

INBRIEF



Patna court extends Khan Sir's protection from arrest

A court in Patna on Tuesday extended the stay on the arrest of educator Faisal Khan, popularly known as Khan Sir, in connection with the coaching institute firing case till the next hearing on July 3. Mr. Khan was named in an FIR related to a firing incident by his guards when miscreants vandalised his coaching institute in early June. He was named in the FIR, and the court on June 9 granted him protection from arrest, which was later extended till June 30. Roshan Anand is one of the accused in the case linked to the alleged vandalism outside Mr. Khan's institute on June 2. He is currently out on bail. PTI

Gurugram police form Labour Liaison Teams in all stations

To strengthen law and order in industrial belts and improve response to labour unrest, Gurugram Police Commissioner has ordered the formation of Labour Liaison and Industrial Co-ordination Teams (LLICT) in every police station jurisdiction across the city. The move comes after violent clashes erupted between police and workers demanding wage hikes at Industrial Model Township in Manesar in April. As per the order, each police station will have one or two LLICT teams depending on the number of industrial units and operational needs. Each team will have four-five personnel with "excellent public dealing skills".

Trinamool camps denied nod to hold Martyrs Day rally at traditional venue

Police impose prohibitory orders in area for 60 days, while Trinamool factions plan annual rally on July 21; they register FIR against Mamata loyalists for 'blocking traffic' while inspecting site for rally

Shiv Sahay Singh
Senjuti Sengupta
KOLKATA

Kolkata Police Commissioner Ajay Nand said on Tuesday that permission cannot be granted to any group to hold public meetings in front of Victoria House in the city's Esplanade area, the traditional venue of the July 21 Martyrs Day rally organised by the Trinamool Congress, as prohibitory orders have been imposed in the area for 60 days.

Trinamool party leaders loyal to Mamata Banerjee had claimed last week that the party chairperson would address party workers at its annual rally on July 21 to pay homage to 13 Youth Congress workers killed in police action during a protest on July 21, 1993. Meanwhile, the party faction led by Ritabrata Banerjee, Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, had also written to the Police Commissioner seeking permission to organise a si-



Mamata loyalists, including Kunal Ghosh and Dola Sen, inspecting the venue for the July 21 Martyrs' Day rally in Kolkata on Sunday. ANI

milar programme to observe 'Shahid Dibas (Martyrs Day)' at the venue on July 21.

Out of bounds

With the Kolkata police imposing prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, restricting public gatherings, rallies, meetings, and demonstrations across parts of central Kolkata, including the Esplanade area, neither of the factions will be able to hold gatherings

in front of Victoria House.

The order, issued by Mr. Nand, will remain in force from July 2 to August 30. It covers areas under the Bowbazar and Hare Street police stations and headquarters of the Traffic Guard, including the stretch from K.C. Das Crossing to Victoria House (Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation headquarters) and adjoining areas, but excluding Bentinck Street.

Meanwhile, the Kolkata police have registered an FIR under Section 285 of

the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita against Trinamool legislator Kunal Ghosh, party Rajya Sabha MP Dola Sen, and senior leader Baishwanar Chatterjee for allegedly blocking traffic in central Kolkata during an inspection at the venue.

"The case was registered at the Hare Street police station. On June 28, between 2.50 p.m. and 4 p.m., the accused formed a gathering in front of Victoria House at Bentinck Street, causing hindrance to vehicular traffic and commuters," Additional Commissioner of Police Kunal Aggarwal said.

"The gathering was formed without any permission. They arrived at the site to inspect and measure the area ahead of the rally and it caused major traffic interruption. We will question the leaders soon," he said.

Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Monday had dared the Opposition party to hold the Martyrs Day rally at the Brigade Parade Ground as it did in 2011.

PDP accuses J&K govt. of stifling protests over 'outsourcing of jobs'

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Tuesday alleged that the Jammu and Kashmir administration had placed its leaders under house arrest to prevent protests against the "outsourcing" of 25,000 government jobs.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said party leaders and workers across the Valley were placed under house arrest to prevent a peaceful protest on the alleged issue. "This selective helplessness exposes the National Conference (NC)'s duplicity. Their duplicity is further exposed when departments such as Housing, Revenue and Forest readily enlist police assistance to demolish the homes of poor and vulnerable families in the name of anti-encroachment drives," Ms. Mufti said.

She said the party's youth wing "courageously carried out protests against the NC government's backdoor appointments even in the face of police crack-downs, detentions and house arrests".

"Speaking truth to power is never easy, but your determination and resilience have shown that no amount of intimidation



PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said party leaders and workers were placed under house arrest to prevent protests. PTI

can silence the voice of justice," she added.

Scores of PDP youth leaders, who held street protests in Srinagar, demanded an immediate rollback of the decision and transparent and merit-based recruitment. According to the PDP, protests were also held in Anantnag, Budgam and Bandipora districts.

Dismissing allegations

The ruling NC dismissed the allegations, saying the outsourcing of 25,000 posts across various departments was not introduced by the party. Jammu and Kashmir Minister Sakina Itoo said the recruitment process has not been compromised. "The concept of outsourcing was inherited from the previous governments," she said.

CM to meet TVK's post-poll allies today; move seen as outreach to mobilise support for byelections

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

In a significant political development after the change of government and the political realignment in Tamil Nadu, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) president and Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay will hold a consultative meeting with the party's post-poll allies on Wednesday. The meeting is scheduled for 4 p.m. at a private hotel in Kovalam on the outskirts of Chennai.

Invite for meeting

TVK general secretary and Minister for Rural Development and Water Resources N. Anand and general secretary (election campaign management) and Minister for Public Works and Sports Development Aadhav Arjuna have met the leaders of the alliance partners and invited them



Ministers N. Anand, Aadhav Arjuna and P. Viswanathan with TNCC president B. Manickam Tagore on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

to the meeting.

They met Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi leader Thol. Thirumavalavan, Indian Union Muslim League national president K.M. Kader Mohideen, Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam general secretary Vaiko, and leaders of the Congress and the Left parties in the last three days and handed over invitations from Mr. Vijay. In the letter, Mr. Vijay said he considered it his duty to thank them for their sup-

port to him for forming the government and expressed his willingness to hold a consultative meeting with them.

The meeting assumes significance against the backdrop of the disintegration of the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance after its defeat in the 2026 election. The meeting is widely seen as an outreach by the TVK to mobilise support of the allies for the byelections, which are likely to be held later this year.

Naveen flays Odisha govt. over textbooks ridden with errors

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) chief Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Odisha government over school textbooks ridden with errors.

"School textbooks are not just books. For every child, they are the first source of truth. A child may question many things, but never the words printed in a textbook. Those words are an article of absolute faith and trust," Mr. Patnaik wrote on X.

"By printing error-ridden textbooks and then flip flopping on their withdrawal, we are shaking the very foundation of our children's future," the former Chief Minister said.

There have been hundreds of mistakes in newly published textbooks for students studying from



BJD chief Naveen Patnaik

Classes 1 to 8. The books were prepared by State Council of Education, Research and Training (SCERT).

Four suspended

Though Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has placed four officials, including former SCERT Director Manoj Padhy, under suspension, the controversy showed no signs of dying down. Meanwhile, members of the BJD hit the streets on Tuesday alleging massive embezzlement in printing of the textbooks.

SIR of electoral rolls kicks off in Jharkhand with BLOs beginning house-to-house verification

Amit Bhelari
RANCHI

The special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls formally began across Jharkhand on Tuesday, with Block Level Officers (BLOs) launching door-to-door visits to distribute enumeration forms and verify voter details.

Jharkhand Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) K. Ravi Kumar said the SIR of the electoral rolls is a participatory and transparent process that is audited at every stage and provides for appeals. He said meetings involving BLOs and booth-level agents (BLAs) were held across the State on Tuesday as part of the SIR process, and enumeration forms have been provided to BLOs for all polling stations.

Addressing the media at Nirvachan Sadan, Mr. Kumar said a social media



Taking stock: Jharkhand CEO K. Ravi Kumar (extreme right) overseeing SIR preparations on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

campaign had been launched to inform the public about the enumeration phase. "Under the SIR, BLOs will conduct door-to-door visits till July 29 to distribute partially filled enumeration forms. Voters are required to verify the details, fill in the necessary information, and submit the forms to their respective BLOs," he said.

Mr. Kumar said voter mapping would be verified through a two-tier process – first by the BLOs and then by the Electoral Regis-

tration Officers (EROs) and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs). Mr. Kumar added the SIR is meant exclusively for eligible Indian citizens and non-Indians should not participate in the process.

The names of all eligible Indian citizens who submit the enumeration forms will be included in the draft electoral roll to be published on August 5, 2026. Mr. Kumar said voters will not be required to submit any documents while filling enumeration forms.

Centre exploring reintroduction of tigers in suitable landscapes in Bengal: Minister

Press Trust of India
KOLKATA

Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Bhupender Yadav on Tuesday said the Centre is exploring the reintroduction of tigers in suitable landscapes across West Bengal through scientific planning, while asserting that conservation has become an integral part of India's development agenda.

Citing the success of tiger reintroduction in Sariska in Rajasthan, where the population has increased from zero in 2008 to 56 at present, Mr. Yadav said the government is exploring the possibility of reintroducing tigers in suitable habitats in West Bengal, the home of the Royal Bengal Tiger.



Lord of the forest: A tiger in Bengal's Sundarbans. FILE PHOTO

He also highlighted the country's conservation gains, saying the number of tiger reserves has risen from 47 to 58 since 2014, while the population of Asiatic lions has increased from 523 in 2015 to 891 in 2026. Referring to India's biodiversity, Mr. Yadav said that despite accounting for only 2.4% of the world's land area, the country is

home to 7% to 8% of all recorded species.

Highlighting the government's conservation initiatives, the Minister said India has shifted from a reactive approach to a proactive one to environmental governance since 2014.

"Conservation is no longer viewed as an isolated environmental concern. It is now an integral pillar of

our vision for sustainable development," he said.

Mr. Yadav said India is contributing to global environmental action through initiatives such as Mission LiFE, the International Solar Alliance, the International Big Cat Alliance and the Global Biofuel Alliance.

Ramsar sites

The number of Ramsar sites has expanded from 24 to 100 during the period, while the area notified as eco-sensitive zones has grown significantly.

Stressing the importance of scientific documentation in conservation, he said institutions such as the Zoological Survey of India and the Botanical Survey of India play a crucial role in protecting biodiversity.

Central Ministers assess flood damage as 3 die in Arunachal

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The Centre on Tuesday rushed Union Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Kiren Rijiju to assess the flood and landslide damage in Arunachal Pradesh, where torrential rains claimed three human lives since June 24.

Assam district affected

The deluge has battered Assam's Dhemaji district downstream of Arunachal Pradesh's Siang region, affecting 45,841 people across 188 villages. The district also reported the first human casualty – a woman in the Sissiborgaon area – in Assam this year.

Thanking Prime Minister Narendra Modi for de-



Union Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Kiren Rijiju inspecting flood-affected areas on Tuesday. PTI

puting the two Ministers to assess the ground situation, Arunachal Chief Minister Pema Khandu said his government's immediate priority was to ensure swift relief for every affected family, restore essential services, and expedite the reconstruction of the areas impacted by the floods.

He said that he accompanied Mr. Chouhan and Mr. Rijiju to Keyi Panyor, one of the worst-affected districts, on Tuesday to assess the situation firsthand, review the ongoing response, and understand the immediate requirements of the affected communities.

Beaten up by villagers, man dies in Odisha

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

In a suspected case of mob lynching, a 32-year-old man was beaten up by the people in Banapur area of Odisha's Khordha district and later died in a hospital.

According to Smit Parmar, Khordha Superintendent of Police, a man named Nayak from Bhimpur village was found in an inebriated state and allegedly misbehaving with a local woman at Khanata village on June 28. Nayak was rescued by police from angry villagers upon receiving information.

A video footage purportedly showing Nayak tied to a electric pole while villagers surround him has emerged.

INBRIEF



Karnataka BJP MLA denies cross-voting, takes 'truth test'

Amid much debate over cross-voting by some Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Janata Dal (Secular) MLAs in the recent election to the Legislative Council of Karnataka, BJP MLA from Belur, H.K. Suresh, on Tuesday took a “truth test” at the Dharmasthala Manjunatha Swamy Temple to state that he did not betray his party. Mr. Suresh, who arrived at the temple town with over 300 supporters, said he did not indulge in cross-voting, adding that he was loyal to the BJP.

Naidu seeks mineral mapping to identify high-value deposits

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has directed officials to undertake comprehensive mineral mapping across the State to identify deposits of critical minerals, and other high-value metallic resources, while stressing the need to maximise revenue through value addition. Reviewing the Mines Department affairs in Amaravati on Tuesday, Mr. Naidu said the State should focus on processing of minerals within the State to generate higher economic value.

HC declines to grant relief for school after child loses vision

The High Court of Karnataka has refused to quash a criminal case against a private school in Mandya district, where a Class 4 student lost vision in one eye and partial vision in the other after students sprayed coloured sparklers inside a school bus, which allegedly had no attendant to monitor them. Rejecting a petition by Divyajyothi School, the court said the safety of children in a school bus is not a matter of charity, it is a “solemn obligation mandated under the statute”.

Telangana CM calls for policy on allotting land to temple

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has directed officials to frame a comprehensive policy for allocation of lands to various maths within the jurisdiction of the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Devasthanam at Yadagiritgutta, stressing that ownership of such lands should remain with the temple. He asked officials to submit a detailed report within a week after a comprehensive review of the engineers’ committee report on the temple construction. Reviewing the temple’s development at a high-level meeting, the Chief Minister said the land allocation model followed by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) should be studied and adapted where appropriate.

Suggesting that land for the Hare Krishna (Charitable) Foundation at Yadagiritgutta be allotted at prevailing market rates, he also directed officials to prepare a list of organisations interested in constructing guest houses on the hill and to grant permissions in a phased manner.

Mr. Reddy called for a clear policy with well-defined regulations for allotting land to various communities. He also instructed officials to immediately release funds for land acquisition required for ongoing and proposed development works within the temple limits and emphasised the need to develop a tourism circuit in the region under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

Reform exam system, Kerala House resolution asks Centre

It faults the Centre and government agencies for failing to acknowledge serious lapses in conduct of entrance exams, calls for strengthening the mechanism to ensure State governments get a say

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Assembly on Tuesday passed a resolution urging the Centre to undertake comprehensive reforms of the national entrance examination system citing serious concerns over its credibility, transparency, and fairness.

The government resolution, moved by Higher Education Minister Roji M. John, states that the credibility of National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), the entrance examination for admission to medical education in the country, has come under serious doubts due to various reported incidents including question paper



UDF supporters at a march in Thiruvananthapuram over the alleged irregularities in NEET and other examinations. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

leaks and other technical and administrative lapses.

The resolution faulted the Centre and the respective central agencies for failing to acknowledge the gravity of the issues in a timely manner and adopt corrective measures, des-

pite serious lapses and irregularities in the conduct of examinations.

Pointing out that education is a subject on the Concurrent List of the Constitution, the Assembly also called for strengthening the mechanism to ensure

that the views and suggestions of the State governments are duly considered while taking policy decisions relating to national entrance examinations.

Rejected amendments

BJP MLA V. Muralreedharan, who was among those moved amendments to the resolution, proposed replacing the criticism of the Union government with a statement commending the Centre and its agencies for their timely and effective intervention in addressing the examination irregularities. Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan objected to the BJP MLA’s speech citing Assembly convention and all proposed amendments were rejected by the House.

‘Kerala SEC candidate has RSS connections’

K.S. Sudhi
KOCHI

Controversies surrounding key political appointments made by the Kerala government has intensified with a section of Congress leaders raising objection to the proposal to appoint N. Seshadrinathan, judge, Family Court, Irinjalakuda, as the State Election Commissioner (SEC). Alleging that he had links with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

(RSS), they said he should not be considered for the post.

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee general secretary P.M. Niyas, who earlier protested against the recommendation of Mr. Seshadrinathan, met Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala in this regard. He urged the Minister to verify the antecedents of Mr. Seshadrinathan, and also his political positions in the past 15 years.

Karnataka SIR begins; 12 lakh forms issued

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls had a steady start across Karnataka on Tuesday, with Booth-Level Officers distributing over 12.48 lakh enumeration forms on the first day of the month-long exercise.

Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who began the exercise by filling up the enumeration form at his

residence, urged voters to actively participate in the SIR and submit their enumeration forms before the July 29 deadline.

According to the Election Commission of India, 12,48,314 forms, accounting for 2.25% of the State’s 5.54 crore electors, had been distributed by 4 p.m. A total of 47,817 forms had been digitised, while 6,840 electors submitted their forms online.

(With PTI inputs)



Safety net: The scheme aims to provide 125 days of work in each fiscal to those from rural households. C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

Tamil Nadu clears decks for ₹12,642-cr. VB-G RAM G scheme

T. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has cleared the decks for the implementation of the ₹12,642-crore Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission Gramin (VB-G RAM G) in the State on Wednesday, by notifying the scheme in its gazette.

As part of the funding arrangement, which is 60:40 for the Union and State governments, the former’s contribution will be ₹ 7,585 crore and the latter’s ₹ 5,057 crore, said an official in the State government. The 23-page-long notification was issued by State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Secretary Prashant M. Wadnere on Monday.

The previous DMK government had stoutly opposed the Union government’s decision to replace MGNREGA with the new rural employment guarantee scheme.

However, Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay told the As-

sembly last week his government was clear about the distinction between politics and maintaining an administrative relationship with the Centre.

The scheme aims at providing an enhanced statutory wage-employment guarantee of 125 days in each financial year to such rural households whose adult members volunteer to undertake unskilled manual work, enabling them to participate more effectively in the expanded livelihood security framework.

The notification stated there would be a Rural Employment Guarantee Council, headed by the Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj [N. Anand], with officials as members and non-official members to be nominated by the State government to represent Panchayat Raj Institutions, non-governmental organisations and weaker sections of society. This will advise the State government on all matters concerning the scheme.

Search and rescue



Indian Coast Guard personnel during an operation to rescue fishermen from a distressed boat off Mangaluru, Karnataka, on Monday night. All six crew members aboard the boat that suffered hull damage amid rough sea conditions were rescued, the ICG said. ANI

Nurses resume strike in Kerala as wage talks end in stalemate

The Hindu Bureau
THRISSUR

A wage dispute between the United Nurses Association (UNA) and the managements of Kerala’s Amala Institute of Medical Sciences and Jubilee Mission Medical College & Research Institute remains unresolved, with nurses shifting their protest to the Collectorate after talks failed to resolve the issue.

The nurses, who have been on strike for nearly three months demanding that the minimum salary be raised to ₹40,000, intensified their agitation on Sunday by staging a sit-in outside the Thrissur Archdiocese headquarters. The

discussions with the management, held in the presence of Thrissur Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath, ended without an agreement.

According to UNA representatives, Youth Affairs and Sports Minister O.J. Janesh contacted the protesters and sought five days’ time, assuring them that a decision would be taken after the ongoing Assembly session. Following the assurance, the nurses withdrew their protest outside the Archbishop’s residence. After a meeting with Thrissur District Collector Shikha Surendran on Monday, they shifted their agitation to the Collectorate.

Woman and newborn found dead in Kerala lodge

The Hindu Bureau
THRISSUR

A 30-year-old woman and her newborn baby were found dead in a lodge room in Kerala’s Thrissur on Tuesday, with the police launching an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the deaths.

The deceased was identified as Jyothi, a native of Edamuttam near Thriprayar. The bodies were found in a lodge at Veliyanur. As per the police, Jyothi is suspected to have given birth inside the room.

The exact cause and time of death will be determined after the post-mortem examination.

Become job creators, not job seekers, President tells graduating students in A.P.

The Hindu Bureau
VISAKHAPATNAM

President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday urged students to become job creators rather than job seekers and dedicate themselves to the development of society and the nation.

Addressing the first convocation of the Central Tribal University in Visakhapatnam, she congratulated the graduating students, medal winners, faculty members and parents, describing the convocation as a milestone and the beginning of a greater responsibility towards society.

She said a degree represents not only academic achievement but also an opportunity to contribute



President Droupadi Murmu presents a degree certificate to a student in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

to nation-building.

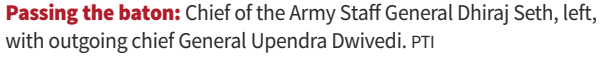
Ms. Murmu, who was accompanied by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and State Education Minister Nara Lokesh, noted that nearly 40% of the graduates receiving degrees were wo-

men, while around 70% of the gold medal winners were women. She urged students to equip themselves with emerging skills to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world and advised them to look beyond text-

books by learning from their surroundings and developing practical skills. At the same time, they should remain connected to their communities, culture and traditions while working for the betterment of society and the nation.

Recalling that she was the first graduate from her village, Ms. Murmu said many students at the convocation were likely the first graduates in their families. She urged them to become pillars of strength for both their families and society.

Quoting her father’s advice, she said that while one should always move forward in life, it is equally important to look back and support those who are still struggling.



Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

He later served as the General Officer Commanding, Delhi Area, overseeing key national and international military engagements and ceremonial responsibilities. After being promoted to the rank of

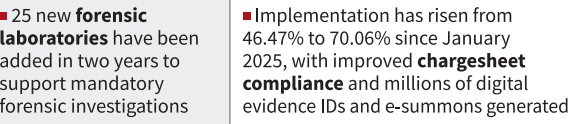
Command and Staff Course in Paris and is recognised for his outstanding performance in professional military education.

However, data maintained by the NCRB shows only 46% of FIRs were digitally transmitted to courts; out of 36 States, U.T.s, Haryana, Goa, Assam, Punjab, and Chandigarh have implemented all parameters, while 23 States are above national average

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The three new criminal laws, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Sakshya Sanhita (BSS), and Bharatiya Nagarik Su-

The digitisation aims to make way for faster, more transparent, and integrated justice delivery nationwide



As many as 63,572 zero-FIRs, those which can be

The Crime and Criminal Tracking and Network Systems, the platform which is used to file FIRs across 16,000 police stations in the country, has an option to register cases in 23 languages and the *Bhashini*

More forensic labs

While in 2023, the forensic labs received 8,44,589 cases for exami-

The Ministry official said that improving Internet connectivity, especially in remote and northeastern parts of the country, standardising processes across States and U.T.s, ensuring full interoperability among all criminal justice platforms and training of personnel were some of the challenges ahead.

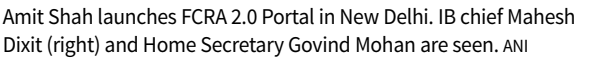
The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

“President Pezeshkian briefed the Prime Minister on the recent developments in West Asia and the way forward. Prime Minister welcomed the understanding reached and reiterated India’s consistent position that all issues must be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy,” said a press note issued by the government.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Mr. Shah launched the FCRA 2.0 Portal and an e-Overseas Citizen of India (e-OCI) card initiative in the presence of Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, Director of Intelligence Bureau (IB)

At present, around 14,500 organisations with FCRA registrations are working across the country. FCRA registration is mandatory for an NGO or association to receive foreign donations. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said that, under the Act, approximately 15,000 to 20,000 applications are made each year and about 17,000 annual returns are filed. The portal, hosted on the National Government Cloud (MeghRaj), includes features such as process re-engineering, an integrated dashboard, Aadhaar-based authentication, e-Sign fa-



Unlike the old website, the new FCRA portal has removed the section on year-wise fresh registrations under the Act. In

The Union Home Minis-

The new portal would

He said the e-OCI card would bring great convenience to more than 50 lakh OCI cardholders. After 20 years, when a new passport is issued, there will be no need to re-issue the OCI booklet, and the cardholder's registration number will also become unique, he said. The e-OCI card will eliminate the problem of loss or damage of the document, and cardholders will be able to carry out real-time verification themselves.

Press Trust of India
UNITED NATIONS

India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Parvathaneni Harish, made

these remarks on Monday while addressing a Counter-Terrorism Week side event on joint action against evolving threats. “The FATF is an indispensable pillar of the global counterterrorism financing and anti-money laundering architecture. Its work is technical, evidence-based and rooted in internationally accepted standards. Attempts to question its credibility often reflect fear of scrutiny rather than genuine process-related concerns,” he said.

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

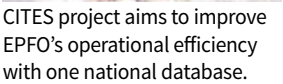
In its order dated June 16, the High Court had directed the oil marketing companies (OMCs) – BPCL, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (HPCL) and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOCL) – to consider a request by VINP Distilleries and Sugars for an enhanced ethanol allocation before the tender process was finalised.

EXPLAINER

A. M. Jigeesh

Current services

The EPFO is facing several technical and procedural



In many cases, even retired beneficiaries had to go to the regional offices in jurisdictions where they had worked to submit claims or clear technical problems. Nominees of deceased members also had to approach the respective regional offices for pension or other claims. The operations are primarily done by more than 120 decentralised databases at present, with no central visibility. There have been com-

The process

The process started on June 26 and was to be com-

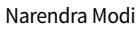
Benefits for members

For EPFO members, the centralised system allows them to see all their previous member IDs under the UAN linked with a single KYC (Aadhaar). The status of the PF accumulations, service records and requests will be displayed to the member. The new interface simplifies transfers, helps maintain an accurate service history, and enables faster settlements, according to the EPFO.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Mr. Modi stressed the importance of adopting a whole-of-government approach, asking the departments to work together rather than in isolation.

Emphasising the significance of integrated planning and coordination, he encouraged wider utilisation of the PM GatiShakti as an effective platform for inter-departmental coordination and informed



decision-making

According to government sources, during the interaction, the Secretaries outlined the major steps being taken by their respective Ministries and Departments in line with the themes of self-reliance, besides "Ease of Doing Business" and "Ease of Living". During their presentations on reform measures and progress made across sectors, they highlighted the ongoing efforts to translate the Prime Minister's vision into actionable outcomes. While also discussing sector-specific challenges, the Secretaries outlined a range of future strategies to enhance governance and service delivery.

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI

A Bench comprising Justices M.M. Sundresh and Sheel Nagu asked the petitioner, advocate Vishal Tiwari, to approach the Patna High Court for appropriate relief. "We are not inclined to entertain this petition. Liberty is granted to the petitioner to approach the High Court," the Bench said.

The last session ended in disappointment for the government as a Constitution amendment bill to implement reservation for women in legislatures in 2029 and increase the number of seats of the Lok Sabha was defeated in the Lower House.

He said that the VHP's objective would not be affected by the Ram Temple episode.

A two-judge Bench on May 27 unanimously upheld the SIR in Bihar, holding that the exercise was constitutionally valid, proportionate and within the poll body's powers under Article 324 of the Constitution and Section 21 (3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

'Insult to the families'
He said withholding information about the deaths was an insult to the families of the personnel and the armed forces, adding that they had laid down their lives in defence of the nation.

India seeks clarity as ‘tipping points’ rock Bonn climate talks

At the Bonn climate talks, when India urged caution on how the term ‘tipping point’ is defined and used, the European Union said that amounted to ‘misinformation’

Rishika Pardikar

At the Bonn climate talks in Germany on June 8-18, alongside the usual laundry list of contested themes such as climate finance, tipping points became an unexpected source of debate and controversy.

According to the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, India urged care and clarity in using terms like “tipping points”, which it said would present challenges around defining the idea and cautioned against mis-communicating or oversimplifying the science.

However, the European Union muddled the waters by raising concerns about “coordinated misinformation” and “obstruction”.

Complexities, uncertainties

A climate tipping point is a threshold in the earth’s climate system beyond which a part of it jumps into a new state.

Once such a tipping point has been crossed, changes can happen faster or harder to reverse on human timescales, even if the original cause of the change is removed.

For example, say warming in the Arctic melts enough sea ice to expose large areas of dark ocean. These waters could absorb more heat, causing more warming and even more melting. With enough heat, this cycle may be able to continue on its own, rendering recovery very difficult.

However, it is difficult to project tipping points in the climate because of complexities in the climate system and uncertainties in the input data.

Climate communicators also struggle with this concept: some see it as a catalyst for urgent action while others have argued that its inherent uncertainties undermine its value for policymaking.

In fact, climate-related drivers of directly experienced disasters, such as extreme rainfall or heatwaves, are sometimes seen as more effective for raising public awareness of climate change and the need for climate action than the relatively abstract concept of climate tipping points.

However, the risks that tipping points carry are significantly larger than routine climate-induced disasters, and thus raise larger questions about how people can adapt to the effects of a breached tipping point.

Multiple thresholds

Tipping points have non-linear behaviour. This means they don’t increase at the same pace or intensity at which greenhouse gases accumulate in the environment. Instead, even small increases in temperature can trigger large, self-amplifying feedback loops.

Aside from warming in Arctic, potential climate tipping points include a ‘dieback’ of the Amazon rainforest (i.e. the risk of the forest reverting to being a savannah), the collapse of an ocean current called the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (AMOC), the mass-bleaching of coral reefs, changes in the monsoons over India and West Africa, and the disintegration of the Greenland ice sheet.



Scientists study the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation, a movement of warm and cold waters that stretches from around Greenland to beyond the tip of Africa and into the Indian Ocean. The risks that tipping points carry are significantly larger than routine climate-induced disasters. AP

While human societies will be better off not threatening any of the climate tipping points, there are also positive social tipping points in the climate space – such as the adoption of renewable energy. Once these technologies win a critical adoption level, some experts have argued, they will be on track to large-scale adoption.

Contesting tipping points

That said, many experts have also said tipping points raise more questions than provide answers.

Scientists also still struggle to project when the AMOC will collapse or when the Amazon rainforest will transition into a savannah ecosystem.

One reason is that scientists have to work with projected emissions and temperature ranges in future and, based on that, they have returned with indications that certain climate systems will change slowly rather than suddenly to new states.

For example, one *Science Advances* paper in April noted that AMOC could slow down by 51%, rather than altogether collapse, by 2100 in a medium-emissions scenario.

This conclusion also depends on the model context because it is not a direct forecast: the paper only aimed to identify which model projections were more credible than others. In other words, uncertainties are implicit in the data and cannot be removed using more data alone.

In fact, research suggests that scientists may be able to identify fixed tipping points clearly only in *post facto* analysis from a historical lens. Meaning, in hindsight.

And in the case of complex ecosystems like the Amazon rainforest, whose fate is closely tied to millions of tribal and urban community members and numerous artisanal enterprises, a projection of

Many scientists and science communicators agree that clearly communicating scientific uncertainty is a good thing because it builds trust

tipping points based only on changes in the climate would miss influences due to, say, cattle-ranching and human deforestation – and underestimate the implications of a change to a savannah.

That said, some scientists have also contested whether tipping points will be abrupt. For example, ice sheets deplete over thousands of years – which is far from abrupt for human observers.

A faux threshold

There is a popular notion that the earth’s surface warming beyond 1.5 degree Celsius is a tipping point. The confusion persists even among participants in climate negotiations, research published in 2019 found.

However, negotiators adopted this number as well as 2 degrees Celsius at the COP21 climate talks in 2015 as a political target based on scientific evidence that warming beyond 1 degrees Celsius, 1.5 degrees Celsius or 2 degrees Celsius will increasingly disrupt the climate. The temperature goals are not tipping points in and of themselves.

At the Bonn climate talks, when India urged caution on how the term ‘tipping point’ is defined and used, the European Union said that amounted to “misinformation”.

Specifically, India argued that the term ‘tipping point’ entails “definitional challenges”. This much has been acknowledged in independent scientific research and in state-led efforts. For instance, the U.K.’s national meteorological office is working on a project titled ‘An Up-HILL Battle: Building

consensus on terminology for high impact climate events and tipping point risks’.

According to a project document: “Unclear and inconsistent terminology for high impact climate phenomena, including concepts such as tipping points, irreversibility, ‘collapse’ and ‘shutdown’, presents a substantial barrier to clear understanding of Earth system risks.”

Way from here

Many scientists and science communicators agree that clearly communicating scientific uncertainty is a good thing because it builds trust.

Both false alarm and a false sense of hope can affect credibility when, say, a projection or a forecast doesn’t come to pass. The risk – rather than the certainty – implicit in tipping points is also significant enough to warrant climate action.

In one 2025 article in *Nature Climate Change*, researchers from Canada, Switzerland, the U.K., and the U.S. criticised the ‘tipping points’ framework for “oversimplifying the diverse dynamics of complex natural and human systems and for conveying urgency without fostering a meaningful basis for climate action.”

They also called for more clarity, especially on the degree of abruptness, the reversibility of changes, and feedback-driven self-amplification.

“Climate change is already causing demonstrable and obvious harm around the world,” the researchers wrote. In tipping point discourse, on the other hand, “there is no specific increment of temperature increase that science can identify as the boundary between our current, already-dangerous climate and a future catastrophic climate, and no justification for doomism and paralysis while the world continues to warm.”

(Rishika Pardikar is a freelance journalist. rishika.s.pardikar@gmail.com)

THE GIST

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It is difficult to project tipping points in the climate because of complexities in the climate system and uncertainties in the input data

BIG SHOT



Women miners wearing plastic bags over their clothing, to protect themselves while searching for gold particles at an artisanal mining site in Mongbwalu, Ituri Province, on June 16. The latest Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has mainly affected Ituri, with health officials struggling to enforce containment measures. AFP

WHAT IS IT?

Rescuing a space telescope

Agence France Presse

On June 30, NASA launched a daring robotic rescue mission – a long shot to prevent one of its ageing telescopes from vanishing into dust. The \$30-million operation is set to last several months, kicking off with the launch of a robot designed to rescue the Swift space telescope, which is currently falling towards the earth.

At the time of writing, the rescue spacecraft developed by the U.S. startup Katapult was slated to lift off on June 30 at 10:23 GMT from a Pacific Ocean atoll aboard a small rocket named Pegasus.

“Everything about this mission is so crazy,” said NASA astrophysicist Regina Caputo. She projected the chances of success at “maybe 50-50.”

After it reaches an orbit near that of the telescope, the robot must locate Swift, manoeuvre around it, and latch on with three ‘arms’. It will then try to tow Swift into a stable orbit over at least a month.

NASA launched the Neil Gehrels Swift Observatory in 2004, originally for a two-year mission to study gamma-ray bursts. Ms. Caputo likened these bursts to a supercharged version of a supernova,



An artist's rendition of the Swift spacecraft observing a gamma-ray burst. FILE

which is the explosive death of a star.

Swift was placed at a roughly 600-km-high low earth orbit so it could remain in touch with researchers. At such an altitude, the device without its own propulsion would eventually drift closer to the earth and burn up in the atmosphere.

For feedback and suggestions for ‘Science’, please write to science@thehindu.co.in with the subject ‘Daily page’



Indian and foreign

Forcing students to learn at least two Indian languages is not ideal

The controversy over introducing a third language from Class 6 stems from an unresolved contradiction in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. At several places, the NEP, rightly, extols the special importance of English, especially in mathematics, science and even legal education, and does not club it with other “foreign” languages such as French or Spanish. At the same time, it advocates the three-language formula, with two languages required to be native to India, one of them ideally the mother tongue, in effect relegating English to the status of a foreign language. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has implemented this aspect of the NEP, ignoring other welcome observations that the policy makes on language learning. While introducing three languages from Class 6, it said students in Classes 7, 8 and 9 should also study three languages, of which two should be “Bharatiya”. Thus, if a student had taken French as a second language along with English, they would have had to forego French and switch to two Bharatiya languages, one of which would be entirely new to them. This could adversely affect their Class 10 Board examination performance, and render redundant the teaching capacity and resources schools had built in those languages. Following backlash, the CBSE has said that students in Classes 7, 8 and 9 need take only one additional Bharatiya language if they had taken English and, say, Spanish. The third language, moreover, will not be tested in the Class 10 examinations. These are, however, temporary arrangements and the CBSE is going ahead with the three language policy with two Bharatiya languages from Class 6.

Prudence demands that if the NEP is to guide the Union government’s decisions, it should ensure language learning that serves the best interests of students. The policy speaks of the need for “high-quality bilingual textbooks and teaching-learning materials for science and mathematics, so that students are enabled to think and speak about the two subjects both in their home language/mother tongue and in English”. Here, the NEP places the mother tongue and English on an equal footing if STEM is to be central to India’s progress. In the same breath, it speaks of the importance of learning languages such as Japanese and German at the secondary level to enhance students’ “mobility”. The government’s vision is to skill Indians for cutting-edge jobs worldwide, building the human capital needed to drive India’s development. Instead of atavistic relapses, education initiatives should look ahead to serve at least this vision, even if that model is open to question. Given that the CBSE often becomes the template for much of India, the better course would be to teach the mother tongue and English and, where resources permit and students desire, offer a third language of their choice.

Data doubts

The latest IIP dataset raises more questions than it answers

India’s latest industrial growth figures show that, contrary to global trends and overall perception, the country’s industrial output is getting stronger. Notably, the data show a quick bounce-back in industrial performance after the initial hit from the West Asia crisis. However, the new data also raise some important concerns about the composition of the growth, the systems behind the recent data upgrades, and the need for further improvements. Growth in the Index of Industrial Production hit a five-month high of 5.1% in May 2026, up from the 4.9% growth seen in April, which itself was a substantial improvement over the performance in March – the first full month after the West Asia crisis began. Within this, the manufacturing sector grew at a relatively robust 5.5% in May, albeit slower than in April. One view is that this is due to a revival in domestic consumption, since the consumer durables and non-durables sectors also grew at multi-month highs. Consumer durables, especially, have done well in April and May. However, the contrary argument is that domestic demand is in fact not doing well, and it is export growth that is leading to higher production. This is bolstered by the fact that GST revenues from domestic transactions have grown slower over the last six months than in 2025-26 and the year before that. Merchandise exports, on the other hand, hit a four-year high in April followed by an all-time high in May. It would certainly be welcome if India’s industry has global demand to fill, but the fact that more of this demand is not coming from within the country is a cause for concern. The economy is already hostage to world events.

The May IIP data were also accompanied by a note from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) stating that it had made a major change to the methodology for computing growth for some sectors. It had abandoned the Wholesale Price Index as its chosen deflator to estimate the value of production in favour of the new Producer Price Index. This is a more accurate approach. But it did not, however, answer why this change was implemented belatedly and not when the new series of data was introduced on June 1. It suggests an unusually unsystematic approach by MoSPI. The strong growth in the IIP also does not reconcile with the fact that the Index of Eight Core Sectors – a separate government measure of industrial growth – grew at its second-lowest rate in 21 months in May. The core sector index is still outdated while the other major indices have been recently updated, but such a discrepancy nevertheless raises questions about what exactly is being measured.

When leaders make foreign policy decisions, each may appear reasonable in isolation. However, their cumulative impact can be strikingly different from what was originally intended. As Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the funeral of former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, India’s deepening engagement with Israel perhaps falls into that category. What was once a mutually beneficial partnership between New Delhi and Tel Aviv seems to have become more of a habit than the product of serious strategic deliberation. Yet, sound policy cannot be guided by the momentum of habit, for habit and strategy often pull in opposite directions.

A reconfigured region

For one thing, it is important to acknowledge the gains from the partnership between India and Israel. India has received considerable military technology and know-how from Israel, as well as expertise in intelligence gathering derived from their extensive counter-insurgency experience. However, the more important question is not only what this relationship provides today, but also what it forecloses over time. Judged on those terms, the picture is not particularly encouraging.

West Asia has been undergoing one of its most intense geopolitical reconfigurations in years, and this one is different in scale. For the past decade, the region’s regional arithmetic has rested on the assumption that Iran was a wounded, sanctions-strangled actor whose reach could be curtailed and ambitions contained. That assumption has now been tested and found wanting. American and Israeli military strikes on Iranian facilities have not produced the strategic calm that Tel Aviv had hoped for at the outset of this costly campaign. Iran responded with retaliatory missile and drone salvos and, more importantly, demonstrated that any blockade of the Strait of Hormuz could not be easily overcome by the rhetoric of carrier groups. Once again, the geography of energy has become the geography of coercion. The terms of the final agreement quietly confirm that Iran was not broken.

The last three months have made it clear that the United States-Iran confrontation is not a distant geopolitical contest for New Delhi. It has had a direct impact on India’s economy. Most of India’s oil imports pass through routes vulnerable to any prolonged conflict in the Gulf. Whenever the Strait of Hormuz becomes a flashpoint, the consequences are felt directly in Indian households. It is here that the strategic canvas becomes more complicated, with every diplomatic choice carrying economic consequences. Strategic flexibility requires shunning comfortable alignments.

Many strategic analysts have long believed that Washington’s policy towards Israel is fixed and



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A changing West Asia demands strategic imagination, flexibility, and diplomatic balance from India

unchanging – a constant around which all regional policy revolves. That assumption now needs to be revised. The public differences between Washington and Tel Aviv, reflected in U.S. President Donald Trump’s frequent outbursts against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, are no mere diplomatic squall. They appear to be genuine, notwithstanding Mr. Trump’s well-known idiosyncrasies, because Washington’s strategic calculus in West Asia has changed faster than expected.

The U.S. urgently needs off-ramps, while Mr. Netanyahu, whose political survival is bound up with escalation, has little interest in de-escalation without achieving his maximalist objectives. The friction becomes evident when the patron and the client are at odds, and the once-blank cheque starts to float.

Iran cannot be ignored

Thus, the perception of a shift towards Israel, reflected in Mr. Modi’s unexpected visit to Tel Aviv (February 25-26, 2026) just before the U.S. and Israel launched their coordinated attack on Iran (February 28, 2026), becomes riskier when it is made more explicit, as it could place India on the wrong side of a regional reconfiguration that neither Israel nor any third party can control. While Mr. Modi’s personal absence from Ayatollah Ali Khamenei’s funeral is unsurprising, the choice of India’s representatives is itself a deliberate signal. Pairing Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita with Bihar Governor Lt. Gen. Syed Ata Hasnain (retired) – himself a soldier-scholar shaped by counter-insurgency experience – may be read as a calibrated posture of political reassurance, while also subtly reflecting India’s religious pluralism.

In other words, it reflects a posture that has internalised the war’s central lessons without yet being willing to say aloud that Tehran’s coercive capacity, demonstrated through the Strait of Hormuz and the missile exchanges, cannot be managed through the optics of Tel Aviv alone. This choice conveys an important diplomatic message of reassurance to Iran, which has demonstrated that it remains a regional heavyweight.

Moreover, Iran is a civilisational state with deep-rooted political and ideological networks across Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, as well as the proven capacity to generate economic pressure that can bypass conventional military deterrence.

A nation that can dictate ceasefire terms to Mr. Trump after absorbing punitive strikes from the U.S. and Israel is not a nation that can be casually discounted. China also appears poised to expand its strategic and economic footprint in Iran, making it imperative for India to exercise greater caution. Greater alignment with Israel risks pushing Tehran further into the China-Pakistan strategic embrace.

Reimagining sovereign AI for India’s strategic future

The United States government recently directed American Artificial Intelligence (AI) behemoth Anthropic to suspend access to its most advanced Fable 5 and Mythos 5 models for foreign nationals on national security grounds. A U.S. Presidential order also creates a voluntary mechanism for the U.S. federal government to access such models up to 30 days before trusted partners can. The Trump administration is simultaneously considering equity stakes in leading AI companies, ostensibly to redistribute the supernormal profits expected from technological advances.

These policy shifts are the latest and most dramatic in a series of sovereign actions demonstrating that governments are increasingly shaping AI policy around national advantage. Europe is moving away from its “regulate first, ask questions later” approach by investing in AI compute and promoting “Buy European” public procurement. Meanwhile, in keeping with President Javier Milei’s swashbuckling style, even Argentina aims to attract AI investment by offering a regulatory safe harbour.

Navigating AI geopolitics

Aggressive AI policy is the new normal. As a large IT services economy that does not have its own frontier AI systems – those requiring upwards of ten septillion floating-point operations to train – India must review global developments and articulate a coherent policy response that allows it to benefit from frontier technology without letting its economic capabilities depend on policy decisions made elsewhere.

India’s IT and app companies are well positioned to scale the everyday use of AI, raising domestic productivity and competitiveness. But rapid diffusion and model dependence pull in opposite directions: using foreign AI models today is the only way to build the economic surpluses needed to depend on them less in the future. Businesses must use the best AI available



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India must leverage global AI while reducing strategic technological dependence over time

to outcompete rivals. They cannot, however, manage the geopolitical risks that accompany dependence on those technologies. This is where public policy must step in. India’s discourse is stuck in a false binary between globalisation and industrial policy. India’s industries must benefit from both at the same time.

The lesson is already visible in another strategic industry: Indian pharma is deeply dependent on ingredients from China, and at the same time, navigates wavering policy regimes for market access in the U.S. A Production-Linked Incentive promotes domestic manufacturing of bulk drugs but NITI Aayog’s latest assessment finds that India still sources 65% of critical ingredients from China. Industrial policies can create footholds, not instant resilience.

Building strategic AI linkages

Frontier AI presents the same strategic dilemma, but on a much larger scale. India spends 0.6% of GDP on research and development, and the private sector accounts for a third of this. OpenAI alone projects its compute spending at \$50 billion this year, over six times India’s annual private R&D spend. The implication is straightforward.

India cannot outspend frontier AI investment, so it must instead deepen its backward linkages to frontier AI through government action while strengthening its forward linkages to global markets for its products and services. This starts with a whole-of-government approach, in which ministries such as external affairs coordinate closely with commerce and it, and perhaps even defence, energy, and telecom, to better serve the technology industry.

Coordination alone, however, is insufficient. Firms can manage commercial risk through contracts and diversified supply chains. They cannot insure themselves against geopolitical risk or concentrated technological dependence; that is the sovereign’s role. Like export credit and hybrid-annuity infrastructure models, the

There is also the matter of Europe, an underutilised and undervalued element in India’s economic planning. India must recognise that Europe’s political landscape has turned against Israel’s actions in Gaza and Lebanon in ways, and at a pace, that would have been unimaginable two years ago.

More than sentiment, electoral arithmetic is at work. And electoral arithmetic often shapes trade policy and, eventually, the tone of bilateral negotiations. India’s status-seeking desire to be seen as a responsible international actor, rather than merely a vast market, and its economic ambitions in Europe – including the operationalisation of the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement – may come under closer scrutiny in the context of its West Asia policy than New Delhi anticipates.

What is unusual about the present moment is that India has no option but to act strategically, independently, and decisively. It has leverage because it has maintained good relations with many Arab Gulf states, from which millions of Indian workers send remittances home. Although Saudi Arabia may once again have found tactical reasons to accommodate Rawalpindi (Pakistan), India’s relationship with the United Arab Emirates has grown even stronger.

New Delhi’s historical ties with Tehran, though constrained by shifting regional dynamics, have not been completely severed. More fundamentally, India’s sheer size combined with its geostrategic attributes makes it an indispensable stakeholder in any emerging regional order. What India needs now is the political will to wield its leverage effectively in pursuit of clearly defined national objectives.

Beyond binary choices

India needs a sufficiently ambitious strategic imagination. But that does not mean choosing between Israel and Iran, for that would be far too simplistic, and history rarely rewards such simplifications. Herein lies the distinction between an adaptive, alignment-driven foreign policy – the kind that follows and adapts to alignments forged by others – and an architectonic foreign policy, which seeks to shape its own strategic environment.

For a country that claims to be ‘Vishwabandhu’, it is important to recognise that the credibility of such a claim will be tested in moments such as these, when the world is watching India’s words and actions. New Delhi’s most valuable strategic asset in the coming multipolar decade is its authentic voice as a champion of the Global South, and every visible alignment with Israel in a conflict in which the Global South overwhelmingly sympathises with the Palestinians risks putting that precious capital in jeopardy. The defence technologies provided by Tel Aviv are undeniably valuable. But the strategic price of appearing aligned in a conflict that has reshaped West Asia is no less real.

government should help underwrite risks that private firms cannot efficiently bear alone. Export credit recognises that firms cannot shoulder geopolitical risks on their own and insures them against disruption. Hybrid-annuity contracts do the same for long-gestation infrastructure by having the state fund part of a project and make fixed payments over time, rather than leaving private capital to bear the full risk.

Industry must step up

And while the government can create the conditions for success, competitiveness must ultimately come from firms themselves. For its part, the Indian tech ecosystem needs to pay attention to quality and innovation that makes services and products valuable to the world.

There is less room for complacency than India’s technology industry often assumes. The Philippines generates \$40 billion in IT exports – already nearly a sixth of India’s IT exports – and is growing faster than the global industry.

Similarly, Indian app companies have barely made a dent abroad. No Indian app features among the top 10 by downloads, in-app purchase revenue, or monthly active users. This calls for greater ambition from the industry itself.

Indian technology also needs a more coherent strategic voice. Incumbent IT firms remain preoccupied with visas and market access, while start-ups are consumed by regulatory frictions and fundraising. Yet, both ultimately share the same interest: ensuring that India remains deeply connected to the world’s leading AI ecosystems while steadily building greater domestic capability.

The real contest in AI is not simply over who builds the best models. It is about who captures the economic and strategic advantages they create. India’s objective should be clear: remain deeply integrated with global AI ecosystems while steadily reducing the strategic vulnerabilities that such integration creates.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Food safety

The Data Point column (June 30), which has highlighted a serious issue that is often ignored – food poisoning cases and food safety – is timely. The mushrooming of food outlets and the proliferation of street food pose a major challenge to food safety.

The reported staff shortage of 30% to 40% in the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India reflects gross neglect of a critical area of public health. The statistical data effectively underscore the gravity of the problem.

Balasubramaniam Pavani, Secunderabad

KV, a disturbing shift

As a former student and the parent of two Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV) students, I am disheartened by the institution’s decline. A KV principal recently remarked during a parent-teacher meeting that the school had become a testing ground for the NCERT. Parents are

frequently asked to endorse government initiatives, while children are made to recite oaths or participate in online surveys through class WhatsApp groups. Students are also being burdened with new online examinations and are expected to complete the syllabus for the next

academic year before the summer break, in addition to their holiday homework. Some teachers promote YouTube channels featuring videos of students without obtaining parental consent. Equally troubling are regressive messages in the classroom. I find this growing politicisation,

academic burden, and the reinforcement of gender stereotypes undermining the quality, neutrality, and values that KV once represented.

Dr. Ragi Chandran, Chennai

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

Need for inclusive, integrated climate action

As Karnataka welcomes a new Minister for Urban Development, there is an opportunity to rethink what makes a city healthy, resilient, and equitable. Much of the public conversation around urban development tends to focus on infrastructure and technology-driven solutions. Yet the true measure of a city's development lies elsewhere: in how its systems support the health and well-being of the people who keep the city functioning.

Among these are sanitation workers, street sweepers, waste collectors, drain cleaners, and others who perform essential services that sustain urban life. Their experiences offer a powerful lens through which to understand urban systems, particularly in an era of climate change.

Climate change is often discussed in terms of rising temperatures and environmental degradation. But these impacts are not experienced equally. They are filtered through housing conditions, employment arrangements, access to healthcare, social protection, and public infrastructure. In other words, climate change is also an urban governance challenge.

Unequal experiences

Across Karnataka's cities, sanitation workers spend long hours outdoors. As heatwaves become more frequent and intense, exposure to extreme heat is no longer an occasional occupational hazard but a routine reality. Heat stress can lead to dehydration, exhaustion, kidney-related illnesses, cardiovascular complications, and reduced productivity.

Moreover, a significant proportion of sanitation workers live in informal settlements where access to basic services remains uneven. Overcrowded housing, poor ventilation, inadequate water supply, and limited green cover amplify exposure to heat. During periods of extreme weather, residents may struggle to secure



Aruna Bhattacharya

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Climate and heat considerations should be integrated into occupational health policies for municipal and contracted sanitation workers

sufficient water for drinking and cooling, while inadequate drainage can increase vulnerability to flooding and disease outbreaks. The result is a double burden: workers are exposed to climate risks both at work and at home.

What does this say about the health of our cities? Traditionally, public health indicators focus on disease prevalence, mortality, or service coverage. While these remain important, they often fail to capture how urban systems function in practice. A city may have healthcare facilities, social welfare schemes, and climate action plans on paper, but whether these systems reach those who need them the most is another matter. Sanitation workers provide a useful barometer of urban system performance because they sit at the intersection of multiple systems. Their experiences are shaped by municipal governance, labour arrangements, housing conditions, environmental infrastructure, healthcare access, and social protection policies.

Consider healthcare access. Many Indian cities have expanded urban primary healthcare services in recent years. Yet questions remain about whether these services are accessible to workers whose health needs are closely linked to occupational exposures. Are primary health centres equipped to respond to heat-related illnesses? Are workers aware of available services?

Similarly, social protection schemes often exist but remain difficult to navigate. Administrative barriers, lack of awareness, documentation requirements, and fragmented institutional responsibilities can prevent workers from receiving the benefits intended for them.

These gaps become even more significant as climate change intensifies. Cities across India, including Bengaluru, are beginning to develop climate action plans aimed at reducing emissions and building resilience.

However, climate adaptation cannot be limited to infrastructure investments alone. It must also address human vulnerability. This requires a shift in how urban development is understood. Health must move from being viewed as the responsibility of the health department alone to becoming a central consideration across urban planning, housing, and labour policies.

A climate-centric urban policy

For Karnataka's cities, several priorities emerge. First, climate and heat considerations should be integrated into occupational health policies for municipal and contracted sanitation workers. Heat action plans need to include worker protections such as access to drinking water, shaded rest areas, modified work schedules during extreme heat, and routine health monitoring. Second, investment in informal settlements is paramount. Improved housing, water access, drainage, and green infrastructure directly influence health outcomes and reduce vulnerability to climate-related risks.

Third, urban primary healthcare systems should be strengthened to respond to climate-sensitive health conditions. This includes training healthcare providers, and ensuring services are accessible to workers. Fourth, cities need better data; evidence on occupational heat exposure, health-seeking behaviour, healthcare costs, and long-term health impacts among urban workers remains limited. Finally, urban governance must become more integrated. Climate resilience, public health, and labour welfare are often treated as separate policy domains. Yet for sanitation workers, such issues are inseparable.

As Karnataka charts its urban future, sanitation workers offer an important reminder: cities are not defined by their infrastructure alone. They are defined by the systems that enable people to live, work, and remain healthy.

Damocles' sword over Kerala's fortunes

The State needs to take steps to increase revenue within its fiscal framework

Vinod Thomas C. Veeramani

The high debt of the Kerala government hangs like the sword of Damocles over the State's ability to borrow and invest. The State's fiscal and revenue deficits are above the median for the major 28 States. While the 2026 budget envisages growth-led fiscal repair, the debt crisis requires an immediate solution, since the debt is mainly incurred to finance current expenditure rather than capital investment.

The financial stress is compounded by the autonomous operations of the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) and Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs). The resulting losses are glaring. With revenue deficit grants from the Union Government now being cut, covering these losses becomes all the more critical. The massive liabilities, expenditures, and interest payments tie the hands of the government, as a status report to the State Assembly details. Strikingly, the government's capital expenditure is a mere 1.3% of its Gross State Domestic Product, one of the lowest among Indian States.

Immediate results

The government needs to improve the effectiveness of the revenue-expenditure framework urgently. A bigger draw-down of Centrally Sponsored Scheme funds, whose utilisation has been chronically below entitlement, offers immediate financing without incurring new debt. The Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment scheme, which are 50-year interest-free capital loans from the



Centre, remains underused. The 16th Finance Commission's urban local body grants offer another avenue, provided municipalities collect taxes that back those transfers.

Moreover, the buoyancy of tax revenue can be vastly improved. Economic growth was almost 10% last year, but taxes grew by only 3%, signifying a tax buoyancy of only 0.3. The State must confront massive revenue arrears and slash off-budget borrowings, as flagged by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Kerala can also strengthen tax compliance by overhauling its Goods and Services Tax (GST) administration, increasing GST registrations, improving targeted tax information systems, and ensuring timely audits. GST revenue growth was 3% in 2025-26 compared with 6% nationally.

The government could also explore fee increases across departments to generate more non-tax revenue. Priority sectors would be port management, building permits, mining levies and forest produce. There could be higher user charges for high-end government services such as specialised skill training.

Long-term improvements

Beyond quick fixes, a fiscal reform agenda is in order, as a report from Sacred Heart college outlines. Dealing with the losses of the PSEs should have priority. An independent review is needed for KIIFB-fund-

ed projects. It is also high time to implement tested models of private participation in PSEs.

A second avenue would be sources of finance. As in Indonesia, a professionally governed State intermediary can help attract capital. Private investment can be made less risky by announcing transparency and predictability in policy. The government may lease, and not sell, land for industrial zones and IT parks. Urban local bodies could access capital markets through bonds backed by property tax, user charges, and land lease income. Kerala diaspora bonds could be RBI-compliant instruments through which NRIs can invest in projects.

Third, the expenditure side of the ledger needs a better look. For every ₹100 in revenue, ₹77 are pre-committed to salaries, pensions, and interest payments, cutting the State's governing capacity. There is good rationale to embark on pension reform.

Fourth, errors of commission should be averted. Encouraging mining in fragile hilltops to earn revenue would be self-defeating. Similarly, allowing private participation in sand mining would be destructive as the damage wreaked by environmental destruction overwhelms any taxes gained. While it is tempting to cut welfare programs in the name of fiscal austerity, it would be a mistake to reverse the schemes that give safety nets to the extremely poor.

Kerala's development potential is well-known, but the fiscal crisis is a roadblock to realising it. The State must immediately enact steps to increase revenue within the existing fiscal framework.

Vinod Thomas is a former senior vice president of the World Bank; C. Veeramani is Director of CDS, Thiruvananthapuram.

UN report captures Israel's crimes against Palestinian children

The children killed in the Gaza Strip by Israeli security forces represent around 2% of the region's entire child population

DATA POINT

Sambavi Parthasarathy

What began as a response to the terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023, has prolonged into a nearly three-year-long aggression resulting in over 73,000 deaths and about 1.8 lakh injuries in the Gaza Strip. Children accounted for 30% of these casualties and 26% of the injuries. Israel's actions have been termed a genocide by the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry in its September 2025 report.

Though Israel has denied such allegations, the Commission's new report released on June 18, 2026 has offered further evidence of Israel's violence. The report observed that several acts of the Israeli forces amounted to "war crime of wilful killing and the crime against humanity of extermination." The Commission's inquiry conducted in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel examined violations and crimes affecting Palestinian children. It noted how Israeli soldiers mocked and weaponised symbols of childhood in Gaza. The report has captured various cases, showing how a systematic and deliberate infliction of harm has been imposed on the children in Gaza. The report highlighted that the children killed in Gaza represented around 2% of its entire child population. As per the report, the conditions of life imposed by Israel in Gaza has deprived the children access to schools and food, resulting in malnourishment among children.

The Commission concluded that Israel has deliberately carried out acts inflicting bodily harm on thousands of children. It stated that much of this harm was not incidental but "intended to destroy the existence of Palestinians in Gaza". To read more about the report, please see this link [newsthink.live/justiceinterview](https://www.newsthink.live/justiceinterview)

Acts of Genocide

The data was sourced from UN's "The essence of childhood has been destroyed": Israel's deliberate targeting of Palestinian children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 7 October 2023'



Table 1: The nearly three-year-long aggression by Israel on Palestine has resulted in mounting casualties. About one-third of those killed were children

Children killed and injured (as of February 2026)			Children who were killed under the age of five		
Killed	21,289	30% of those killed	Under 5	5,031	
Injured	44,500	26% of those injured	Under age 1	1,029	
			Newborns	420	

Additionally, 5,160 children are estimated to be buried under the rubble

Table 2: Indicators related to amputation and disability among children in Gaza

Gaza now has the highest concentration of child amputees per capita in the world (Oct-Dec 2023)	
One or more limbs amputated (Oct-Dec 2023)	Over 1,000
Children disabled during the conflict (as of September 2025)	21,000
Hearing loss (as of June 2025)	10,000
Severe hearing loss (as of June 2025)	5,000

Table 3: Thousands of children have been orphaned or separated since October 7, 2023

Orphaned and unaccompanied children	
Children who lost one or both parents (Oct 7 2023 to Oct 7 2025)	58,554
Unaccompanied or separated (Between Oct 7 2023 – Oct 7 2025)	17,000 & 18,000
Families led by a child under 16 (as of June 2024)	One in 4
Families reportedly caring for non-biological children (as of Jun 2024)	>40%

Table 4: Select indicators that show the impact of the conditions of life imposed by Israel in Gaza

Indicators related to health	
Children aged 6-59 months admitted for malnutrition treatment	>3,200
Children identified with acute malnutrition (by 2025)	95,000
Children under five at risk of malnutrition (as of Dec 2025)	~ 320,000
Confirmed child deaths due to malnutrition (as of Oct 2025)	151
Children aged 6-59 months expected to suffer acute malnutrition	~101,000
Severe cases of malnutrition	31,000
Decline in birth rate compared to 2022	
Percentage increase in miscarriage rates since October 2023	300%
Share of surveyed children who felt their death was imminent	96%
Children needing mental health and psychological support	~all of 1.2 mn

Indicators related to education	
School-aged children without sustained access to formal education	637,475
Children under five at risk of severe developmental delays (as of Jan 2026)	Over 335,000
School buildings requiring full reconstruction or major rehabilitation	~93%

The UN identifies hate speech as a "precursor to atrocity crimes, including genocide," in cases like the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis in Rwanda. The phrases used by a section of political leaders and members of security forces in Israel, shown in the graphic below, reveals how their language stereotypes Palestinians to normalise brutal violence against even children

Hanoch Milwidsky, Knesset member, February 21, 2024: **"You will die, your children will die, your grandchildren will die - there won't be a Palestinian state, there won't be"**

Nissim Vaturi, Deputy Speaker of the Knesset, Oct 9, 2023: **"Erase Gaza. Nothing else will satisfy us... Do not leave a child there, expel all the remaining ones at the end, so that they will not have a resurrection"**

Nissim Vaturi, January 30, 2025: **"Gaza is full of terrorists and every child born there is already a terrorist, from the moment of his birth"**

Merav Ben-Ari, Knesset member, October 16, 2023: **"There is no equality with Gazan children [compared with Israeli children]. Children in Gaza brought [their own killing] on themselves"**

Moshe Feiglin, former Knesset member, May 2025: **"Every child, every baby in Gaza is an enemy... We need to conquer Gaza and colonise it and not leave a single Gazan child there. There is no other victory"**

An Israeli soldier, in a video he posted:

"In my childhood, I've always dreamed of blowing up my school. Today I'm blowing up a school. Wow!"

Decisions are made by the **"appreciation of the commander on the ground."** – Israeli soldiers, as captured in Breaking Ranks: Inside Israel's War documentary by ITVX. They

stated they **do not worry about international law** because they believe they will be shielded from prosecution

On shooting Palestinians: **"The first shot is directly to the head."** – an Israeli soldier, in the same documentary

On seeing children shot: **"We saw two teenagers pushing some sort of cart and the first shot was directly to head."** – an Israeli soldier, in the same documentary

"Obviously, fingers are light on the trigger." – an Israeli soldier, at a Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) aid site

On shooting children at aid sites: **"Around 1 AM, there were a couple of teenagers just sprinting away, two [Israeli] soldiers ran after them, took two shots and the two kids just snapped backwards and dropped."** – a GHF truck driver, who spent seven weeks in Gaza, recounted

"For all those asking why there is no education in Gaza, oops a missile fell on you, that sucks, too bad. That is how you will not be engineers anymore." – an Israeli soldier, in a video posted to social media

On shooting a 10-year-old boy (January 28, 2025): **"I am the one who shot your son. God willing, he will die."** – an Israeli soldier, said to the boy's father. The boy died.

All these quotes have been reproduced as documented in the UN Commission's report

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The  **Hindu.**

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 1, 1976

Thanjavur Palace to be preserved

Madras, June 30: The Thanjavur Palace built by the Nayak Rulers in 16-17 century AD, standing on a 50-acre site, will be preserved as an archaeological monument. Necessary repairs will be carried out under a phased programme to protect this historical structure. The renovation will be undertaken by the State Department of Archaeology.

The 90-feet high structure – the Bell Tower with a flight of steps to reach the top will be restored to its original strength this year.

The Palace, in the middle of the town, was maintained by the Public Works Department till 1972 when it reported that the centuries-old building was in a very weak condition which did not permit carrying out major repairs or improvement. The PWD also felt that to take up the repair work at great heights was a hazardous process. The State Department of Archaeology, which has already taken up the responsibility of maintaining the Tirumalai Nayak Mahal in Madurai will now preserve this Palace.

The Maharatta kings who ruled Thanjavur after the Nayaks, evinced very keen interest in the upkeep of the palace and spent large amounts on its improvement.

Part of this mammoth structure now houses the Art Gallery and the world-renowned Saraswathi Mahal Library. Valuable portrait-paintings of the Maharatta rulers adorn the inner walls of the Palace but these have suffered heavy damage in the hands of unscrupulous visitors. The Department will preserve them too.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 1, 1926

British claims against Iraq government

Cairo, July 1: In the Commons, replying to Com. Kenworthy, with regard to the British renunciation of the claims against Iraq Government for the repayment of 94 lakhs in respect of public works, Major Ormsby Gore said the ownership of the Iraq railways built at the British cost still rests with the British Government. The question of their future was still being discussed as also the liquidation of certain claims on account of irrigation and other stores.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

MNREGA funds allegedly unpaid by the Union government

17 in ₹ crore. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Tuesday alleged that the Narendra Modi government was not paying pending dues of ₹17,144 crore to the States and Union Territories towards MGNREGA wages. He also alleged that the government has imposed the VB-G RAM G scheme on States, increasing the financial burden on them by 40 per cent. PTI

Rise in wrong-side driving prosecutions in Delhi in 2026

98 in per cent. Prosecutions for wrong-side driving rose by 98 per cent, and challans for unauthorised parking went up by 36.5 per cent in Delhi in the first six months of 2026 compared with the corresponding period last year, according to official data. The police intensified enforcement after a push from Delhi Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu. PTI

Bengal govt's package for development of tribal areas in the State

350 in ₹ crores. West Bengal Chief Minister Suvenudhikari on Tuesday said his government has asked the Tribal Development department to prepare a special package of ₹350 crore for developing Adivasi-dominated areas in the State, while accusing the previous Trinamool Congress dispensation of neglecting their welfare. PTI

Number of illegal water connections cut in Mumbai

2257 Maharashtra Cabinet Minister Uday Samant on Tuesday said that as many as 2,257 illegal water connections have been cut in Mumbai in the last six months, and more such actions will follow. The issue was raised by BJP MLC Rajhans Singh. These unauthorised connections were being used for construction activities. PTI

Deaths higher than expected during France heatwaves

300 French health officials said on Tuesday that there were at least 300 more deaths than expected during a five-day heatwave in May. Apart from the May heatwave, France experienced a record-breaking heatwave of 11 days earlier this month that scientists link to climate change. REUTERS
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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The fiscal tightrope for State govts.

Most State government expenditure is on social sectors, such as health and education, and economic sectors, such as agriculture and irrigation. In Kerala, such spending has driven social progress since the 1960s. The gap between expenditure and receipts is usually financed through market borrowings.

ECONOMIC NOTES

Jayan Jose Thomas

Kerala and Tamil Nadu are among the most socially and economically advanced States in India. Yet, the finances of both governments, like those of most other States, are under stress. The White Papers recently released by the two governments described their outstanding debt as alarming. State government debt is often vilified as the result of fiscal mismanagement. But it may, in fact, reflect a mismatch between development aspirations and the limited fiscal capacity of State governments.

The fiscal dilemma

Debts build up over the years with deficits, which arise when the government's expenditure overshoots its tax and other receipts. In India, while the power to raise taxes rests largely with the Union government, a larger share of overall government spending is borne by the State governments. A majority of the State government expenditure is on social sectors, such as health and education, and economic sectors, such as agriculture and irrigation, all of which have a direct impact on people's lives and livelihoods. In Kerala, the high levels of State government spending on social sectors since the 1960s have been a central constituent of the public action driving social progress. Compared with the corresponding average for all Indian States, per capita State government social expenditure was higher in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (by 30% and 20%, respectively). In contrast, it was markedly lower in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (by 35% and 40%) (for the period 2020-23, according to an analysis based on State Finances: A Study of Budgets, Reserve Bank of India).

States meet their expenditures partly through their own revenues – which mainly include State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) and sales tax – and through fiscal transfers, grants, and loans from the Union government. Kerala has a sufficiently good record of mobilising own-tax revenues, which, on a per capita basis, are 1.5 times the average for all Indian States and Union Territories. However, its share in the Union government's tax devolution to States was 1.92%, lower than its 2.6% share of India's population in 2023-24.

The excess of expenditures over receipts has been met through market borrowings by the States, on which the States pay interest (Charts 1 and 2).

Of the limited financial resources at its disposal, Kerala has been able to direct only 10% towards capital expenditure to enhance future production capabilities. The rest was spent on revenue, or day-to-day expenditure. Approximately a fifth of the State's budget expenditure was on the salaries of government employees, mainly teachers, nurses, doctors, and police personnel. Pensions accounted for 15.3%, while interest on market borrowings accounted for 16.5% of the total budget expenditure (Chart 2).

The investment challenge faced by Kerala

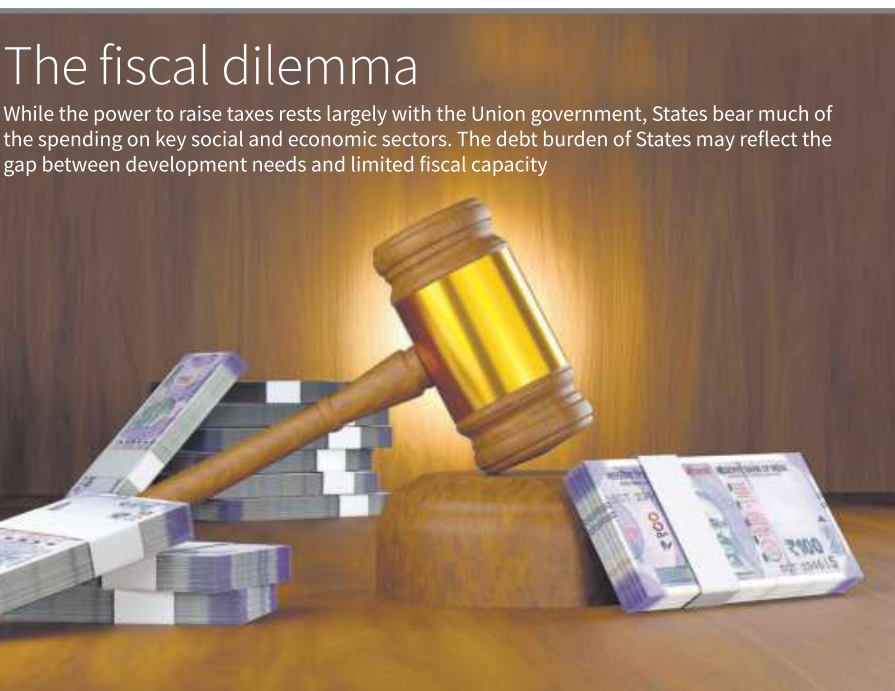
Kerala is thus caught in a fiscal dilemma. If it tries to create more fiscal space by reducing revenue expenditures – cutting pensions, retrenching employees – it risks eroding its strengths in the social sector. At the same time, Kerala urgently requires large-scale, State-directed investments in infrastructure, higher education and research, and public transport, if it is to realise its potential in modern, knowledge-intensive economic sectors. Educated young people are leaving Kerala in large numbers because the State is unable to create educational and employment opportunities that meet their aspirations.

In Kerala, the government's weak fiscal capacity contrasts with unmistakable signs of private affluence (lavishly built houses, expensive cars, and a high density of gold shops), threatening to exacerbate inequalities.

The ratio of credit to deposits of scheduled commercial banks in Kerala is only around 66%, compared with the national average of 76% and ratios exceeding 100% in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu (2023). The excess of bank deposits over bank credit is one indicator of the volume of unutilised savings in Kerala. Between 2016 and 2026, the State government's capital expenditure could have been at least doubled if Kerala had been able to channel at least part of its surplus savings into investment (Charts 3 and 4).

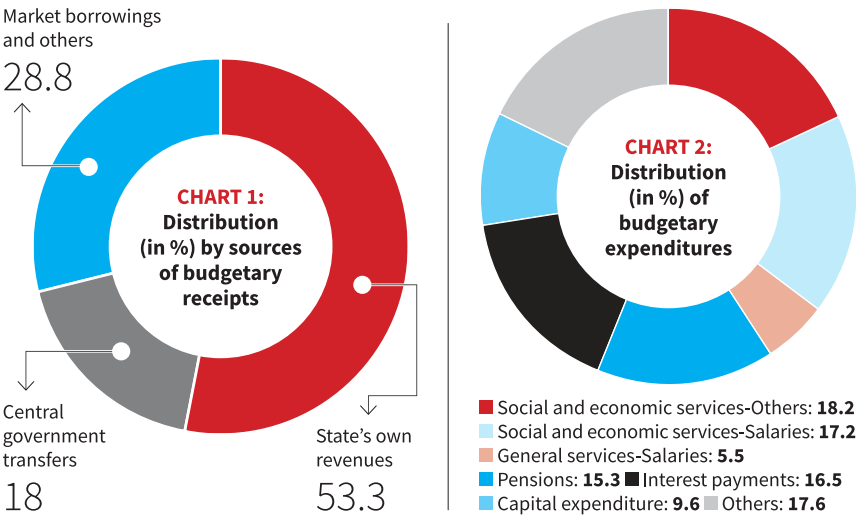
The borrowing opportunity for China's local governments

In China, the bigger chunk of the massive investments that have boosted economic growth has been undertaken by provinces and lower-level local governments. Local governments borrow heavily to finance these investments, drawing on the large pool of domestic savings held by Chinese banks, while their efforts are coordinated through central government planning. China's local governments raise resources through the sale of local government bonds (LGBs), land sales, and off-budget



The fiscal dilemma

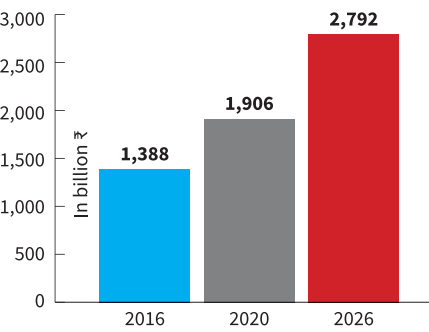
While the power to raise taxes rests largely with the Union government, States bear much of the spending on key social and economic sectors. The debt burden of States may reflect the gap between development needs and limited fiscal capacity



Note: Kerala's total budgetary receipts = total budgetary expenditures = ₹1,924.6 billion. That amount was 13.5% of Kerala's Gross State Domestic Product of ₹14,271.5 billion.

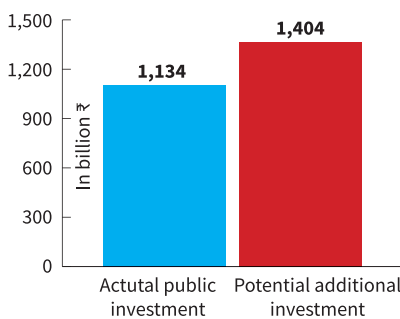
Source: Revised Budget in Brief 2026-27, Finance Department, Government of Kerala

CHART 3: Deposits mobilised in excess of credit disbursed in Kerala by scheduled commercial banks



Sources: Economic Survey, Government of India; Budget documents, Government of Kerala

CHART 4: Actual investment and potential additional investment that could have been financed with bank deposits in excess of credit in Kerala, 2016-2026



borrowing via local government financing vehicles (LGFVs), supplementing fiscal transfers by the central government.

In India, not only have there been limits on borrowing by State governments, but the cost of their debt has also been markedly high. State governments pay interest of 6.5% to 7.5% on the securities they issue, known as State Development Loans (SDLs), to borrow from the market. This is 0.25 to 0.75 percentage points higher than the rate at which the Union government borrows and significantly more expensive than the cost of borrowing by Chinese local governments from their banking system (around 2%).

The high interest burden further tightens the debt noose around State governments.

The State and Union government bonds issued in India are largely purchased by domestic financial institutions, including commercial banks

and insurance companies, which deploy the savings they mobilise from the public to support government finances. In effect, the debt the government owes is a debt to its own people. A government that borrows to fund projects that expand welfare and opportunities is serving a far greater cause than a tight-fisted government.

A family would prefer that its savings, rather than being wiped out to send their child to study in a distant land, be used to establish a public university in their district.

We need fiscal structures that enable State governments to access domestic savings more easily and at a lower cost to fund meticulously planned development projects.

(Jayan Jose Thomas is a Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi and a visiting researcher at the South Asia Institute of the Heidelberg University.)

THE GIST

State government debt builds up over the years when expenditure exceeds tax and other receipts. While the Union government raises most taxes, States bear a large share of public spending.

States meet their expenditures partly through their own revenues, including State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) and sales tax, and through fiscal transfers, grants, and loans from the Union government.

The excess of expenditures over receipts has been met through market borrowings by the States, on which the States pay interest.



KEYWORD

Papal encyclicals through eras of industrial and technological change

From addressing workers' rights in *Rerum Novarum* to the nuclear precipice in *Pacem in Terris* and the algorithmic frontiers of *Magnifica Humanitas*, modern papal encyclicals have drawn attention to key ethical questions in response to geopolitical, economic, and technological shifts

Faisal C.K.

In October 1962, the world held its collective breath. For thirteen agonising days, the United States and the Soviet Union stood eyeball-to-eyeball, their fingers hovering over nuclear triggers. The Cuban Missile Crisis had brought humanity to the absolute precipice of thermonuclear annihilation. This was not merely a political standoff; it was the terrifying zenith of the Third Industrial Revolution—an era where human scientific genius and industrial mass production had successfully automated the mechanics of global extinction. Strategic Air Command was put on DEFCON 2, and millions of families watched their televisions in terror, wondering if the dawn would bring the end of civilisation.

It was against this apocalyptic backdrop, with the literal survival of the human race hanging in the balance, that an aging, ailing Pope John XXIII decided to intervene. Behind the scenes, the Pope acted as a critical diplomatic bridge, exchanging secret, urgent messages with both John F. Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev, pleading for restraint. The crisis eventually receded, but the terrifying realisation of how close the world had come to self-destruction, permanently altered the course of papal history.

Just months later, in April 1963, while actively dying of stomach cancer, Pope John XXIII issued his final, most profound legacy to the world: the papal encyclical '*Pacem in Terris*' (Peace on Earth). Written in the raw, trembling wake of near-catastrophe, it was a radical document. For the first time in history, a Pope addressed an encyclical not just to the Catholic hierarchy, but to “all men of goodwill”. It was a desperate, eloquent appeal to human reason, arguing that peace could not be built on a balance of terror or a mountain of industrialised weaponry, but only on the bedrock of mutual trust, human rights, and the moral law.

The anatomy of a Pontifical encyclical
This grand tradition of the Church stepping directly into historical fires did not begin—nor did it end—with the Cuban Missile Crisis. A papal encyclical (derived from the Greek *enkyklios*, meaning ‘circular’) is a formal pastoral letter sent by the Pope to guide the world through urgent geopolitical, economic, and technological upheavals.

The publication of Pope Leo XIV’s landmark encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas* (Magnificent Humanity), directly continues this prophetic lineage. It positions itself alongside historical, legal and moral landmarks like Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and Pope John XXIII’s *Pacem in Terris* (1963). To understand its weight, one must unpack the distinct mechanisms of an encyclical: its historical background, its persuasive power (how it shapes global discourse), and its canonical validity (its authority under Catholic canon law).

The perils of the industrial revolutions
Encyclicals do not emerge in a vacuum; they are reactive, serving as a moral



A call to reflect: Pope Leo XIV signing his first Encyclical Letter '*Magnifica Humanitas*' in The Vatican. AFP

mirror to global revolutions. Far from being disconnected responses to separate crises, the social encyclicals of the Church form a continuous, 135-year theological lineage. Each document marks a socio-economic intervention at a different, compounding stage of the Industrial Revolution, where technological progress threatened to outpace human ethics.

Driven by the First and Second Industrial Revolutions (mechanisation and mass production), *Rerum Novarum* (1891) addressed the soot-choked reality of the working class. It defended workers’ rights, unions, and the concept of a ‘just wage’ against unregulated capitalism and Marxist state socialism, asserting that human labour is not a mere commodity.

Forty years later, during the rise of massive financial cartels and corporate monopolies, Pope Pius XI introduced the principle of subsidiarity in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931). It argued that centralised powers—whether states or mega-corporations—must not strip local communities or individuals of their agency.

Pacem in Terris met the Third Industrial Revolution head-on, confronting the automated, systemic danger of nuclear weapons by advocating for interstate relations grounded in universal human rights rather than military might. In *Laborem Exercens* (1981) Pope John Paul II defended the “priority of labour over capital”, as early computerisation and microprocessors began to automate factory floors. He asserted that machines and software are merely tools, and that the human being must always remain the active subject of work, never a passive object to be optimised.

Pope Benedict XVI warned in *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) against the “Technocratic Paradigm”—an ideological mindset where “what is technically possible becomes morally permissible”, fracturing truth and genuine human relationships. Pope Francis in *Laudato Si’* (2015) expanded

this critique by bridging digital ethics with environmental devastation, arguing that modern technological systems view both nature and human data as raw resources to be extracted and manipulated for profit.

The Nexus of Magnifica Humanitas
Issued on the 135th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIV’s *Magnifica Humanitas* marks the latest structural shift in this lineage, explicitly targeting the Fourth Industrial Revolution data monopolies, and advanced artificial intelligence.

By confronting algorithmic bias, corporate data concentration, autonomous weapon systems, and the risk of viewing humanity as a dataset to be optimised, the text modernises the Church’s ancient defence of human dignity for the digital era.

In Catholic Canon Law, the authority of an encyclical is highly nuanced. It falls under the category of the *Ordinary Magisterium* (the everyday teaching office of the Pope). An encyclical is generally not an exercise of papal infallibility. It does not usually decree immutable dogma. However, it is far more than a mere personal opinion; it is an official, authoritative document meant to guide the conscience of the universal Church. According to the Code of Canon Law, the faithful are required to give the Ordinary Magisterium a ‘religious submission of intellect and will’. While it does not demand the absolute theological assent of defined dogma, it mandates respectful adherence and intellectual docility from Catholics.

The canonical validity of a new document like *Magnifica Humanitas* relies heavily on its seamless synthesis with prior texts. By pulling the principle of subsidiarity from *Quadragesimo Anno* to fight data monopolies, and the priority of labour from *Laborem Exercens* to critique AI deskilling, Pope Leo XIV ensures his arguments are an organic evolution of Church law rather than a sudden rupture.

If an encyclical’s canonical validity binds the internal Catholic conscience, its persuasive power is what sways the secular world. The influence of the Papacy rests entirely on moral authority and philosophical persuasion. By utilising natural law methodology – the idea that certain moral truths regarding human dignity are discoverable through human reason alone – the text bypasses purely sectarian barriers to reach secular policymakers.

Rather than issuing a blanket, anti-technology condemnation, the encyclical adopts the posture of an “informed critic”. This strategic nuance is exactly what draws tech leaders and global regulators into the conversation.

Babel vs. Jerusalem
Ultimately, this century-long line of papal encyclicals represents the Church’s continuous effort to ensure that technological progress serves humanity rather than dominating it. Just as Pope John XXIII used the terrifying clarity of the Cuban Missile Crisis to demand a world ruled by moral order rather than nuclear fear, *Magnifica Humanitas* operates on the same dual front.

In *Magnifica Humanitas*, Pope Leo XIV captures this historical struggle through two vivid biblical images: humanity’s choice between constructing the Tower of Babel or rebuilding Jerusalem. Babel represents the prideful, unbridled pursuit of technical power as an end in itself—a path that inevitably leads to the reduction of human beings into disposable datasets. Jerusalem represents a community structured around justice, relationship, and the absolute recognition of human dignity. As the gears of the Industrial Revolution continue to turn from steam to software, this papal lineage serves as a vital reminder: humanity’s true magnificence lies not in the supreme power of its machines, but in its capacity for justice, conscience, and love. (Faisal C.K. is Deputy Law Secretary to the Government of Kerala. Views are personal.)



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

What is the origin of the word “bootleggers”? (V. Ramkumar, Chennai)
“Bootleggers”, as you know, are people who brew and sell illicit liquor. The word was first coined in the United States in the mid-19th century. It gained popularity within America, however, when the country went through a “dry spell” (prohibition) between 1920-1933. People who were fond of hard drinks had to depend on ‘bootleggers’ to wet their palates.

Bootleggers brewed whiskey in the outskirts of towns and cities. As it was illegal to sell whiskey in the open market, the dealers had to find ingenious ways of bringing the bottles into towns and cities. One method they employed was to hide the bottles inside the tall boots they used to wear. Since they hid the bottles in their boots they began to be called “bootleggers”!

Nowadays, the word is being used in a very general sense. When you say that someone is bootlegging, it doesn’t necessarily imply that he is making or selling illicit liquor. He could be making copies of videotapes and selling them illegally. Video piracy is a form of bootlegging. Here are a few examples: Prakash was caught bootlegging Windows 2000 CDs.

Amrit bought a bootleg CD of last night’s concert.

How is the word “alias” pronounced? (V. Kishore, Secunderabad)
The “a” in the first syllable is like the “ay” in “day”, “hay”, and “may”. The “i” is pronounced like the “i” in “sit”, “bit”, and “fit”, while the following “a” sounds like the “a” in “China”. The stress is on the first “a”.

What is an alias? Your official name may be Kishore, but at home everyone may be calling you Ravi. Ravi is your alias. An alias is a name by which a person is also known. Sometimes, people give a false name deliberately; this can also be called an alias. Here are a few examples: Ramanujam, alias Ravi, is arriving in Bangalore tomorrow. The well-known criminal used several aliases.

Which of the following sentences is correct? “He left for America after a three-day state visit” or “He left for America after a three-days state visit”. (Lenin, Chennai)
The first sentence is correct. You talk about a “three-day visit”, “two-week holiday”, “five-month vacation”, etc. You do not say three days visit, or five months vacation. In these examples, “three-day”, “five-month”, and “two-week” are functioning as adjectives. Here are a few more examples:

We are planning to go on the fourteen-day cruise next year. Sailaja’s four-page document was well written.

How is the word “vide” used? Can I say “The material was dispatched vide our invoice no....”? (Zatneer, Hyderabad)
“Vide” is a Latin word meaning “look at” or “refer to”. Formal letters referring to an earlier correspondence always make use of this word.

Your sentence implies that you sent the material through the invoice. It is not possible to do that! You could however say, “We have dispatched the materials as per our agreement (vide letter dated....)”. Published in *The Hindu* on February 20, 2001

Word of the day

Affray

a noisy fight

Synonyms: altercation, ruffle, disturbance

Usage: The public affray disrupted traffic for nearly an hour.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/affray

International Phonetic Alphabet: /əˈfɹeɪ/

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

THE DAILY QUIZ

Alferd Hitchcock once said, “In feature films the director is God; in documentary films God is the director”. A quiz on documentaries

Joan Sony Cherian

QUESTION 1
An easy one. In 2008, this documentary, which follows the life of a young girl in rural Varanasi, won the Oscar. Name the documentary and its director.

QUESTION 2
Documentary film making became more mainstream in the 1930s and 1940s due to a movement in the U.K which wished to use films to educate the masses. What was the movement called? Who was it led by?

QUESTION 3
Triumph of the Will, Olympia and Victory of the Faith are

documentaries directed by the same person. Name the film maker. Also, mention the other commonality that these films have.

QUESTION 4
This documentary won the National Film Award for Best Investigative Documentary in the 1990s. Last month, the director of the film alleged that his documentary was removed from YouTube for being “too violent”. Name the film and the director.

QUESTION 5
Which was the first Indian documentary to be nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature?



Visual question: This duo won the Best Documentary Feature at the 97th Academy Awards. Name them and the film. REUTERS

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

- Einstein’s Special Relativity paper was first published in this journal. **Ans: Annalen der Physik**
 - The original German title of Einstein’s 1905 paper on Special Relativity. **Ans: Zur Elektrodynamik bewegter Körper (On the Electrodynamics of Moving Bodies)**
 - According to Special Relativity, this physical quantity remains invariant for all inertial observers. **Ans: The speed of light in vacuum (c)**
 - This paradox describes a travelling twin returning younger than the twin who remained on Earth. **Ans: The Twin Paradox.**
 - This 1905 paper was published after his Special Relativity paper and is often regarded as completing the “miracle year”. **Ans: Does the Inertia of a Body Depend Upon Its Energy Content? (introducing mass-energy equivalence)**
- Visual: This interferometer was used in a landmark 1887 experiment which paved the way for Einstein’s Special Theory of Relativity. **Ans: The Michelson-Morley experiment**
- Early birds:** K.N. Viswanathan| Sukdev Shet| Bhavya Pandey| Prem Nath Tiwari

INBRIEF



NCLAT upholds order to pay PF dues to Jet Airways staff

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Tuesday upheld an NCLT order directing Jet Airways' liquidator to pay provident fund (PF) and gratuity dues to workmen and employees in full. The NCLAT rejected pleas by SBI and other banks that payment of PF, gratuity and pension fund dues be part of the liquidation estate, where they would be subjected to competing claims from various creditors under the IBC distribution mechanism.

After Trent, Noel Tata to step down as Voltas chairman

Almost a week after stepping down as chairman of Trent, Noel Tata announced on Tuesday that he would also relinquish the chairmanship of another Tata group firm, Voltas. Addressing shareholders of the leading cooling products maker in its 72nd AGM, Mr. Noel Tata, 69, said this would be his last AGM as Chairman of Voltas. "As you might be aware, this will be my last annual general meeting as Chairman," Mr. Noel Tata said in his address to shareholders.

Export duty on diesel, ATF reduced; petrol increased

Prompting a potential boost to India's export of hydrocarbons, the Union Finance Ministry late on Tuesday lowered the export duty on diesel to ₹8.5 per litre and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) to ₹7.5 per litre, while increasing the export levy on petrol to ₹4 per litre. The rates are applicable for the fortnight commencing July 1. In addition to this, the government expanded the number of countries exempted from the levy to include Mauritius and Maldives.

Govt. extends customs duty exemption on petrochem imports

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Finance Ministry on Tuesday extended the customs duty exemption on import of petrochemical products by another 15 days as it seeks to ensure a smooth transition for the domestic manufacturing industry relying on them for feedstock and intermediates.

At the peak of the West Asia conflict, on April 2, the government announced the waiver to ensure uninterrupted supply for domestic manufacturing industries.

"As the situation is gradually normalising, to ensure a smooth and non-disruptive transition for the affected sectors, it has been decided to extend the said exemption by a further period of 15 days, that is, till July 15," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

The exempted items include anhydrous ammonia, methanol, acetic acid and polyvinyl chloride.

Surge in ship traffic across Hormuz as Iran, Oman talk

With the Joint Hormuz Committee set up to finalise future framework for ship transits, tracker agencies reported rise in transits across the strait, including west-bound ships for loading cargo

M. Kalyanaraman
CHENNAI

With Iran and Oman setting up a Joint Hormuz Committee to come up with a framework for the management of the Strait of Hormuz, tracker agencies have reported a surge in transits across the strait, including west-bound ships entering the strait for loading cargo.

Early last week, Iran and Oman's ministers met and agreed to set up a joint committee.

But Iran, saying its role in managing the strait was not being recognised, launched a drone attack on a ship transiting through the Omani route.

On Thursday (June 25), the foreign ministers of Iran and Oman spoke on the phone and agreed to move forward on talks.

On Monday (June 29), Kazem Gharibabadi, Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, met with Abdulaziz Al Hi-



Smooth sail: Ships not related to Iran accounted for almost the entire increase in traffic. AFP

nai, Oman's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, to mark the first meeting of the Joint Hormuz Committee in Muscat, Oman. Mr. Gharibabadi posted on X that he discussed with his Omani counterpart the future management of the strait and the sovereignty of coastal states.

Despite a surge in attacks by both sides last week, ship transits over the week of June 22-28 increased 70% over the previous week, as per Lloyd's

List data. More than 240 ship transits happened last week, compared to some 130 the previous week.

Almost all the increase came across the non-Iranian route, presumably along Oman, and these had no links to Iran. Four Indian ships that had applied for permission from both the nations for transiting continue to be anchored inside the Gulf, as per marinetraffic.com

Ships not related to Iran accounted for almost the

entire increase in traffic, indicating that both the northern Iranian and the southern Omani routes are now popular among shippers seeking to evacuate. Significantly, Lloyd's List records 85 ships moving into Persian Gulf last week.

The MoU calls for 60 days of toll-free traffic, following which a mutually agreed framework will need to be put in place.

While Iran has indicated a preference for tolls, Oman, last week, signed on to a Gulf Cooperation Council statement that called for no tolls.

In 1968, the two sides proposed an inbound and outbound channel with a buffer in between, in the middle of the strait, for ship transit; this became the norm and was accepted by the International Maritime Organization, but there was no mention of sovereignty, tolls, or governance then. Iran has said it has mined these channels during the current war.

MSC arm to buy 49% stake in Vizhinjam port for \$1.4 bn

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. (APSEZ) and Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) Group's terminal arm, Terminal Investment Ltd. (TIL), have announced a

definitive agreement under which TIL will invest \$1.397 billion to pick up a 49% stake in Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Ltd. (AVPPL) that operates the Vizhinjam port in Kerala.

The move is expected to enhance volume visibility and ramp-up incremental

cargo at Vizhinjam port.

"The strategic collaboration represents the single largest foreign private investment in Indian port infrastructure and cements Vizhinjam's emergence as a dominant transshipment gateway in the Indian Ocean region," APSEZ said.

"Vizhinjam port has emerged as a premier transshipment hub and ramped up at an unprecedented pace, becoming the first Indian port to earn the unique distinction of crossing 2 million TEUs within 18 months," said Ashwani Gupta, whole-time direc-

tor and CEO, APSEZ.

TIL is one of the world's largest container terminal operators and part of the MSC Group, comprising a portfolio of over 100 container terminals in five continents with a throughput of over 70 million TEUs annually.

'Fintechs' personal loan defaults rose

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Fintech firms' small ticket personal loan defaults rose to 6.4% in March this year from about 4% in March 2024, signalling potential asset quality risks, according to Reserve Bank of India's Financial Stability Report (FSR) June 2026.

Small ticket loans refer to borrowings less than ₹50,000. Delinquent loans are defined as loans due for 90-170 days.

Unsecured retail loans constitute about 70.5% of fintech firms' loan books and about half of them were extended to borrowers under 35 years of age. An overwhelming share of Indian small borrowers resort to loan apps, mostly due to accessibility.

Fintech firms now control more than half of the small ticket personal loan market followed by NBFCs with a smaller but substantial 30.7% of such loans. Banks had more than 20%



Small value loans rose 41.6% in fintech firms as of March 2026.

of the market in March 2024 and this came down to 10% as of March 2026.

These small value loans increased 41.6% in fintech firms as of March 2026, from less than 15% in the same period last year.

The gross non-performing asset ratio of NBFCs as a whole is likely to rise to 2.8% of outstanding loans by March 2027 from 2.4% a year earlier. Of the 174 NBFCs that underwent stress test, seven may fall short of the 15% minimum capital norm, the RBI said.

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Riding on the demand for electric vehicles (EVs) since the outbreak of the West Asia conflict, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd. (TMPV) on Tuesday launched the all-new Sierra.ev at price starting ₹18.79 lakh (ex-showroom).

The top most variant is priced at ₹24.79 lakh. Deliveries will commence from July 2026.

The launch of the Sierra.ev comes at a moment when electric mobility decisively is moving into the mainstream.

Structural shift

Strong customer confidence, improving total cost of ownership, the rapid scale-up of charging infrastructure, and a maturing ecosystem are driving a structural shift in adoption with EVs transitioning from early adopters to a compelling, everyday mo-



The launch of the Sierra.ev comes at a moment when electric mobility decisively is moving into the mainstream. BY ARRANGEMENT

bility choice, said Shailesh Chandra, MD & CEO, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd.

Stating that the bookings for the EVs had gone up three times over the past months, he said, "The Sierra has always stood for more than just mobility. It has been an icon of innovation, aspiration and progress, bringing the future closer to customers."

"When reintroduced, it once again broke new

ground by creating India's premium mid-SUV segment. Today, with Sierra.ev, we are taking that legacy forward and setting a new benchmark for what an uncompromised premium SUV can be in the electric era. Combining exceptional real-world range, exhilarating performance, intelligent technology, indulgent comfort and go-anywhere capability, the Sierra.ev delivers an SUV experience that is as desir-

able as it is transformative," he said.

Sierra.ev, the mid-SUV segment sits at the heart of India's SUV market, shaped by a new generation of customers who see their vehicle as a reflection of their lifestyle, ambitions and identity.

"As EVs move firmly into the mainstream, desirability will be the defining catalyst for adoption. The Sierra.ev is designed to lead that shift. More than our most advanced SUV yet, it is a bold expression of the future - making electric mobility more appealing, accessible and compelling than ever before, while accelerating India's journey towards a cleaner, zero-emission future," he added.

The new Sierra was introduced seven months ago and the company has so far sold 40,000 units. Now, the EV version will add to the volume, company officials said.

Sanmar eyes foray into warehousing

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Chennai-headquartered Sanmar Group said it was mulling foray into the warehousing segment. "At a group level, we are looking at a plan that we expect to announce later this year. We are evaluating warehousing among a few other sectors. It is still early days," Vijay Sankar, Chairman, The Sanmar Group, said during a press meet.

Sanmar Engineering, a part of The Sanmar Group, will commemorate its 50th anniversary on July 1,



Vijay Sankar

2026, marking a milestone in the history of joint venture (JV) partnerships between India-based business houses and leading American corporations.

Sanmar Engineering would make investments

into manufacturing capacity expansion, product development, customer-specific application development, and market segment diversification.

B. Visweswaran, Managing Director, Sanmar Engineering, said, "Flowserve Sanmar is expanding seal system and gas panel manufacturing capacity with a new plant at Kunnappattu village, Thiruporur, near Chennai. Xomox Sanmar is expanding capacity from 80,000 valves per year to 150,000 valves per year at its facility in Viralmalai, Tamil Nadu."

"Anderson Greenwood Crosby Sanmar is investing in advanced digital test benches and cryogenic testing facilities, apart from a new office space in Viralmalai. BS&B India has continued to develop custom-engineered products in the segment such as Defense, Space, Nuclear Power, and Emerging Technologies," he added.

Narayan Sethuram, Vice Chairman, Sanmar Matrix Metals, informed that the company manufactured products for metro coaches and for Vande Bharat coaches.

CIL targets ₹1,900-cr. FY2030 R&D spend

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Coal India Ltd. (CIL) said it is targeting to invest about ₹1,900 crore in research and development (R&D) by FY2030. CIL spent ₹61 crore on R&D in FY24, which surged to ₹245 crore in FY25 with the establishment of the National Centre for Coal and Energy Research (NaCCER).

Norms laid down by the Department of Public Enterprises mandate annual

R&D expenditure of an average 1% of the entity's profit before tax from the preceding three years. NaCCER is supervising 19 R&D projects at an outlay of ₹225 crore. 13 more projects dealing with pilot-scale research and prototype development are underway at CIL's three Centres of Excellence.

CIL subsidiary Eastern Coalfields Ltd has an agreement with Canada's Ergo Exergy for underground coal gasification.

ACME-IHI JV receives Japan's CfD subsidy for Green Ammonia project

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

ACME Group and IHI Corporation's green ammonia joint venture 4,05,000 tonnes per annum (TPA) project, which is being established in Gopalpur, Odisha, has been certified under Japan's price gap support program by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism pursuant to the Hydrogen Society Promotion Act.

The grant has been given under Contract for Difference (CfD) Subsidy, a key pillar of Japan's long-term hydrogen strategy.

According to Japan government estimates, the value of the Grant under CfD Subsidy to ACME - IHI JV project is reported to be \$3 billion. Japan will provide price support for 2,28,000 TPA of clean ammonia supply capacity from the Gopalpur project, helping bridge the cost gap between green and conventional ammonia for various Japanese off-takers for a 25-year period starting September 2030 for delivery of clean ammonia to Japan.

Additionally, 1,77,000 TPA of the Gopalpur project's capacity has been earmarked under Japan's Long-Term Decarbonized Power Source Auction (LTDA), to further underpin project assurances for the JV to supply decarbonised fuel into Japan's power sector over a long-term horizon.

The ACME - IHI Green

The value of the Grant under CfD Subsidy to the project is reported to be \$3 billion

Ammonia JV project is being developed as a world-scale green ammonia export hub powered entirely by renewable energy. It is being established at Tata Steel SEZ Industrial Park at Gopalpur district of Odisha and is expected to be commissioned by July 2030.

Anil Taparia, CEO, ACME Green Molecules Business said, "The selection of our Gopalpur joint venture under Japan's clean hydrogen CfD scheme, together with LTDA support for capacities at Gopalpur and Paradip, is an important milestone for ACME."

"These approvals provide long-term revenue visibility across our green ammonia portfolio and materially strengthen the bankability of our projects while supporting the objectives of India's National Green Hydrogen Mission and Japan's decarbonization framework," he added. ACME Group has already started another Green Ammonia project in Paradip, Odisha, with a production capacity of 8,00,000 TPA to be commissioned by 2029. It has signed a Green Ammonia Purchase Agreement with Solar Energy Corporation of India for 370,000 TPA, creating a domestic offtake base. A further 83,000 TPA has now been awarded under the LTDA programme for supplies to Japan.

Etruscan tomb now on public display after over 160 years

The tomb was found on land that belonged to the aristocratic Torlonia family and the frescoes remained in their private collection until now. European museums loaned Villa Giulia artefacts of the tomb which are now being shown alongside the frescoes for the first time in over 160 years.

A photograph taken through a chain-link fence, showing a person walking on a road in front of a concrete wall. In the background, there are mountains and a cloudy sky. The fence is in the foreground, and the person is in the middle ground. The mountains are in the background. The sky is blue with white clouds. The person is wearing a red shirt and dark pants. The concrete wall has several windows. The road is paved. The mountains are rocky and have some vegetation. The sky is bright. The overall scene suggests a border or a restricted area.

‘The wait is like torture’: Turks in despair as Schengen visa delays mount

Mr. Trump's Department of Homeland Security, with help from the DOGE effort led by Elon Musk, revamped a govern-



Representatives of Delta Sigma Theta outside the federal courthouse after a hearing in a lawsuit seeking to block President Donald Trump's executive order tightening rules on mail-in voting on June 2. REUTERS

to redraw congressional district lines, efforts buoyed by the Supreme Court striking down a key section of the Voting Rights Act, and he has been directing his Department of Justice to investigate voting and election operations, which Democrats see as a possible prelude to their involvement in November.

All the activity around how the nation votes and runs its elections is a reflection of the Republican President's long fixation on his false claim that his 2020 election defeat was rigged. He has been so frustrated by the inability of the Senate to pass the SAVE ACT that he has refused to sign a bipartisan housing Bill.

He weighed in again

Deportees sue U.S. over expulsions to Ghana in top human rights court

A young man with dark hair, wearing sunglasses and a purple shirt, is in the foreground, shouting with his mouth wide open. He is holding a blue sign with yellow text that reads "IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ARE WORKER RIGHTS". Behind him, another person is partially visible, also holding a similar sign. The background shows a crowd of people and a building, suggesting a protest or rally.

"No person should be returned to a place where they face persecution, torture or serious threats to their dignity and safety," senior partner at Ghanaian law firm Merton & Everett

The lawsuit asks the court to order Ghana to both disclose the terms of the deportation agreement and terminate it.

The firm, along with Cornell Law School Transnational Disputes Clinic, in the U.S., and the Global Strategic Litigation Council, a coalition of NGOs, filed the lawsuit Monday at the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice in Abuja. The court is the top judicial

England bowlers will challenge struggling Indian batting unit

It remains to be seen whether the Men in Blue will give a debut to dashing opener Sooryavanshi; Shreyas cannot afford two series losses in a row as the new T20I skipper; the host boasts of a well-rounded team full of match-winners

INDIA IN ENGLAND

Press Trust of India
CHESTER-LE-STREET

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's eagerly awaited debut and the thoroughly exposed batting frailties on challenging wickets dominate the discourse on India as it takes on England in a five-match T20I series starting here on Wednesday.

The twin failure of Sanju Samson against Ireland offers the Men in Blue a perfect excuse to bench the opener and pair Sooryavanshi with Abhishek Sharma, who could be saved by that 20-ball 49 in the first T20I at Belfast.

It could end up being the move that gives the visitor a strong start against England.

Ishan Kishan also did not cover himself in glory during the two-match series against Ireland and was dismissed for one and 12. But then the inclusion of Sooryavanshi alone should not be viewed as a quick fix.

None of the India batters looked comfortable in conditions that offered considerable assistance to speedsters. England has extreme pace in Jofra Archer, Josh Tongue, Saqib Mahmood, and Sonny Baker and wiliness in Adil Rashid and Rehan Ahmed.

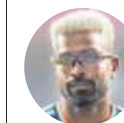
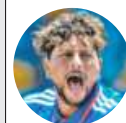
That the average T20I score at the Riverside

India's T20I journey in England

As the Men in Blue gear up for the five-match series, it's time to revisit the numbers:



TOP OF THE CHARTS

BATTING			BOWLING		
					
ROHIT SHARMA (213 runs, 8 inns)	VIRAT KOHLI (192 runs, 7 inns)	SURYAKUMAR YADAV (171 runs, 3 inns)	HARDIK PANDYA (11 wkts, 5 inns)	CHRIS JORDAN (9 wkts, 6 inns)	KULDEEP YADAV (5 wkts, 2 inns)

Ground is 138, with a highest of 195, hints at bowlers' dominance across eight previous matches held here.

India's new T20I captain Shreyas Iyer would certainly not want a second series defeat in a row.

In both the T20Is against Ireland, the Indian

bowlers let the rival batters off the hook in the middle overs after taking an initial grip.

An encore will be more brutally exploited by England batters.

In that context, India will require a more organised effort from bowlers, particularly spinners – Ax-

ar Patel and Washington Sundar – who have so far been largely ineffective.

The teams (from):

England: Harry Brook (Capt.), Rehan Ahmed, Jofra Archer, Sonny Baker, Tom Banton, Jacob Bethell, Jos Buttler, James Coles, Jordan Cox, Sam Curran, Liam Dawson, Will Jacks, Saqib Mahmood, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt,

Josh Tongue, and Luke Wood.

India: Shreyas Iyer (Capt.), Tilak Varma (Vice-capt.), Ravi Bishnoi, Abhishek Sharma, Suryansh Shedge, Prasidh Krishna, Sanju Samson (wk), Axar Patel, Harshit Rana, Ishan Kishan (wk), Washington Sundar, Arshdeep Singh, Shivam Dube, Prince Yadav, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, and Varun Chakravathy.

Match starts at 10 p.m. IST.

Gardner and Mooney carry Australia into final with ease

T20 WORLD CUP

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LONDON

The West Indies was blown away by the perfect storm that is also known as the Australian women's cricket team.

The Aussies moved into the final of the Women's T20 World Cup, winning the first semifinal at the Oval by eight wickets with seven overs to spare on Tuesday. They will take on the winner of Thursday's second semifinal between England and South Africa at Lord's in Sunday's summit clash. That will be their eighth final in what is only the 10th edition of the tournament.

Sophie Molineux's women hadn't been stretched so far and had scored convincing wins over India and South Africa, two of the strongest teams in their group. You wouldn't call the West Indies quite that, and even their captain Hayley Matthews had admitted that no one really expected her team to win against Australia.

Matthews had begun in gorgeous fashion though, driving the first ball of the match, bowled Lucy Hamilton, fluently through the covers for four. Her opening-wicket stand with Qiana Joseph was worth 47, but it took them eight overs.

The wickets continued to tumble, the runs dried up. It took a seventh-wicket stand of 42 off 27 balls between Deandra Dottin, who had to be carried off the field by her teammates



Leading the charge: Opener Mooney made it a stroll in the park for the Aussies. AP

shortly before the match got underway, and Jannilea Glasgow, to make sure Australia would have some sort of a target to chase.

The Aussie spinners had a merry time, with Molineux, Ashleigh Gardner and Georgia Wareham sharing six wickets evenly among them.

The champion all-rounder Gardner then came back with the bat in her hands to play her part in the easy chase, which was

led on a pleasant afternoon by Beth Mooney (61 n.o., 36b, 8x4).

Gardner (35 n.o. 20b, 4x4, 1x6), thus for the second time in as many matches, finished a successful chase for Australia.

The scores (semifinal): West Indies 125/7 in 20 overs (Hayley Matthews 30, Sophie Molineux 2/30, Ashleigh Gardner 2/13, Georgia Wareham 2/17) lost to Australia 127/2 in 13 overs (Beth Mooney 61 n.o., Gardner 35 n.o.); **Toss:** Australia; **PoM:** Gardner.



Red-letter day: Cape Verde players and staff celebrate after progressing. REUTERS

Africa bests Asia in reaching the knockout stage

FIFA WORLD CUP

Avon Sengupta

For decades, the World Cup was a tournament where Asia and Africa hoped to cause the occasional upset. This summer, while Africa has made a good account of its potential, Asia would feel disappointed at the end of the group stage of the competition.

A record nine of Africa's 10 qualified teams have made it to the knockout rounds, but only two from Asia progressed into the round of 32 – Japan has since bowed out while Australia is still to face Egypt.

Throwing light on Asia's collective disappointment, Jordan coach Jamal Sellami, whose team suffered three defeats in as many group games, said Asia needs "more players to play at that high level" to stand a chance of doing well in global competitions.

Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu, while acknowledging the below par performance of Asian teams,

wanted his side to become "the hope" for the continent before the pre-quarterfinal heartbreak against Brazil.

His comments came days after viral footage showed Chinese football fans in Shanghai celebrating Japan's 4-0 victory over Tunisia, briefly setting aside decades of political rivalry.

Africa, meanwhile, has surpassed the continent's previous best, when only two reached the round of 16 in both 2014 and 2022. Among them, Cape Verde has been one of the tournament's biggest revelations.

"We have become an example that small countries also can have big objectives provided they have focus, determination and work with organisation," head coach Pedro Leitao Brito 'Bubista' said after securing a clash with Argentina.

"We have shown that nothing is impossible. We have represented our country, but we also represent Africa and small countries around the world. We are proud to be able to play Argentina," he said. "This

is a country with which we have longstanding ties.

"But above all our will is to do things with our identity regardless of who the opponent is. We will play our game with attitude and responsibility, knowing that Argentina has some of the best players in the world plus Messi, who some believe is the best of all time."

Morocco has reinforced that its run to the semifinals in Qatar was no one-off, while Senegal recovered from losses to Norway and France to advance. Egypt finished second in Group G with a win and two draws, while Ivory Coast responded to a narrow defeat to Germany with wins over Curacao and Ecuador, while Algeria and Senegal also sneaked through as the sixth and eighth best third-placed teams.

South Korea, the only Asian team to have ever reached a World Cup semifinals, paid the price for fielding a much-weekend side without its captain Son Heung-min in its last group game against the Africans.

Swiatek and Zverev overcome a stern test

WIMBLEDON

Reuters
LONDON

Defending champion Iga Swiatek overcame a serious second-set wobble to reach the second round at Wimbledon on Tuesday, beating powerful American Taylor Townsend 6-1, 2-6, 6-3.

The third seed appeared overcome with emotion after match point, burying her head in a towel as she celebrated the hard-fought win.

Amanda Anisimova, last year's finalist, also advanced with a 6-3, 6-2 win over North Macedonia's Lina Gjorcheska, while Elena Rybakina, the 2022 champion, overcame a stern test from Frenchwoman Lois Boisson to reach the second round with a 6-4, 1-6, 6-3 victory.

The 2024 finalist Jasmine Paolini recovered from a nightmare start to reach the second round, fighting back to beat American Robin Montgomery.

The 13th-seeded Italian was blanked in the opening set but showed her resilience to seal a 0-6, 6-4, 7-5 victory.

Svitolina ousted

However, eighth seed Elina Svitolina became the first top-10 casualty in the women's draw, squandering a 4-0 first-set lead before fellow Ukrainian Daria Snigur rallied to claim a 7-5, 6-2 victory.

In the men's section, reigning French Open champion Alexander Zverev overcame a stern challenge from Belgium's Alexander Blockx to prevail 6-4, 6-7(8), 7-6(5), 7-6(0) in a battle lasting nearly three hours.

Finnish qualifier Otto Virtanen claimed the biggest win of his career by

stunning American Ben Shelton 6-4, 3-6, 6-7(8), 6-2, 7-6(11-9) after more than four hours on the court.

Djokovic starts well

Meanwhile on Monday, Novak Djokovic launched his latest bid for a record-equalling eighth Wimbledon title and standalone 25th Grand Slam crown with a battling 6-4, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4 win over China's plucky Wu Yibing in the first round.

Still fiercely competitive at the age of 39, Djokovic is looking to equal Roger Federer's tally at the All England Club and go past Margaret Court in the all-time list of Grand Slam titles, and he showed flair and fight to stay on track.

"It's better when you win in the end. It's not the first time I'm showing and talking about the significance of Wimbledon in my career and my life," Djokovic said, before talking about playing under the Centre Court roof and lights after two sets.

"It felt really challenging today, Wu deserves a round of applause for his incredible performance. As for how I'm feeling, I'm feeling happy but not the freshest I guess. It didn't feel like the first round to be honest.

Easy for Sabalenka

The women's top seed Aryna Sabalenka, who left the French Open Paris in a 'deep, dark place' after losing the last 10 games of her quarterfinal against Diana Shnaider, breezed past Serbian qualifier Teodora Kostovic 6-2, 6-3 to start her campaign for a maiden crown.

Seventh seed Coco Gauff downed Tamara Korpatsch 6-2, 6-1 while French Open champion Mirra Andreeva, seeded five, beat Magda Linette 7-5, 6-4.



Champion stuff: Swiatek did not let a second set blip unsettle her while it was all music to Djokovic's ears as he began his quest for a record-breaking 25th Major crown. REUTERS

IMPORTANT RESULTS

First round: Men: Majchrzak (Pol) bt 30-Tabilo (Chi) 6-3, 7-5, 7-5; 5-de Minaur (Aus) bt Burruchaga (Arg) 7-6(5), 6-1, 6-0; 6-Fritz (USA) bt Lajovic (Srb) 6-3, 6-4, 6-3; Halys (Fra) bt 32-Arnaldi (Ita) 3-6, 6-1, 7-6 (5), 6-3; Munar (Esp) bt 18-Cerundolo (Arg) 6-1, 6-4, 6-3; Virtanen (Fin) bt 4-Shelton (USA) 6-4, 3-6, 6-7(8), 6-2, 7-6(9); 10-Bublik (Kaz) bt Kokkinakis (Aus) 4-6, 6-3, 6-7(10), 6-3, 6-4; Bergs (Bel) bt 27-Humbert (Fra) 6-2, 7-5, 4-6, 3-6, 6-3; 19-Khachanov bt Harris (GBR) 6-3, 5-7, 6-3, 6-3; 20-Fils (Fra) bt Collignon (Bel) 7-5, 6-1, 6-3; 15-Mensik (Cze) bt Samuel (GBR) 5-7, 6-3, 6-3, 3-6, 7-6(7); 2-Zverev

(Ger) bt Blockx (Bel) 6-4, 6-7(8), 7-6(5), 7-6(0); Sonogo (Ita) bt 29-Etcheverry (Arg) 6-4, 6-4, 6-7(2), 7-6(4); 7-Djokovic (Srb) bt Wu (Chn) 6-4, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4. **Women:** 6-Anisimova (USA) bt Gjorcheska (MKD) 6-3, 6-2; Maria Sakkar (Gre) bt 24-Tauson (Den) 6-3, 6-3; 13-Paolini (Ita) bt Montgomery (USA) 0-6, 6-4, 7-5; 21-Bouzokva (Cze) bt Gibson (Aus) 6-1, 3-6, 6-2; 26-Keys (USA) bt Day (USA) 6-7(5), 6-4, 6-3; 3-Swiatek (Pol) bt Townsend (USA) 6-1, 2-6, 6-3; 2-Rybakina (Kaz) bt Boisson (Fra) 6-4, 1-6, 6-3; 25-Mertens (Bel) bt Siegemund (Ger) 6-2, 6-4; 23-Navarro (USA) bt Badosa (Esp) 4-6, 6-3, 7-5; Snigur

(Ukr) bt 8-Svitolina (Ukr) 7-5, 6-2; 29-Eala (Phi) bt Zarazua (Mex) 6-1, 6-2; 15-Shnaider bt Lys (Ger) 7-5, 6-1; 17-Cirstea (Rou) bt Bejlek (Cze) 6-1, 7-6(6). 10-Muchova (Cze) bt Zakharova 6-3, 6-2; 5-Andreeva bt Linette (Pol) 7-5, 6-4; Bouzas Maneiro (Esp) bt 27-Potapova (Aut) 6-2, 6-3; 18-Alexandrova bt Udvardy (Hun) 6-4, 6-2; 7-Gauff (USA) bt Korpatsch (Ger) 6-2, 6-1. **Fallen seeds: Men:** 4-Shelton, 18-Cerundolo, 27-Humbert, 29-Etcheverry, 30-Tabilo, 32-Arnaldi. **Women:** 8-Svitolina, 24-Tauson, 27-Potapova.

Limansa — a star in the making from the Dilshan lineage

The daughter of the celebrated former Sri Lanka opener is leaving no stone unturned as she hopes to make an impression in the U-19 Women's World Cup which will be jointly hosted by Bangladesh and Nepal in early 2027; she is also looking to carve an identity of her own

Anirudh Velamuri
Lavanya L

The surname Tillakaratne carries considerable weight in Sri Lankan cricket. It evokes memories of Hashan Tillakaratne's dependability, Tillakaratne Dilshan's innovation, World Cup triumphs, and decades of service to the national side.

Now, another Tillakaratne is trying to earn that name on merit. Seventeen-year-old Limansa Tillakaratne, Dilshan's daughter, is touring India with Sri Lanka's Under-19 women's side for three T20s and three One-Day fixtures, in preparation for the U-19 Women's World Cup, which Bangladesh and Nepal will jointly host in early 2027.

She hopes to become the latest member of a cricketing lineage while carving out an identity that is distinctly her own.

It's been a steep learning curve for the outfit in Chennai, with Limansa herself, a leg-spinner, proving expensive with the ball and registering three ducks in the middle order.

Sri Lanka gave a better account of itself in the second game, bringing the margin of defeat down from 93 runs in the first match to 11 in the second, with an improved effort in the field. Limansa even struck timber as she sent back the dangerous Ira Jadhav. India won the third fixture by seven wickets to take the series, with Sri Lanka's batting weaknesses costing the side.

Catching the action

Following his daughter's run carefully, about 600 kilometres away in Hyderabad, is her father, Dilshan, currently with TG20 franchise Khammam Aces for the inaugural edition of the league. Long distance defines this father-daughter relationship.

"When I started cricket, he was actually not in Australia (where the family moved to after his retirement in 2016). I think he was in India and I was playing locally, just for fun. I was bowling, and the ball was looping. I didn't have a clue about cricket then.

"My mom (Lankan actor Manjula Thilini) said if I enjoyed it, I should keep at it, and she'd send video clips of me playing. One day, he saw something he liked and thought there was talent there work with. That's how I started playing," Limmy, as she is fondly called, told *The Hindu* after her game at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai.

Memories of those early videos draw out a chuckle from Dilshan.

"Limmy began playing at home in the garden. She'd normally hit tennis balls. I didn't take it so seriously then. I wanted my son to play. After my retirement in 2016, we moved to Australia as a family. I continued playing Legends League and was travelling and my wife would tell me about Limmy's thing with cricket. She was very keen. During break time in school, she'd play with the boys. One of the teachers picked up on that and took her and my wife to a local club where she signed up and started training. My wife then sent me the videos," Dilshan told this publication.

"I still have those early videos and still have a good laugh when I revisit them. She bowled all the wrong lengths, used the wrong arm. The ball would bounce thrice. But she was so keen. She'd wake up early to watch matches regardless of her schedule. It was evident she wanted to do something in the game. So, we decided to work hard on that for one year. Every day, two to three hours after school, we worked on her game," the 49-year-old added.

The youngest

The results then trickled in. In 2021, Limmy, aged 12, became the youngest female cricketer to play at the premier level when she made the U-16 squad for Cricket Victoria.

She then broke into the U-19 Victoria side and played regularly for Melbourne Cricket Club. Dilshan even fondly remembers a century she scored for Victoria. But then, the family patriarch threw his eldest a googly.

"We decided to take her to Sri Lanka. I took her to my club, Bloomfield (Cricket and Athletic Club) in Colombo. We spent time working on her bowling. We tried her out in the U-19 provincial side, where she did really well. Selectors then wanted to pick her, and she made the team for the inaugural U-19 Asia Cup in 2024 and the U19 World Cup in Malaysia last year," he remembered.

Sri Lanka made the Super Six stage of



the World Cup but couldn't progress to the knockouts, finishing fifth in the final standings. But one memory stands out.

"Sri Lanka beat Australia in the Super Six match, and Limmy won the Player-of-the-Match Award," Dilshan exclaimed, the irony not lost on him. She took a wicket, giving away just 18 runs in her four overs. She also took two catches and effected a run out in that low-scoring fixture where Sri Lanka defended a paltry 99/8 with a 12-run win.

She eventually finished that tournament with seven wickets, the second-highest wicket-taker for her side behind left-arm spinner Chamodi Praboda's nine scalps.

Obvious choice

For a young bowler, leg-spin isn't an obvious choice of speciality.

"She always bowled the googly, and it came naturally for her," Dilshan, a handy offie himself, explained.

"I thought, developing it into leg-spin would be more advantageous for her, and for any side she might be a part of. It took us a year," he added, saying small but smart interventions as a coach are needed early on in a player's trajectory to maximise their success as a cricketer.

"In my bowling, I'm trying to work on my speed. I am trying to bowl flatter and get the ball to turn more," Limmy explained.

With Dilshan as coach, the conversation turned to batting soon enough. She started lower down the order but soon began opening for her side and then moved into the middle order, especially in 50-over games. Ask her about what tricks her dad has shared with her in the nets, and she asks, "You're talking about the Dilscoop, right?"

"We've been practising it. I practised it first with my dad, and I tried a few in the nets, and it came out really well. I'm just waiting for the right ball in the middle to play it," she added cheekily.

Country first

Cricketing migrations to Australia are the norm, not away from it. For the women's game, Australian systems have been the holy grail, led by a senior women's side that is head and shoulders above its competition. But for Dilshan, that Sri Lankan crest he had worn on his chest for nearly two decades meant more.

"As a Sri Lankan captain, I'm happy for my daughter to play for Sri Lanka. Yes, we live in Australia. Every facility is there. The pathways are very good, and there is no

difference between boys and girls. But as a Sri Lankan, I do want her to play for Sri Lanka," Dilshan stated.

His wife was unsure about the move. But Limmy immediately got on board.

"I remember the first day she had a trial. We landed in Colombo at 11.30 or 12 o'clock at night. It was 2 am by the time we got home. She had a game the next morning. She played, took four wickets, and scored fifty-odd. On the way back home, she threw up while on the road. The time difference and the strain of it were a bit much. But she was ready. She always delivers what I ask of her. There's no complaining or saying she's tired," Dilshan proudly declared.

When performances didn't go her way, Dilshan and Limmy were out late to hit the nets.

"Even if she's come back late from a game, if she hasn't performed well, she'll say, 'Thaathi' (Sinhalese term for father), let's go to the nets.' That could be at 10 pm. I would have to book indoor nets, and we'd go and train for an hour.

"You can see the change in where her mum is now. She was unsure before, but she's so happy with how Limmy has come along," he added.

For Limmy, it is also an opportunity to carry on her father's legacy.

"I'm actually really proud to be his daughter and to start a career, not because of him, but inspired by him really, and I'm really happy that I have this figure behind me, supporting me and always there for me whenever I need him."

Try and be better than me

When she made the national U-19 side, Limmy distinctly remembers Dilshan saying, "You're following in my footsteps. You have to be better than me. Try and be better than me!"

A day after *The Hindu* caught up with Limmy, Dilshan looks at her laughing on video as she brushes off the pressure those lines come with and can't help but smile.

"She's totally different from me. She's a leg spinner, I'm an off spinner. I'm



right-handed, she's left-handed. My only message to her has always been that she needs to be a good cricketer in all three departments. When she started playing, she was a very poor fielder. As her father and one of the best fielders in the world, I was a bit disappointed when she would drop catches. We set a target for that too. I heard she was good in one of these games and put in some good stops in the field."

For Limmy, *Thaathi* is the north star. Coaches at different levels may give her countless tips, but nothing happens without her father hearing about it and giving his thoughts on its validity. That means the cricketer and coach in Dilshan is always on, but it's a relationship bedrock he has come to savour.

"I am quite happy that Limansa listens to me. Even when coaches try to change something, she will bring it to me first. I always encourage trying everything. If it doesn't work, go back to your basics!"

Huge relief

As a father, seeing systems emerge for his daughter to discover her cricketing sensibilities within is a huge relief for Dilshan.

What Limmy can only learn from someone like her father, which is perhaps most important, is managing expectations.

"I've told her that sometimes she might get dropped, even if her performances are okay. It's happened to me too. In 2008, I was benched. I went back to domestic cricket, scored heavily, and won games, but still didn't get highlighted enough to make it back. I was batting at No.6 or 7. I then pitched myself as an opener to the management. I knew Sanath (Jayasuriya) was retiring in the 2009 season, and that space was there to take. I went back to the domestic scene and scored heavily, batting till the 25th and 26th over."

"In 2008-09, I got an opportunity to play as an opener, that too in the squad, not the eleven, when we toured Pakistan (now infamous for the attack on the Lankan player bus in Lahore). I piled up runs, got 140-odd, and even won Player of the Series. But I got that chance because Upul Tharanga pulled something just before the toss in the opening game. That opening slot was mine thereafter till I retired. I took risks, but they worked. I always tell Limmy that sometimes, as cricketers, we have to take risks. She knows disappointments, drops will come and understands they are part of the package."

In the middle of a crucial school year, the Tillakaratne household has allowed her to put schoolwork on hold as she prepares to make the team for the U-19 World Cup once more.

Assignments are being sent from wherever she's playing in the meantime. The big questions are a headache for after January and Limmy is happy to just focus on being on a cricket field full-time.

THE GIST

- Limansa and her father, Dilshan, are opposites who love working on their craft together. He's an off-spinner, she's a leg-spinner. He's right-handed, she's left-handed
- Fondly called Limmy, she grew in the Australian cricketing system before the family decided that she should represent her native country
- When she broke through to Premier cricket in Australia, she was only 12, making her the youngest female cricketer to play at that level
- Limansa was part of the Sri Lankan U-19 World Cup squad in 2025 and the side made the Super Six stage