on lower provisions and costs.

Net interest income climbed 7.2% to ₹4,684.72 crore while net interest margin was a tad higher at 3.52% (3.46%).

Provision for bad loans dipped 23% to ₹1,339.2 crore. Gross non-profitable assets as a share of gross advances shrank to 3.25% from 3.64%. Net NPA's share in net advances fell to 0.95% against 1.12%.

Net FDI negative in May on \$74 million excess outflow

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows turned negative once again in May with outflows exceeding inflows by \$74 million, according to the latest Reserve Bank of India data.

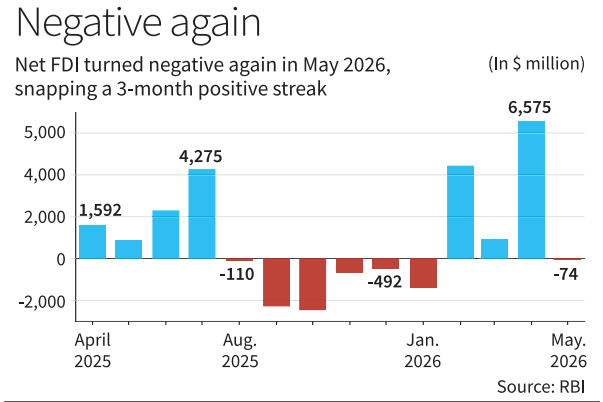
This snapped a three-month streak of positive net inflows and was driven by a sharp drop in direct investment entering India.

That is, even though outflows fell, inflows fell by a larger amount.

As per the data, the total direct investment entering the country, or gross inflows, stood at about \$6.07 billion in May 2026. This was 60% lower than in April and nearly 23% lower than in May last year.

The RBI's commentary did not speak about May on a standalone basis but instead focused on the April-May 2026 period.

During this period, it said Japan, Singapore, and Mauritius accounted for about 74% of the total equity inflows with financial services receiving the high-



est share, followed by manufacturing, retail and wholesale trade and computer services. It added these sectors together accounted for about 80% of total inflows.

Total outflows

Total outflows stood at \$6.14 billion in May 2026, lower than in April 2026 and May of last year. But total outflows exceeded total inflows by \$74 million.

Within the outflows, outward investment by Indian firms stood at \$2.4 billion in May this year, 49% lower than in April and 9.6% lower than May 2025.

“Of the outward FDI, around 74% of the flows were directed towards the U.S., Cayman Islands and the Netherlands; the major sectors included financial, insurance and business services and manufacturing, accounting for more than 85% of the outward flows during April-May 2026,” the RBI said.

The other component of outflows, repatriation and disinvestment by foreign companies operating in India, stood at \$3.7 billion in May 2026. This was 5.1% lower than in April and 13.3% lower than in May of last year.

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS - TIRUPATI
e-AUCTION NOTIFICATION TENDER

e-Auction for Sale of Press Jelly, Office Sweeping / records etc., (As-it-is where-it-is condition) in TTD Press. For Tender Notice & details, please see the Auction Id: 26261. Roc. No. P2/36/Press/2014. Please log on to the website <http://www.tirumala.org> and <https://konugolu.ap.gov.in>. For further details contact: 0877-2264292.

TTD-40021(31)/1/2026-PRO SEC(Adv.No.123) Date:22-07-2026 **EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

SANJAY GANDHI INSTITUTE OF TRAUMA AND ORTHOPAEDICS
(Government of Karnataka Autonomous Institute)

Byrasandra, Jayanagara East, Bengaluru - 560 011 Ph: 080-26564516, 26562500 Grams: SITO Fax: 26565222 E-mail: sitodirector@gmail.com
No. SGITO/e-Tender/ME/X-Ray/340/2026-27 Date: 22-07-2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through KPP Portal only)

Sanjay Gandhi Institute of Trauma & Orthopaedics, Byrasandra, Jayanagara East, Bengaluru - 11 invites tender from the eligible tenderers through the KPP portal of GOK for the following.

Sl No.	Description
1.	No. SGITO/e-Tender/ME/Hitachi/340/2026-27 SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENTS ON TURNKEY BASIS
2.	No. SGITO/e-Tender/X-Ray/FMS/66/2026-27 SUPPLY OF ORTHOPANTOMOGRAM (OPG) X-RAY MACHINE - 1 No.
3.	No. SGITO/e-Tender/Micro Drill/15/2026-27 SUPPLY OF MICRO DRILL SYSTEM - 2 Nos.
4.	SGITO/e-Tender/BMW/14/2026-27 DISPOSAL OF BIO MEDICAL WASTE SERVICES

(1) The Tenderers can download the documents from: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/> on or after **23-07-2026** and the last date for submission of completed tenders through e-portal is **07-08-2026** upto **4:00 PM**.

(2) The Tender Accepting Authority reserves the right to accept / reject or cancel tender without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- Director
Tender Inviting Authority
DIPR/SI/1767/2026-27

कार्यालय अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियंता सा.नि.वि. संभाग कोटा
क्रमंक: 1051 दिनांक: 20.07.2026

संशोधित निविदा संख्या-09/2026-27

इस कार्यलय के चार्ज 776 दिनांक 17.06.2026 के द्वारा प्रकाशित निविदा सूचना संख्या-09/2026-27 अविलंब कार्यों से निम्न संशोधन किया जात है।

क्र. सं.	विवरण	पूर्व से	अब यह क्या जाये
1	निविदा फार्म मिलने एवं जमा करने की तारीख	29.06.2026 से 20.07.2026 सबसे 6.00 बजे	29.06.2026 से 23.07.2026 सबसे 6.00 बजे
2	ऑनलाइन तकनीकी निविदा खोलने की तारीख	22.07.2026 अपराह्न 3.00 बजे	24.07.2026 अपराह्न 3.00 बजे
3	अंतिम प्रौढी जमा करने की तारीख	21.07.2026 सबसे 4.00 बजे	24.07.2026 दोपहर 12.00 बजे

निविदा की अन्य शर्तें यथावत रहेंगे।
UBN No.: PWD2627WLOB05240
DIPR/C/12800/2026

अतिरिक्त मुख्य अभियंता सा.नि.वि. संभाग कोटा

Government of Rajasthan
Superintendent shri kalyan govt. hospital sikar
Email- pmo_sikar@yahoo.in Date- 17-07-2026

No. SKH/Store/NIT/2026-27/214 E-Tender Notice Invitation No. 03/2026

Online Bids are invited from the registered bidders of appropriate category for supply of the following items:-

S.N.	Name of Item	Estimated bid value (Rs.) including all taxes	Last date of online submission of bid	Technical bid of opening
1	Rate contract for medicine under MNDY	400.00 lac	10/08/2026	11/08/2026
2	Rate contract for surgical & suture under MNDY	200.00 lac	10/08/2026	11/08/2026

Note:- 1. Detailed bid document can be download from <http://sppp.raj.nic.in> & <http://proc.rajjasthan.gov.in>
2. Bid fees EMD and processing fee will be as per bid document and rtp rules 2013.
3. Other details specification, conditions are as per the detailed bid document.
1. NIB CODE- MHS2627A1987 2. UBN CODE- MHS2627GLOB02618
3. UBN CODE- MHS2627GLOB02919
DIPR/C/12768/2026 **Superintendent Shri Kalyan Govt. Hospital Sikar**

BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED
(Wholly Owned Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
CIN-U04010KA2002SGC030438

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPP Portal)

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Availability of bid document: **24.07.2026 From 15:00 hrs** on or after. Last date for receipt of bids: **10.08.2026 Up to 15:00 hrs**

The detailed notification can be obtained from the Website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. Further details can be obtained from the office of the undersigned.

For Electricity related complaints call: 1912 **Sd/- General Manager (DAS, SG & TIC) BESCOM, Bengaluru.**
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ZAWTAR AL-GHARBIYAH

Lebanon PM says Beirut working for ‘complete Israeli withdrawal’



Lebanon is working towards a “complete Israeli withdrawal” from areas it occupies, Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said on Wednesday on a visit to a village where Lebanon’s army recently deployed. “We will continue mobilising our political and diplomatic efforts to secure a complete Israeli withdrawal from the south.” AFP

NEW YORK

U.S. court sets June 2027 trial for Venezuela’s ousted leader Maduro



Venezuela’s ousted President Nicolas Maduro will go on trial in the United States on June 1, 2027, a judge ruled on Wednesday, after his capture in a U.S. military raid in January. The former leader and wife, Cilia Flores, have been held in a Brooklyn jail after pleading not guilty to drug trafficking and firearms charges. AFP

MANILA

Allowing Iran to control Hormuz ‘dangerous precedent’, says Rubio



U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio told Southeast Asian Foreign Ministers on Wednesday that Iranian control of the Strait of Hormuz would set a dangerous precedent with repercussions beyond the West Asia. Mr. Rubio’s remarks came as the region is grappling with claims by China and ASEAN members in the South China Sea. AFP

KABUL

Pak. strike on Kabul drug treatment centre may be war crime: Amnesty



A Pakistani air strike that hit a drug treatment centre in the Afghan capital Kabul in March, killing hundreds of civilians, should be investigated as a possible war crime, human rights organisation Amnesty International says. It said it had “found no evidence to support” Pakistan’s claims of it being used for military purposes. AP

Trump vows to hit a bridge or power plant in Iran for each Hormuz attack

U.S. leader’s threat comes during the 11th consecutive night of U.S. strikes on Iran, with attacks targeting aircraft hangars and drone storage sites; Jordan says it intercepted four missiles and four drones, with two missiles falling in ‘uninhabited areas’

Associated Press
DUBAI

U.S. President Donald Trump has warned Iran that the U.S. will destroy one bridge or power plant each time Iran shoots at a ship in the Strait of Hormuz. The warning came after the U.S. carried out another wave of strikes on Iran, where air defences opened fire over the capital, Tehran. Iran launched a missile attack on a Jordanian city on Israel’s doorstep, and alerts were issued in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. In his warning on social media, the President returned to earlier threats to

target civilian infrastructure in retaliation for Iranian attacks. “From this point forward, any time the Islamic Republic of Iran shoots at a ship in the Strait of Hormuz, whether it be by Missile, Rocket, Drone, or any other device or weapon, the United States will bomb and destroy ONE BRIDGE OR POWER PLANT,” Mr. Trump wrote on social media. The U.S. military said the 11th night of air strikes on Iran targeted aircraft hangars and drone storage sites, as diplomatic efforts have shown little public sign of progress. Officials on both sides have dug in



Donald Trump during a dignified transfer solemn event for troops killed in West Asia, at Dover Air Force Base in U.S. on Wednesday. AFP

on their dispute over the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway for global energy that remains largely closed because of Iranian attacks. Israel has avoided striking Israel since hostilities resumed last month, apparently hoping to keep it from re-entering the war. But the missile and drone attack on Jordan’s city of

Aqaba, within sight of Israel’s Eilat, raised concerns over a further widening of the conflict after an agreement to halt hostilities collapsed. Jordan’s military said it intercepted four Iranian missiles over Aqaba, while two others fell in “uninhabited areas”. Plumes of smoke could be seen overhead in videos filmed by people in the nearby Israeli city of Eilat. Jordan said it also intercepted four Iranian drones. Another missile alert sounded in Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia warned residents of Dammam to seek shelter. Authorities later said danger had passed.

Zelenskyy fires Army chief and names a replacement

Associated Press
KYIV

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday fired Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyy as commander-in-chief of the armed forces and named his replacement, following days of mass protests in Kyiv, the country’s capital, and other cities across the nation demanding his removal. It was the second major change Mr. Zelenskyy has made under street pressure, after protests last summer forced him to undo a law weakening Ukraine’s anti-corruption watchdogs. Mr. Zelenskyy appointed Mykhailo Drapatyi as the new army chief, according to a statement on social media. “Our shared wish is one – victory over



Acting Defence Minister Yevhenii Khmara with commander-in-chief of Ukraine’s armed forces Mykhailo Drapatyi on Wednesday. REUTERS

the enemy and conditions at the front and in pressure on Russia that would force Russia toward peace,” Mr. Zelenskyy said. The Ukrainian leader said he made the decision after a series of meetings with military commanders. They began shortly after protests broke out demanding the reinstatement of former Defence Minister Mykhailo Fedorov, seen by demonstrators as a driver of military modernisation, and the removal of Gen. Syrskyy. Mr. Zelenskyy thanked Gen. Syrskyy for his achievements in Ukraine’s fight against Russia and praised him for the defence of Kyiv.

Saudi, UAE ministers signal unity after months of tension

Reuters
RIYADH

Senior Saudi and United Arab Emirates officials on Tuesday shared similar social media posts affirming their close historical ties and “wise leadership,” a move that follows months of tensions owing to a rift between the two Gulf monarchies. The posts on X by Saudi Minister of Media Salman Al-Dosary and Abdulla bin Mohammed Alhamed, Chairman of the UAE National Media Authority, were both released at 7 p.m. Riyadh time. “Emirati-Saudi relations are an extension of a shared history and deep-

The move follows months of tensions owing to a rift between the two Gulf monarchies rooted fraternal ties between two brotherly peoples, united by a single destiny,” Mr. Alhamed wrote. “The relationship between the Kingdom and the Emirates is a relationship between two peoples united by a shared history and heritage, and wise leadership in both countries,” Mr. Al-Dosary’s post said. Both posts said media should reflect those aspects of relationship and avoid undermining them.

U.S. to announce nuclear agreement with Saudi Arabia

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

The United States plans to announce a landmark deal with Saudi Arabia on Wednesday that would help establish a civilian nuclear programme in the kingdom, according to media reports. The move comes as Washington fights a war with Iran that began in part over U.S. concerns with Tehran’s own nuclear program – an issue that remains a key point of contention during now-stalled talks between the two foes. The New York Times, citing two unidentified U.S. officials, reported on Tuesday that the Trump administration planned to formally sign and announce the deal with the Saudis on Wednesday. President Donald Trump’s administration said the agreement would provide billions of dollars for the U.S. nuclear industry. A provision in the 30-year deal would potentially see U.S. companies build a uranium enrichment facility in Saudi Arabia, the Wall Street Journal reported. However, U.S. lawmakers from both parties and Israeli officials have voiced opposition to a civilian nuclear project for Saudi Arabia over fears it could be converted to eventually develop nuclear weapons.

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Mamdani says NYC cannot arrest Netanyahu, urges federal govt. to act

Associated Press
NEW YORK

New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani said late Tuesday that the city would not be able to execute an arrest warrant issued by the world’s top war-crimes court for Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu, but urged the federal government to do so. In the video, Mr. Mamdani described the Israeli Prime Minister as a “war criminal” and said he is not welcome in New York City. “It is clear that we do not have the independent legal authority to enforce this warrant,” he said in a video posted on X. “The federal government however does and I call on



New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani speaks about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in video on Tuesday. REUTERS

them to join the ICC and execute this warrant,” he added. Mr. Mamdani had told the New York Times earlier this month that he and the city’s legal department were discussing arresting Mr. Netanyahu if he comes

to New York City for the UN General Assembly in September. President Donald Trump on Monday told Mr. Netanyahu in a social media post that he “will not be arrested, in any way, shape, or form, while in

the United States of America.” Mr. Mamdani had said throughout his mayoral election campaign last year that he would seek to order the city’s police to arrest Mr. Netanyahu under the criminal court’s warrant over Mr. Netanyahu’s role in the war in Gaza. In his video message on Tuesday, Mr. Mamdani said his administration has reviewed all avenues available and determined the city can’t execute the arrest warrant. Danny Danon, the Israeli ambassador to the UN, responded by telling the mayor “enough.” “You were elected to serve New Yorkers, not Hamas’ propaganda,” he said.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that my client is purchasing the entire first floor, along with 22.5% undivided share in the land, two car parking spaces, and one servant room in the stilt parking of property bearing No. B-6/79, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi, from Mr. Parul Goel, S/o Mr. F.S. Goel. Any person having any right, title, interest, claim, lien, mortgage, charge, objection, or any other encumbrance in respect of the said property is requested to intimate the undersigned in writing, along with supporting documents, within 05 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it shall be presumed that no such claim exists and the sale transaction shall be completed. Contact: Garv Bajaj, Advocate Mobile: 9871707550, 7011858554

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE MOTOR ACCIDENT CLAIMS TRIBUNAL CUM SPECIAL DISTRICT JUDGE, THANJAVUR
M.C.O.P.No. 1149/2025
A. Usha and others -Petitioner
Vs.
Bankaj Tiwari, S/o Udit Narayan Tiwari, Bri.J Vihar, C Block, Hindon Air field, Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh - 201004
- 1st Respondents
NOTICE
This is to inform that the petitioners took several steps to serve Court notice on 1st Respondent by court and registered post to appear before the court to answer the claim of the petitioner but not served. You are hereby directed to appear before the court on 11/08/26 at 10.30 A.M either in person or by pleader before the Hon'ble Count without fail. In default of appearance on the hearing date the issues will be decided by the court as exparte.
C. Amersingh B.A.,B.L., Advocate

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE MOTOR ACCIDENT CLAIMS TRIBUNAL CUM SPECIAL DISTRICT JUDGE, THANJAVUR
M.C.O.P.No. 1148/2025
K. Anitha- Petitioner
Vs.
Bankaj Tiwari, S/o Udit Narayan Tiwari, Bri.J Vihar, C Block, Hindon Air field, Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh - 201004
- 1st Respondents
NOTICE
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C. Amersingh B.A.,B.L., Advocate

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Laltesh W/o Mainpal Singh R/o B- 440, Gali No. 21, Bhajanpura, Delhi-53 have changed my name from Laltesh to Laltesh Devi for all purposes.

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE MOTOR ACCIDENT CLAIMS TRIBUNAL CUM SPECIAL DISTRICT JUDGE, THANJAVUR
M.C.O.P.No. 1147/2025
A. Usha and another -Petitioner
Vs.
Bankaj Tiwari, S/o Udit Narayan Tiwari, Bri.J Vihar, C Block, Hindon Air field, Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh - 201004
- 1st Respondents
NOTICE
This is to inform that the petitioners took several steps to serve Court notice on 1st Respondent by court and registered post to appear before the court to answer the claim of the petitioner but not served. You are hereby directed to appear before the court on 11/08/26 at 10.30 A.M either in person or by pleader before the Hon'ble Count without fail. In default of appearance on the hearing date the issues will be decided by the court as exparte.
C. Amersingh B.A.,B.L., Advocate

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Distinctive number(s)
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No. of shares: 16000
North Paravur, Kerala
Date: 23.07.26 Mulloth Manikka Menon

PUBLIC NOTICE

Under the instructions and on behalf of my client, Mr. Sarabjeet Singh Anand, Partner of M/s K2S Buiktech, I hereby inform the general public that my client has entered into a Sale Deal/Bayana Agreement with Mr. Shabad Manchanda, the owner of Property No. Q-188, Jangpura Extension, New Delhi-110014, for the purchase of the aforesaid property. Pursuant to the said agreement, a part payment towards the sale consideration has already been made by my client.
The general public is hereby cautioned not to enter into any sale, transfer, collaboration, mortgage, lease, licence, financing arrangement, or create any third-party rights or interest in respect of the aforesaid property. Any person dealing with the said property, in any manner whatsoever, shall do so entirely at his/her/their own risk, cost and consequences and shall be solely responsible for all legal consequences arising there from.
Sd/-
(Adv. Aman Chawla)
Advocate for Mr. Sarabjeet Singh Anand
Office: Q-11A, Basement, Jangpura Extension, New Delhi-110014

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public are hereby informed that my client Sri. Raghupathi Simhachalam, S/o. Raghupathi Paparao, intended to purchase property of All that the pieces and parcel of Open land bearing Plot No. 584, admeasuring 300 Sq. Yards or equivalent to 250.640 Sq. Meters, in Sy. No. 376, 400, 401, 402, 404, 405 & 406, situated in Pasmamia Village, Abdullapurmet Revenue Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, under Pedda Amberpet Municipality and entered into an Agreement of Sale dated 02-07-2026 with Smt. Neelam Nijhawan, W/o. Late Mr. Sunil Kumar Nijhawan, Mr. Ankit Nijhawan, S/o. Late Mr. Sunil Kumar Nijhawan, Smt. Vandana Nijhawan @ Vandana Puri, D/o. Late Mr. Sunil Kumar Nijhawan, W/o. Dhruv Puri, having succeeded the same through Late Mr. Sunil Kumar Nijhawan, who in turn acquired the same by virtue of Sale Deed dated 31-10-1980, registered as Doc. No. 10094 of 1980, at SRO-Hyderabad East, executed by Sri. Hikalal Bai Reddy and others through their GPA Holder Sri. M.V. Rangachari (vide GPA Doc. No. 1091/1980, registered on 25-07-1980, at SRO-Malakpet, Hyderabad East. If any person/s or institution have any claim, right or interest whatsoever nature in the said property, they may submit their objections to the undersigned within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice with all relevant papers and proofs. If no objections are received, my client shall proceed with the sale transaction of the said property and no objections will be entertained thereafter.
B. PAVAN KUMAR, Advocate
H. No. 3-82-65/1735, Street No.1, Shubhodaya Colony, Boduppal, M.M. Dist. - 500 092, (M) +91 7075773527, Email id: bhalla.balla@gmail.com
Hyderabad, Date: 22-07-2026

Sport

DECISIVE FACTOR

Ready infrastructure sealed India's 2030 CWG bid: Sadleir



COMMONWEALTH SPORT

Ahmedabad's ready-made world-class sporting infrastructure played a decisive role in securing the hosting rights for the centenary 2030 Commonwealth Games, said Commonwealth Sport CEO Katie Sadleir, adding that the bid perfectly aligned with the governing body's revamped low-cost hosting model.

FULL OF OPTIMISM

Vishal focused and all geared up for a good show at Glasgow



FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

I'm entering the Commonwealth Games with a mindset to win. Months of hard work, honesty, discipline, consistency and self-belief have brought me to this stage, and I trust the process. Representing India is the biggest motivation, and I'll give everything I have to make the nation proud — 400m National champion Vishal.

PRIORITIES

Animesh not fretting over losing the tag of India's fastest man



FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

Animesh Kujur isn't losing sleep over surrendering the tag of India's fastest man to Gurindervir Singh. Instead, the National record-holder in the 200m wants his performances at the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games to do the talking. "Just waiting for Asian Games. Then we'll talk again," Animesh said.

LEARNING CURVE

Knowledge transfer as important as doing well at the Games: Rajpal



PTI

Both the Games side and the non-Games side at Glasgow are equally important. There will be knowledge-transfer programmes on the sidelines so we can match or better things when we host the next Games in India. We will also be taking back the flag and the baton — India's Chef de Mission Rohit Rajpal.

Can Indian athletes punch up in the scaled-down Games?

Leading the country's charge will be javelin ace Neeraj, who will face stiff competition from Pakistan's Nadeem; the number of disciplines has been cut from 19 to 10 as the event tries to stay relevant

C'WEALTH GAMES

K. Keerthivasan
GLASGOW

Victoria's decision to pull out of hosting the Commonwealth Games (CWG) in July 2023, citing unsustainable costs, plunged the multi-sport event into uncertainty. There were fears that the 2026 Games might not be held at all. For nearly a year, the search for a replacement host went on. Gold Coast, the 2018 host, along with Singapore and Malaysia, figured prominently before Glasgow officially stepped up in September 2024 to host the event, returning after its successful staging of the 2014 Games.

Realising the spiralling organising costs, Glasgow tactfully cut the number of disciplines to 10 across four venues, a considerable reduction from Birmingham 2022 where 19 sports were staged across 15 venues. In many ways, the Glasgow Games beginning on Thursday can be credited with saving the multi-sport event from losing its relevance.



Ready to rumble: India will have high hopes from boxer Lovlina while Sreeshankar and Tejaswin will also look to bring home a medal. PTI, SUDHAKARA JAIN & FILE PHOTO

Describing it as the 'Reimagined Games', George Black, Chair, Glasgow 2026, and Phil Batty, Chief Executive Officer, wrote: "Glasgow 2026 is being realised with 150 million pounds of investment. The competition is being entirely privately funded. A

self-sustaining, ground-breaking Games delivery model." It might be a scaled-down Games, but make no mistake there will be no shortage of star power, including Olympic medalists, world champions and reigning CWG title-holders.



Leading India's charge will be Tokyo Olympics gold medalist and former world champion Neeraj Chopra in the men's javelin. The Indian ace will be challenged by Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, the Paris Olympic champion and defending CWG titlist.

The athletics discipline will be headlined by Scotland's reigning world mile record holder Josh Kerr, and England's Katarina Johnson-Thompson, the 2023 world champion and Paris Olympics silver medalist in the heptathlon. Jamaica's Danielle Wil-



liams, the 2023 world champion in the women's 100m hurdles, and Kenya's Faith Cherotich, the Paris Olympics bronze medalist in the women's 3000m steeplechase, are also among the biggest names set to light up Glasgow. India's medal hopes in

athletics will also rest on Tejaswin Shankar (decathlon), M. Sreeshankar (long jump), and Parul Chaudhary (5000m and 3000 SC). Will Indian athletes be able to overhaul their 2022 medal tally of eight or surpass their best medal haul

of 12 from the home CWG in 2010? A sizeable share of India's medals will also come from boxing and weightlifting.

At Birmingham, Indian boxers won seven medals while the weightlifters returned with 10.

In the boxing ring, Lovlina Borgohain, the Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist, will be looking for her maiden CWG medal. The others to keep an eye on are Jaismine Lamboria (57kg) and Sachin Siwach (60kg).

In weightlifting, Mirabai Chanu (48kg) will be aiming to complete a historic hat-trick of CWG gold medals. Harjinder Kaur (71kg), Bindyarani Devi (58kg), Gyaneshwari Yadav (53kg) and S. Sanjana (63kg) are among India's other leading medal hopes.

The Games had transformed the fortunes of several Indian sportspersons in ways even they scarcely could have imagined. Shashar Kamal, Mirabai and Manika Batra are among the finest examples.

Will the 'Reimagined Games' produce a few more young Indian stars?

A great platform to make a name for yourself: Rasquinha

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

As a truncated 2026 Commonwealth Games kicks off on Thursday, most of the stakeholders admit the medal rush may not be as prolific but insist there is no lack of incentive for those participating.

"I think it's going to be a very different Commonwealth Games because a lot of our medal-winning sports are missing. Last two CWG, we won 12 medals in wrestling, six in badminton, seven in table tennis, two each in hockey and squash — none of them is there. So it's 100% going to affect our medal tally.

"(But) in terms of position on the table, I think it'll still be Australia and England at the top, by far the strongest at this level. For the third place, which India ideally should be aiming for, it's always a battle with New Zealand and Canada. What's going to be really important is, can we win those gold medals?" former India captain and CEO of Olympic Gold Quest Viren Rasquinha said in an interaction on Wednesday.

He admitted it was disappointing but added that most sports have other important events ongoing, ensuring there was no drop in terms of competitive exposure ahead of the Asian Games.

"Currently, all our top



Raring to go: Neeraj would strive to regain the Commonwealth Games crown. GETTY IMAGES

shooters are at the Rifle & Pistol World Cup in Hangzhou. In table tennis the UTT is on, there will be the hockey World Cup and the badminton World Championships.

"For those participating, I totally disagree with the notion that the Commonwealth Games is not of value.

"As athletes and coaches, you always respect every competition and as an opportunity to participate and do well for younger players, the Commonwealth Games is a great platform to make a name for yourself."

Asked about his medal expectations, Rasquinha

refused to put a number. "I'm never one for making predictions. If you look at what's happened in Indian athletics recently, there have been about 26 National records in the last 6-12 months. So, I think athletics is one sport where we can look at 8-10 medals. The women's boxing squad is so strong this time, all seven participants are capable of winning medals. Weightlifting, again, we can expect 8-10."

(The interaction was facilitated by Sony Sports Network, the official broadcasters of the Commonwealth Games 2026. Tune-In: Day 1, July 24 from 1 p.m IST live on Sony Sports Ten 2 SD & HD).

Mirabai need not push for third gold: coach Vijay

WEIGHTLIFTING

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

Olympic and World championships medalist Mirabai Chanu need not push herself to claim her third consecutive gold at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games, said National chief coach Vijay Sharma.

Mirabai totalled 205kg at the National championships at Modinagar in February before pulling out of the Asian championships at Gandhinagar in May due to a shoulder injury.

The soon-to-be 32-year-old will be eyeing her fourth CWG medal of any colour in a row in Glasgow while trying to stay injury-free. Since an Asian Games medal has eluded Mirabai, the continental Games in Aichi-Nagoya, from September 19 to October 4, would be her priority.

Vijay said it would not be prudent to push her in the women's 48kg competition in Glasgow.

"For Mira, the CWG will be like a practice event before the Asian Games. A total of 190-195kg should be enough for her to win the CWG gold medal. Irrespective of the total, a gold is a



Hard at work: The coach feels that CWG will be like a practice event for Mirabai as she targets a medal at the Asian Games. FILE PHOTO: SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

gold. Her main target is medalling at the Asian Games," Vijay told *The Hindu*.

Mirabai had won the

Commonwealth championships title in Ahmedabad by a margin of 32kg after aggregating 193kg.

Apart from Mirabai, V.

Ajaya Babu (79kg) will be in the race for a gold medal. M. Raja (65kg) has an outside chance of finishing on top of the podium.

Following four positive dope tests, including that of gold medal prospect N. Ajith (71kg), which led to a reduction in the country's quota places, it will be challenging for the Indian weightlifting squad to replicate its 10-medal performance of the Birmingham Games four years ago.

The 12-member Indian weightlifting team trained at Wolverhampton University in Birmingham for more than three weeks before moving to Glasgow.

Challengers end UTT league stage on top

Amol Karhadkar
PANAJI

The gulf between the table-topper and the bottom-placed side was evident as Dempo Goa Challengers finished the league stage with a commanding 10-5 victory over UP Prometheans in Ultimate Table Tennis Season 7 at the Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium on Wednesday.

With both sets of owners employing *dhol-tasha* bands to rally their teams, the atmosphere was festive. But on the table, the contest was largely one-way traffic in favour of the home side.



On song: Szocs played a key role for the Challengers. BUTTERFLYUTT

Despite being assured of the top spot, Goa resisted the temptation to rotate its squad and instead fielded its strongest combination. Experienced campaigners Alvaro Robles and Bernadette Szocs laid the foundation, although Szocs was

pushed all the way by Sayali Wani, who produced one of her finest performances of the season before eventually falling short.

Playing only for pride, the Prometheans used all the six available players — a rarity in UTT. Captain Ma-

nav Thakkar delivered his team's most assured display, but even he could not deny the in-form Abhinandh P.B. a crucial game. The youngster's aggressive hitting off both wings in the closing stages of the third game capped another composed outing.

With Challengers, HVR Kolkata Thunder Blades and defending champion U Mumba TT already through, the final league tie on Thursday will determine the fourth semifinalist. Dabang Delhi TTC must win at least nine games against PBG Pune Jaguars to qualify, while Pune requires an unlikely 12-point haul. If the contest goes

down to the final game, Ahmedabad APL Pipers will progress to the semifinals.

The result: Dempo Goa Challengers bt UP Prometheans 10-5 (Alvaro Robles bt Sudhanshu Grover 11-7, 11-5, 11-4, Bernadette Szocs bt Sayali Wani 11-3, 9-11, 11-9, Abhinandh P.B. & Szocs bt Richardo Walther & Swastika Ghosh 11-9, 11-10, 11-9, Abhinandh lost to Manav Thakkar 8-11, 7-11, 11-8, Syndrela Das lost to Yangzi Liu 11-10, 7-11, 6-11) **Standings:** Dempo Goa Challengers 56 points (6 ties); HVR Kolkata Thunder Blades 49 (6); U Mumba TT 48 (6); Ahmedabad APL Pipers 45 (6); Dabang Delhi TTC 36 (5); PBG Pune Jaguars 34 (5); UP Prometheans 32 (6).

INBRIEF



Philipsen wins Tour de France 17th stage

Jasper Philipsen took a dominant victory in a reduced bunch sprint at the end of the Tour de France’s Alpine 17th stage on Wednesday. Set up by a strong lead-out from his former World champion teammate Mathieu van der Poel, Philipsen finished several bike lengths ahead of Mauro Schmid and Olav Kooij, who had each already won a stage at the Tour. Race leader and defending champion Tadej Pogacar came home safely in the main peloton just under nine minutes later.

Lakshya hits unbeaten ton as India U-19 dominates

Opener Lakshya Raichandani hit his second century of the series to help India U-19 consolidate its position on day three of the second Youth Test against Sri Lanka U-19 in Colombo on Wednesday.

The scores: India U-19 411 & 208/3 decl. in 40.2 overs (Lakshya Raichandani 100 n.o., Manal Chauhan 51 n.o) vs Sri Lanka U-19 148 in 52.1 overs & 155/4 in 36 overs (Senuja Wekunagoda 64, Vimath Dinsara batting 55, C. Venkata 3/25).

Sindhu beats Unnati; Ayush upsets World No. 11 Farhan

P.V. Sindhu overcame a challenge from teenage compatriot Unnati Hooda to progress to the second round, while Ayush Shetty produced a stunning upset by knocking out World No. 11 Alwi Farhan in the opening round of the China Open in Changzhou on Wednesday.

The results (first round): Women: P.V. Sindhu bt Unnati Hooda 21-14, 9-21, 21-10. **Men:** Ayush Shetty bt Alwi Farhan 17-21, 21-5, 21-17. **Doubles:** Liang Wei Keng & Wang Chang bt Hariharan Amsakarunan & M.R. Arjun 21-16, 21-7. **Mixed doubles:** Feng Yan Zhe & Huang Dong Ping bt Rohan Kapoor & Ruthvika Shivani Gadde 21-9, 21-16; Guo Xin Wa & Chen Fang Hui bt Dhruv Kapila & Tanisha Crasto 21-18, 21-18.

Hetmyer takes WI over the line in a nail-biting finish

Shimron Hetmyer held his nerve in the run chase to make an unbeaten 69 and steer West Indies to a two-wicket win over New Zealand on Tuesday in the fifth and final One-Day International in Barbados. New Zealand took the series 3-2.

The scores: New Zealand 268/9 in 50 overs (Latham 69, Kelly 64, Young 56) lost to West Indies 269/8 in 47.3 overs (Hetmyer 69, Rutherford 61; Lennox 3/35, Duffy 3/67). **Toss:** West Indies. **PoM:** Hetmyer.

LIVE TELECAST

▼ **CW 2026 (Pre-Event Matches):** Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 2 p.m.; **Opening Ceremony:** Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Friday)
Zimbabwe vs India: First T20I, Unite8 Sports 1, 2 & FanCode, 4.30 p.m.

Firouzja walks away with the title

The Frenchman plays out a draw with Arjun to bag the top prize; Andreikin surprises with a second-place finish while Gukesh is last

CHESS

C. Shyam Sundar
CHENNAI

A draw was enough for Alireza Firouzja in the seventh and final round of the Chennai Grand Masters on Wednesday as the Frenchman walked away with the title in a strong field. Firouzja’s 41-move stalemate also ended his opponent Arjun Erigaisi’s chances of fighting for first place.

Clearing the path
The loss suffered by Uzbekistan’s Nodirbek Abdusattorov at the hands of Dmitry Andreikin (Russia)



Toast of the town: Firouzja was a crowd favourite after going all the way. B. VELANKANNI RAJ



cleared the path for Firouzja as the 23-year-old emerged champion with 4.5 points.

Firouzja entered the final round as the sole leader, half a point ahead of Arjun and Abdusattorov.

While Arjun needed a win to overtake him, Abdusattorov had to beat Andreikin and hope the top-

board encounter ended in a draw to force a playoff.

Andreikin proved to be the surprise packet, taking the runner-up spot with four points after remaining unbeaten.

Firouzja, who didn’t lose a game through the week, received ₹25 lakh for his title-winning effort while Arjun took the third spot, followed by Abdusattorov and M. Pranesh. World champion D. Gukesh held Hans Niemann to a draw and finished with the wooden spoon (two points). He narrowly avoided slipping out of the 2700-club, thanks to the stalemate; the 20-year-old, who had lost his previous two games, settled for a 19-move draw.

Nihal Sarin, who began with four straight draws, appeared to lose steam towards the business end and wound up with 3.5 points despite a well-crafted win against Arjun in the penultimate round. The fifth-place finish was a creditable performance by Pranesh, the lowest-rated player in the event who handed Gukesh a shock defeat.

The results: D. Gukesh 2 drew with Hans Niemann (USA) 3; Nihal Sarin 3.5 drew with M. Pranesh 3.5; Alireza Firouzja (Fra) 4.5 drew with Arjun Erigaisi 4; Dmitry Andreikin (Rus) 4 beat Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb) 3.5.

Final standings: 1. Firouzja, 2. Andreikin, 3. Arjun, 4. Abdusattorov, 5. Pranesh, 6. Nihal, 7. Niemann, 8. Gukesh.

Niemann takes a dig at Gukesh



No holds barred: Niemann has landed himself in trouble quite a few times due to his straight-talking. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

C. Shyam Sundar
CHENNAI

American Grandmaster Hans Niemann is known more for controversies than his exploits on the board.

He was involved in a public feud with World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen over the cheating allegations levelled against him by the Norwegian. Despite his achievements and avowed ambition to become the best player on the planet, his straight-talking seems to put him in a spot more often than not.

After the end of the Chennai Grand Masters here, the 23-year-old took a dig at reigning World champion D. Gukesh and his predecessor Ding Liren, saying that they had never been the best players in spite of winning the game’s top prize.

“The main reason we’ve seen Ding and Gukesh do

poorly is that they were never the best players in the world. Not even close to it,” Niemann said on Wednesday.

He also criticised the World Championship format with “limited number of games” and said that it does not necessarily identify the strongest player over a sustained period. Despite that, Niemann felt Uzbekistan’s Javokhir Sindarov was a deserving challenger for the title.

As for the match itself, he opined that Gukesh – whose confidence has been dented by a succession of poor results – could return to form with a bright start.

“If he starts well, regains his confidence and takes control, his prime form could return. But if he starts poorly, it is just going to be a reminder of all the bad results. In one match of 14 games, anything can happen.”

India faces spirited Zimbabwe as Shreyas’ search for maiden win as skipper continues

INDIA IN ZIMBABWE

Press Trust of India
HARARE

Shreyas Iyer will be eager to earn his first win as India captain when his young team eyes course correction against a spunky Zimbabwe side that is expected to fight hard during the three-match T20I series starting on Thursday here.

Having lost six of his first seven games as skipper in the series defeats to Ireland and England, the contests against Zimbabwe gives Shreyas a chance to get the house in order. A series win against the host would be the expected outcome while a defeat could unnerve the dressing room which has the 15-year-old Vaibhav Sooryavanshi.

For this short tour, India will have a stop-gap head coach in VVS Laxman, whose personality is diametrically opposite to the combative Gautam Gambhir. The spotlight will once again be on ‘Boy Wonder’ Sooryavanshi as he is set to open in all three games alongside Abhishek Sharma, given the absence of Sanju Samson.

The Harare Sports Club ground will bring back fond memories for both



Happy place: Abhishek must have fond memories of Harare Sports Club, having scored his first T20I ton at the venue. ANI

Abhishek and Sooryavanshi. The Punjab opener made his international debut here and scored his first T20I ton in his second appearance. For Sooryavanshi, this is the venue where he hammered a hapless England U-19 team with 175 in the junior World Cup final earlier this year.

The series was supposed to be an opportunity to experiment with a new-look bowling attack, but it has turned into a must-win affair for India due to recent debacles.

The afternoon games on pitches here, which always have a bit of juice and carry, can pose problems for most of the Indian batters. Blessing Muzarabani and Richard Ngarava, two tall and potent fast bowlers, have the ability to cause chaos.

Laxman’s strategy, therefore, will be interesting to watch. The batting position of vice-captain Tilak Varma and the selection of ‘all-rounders’ – among Shivam Dube, Suryansh Shedge and Harsh Dubey – in the XI will be closely monitored.

Teams (from): Zimbabwe: Sikandar Raza (Capt.), Brian Bennett, Ryan Burl, Tanaka Chivanga, Ben Curran, Brad Evans, Wessly Madhevere, Tadiwanashe Marumani, Wellington Masakadza, Blessing Muzarabani, Dion Myers, Richard Ngarava, Newman Nyamhuri, Milton Shumba, Tafadzwa Tsiga. **India:** Shreyas Iyer (Capt.), Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan, Tilak Varma, Shivam Dube, Harsh Dubey, Suryansh Shedge, Yash Thakur, Prince Yadav, Mayank Yadav, Ashok Sharma, Ravi Bishnoi, Prabhsimran Singh, and Rinku Singh.

Match starts at 4:30 p.m. IST.

Fear of failure has no place in this team: Shreyas

Press Trust of India
HARARE

India captain Shreyas Iyer wants his players to play fearless cricket and not be weighed down by criticism after the team’s disappointing run in England, saying the recent setbacks have only brought the squad closer ahead of the three-match T20I series against Zimbabwe.

India arrives in Zimbabwe after enduring a winless white-ball tour of England and Ireland, but Shreyas said the team has identified the areas it needs to improve on.

“We had a rough patch in England, but there were a lot of positives. We got to know what we have to build as a team going forward, what kind of presence of mind, awareness and adaptability we need once we step onto the field,” Shreyas said on the eve of the opening T20I here.

“Some of us are playing here for the first time, so the quicker we adapt, the better results we will get.

“I don’t think we should fear failure because when you have such thoughts at the back of your mind, then you play to save yourself.

“When you don’t have that fear, you can get the best out of yourself.”

Anahat and Aryaveer advance in World junior squash

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Anahat Singh and Aryaveer Dewan registered facile wins to enter the pre-quarterfinals of the World squash junior individual championships in Ontario, Canada.

Women’s top seed Anahat brushed aside Hong Kong’s Pui Yin Chole Lo in straight games in the round-of-32, and will next meet Malaysian Doyce Ye San Lee.

Aryaveer eased past South African Joseph Feast and will take on American Yaseen Shalaby next.

However, Gurveer Singh, Yusha Nafees, Saanvi Kalanki, Rudra Singh and Anika Dubey bowed out after losing to higher seeded opponents.

The results (round of 32): Men: Aryaveer Dewan bt Joseph Feast (RSA) 11-4, 11-3, 11-3; Adam Hawal (Egy) bt Gurveer Singh 11-6, 11-8, 11-3; Nickhileswar Moganasundharam (Mas) bt



In focus: Anahat brushed aside Hong Kong’s Pui Yin. WORLD SQUASH

Yusha Nafees 11-9, 11-7, 11-8.

Women: Savannah Moxham (Bel) bt Saanvi Kalanki 11-7, 11-4, 11-2; Barb Sameh (Egy) bt Rudra

Singh 11-5, 11-6, 11-1; Tsz Ching Cheung (HK) bt Anika Dubey 11-6, 11-7, 11-5; Anahat Singh bt Pui Yin Chole Lo (HK) 11-3, 11-1, 11-3.

Indian shooters stumble

Press Trust of India
HANGZHOU (CHINA)

Indian shooters got an early indication of the challenge that awaits them at the Asian Games in Japan less than two months from now as China dominated the opening day of the ISSF World Cup here on Wednesday, winning both gold medals on offer while India finished without a podium.

Neither of the country’s two 10m air pistol mixed teams progressed beyond the qualification stage.

The pairing of multiple World Cup gold medallist Suruchi Inder Singh and Kedarling Uchaganve finished ninth with an aggregate score of 577, with Suruchi shooting 292 and Kedarling managing 285.

India’s second pair of Sainyam and Kamaljeet also totalled 577 but had to settle for 11th after scores of 288 and 289 respectively.

Indian boys beat Pakistan, Oman in youth hockey5s; girls drub Uzbekistan

Press Trust of India
MUSCAT

The Indian sub-junior boys’ team maintained its winning run, outplaying Pakistan and Oman in the Elite Pool of the FIH Youth Hockey5s Asian Championship here.

Led by Ketan Kushwaha, India first registered an emphatic 14-0 win over Oman, with the skipper scoring four goals.

Ashish Tani Purti struck a hat-trick, while Rahul Yadav and Shahrulkh Ali scored braces.

Prahalad Rajbhar, Karan Gautam and Ronit Pal also found the back of the net.

Against Pakistan, India prevailed 7-4, with Karan Gautam completing a hat-trick. Rahul Yadav, Prahalad Rajbhar, captain Kushwaha and Ronit Pal were the other scorers for India.

Aslam Muhammad Farhan, Adeel and Usman Muhammad scored for Pakistan.



Good show: While the boys bested Pakistan 7-4, the girls routed Uzbekistan 16-0. X@THEHOCKEYINDIA



The sub-junior girls, meanwhile, were held to a 2-2 draw by China before thrashing Uzbekistan 16-0 in another Elite Pool match.

Trailing for most of the contest after Chen Ge put China ahead, India fought back through Nousheen Naz, who scored twice to give her side the lead.

However, Jiaxin Guo netted a late equaliser to earn China a share of the points.

India then rounded off the day with a dominant

16-0 win over Uzbekistan, Nousheen scoring four goals.

Sandeepa Kumari and captain Sweetie Kujur struck hat-tricks, while Diya and Pushpa Manjhi added braces.

Kiran Ekka and Nilam Topno also got on the scoresheet.

The tournament serves as a qualifier for the inaugural FIH Youth Hockey5s World Cup.

The results: Boys: India 14 (Ashish Tani Purti 1, 16, 19, Rahul

Yadav 2, 12, Shahrulkh Ali 3, 13, Ketan Kushwaha 6, 11, 15, 20, Prahalad Rajbhar 9, Karan Gautam 15, Ronit Pal 18) bt Oman 0.

India 7 (Karan Gautam 5, 9, 19, Rahul Yadav 3, Prahalad 10, Kushwaha 11, Romit 11) bt Pakistan 4 (Aslam Muhammad Farhan 6, Adeel 8, Usman Muhammad 10, 16).

Girls: India 2 (Nousheen Naz 16, 17) drew with China 2 (Chen Ge 4, Jiaxin Guo 19).

India 16 (Sandeepa Kumari 2, 6, 20, Diya 3, 17, Nousheen 6, 9, 15, 16, Kiran Ekka 8, Sweetie Kujur 10, 13, 20, Pushpa Manjhi 11, 13, Nilam Topno 18) bt Uzbekistan 0.



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GETTY IMAGES

P.K. Ajith Kumar

That day is still fresh in memory. Because that innings is fresh in memory.

The winter was setting in at Raipur. The Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Stadium, some 20 kms away from the city, looked more imposing than usual as it was virtually empty. There were hardly any spectators for the Senior Women's T20 Challenger Trophy back in 2022.

It was a pity that Yastika Bhatia's unbeaten 99 for India-D against India-C was watched only by a few. It was a masterclass in T20 batting. She was technically correct, played proper cricketing shots, chose the right balls to hit, and struck at a rate of 162.

The only thing she got wrong was counting the balls: otherwise, she would have completed her century. She may have missed the hundred by just one run, but those who watched that innings may not have forgotten it in a hurry. It remains one of the very best in the domestic game over the last few years. Yastika, it was obvious, would go far.

She may have taken her time, but she has gone far. All the way to the Lord's honours board, in fact. The 25-year-old became the first woman to reach there by scoring a Test century.

The hundred consisted of all those elements which the Raipur innings had: technique, lovely shots, and ability to choose the right balls to hit. Of course, the occasion was bigger. It was a Test match, that too a historic one – the first-ever women's Test at cricket's more revered venue. The bowling was much stronger: the Laurens – Bell and Filer – with their seam speciality, another quick in Issy Wong and spinners in Sophie Ecclestone and Mady Villiers.

Crucial performance

Yastika's 113 helped India declare its second innings with the bowlers assured of four sessions in their bid to bundle England out. They needed only two and Indian women's cricket recorded one of its greatest triumphs of all time – a Test win at Lord's by 270 runs.

It was the greatest moment in Yastika's professional life. "The best is yet to come," she would say. But, this one will remain special for several reasons, and we are not just talking about the Lord's honours board. This was her first-ever century for India. It came after a terrible ACL injury and the long, difficult rehabilitation process.

Shortly after the Test, in which she also kept wickets, Yastika looked back at that tough period. She was honest and spoke at length. Her face and eyes told what she had gone through.

"I started from scratch after the injury," said the southpaw. "For the first two months after the surgery, I took total rest. From there, I had to come back. All the muscles in my left leg had been lost in those two months. So after that, I had to start afresh."

The rehabilitation stage began afterwards. "Each muscle you have to train for... the muscles around the knee," she said. "And then slowly there would be progress. Not in one or two days, surely. It was very frustrating to miss out on big tournaments (including the ODI World Cup that India went on to win at home)."

Staying positive

Yastika, however, remained confident. "I had the belief in myself that I could come back from this injury," she said. "The people around me also helped me keep a very positive frame of mind. I was able to do rehab one day at a time."

What did she first do when she finally got to the ground at last? "I was keeping wickets. I just did catching practice, there was no batting; I was very happy. That

day, I was like a little kid smiling the whole day. I was glad that I could keep after four months. Those moments are priceless; I felt the love of the game again. Whatever setbacks you have, how deep that setback is... the love for the game, the belief in yourself – those are very, very crucial," she said. "That will help you to come out from rock bottom and rise once again."

Support system

The top-order batter is grateful to those who stood by her during those difficult days. "A lot of people have helped me behind the scenes," she said.

"My family – my mother, father and sister – they have been the biggest support. My coaches and trainers back home and also the support staff and teammates here in England... they have all backed me. And those at the BCCI Centre of Excellence (CoE), where I underwent the rehab... the surgeons, doctors who took care of my surgery. All of them played a crucial role. My comeback wouldn't have been possible without them."

Then there is a familiar name – Smriti Mandhana, the fellow stylish left-hander with whom Yastika shared a crucial second-wicket partnership in the second innings at Lord's. Smriti, who had also gone through the trauma of an ACL injury, had some advice for her teammate.

"I had a conversation with Smriti. She just looked at me and said: 'This is going to be a turning point in your career,'" Yastika recalled. "She said that because she had faced similar injuries or setbacks. She had learned so much about everything... little,

little things in rehab and in cricket. It completely changed her. She said that my entire mindset, too, would change.

"She said: 'Your game will go to a different level.' She could sense that. We had a few chats during my rehab; the other players were at a camp. I was a little nervous about how things would go. But she said: 'Keep doing your hard work. You are a sincere kid. You are a good human. Just keep working hard and your time will come one day.'"

That day did come. Smriti was there at Lord's to watch it from the sidelines and had been with Yastika out in the middle for a large part of her innings.

It was lovely to watch both of them bat together. Smriti is among the most stylish batters in women's cricket. Yastika, too, is elegant and can play gorgeous strokes.

And Yastika loves batting with Smriti. "You learn so much from her," she said. "Her mindset is very good: she always thinks positively and takes on the bowlers, but in a subtle way. I always look up to her. We have good camaraderie and I enjoy batting with her."

A moment to remember

Looking back at her historic century, Yastika said: "It is unbelievable because I was in a very different place six months ago. If you had told me that I would have my name on the honours board at Lord's, I wouldn't have believed it. But I was taking small steps to that place and I have worked really hard.

My family's support has been there since the beginning."

More than her hundred, she wanted to ensure India had enough runs on the board.

"We had to make a big score at a good rate so that we would have enough time to take England's 10 wickets," said Yastika.

"That was on my mind. I always play my best when I play for the team. I never think about my own score. Playing for the country is a matter of pride. You must have seen my celebration; I kissed the flag on my helmet. I am proud that I could do it for my country."

She could serve the country with both gloves – the batting as well as keeping ones – for years to come. Her class has to be acknowledged, and she deserves a long run.

Missing out

Interestingly, Yastika is not part of the squad for the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, starting September 19. She is the only player to be dropped from the team that played at the T20 World Cup in England, where India was knocked out in the group stage.

THE GIST

In the Lord's match, Yastika's 113 helped India declare its second innings with the bowlers assured of four sessions in their bid to bundle England out

Smriti, who had also gone through the trauma of an ACL injury, helped the fellow southpaw during her comeback

Interestingly, the 25-year-old is not part of the squad for the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, starting September 19



I started from scratch after the injury. But I had the belief in myself that I could come back

YASTIKA
India wicketkeeper-batter



