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'Karnataka BLOs not making house visits during SIR'

BENGALURU
An NDA delegation has, in a letter to Karnataka CEO, alleged 'irregularities' in the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and accused booth-level officers of violating guidelines by not visiting houses for verification. » PAGE 3



India to push for non-permanent seat at the UNSC

NEW DELHI
External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will launch India's official campaign for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council during 2028-29, key for the country's leadership role in the Global South on July 13. » PAGE 4

PM Modi kicks off 3-nation trip with visit to Indonesia

JAKARTA
Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Indonesia on Monday, on the first leg of his three-nation tour also covering Australia and New Zealand, aimed at further strengthening India's Act East Policy and its commitment to an inclusive Indo-Pacific. » PAGE 4

Beijing test-fires 'strategic' missile into the Pacific

BEIJING
A Chinese nuclear submarine test-fired a "strategic" missile carrying a dummy 'training simulation' warhead into the Pacific Ocean on Monday, the Chinese Navy said in a statement, drawing immediate condemnation from nations in the region. » PAGE 14



Russian missiles, drones leave 21 dead in Ukraine

KYIV
Russia unleashed waves of missiles and drones at Ukraine on Monday killing at least 21 people, authorities said. Fifteen people were killed in capital Kyiv, and 56 other were injured, according to authorities. » PAGE 14

Pahalgam attack: NIA files charges against LeT chief

Supplementary chargesheet provides details of Pakistan's conspiracy, Saeed's role, and supporting evidence collected by the agency; LeT, TRF charged as legal entities for their role in the attack

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday filed charges against Hafiz Saeed, chief and founder of the Pakistan-based terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and its proxy The Resistance Front (TRF), in the Pahalgam terror attack case.

Twenty-six civilians were killed in the attack on April 22, 2025.

An NIA spokesperson said a supplementary chargesheet was filed before the NIA Special Court in Jammu.

"The accused has been charged under various sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023 and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. NIA

Terror trail

Hafiz Saeed (76) is the chief and founder of Pakistan-based terrorist organisation Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)

■ He is believed to be behind the 2000 Red Fort attack, 2001 Parliament attack, 2002 Akshardham Temple attack and the Mumbai train bombings in 2006

■ India termed Saeed the mastermind of 2008 Mumbai terror attacks and sought his extradition multiple times

■ In 2008, he was designated as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist by the United States



has also invoked the penal section against the accused for waging war against India and hatching a conspiracy from across the border in the chargesheet," the NIA said.

The latest chargesheet, filed in continuation of the original 1,597-page char-

gesheet, provides details of Pakistan's conspiracy, Saeed's role, and supporting evidence collected by the NIA in the case "through meticulous scientific investigation and on-ground examination".

The NIA had filed the original chargesheet on

December 15, 2025. It had then charged Pakistani terrorist handler Sajid Jatt as an accused along with three terrorists, who were killed by the security forces during Operation Mahadev in July 2025.

Besides, two arrested accused, civilians who allegedly provided logistics to the attackers, were named in the previous chargesheet.

The NIA has charged the LeT and the TRF as legal entities for their "role in planning, facilitating, and executing the Pahalgam terror attack".

"The NIA continues to probe the case to unravel the complete conspiracy by Pakistan, which has been actively sponsoring terrorism on Indian soil from across the border," the central agency said.

3 held over rape, murder of minor in West Bengal

Shiv Sahay Singh
Seniuti Sengupta
KOLKATA

Three persons have been arrested in connection with the alleged rape and murder of a 12-year-old girl in Baruipur in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, officials said on Monday.

One of the accused, Pravas Mondal, was arrested on Sunday night, while two more – Dibakar Sardar and Ananda Sardar – were arrested on Monday, according to police.

"Pravas Mondal and Dibakar Sarda were also produced before a court, which granted 20 days of police custody. Later, we also arrested the third accused, Ananda Sardar, who will be produced before the court on Tuesday. Two more people have also been detained and the police are questioning them," a senior police officer from South 24 Parganas district said.

Chief Minister Suvenud Adhikari on Monday assured the family members of the victim that his government would ensure capital punishment for the accused. "The family of the victim will get the justice in the way they want it. We will ensure capital punishment for the accused. I am happy that the family have shown faith in me," Mr. Adhikari said.

The police have registered charges of gang rape and murder against the accused. Necessary Sections of POC SO Act have also been added to the first information report after the primary investigation, the officer said.

Violence had erupted on Sunday after the body of the minor was recovered from a pond. One person was lynched by a mob and some police personnel were injured in the violence. A police vehicle was also vandalised.

There were no reports of violence on Monday.



Jail turmoil: Inmates boarding a bus to be transferred after the clashes at the Negombo prison in Sri Lanka on Monday. REUTERS

7 officers among 26 killed in clashes at Sri Lankan jail

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

At least 26 persons, seven prison officers among them, were killed in a Sri Lankan prison on Monday after a clash among inmates escalated into deadly violence. Over 100 persons were injured.

Tensions began on Sunday as groups of inmates reportedly attacked each other, killing two persons and prompting authorities to deploy military personnel around the prison in Negombo, around 30 km from capital Colombo.

The clashes escalated on Monday even as some inmates gathered on the rooftop to protest, demanding their immediate release.

Prison spokesperson Chaminda Gajanayake said that some prisoners rushed towards the main gate and attempted a break-out, but were held back.

Residents of the area told local media that gunshots could be heard outside, suggesting that prisoners had likely seized firearms from prison guards earlier.

Sri Lanka's Justice Minister Harshana Nanayakkara expressed "profound shock and grief" at the loss of human lives. "Whether they were inmates, or associated with the underworld, is not relevant to us at this moment," Mr. Nanayakkara told pressper-

sons, adding that he took responsibility for the shocking incident.

Authorities are working to separate rival gangs in the prison that are suspected to have triggered Monday's deadly violence, officials said. Meanwhile, authorities have decided to transfer some inmates from Negombo prison to other facilities, officials said.

Prisons Department Media Spokesperson A.C. Gajanayake stated that a special investigation has been launched into the incident. He said a dedicated investigation team has been appointed on the instructions of the Commissioner-General of Prisons to conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the causes and circumstances surrounding the unrest.

Overcrowded prisons
Monday's prison riots come six years after a deadly riot at the Mahara prison, north of Colombo, during the height of the pandemic in 2020, in which as many as 11 inmates were killed. The incident put the spotlight on dire conditions in Sri Lanka's prisons at the time. Rights defenders said the prisons were accommodating thrice their intended capacity, resulting in severe overcrowding and lack of facilities during the pandemic.
(With PTI inputs)

Link challenge



Workers clear debris from the Missing Link section of the Pune-Mumbai Expressway in Maharashtra on Monday, after heavy rain triggered a landslide in the area. The section was opened in May. PTI (REPORT ON PAGE 4)

Form used in Census second phase rehearsal has 'open column' for caste

Vijaita Singh
Abhinav Lakshman
NEW DELHI

The questionnaire used in the rehearsal for the second phase of Census, which started in 16 States and Union Territories on Monday, has an "open column" for respondents to record their castes, several officials involved in the exercise told *The Hindu*.

Though this gives an indication of how caste is likely to be enumerated in the country as part of the Population Census 2027, officials said that this was just a "pre-test" and the final methodology will be prepared based on the feedback received during the exercise, which concludes on July 20.

The castes of all residents will be recorded in

the second phase of the Census, named Population Enumeration (PE).

The 2027 Census is the first digital Census and the first to enumerate caste in Independent India.

Until now, only the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) were enumerated during the Census exercise.

The PE phase will be conducted in February 2027 across the country but in Ladakh and snow-bound areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, it will be concluded by September 30. The final questionnaire will be known by September.

Debate continues

The discourse on the methodology of caste enumeration has largely swung bet-



An enumerator takes notes during a door-to-door survey for the Census in New Delhi. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ween either leaving an open column for caste – as in the 2011 Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) – or preparing a list of castes for people to pick from, as the Bihar government did in its 2022-23 caste-based survey.

Interestingly, the open column methodology had resulted in the 2011 SECC returning over 46 lakh different "caste names", largely owing to the difference in what people understand by caste. Significantly, the Prime

Minister Narendra Modi-led government has consistently maintained over the last decade that the 2011 SECC's caste data were unreliable because of "errors" in data collection.

The total number of castes enumerated by the

Census exercise held in 1931 was 4,147.

Meanwhile, the pre-test exercise under way also allowed self-enumeration, and the portal had been accessible from July 1 to 5 only in the specific areas where the rehearsal is being conducted.

In Faridabad, Haryana, the exercise is being conducted in 17 enumeration blocks.

Each block typically has 150 to 180 residential units with a population of 650 to 800 people.

"To evaluate field procedures, digital applications, and operational arrangements ahead of the nationwide population enumeration, a pre-test will be conducted in Ward No. 24 – comprising 17 enumeration blocks – from July 1 to July 20," the office of the

Deputy Commissioner, Faridabad said.

The PE phase in 2011 Census had 29 questions covering demographic, cultural and economic parameters, as well as literacy, migration, marital status, travel to place of work, and fertility.

An official said, "While SC and ST communities will be enumerated as they have always been, with codes for communities in the SC and ST lists, other people will have an open column to fill in their caste and enumerators will enter whatever a resident says their caste is."

This comes even as scholars and experts have been speculating how the government will decide to enumerate castes in India ever since the Union Cabinet approved it in 2025.

INBRIEF



Surjewala seeks inquiry into Haryana exam ‘irregularities’

Congress MP Randeep Singh Surjewala on Monday alleged large-scale irregularities in the Haryana Teacher Eligibility Test (HTET) for trained graduate teachers and primary teachers, claiming that the examination process had been marred by broken seals on question paper packets, printing errors, and incomplete questions. Mr. Surjewala sought a judicial inquiry by a sitting judge of the High Court into the entire HTET examination process. Alleging that such lapses reflected a complete collapse of the exam system, he accused the State’s BJP government of playing with the future of aspirants. PTI

Jalalabad in U.P.’s Shahjahanpur to be renamed Parshurampuri

The Uttar Pradesh government in a Cabinet meeting on Monday approved the proposal to rename the town of Jalalabad in Shahjahanpur district as Parshurampuri. The decision will come into effect after the issuance of the notification. Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said, “The concerned department will complete the necessary administrative and legal formalities relating to the renaming. Thereafter, the name of the town will be changed in all government records and departmental documents in accordance with the prescribed procedure.” The State government move seeks to identify the town as the birthplace of Lord Parshuram.

Cong. MLA to move SC as M.P. reconstitutes Waqf Board, appoints 2 Hindu members

July 4 notification announces new 10-member board; State first in the country to reorganise board; matter related to various provisions of new Act pending before apex court, says MLA Arif Masood

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

Congress MLA Arif Masood on Monday said he will move the Supreme Court against Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav’s decision reconstituting the State Waqf Board with the inclusion of two non-Muslim members, both Hindus, in it. The new board, formed under Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, is the first State Waqf Board in the country to do so, officials said.

As per a gazette notification issued on July 4 by the Backward Classes and Minority Welfare Department, the State government announced the new 10-member board with Manoj Malpani of Indore and Animesh Bhargava of Guna district as its members. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Sanwar Patel has been retained as the chairperson of the board.

The decision has drawn criticism from leaders of the Muslim community, with Mr. Masood terming



CM Mohan Yadav’s government has announced the new board with Manoj Malpani and Animesh Bhargava as its members. FILE PHOTO

the move “completely wrong” as the matter related to various provisions of the new Act is pending before the Supreme Court.

The Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, was notified in April last year, and inclusion of non-Muslim members was one of the various contentious provisions. The law mandated that the Central Waqf Council and State Waqf Boards must have at least two non-Muslim members.

In September that year, while the Supreme Court did not stay the Act entirely, it stayed the operation of certain contentious provisions pending further judicial scrutiny.

Mr. Masood said, “The entire matter is currently sub judice in the Supreme Court on two points. There is no stay but the proceedings are still going on and the SC will give its final verdict.”

A government statement on the announcement read, “Chief Minister Mohan Yadav has taken an important decision to reconstitute the Madhya Pradesh Waqf Board. With this, Madhya Pradesh has become the first State in the country to reconstitute its Waqf Board under the

provisions of the Waqf Act, 1995, as amended in 2025.”

The other members include former Union Minister Najma Heptulla, Congress MLA Atif Aqueel, Faizan Khan, Fatema Choudhary, Shaista Sultan, and Shabana Khan. IAS officer Satyendra Singh, Commissioner, Backward Classes and Minority Welfare Department, will serve as an ex officio member.

Welcoming the development, Mr. Patel said, “Waqf mafia had been sitting in the board for years but I thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi for bringing in the new law, which makes it mandatory to have women as well as non-Muslim members as experts. I also thank Mohan Yadav for making Madhya Pradesh the first State in implementing the new law.”

‘Why in such a hurry?’

Mr. Masood, an MLA from Bhopal (North), questioned why the government and Mr. Patel “were in such a hurry” to form the new board.

Shah lays foundation stone of Mookerjee’s statue in Kolkata

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday laid the foundation stone of a 125-foot statue of Syama Prasad Mookerjee in Kolkata on the 125th birth anniversary of the Jana Sangh founder, and lauded the efforts of the Suvendu Adhikari government.

Mr. Shah, who was on a day-long visit to Kolkata, participated in the ‘bhoomi puja’ ritual and laid the foundation stone in the city’s New Town area in presence of Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari. He also offered tributes to the Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) ideological fountainhead at his birthplace in south Kolkata.

Mr. Shah expressed happiness that on the 125th birth anniversary of Syama Prasad Mookerjee there is a BJP government in West Bengal. He also referred to the abrogation of Article 370. “Today, marking his 125th birth anniversary, PM Modi has fulfilled his resolve by completely abrogating Article 370; today, Kashmir is an integral part of India,” the Home Minister said.

Mr. Shah said in just a few days the Suvendu Adhikari government has start-



Union Home Minister Amit Shah at the residence of Syama Prasad Mukherjee in Kolkata on Monday. ANI

ed implementing the promises made by the BJP, which include implementation of Annapurna Yojana, giving land to Border Security Force and making travel of women free in government buses. “We are fulfilling the promises we made in our ‘Sankalp Patra’ during the Bengal election,” he said.

PM’s address

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also addressed the event through a video message and described Mookerjee as a visionary, patriot and champion of national unity.

“Today, the nation and West Bengal are remembering a great son of the soil, a great patriot who was dedicated to the integrity of India,” Mr. Modi said.

Suggestion made at AIADMK meet to take AMMK founder Dhinakaran back into party

T. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

A suggestion to take AMMK founder T.T.V. Dhinakaran back into the AIADMK was made during a meeting of AIADMK office-bearers, chaired by party general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami, in Thanjavur on Monday.

Exchange of views

Padma Kumaresan, a functionary, who articulated this point at the meeting, said that when he conveyed the idea to Mr. Palaniswami, he heard it “intently”, and replied that Mr. Dhinakaran was running a party of his own. A senior functionary of the party, who was present at the meeting, confirmed the exchange of views.

The matter did not figure



AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami with AMMK leader T.T.V. Dhinakaran. FILE PHOTO

again in the subsequent deliberations, he added.

Drew a blank

Thanjavur was one of the districts where the AIADMK and its allies drew a blank.

In neighbouring Mayiladuthurai, too, the coalition led by the Dravidian major

fared poorly. Put together, the two districts have 11 constituencies.

The idea of bringing the AMMK founder back into the party did the rounds about a month ago. When asked about it at the time, Mr. Dhinakaran said he was “even now” with the AIADMK.

HC gives WFI 2 weeks to decide on notice it issued to Phogat

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday asked the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) to take a decision within two weeks on the show-cause notice issued to grappler Vinesh Phogat over accusations of indiscipline and anti-doping rule violations.

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma closed the proceedings on Ms. Phogat’s petition, which challenged the show-cause notice as well as the WFI’s selection policy and circular, after the federation’s counsel submitted that her grievance relating to participation in the Asian Games selection trials was now infructuous.

The WFI counsel said Ms. Phogat would be given a personal hearing before a



Wrestler Vinesh Phogat

decision is taken on the notice.

Even as her counsel asserted that the petition raised “larger issues” with respect to the selection policy, the court said the athlete would have to file a fresh petition.

The court was informed that pursuant to judicial orders, Ms. Phogat was permitted to participate in the Asian Games trials.

The petitioner’s senior counsel informed the court that she has received a fresh show-cause notice for her conduct at the trials.

Bihar ‘encounter’ killing: JD(U) distances itself from Minister’s remarks after visit to family

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

A day after Bihar Minister and Janata Dal (United) leader Ashok Choudhary visited the family of Bharat Bhushan Tiwari and assured them of justice into the alleged “extrajudicial killing” of the local activist in a police encounter, his party on Monday distanced itself from the Minister’s remarks.

JD(U) leader and Minister Shrawan Kumar on Monday said Mr. Choudhary visited the family in Bihauti village of Bhojpur district in his individual capacity and whatever he said was his personal opinion and not that of the party.

Mr. Choudhary, a Cabinet Minister in the BJP-led



Bharat Bhushan Tiwari was killed in a ‘police encounter’ on June 17. ANI

National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government of Bihar, said after meeting the family, “There are many aspects of the case that I was not aware of earlier, and I have now been apprised of them. I will brief Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on all these issues and inform him about the prevailing situation.”

Mr. Kumar, however, said the visit should not be

seen as a government’s official move. “Also, whoever is making such statements should do it after giving some thought,” he said.

The 28-year-old, who was killed in the June 17 encounter, was known locally for raising issues, including alleged corruption in local administration. According to police, Tiwari opened fire on officers with an illegal firearm when they attempted to arrest him and they retaliated in self-defence.

Earlier, Union Minister and chief of NDA ally Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) Chirag Paswan too had condemned the circumstances surrounding Tiwari’s death, saying that no one, including the authorities, should take the law into their own hands.

For Delhi’s auto drivers, the EV shift stirs memories of the rushed CNG transition

Shrimansi Kaushik
NEW DELHI

For Pawan Kumar, an auto driver in Daryaganj, every electric auto on Delhi’s roads evokes memories of another transition that reshaped the city’s transport system over two decades ago. Now 65 and driving an electric vehicle (EV), Mr. Kumar still remembers the long queues outside compressed natural gas (CNG) stations, the scramble for conversion kits, and the uncertainty that followed when autorickshaws were ordered to switch from petrol to CNG almost overnight.

As Delhi embarks on another clean fuel transition, this time towards EVs, many drivers who lived through the CNG shift wonder whether history will repeat itself.

However, unlike the CNG rollout, experts say, the shift to EVs is being im-

plemented in phases, with a rudimentary charging infrastructure in place and plans to expand it further, which could hopefully make the transition less abrupt than the one many drivers still remember.

The sudden move

Delhi’s transition to CNG, undertaken to combat severe air pollution, followed a public interest litigation filed in the Supreme Court by environmental lawyer M.C. Mehta in 1996. In 1998, the court directed a series of measures to curb vehicular pollution, including replacing pre-1990 autos and taxis with clean-fuel vehicles by March 31, 2000.

“No one said moving to a cleaner fuel was bad, but the move was a bit sudden. There weren’t enough supply stations, and the number of vehicles that could run on CNG was far fewer than required,” Mr. Kumar



Autorickshaws queue-up at one of the CNG filling stations in New Delhi. The government has announced that from January 1, 2027, only electric three-wheelers will be registered in Delhi. FILE PHOTO

said, recalling spending at least eight to 10 hours standing in queues to refill his vehicle with gas.

“Most drivers agreed to the shift because CNG was cheaper than petrol. CNG was about ₹12 per kg, whereas petrol was ₹28 per litre,” he added.

Rajpal, a 60-year-old auto driver at New Delhi rail

way station, went through a similar experience.

“The government told us to convert, but nobody thought about how a driver earning daily wages would arrange the money. The conversion kit was expensive, and workshops gave us dates weeks or even months later. During that time, many autos stayed

off the road,” he said.

“Drivers and passengers suffered because the infrastructure wasn’t ready when the rules came into force,” he added.

By 2001, the transition had gained pace, with 30,000 autorickshaws running on CNG and plans to introduce 20,000 more.

“The Supreme Court had directed Indraprastha Gas Limited to set up 80 CNG supply stations. There was a huge mismatch between supply and demand, which resulted in long queues at the stations and delays in refuelling,” said Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director (research and advocacy), Centre for Science and Environment.

‘Scaling up’

According to the experts, the three-wheeler segment has already moved significantly towards electrification, and they are optimis-

tic about the transition.

“The Central government’s VAHAN portal shows that of all three-wheelers sold in India, more than half are electric, including e-rickshaws and e-autos. Delhi already has about 2,500 charging points, and these EVs can be charged at home. All the government has to do is scale up the public charging and battery-swapping infrastructure as swiftly as possible,” Ms. Roychowdhury said.

Sarika Panda Bhatt, co-founder of Raaghiri Foundation, echoed Mr. Roychowdhury’s views.

“Unlike CNG, which still produces tailpipe emissions, EVs eliminate tailpipe emissions and can also reduce greenhouse gas emissions as the electricity grid becomes cleaner,” she said.

Ms. Bhatt also pointed out key differences in implementation. “The EV

transition has been more gradual, allowing charging infrastructure, vehicle availability, and the supply chain to expand alongside growing demand,” she said.

Concern remains

Auto drivers, however, say the optimism does not reflect the realities on the ground.

They argue that charging infrastructure remains inadequate and that battery costs continue to be a major concern. As per the Vaahan portal, the number of auto-rickshaws in Delhi is 53,838. Ms. Roychowdhury said.

“Only 2,500 charging points for one lakh autos? The actual number of autos on the ground is almost double that. This is highly insufficient. Solutions such as charging at home are not feasible because of narrow lanes, the lack of proper electricity meters, and

limited access to electricity,” said Deependra Chahar, general secretary, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh.

Haider Ali, former president of the Aam Aadmi Auto Wing, said the cost of batteries and EV repairs would prove expensive for drivers.

“The present shift is exactly like the earlier one. Drivers did not go home while standing in CNG queues, which took only a minute to refill. What will happen when drivers stand in queues to charge EVs, which take hours?” he said.

As per the Delhi EV Policy 2026, the government has announced that from January 1, 2027, only electric three-wheelers will be registered in Delhi.

Internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles that are already in use will be permitted to operate until the completion of their prescribed lifespan of 15 years.



INBRIEF



Saudi Arabia's low-cost carrier Flyadeal makes India debut

Saudi Arabian low-cost carrier Flyadeal on Monday commenced its India operations with the launch of a daily non-stop service between Hyderabad and Riyadh (using Airbus A320 aircraft), making Rajiv Gandhi International Airport its first destination in the country. The Hyderabad-bound flight departs Riyadh at 11.20 p.m. and arrives at 6.50 a.m. the following day while the return service leaves Hyderabad at 7.55 a.m. and reaches Riyadh at 11.05 a.m.

A.P. YouTuber charged under UAPA for 'Maoist propaganda'

The Andhra Pradesh Police have registered a case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and other charges against YouTuber Joseph Bachalakuri alias Prashna Ravan for allegedly propagating Maoist ideology. He was arrested on Sunday and has been remanded to judicial custody. Mr. Bachalakuri has been on bail for several cases registered against him after earlier being arrested on June 30 over remarks against Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan.

Custodial torture allegation clouds POCSO probe in Kerala

A day after the Kerala police concluded that the sexual abuse allegations made by a 13-year-old girl were false, the case has taken a new turn with a 20-year-old youth – one of the 10 accused – alleging custodial torture. The youth, who was taken into custody during the probe, has lodged a complaint with Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala alleging he was tortured by police. The police questioned six persons, including four minors, in connection with the POCSO case.

A.P. issues warning to shrimp farms over White Gut Disease

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Officials of the Fisheries Department of Andhra Pradesh sounded alarm about the outbreak of White Gut Disease (WDG), also known as White Feces Disease (WFD), in shrimp ponds in the State. Explaining the symptoms of the disease, scientists appealed to the shrimp farmers to take measures to prevent the spread of the disease.

A team of Fisheries Department officials, who collected samples of shrimp, water, faeces and feed, reportedly confirmed the symptoms of the disease in some ponds in West Godavari district.

The team led by Joint Director (Fisheries) D. Srinivas collected samples from the shrimp ponds in Undi mandal. The samples would be sent to laboratories located at Kaikalur and Bhimavaram. The teams collected more samples from the nearby aqua ponds, the Joint Director said.

"Shrimp affected by WGD take in less feed, suffer from stunted growth, have intestines that turn brown, and shows signs of loose shells. Aqua farmers should maintain good hygienic conditions to prevent diseases. We are collecting samples from tanks across the State," an officer of the task force team constituted to check the disease said.

Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu directed the officials to educate the farmers on preventing the spread of the disease.

Karnataka BLOs on SIR duty not visiting homes, says NDA

BLOs filling enumeration forms in violation of guidelines, NDA delegation alleges in a letter to the CEO; CM rules out intervention, accuses Opposition of depriving minorities of their voting rights

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Alleging 'irregularities' in the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Karnataka, NDA leaders led by Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy have written to Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) V. Anbu Kumar seeking an immediate inquiry into the exercise.

The delegation, including Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, Leader of Opposition R. Ashok, Leader of Opposition in Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, and JD(S) party leader C.B. Suresh Babu submitted a letter to the CEO on



Verification drive: A Booth-Level Officer examines voter details during the SIR of electoral rolls in Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka. PTI

Monday, requesting 're-verification' of all enumeration forms through mandatory door-to-door visits, and strict legal action against those found responsible for irregularities.

The letter pointed out the guidelines require

Booth-Level Officers (BLOs), under the supervision of the District Election Officer, to visit every household, verify the identity of each family member in person, and carry out door-to-door verification. However, this was not hap-

pening in many places, the leaders alleged.

"Instead of visiting homes, the BLOs were filling in enumeration forms from community halls, mosques, and even their own residences," the letter stated, further claiming that WhatsApp groups had been created to carry out the exercise.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Monday ruled out any interference by the government, asserting that the SIR was entirely under the purview of the Election Commission. He also accused the Opposition of attempting to deprive the poor and minorities of their voting rights.

Search continues for missing A.P. fishermen

V. Kamalakara Rao
VISAKHAPATNAM

A massive, coordinated search is under way in the Bay of Bengal after a fishing boat, *IND-AP-MM-VS-83*, capsized in severe weather off the Visakhapatnam coast on Saturday.

Six fishermen are still missing, and the search for them is under way amid turbulent seas and strong winds.

The mechanised boat left the Visakhapatnam Harbour on July 1 for a rou-

tine trip and was due back by the afternoon of Saturday, but did not return.

The crew last made contact on that day, telling their families they were off the Gangavaram coast and heading back. Soon after, the vessel got caught in turbulent weather.

The boat's owner, Kari Chinna, was rescued by a Panama-flagged merchant vessel. The search for the rest of the fishermen has widened with the Indian Coast Guard and Navy joining the efforts.

Kerala, Adani Group seek to mend fences

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Amid differences between the Kerala government and the Adani group over the proposed sale of shares in the Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Limited (AVPPL), the company has said it wants to take the port project to next level only with the support of the State, and the backing of the Centre.

Allaying fears of a monopoly by a shipping line, Aswani Gupta, CEO of Ada-

ni Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ), said that partnering with the Switzerland-based Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) does not mean that it will have exclusivity at the port, which is, and will continue to be, open to all partners from around the world.

The State, meanwhile, is exploring possibility of placing conditions on the proposed transfer of stakes and has reportedly sought legal advice from the Advocate-General.

T.N. defends CRZ nod for Mamallan reservoir project

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu State Coastal Zone Management Authority (TNSCZMA) has defended the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearance granted to the proposed Mamallan Reservoir project in Chengalpattu district before the Southern Bench of the National Green Tribunal.

It argued that the project complies with the CRZ Notification, 2011, and was subjected to multiple levels of technical scrutiny. It also has stringent environmental safeguards.

In its counter-affidavit, the authority sought the dismissal of a petition, filed by K. Saravanan, challenging the CRZ clearance issued in December 2025 for the proposed reservoir in the Kovalam sub-basin. The site falls between the East Coast Road and the Old Mahabalipuram Road.

According to the authority, the proposed Phase-I reservoir will cover 1,770.5 hectares (4,375 acres) and have a storage capacity of 1.655 thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft) to address the recurring drinking water shortage in the southern parts of the Chennai Metropolitan Area. It said the reservoir would cater to around 50,000 residents in villages, including Nemmeli, Krishnankaranai, Pattipulam, Paiyanur, Kalavakkam, Thiruporur, Thiruvadanthai and Mamallapuram, besides mitigating floods and sea-

While govt. says the project will address water shortage and floods, fishermen say it will affect their livelihood

water intrusion.

The counter-affidavit said the proposal was examined by the Chengalpattu District Coastal Zone Management Authority (DCZMA), the State Expert Committee, the State Expert Appraisal Committee, the IIT-Madras and the TNSCZMA before the CRZ clearance was granted.

The project does not involve reclamation of the sea, estuary, or tidal waters, but is proposed on inland floodplain *poromboke* land, it said.

Dissent note

The project, however, has drawn sustained opposition from fishing communities and environmental experts.

Fishing community's representatives from villages along the Nemmeli-Kovalam backwaters have alleged that they were not consulted before the project was approved and have said the reservoir will affect the livelihoods of thousands of inland and marine fishermen dependent on the brackish water ecosystem. They have also contended that converting the tidal marsh into a freshwater reservoir could increase flood risks to neighbouring villages.

'Karnataka govt. plotting to derail HMT revival package'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H.D. Kumaraswamy on Monday accused the Congress government in Karnataka of conspiring to derail the Centre's efforts to revive Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT), alleging that the State government was using the Forest Department to create obstacles just when a special revival package for the public sector enterprise was nearing a crucial stage. He said HMT would challenge the order before the court.

Responding to media reports that the State Forest Department had issued a notice to HMT and set a deadline for returning its land in two areas, Mr.



H.D. Kumaraswamy

Kumaraswamy questioned the timing and legality of the action.

"The matter is pending before the court. At such a sensitive stage, the State government, through the Forest Department, has issued a notice and has imposed a deadline. This amounts to interference with judicial proceedings and is contrary to law," he

said. He added that Bengaluru Urban Deputy Conservator of Forests N. Ravindra Kumar had ordered the HMT to immediately surrender 430 acres of land to the Forest Department on the grounds that it constituted forest land.

"With the objective of breathing new life into HMT, I have been making efforts to convince the Prime Minister and the Union Finance Minister to approve a special package. Just when the package was close to being announced, the State government, with malicious intent, got such a notice issued," he alleged.

The Union Minister said a meeting on the proposed package was scheduled for the following week and a decision to revive the enterprise was imminent.

Monsoon mosaic



A biker makes his way through heavy rain in Udupi, Karnataka. The district recorded 71.7 mm of rainfall on Monday. UMESH S. SHETTIGAR

Kerala Police invoke UAPA against man for comment on Pahalgam victim's kin

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Police have invoked the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) against a 26-year-old man, Muhammed Sanoof, who was arrested upon his return from Saudi Arabia in connection with an offensive comment posted under a video featuring the daughter of a victim of the Pahalgam terror attack.

The legal action was taken against Mr. Sanoof of Ayikkarapadi in Malappuram. He was detained on the basis of a lookout notice at the Calicut Interna-

Police have secured evidence that prompted addition of UAPA charges against the accused

tional Airport on July 4, following which the Karipur police handed him over to the Muttam police in Idukki, where the case had been registered.

Complaint filed

The case pertains to a Facebook comment allegedly posted by the accused under a video that featured the daughter of N. Rama-

chandran, a Kochi native who was killed in the terror attack in April 2025.

The case was registered based on a complaint filed by a Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha leader.

During the interrogation, the Muttam police reportedly secured evidence that prompted the addition of UAPA charges against the accused. His mobile phone is also under examination.

While the accused has been remanded in judicial custody, the police are likely to seek his custody for further evidence and interrogation, sources said.

Actors Revathy, Padmapriya resign from AMMA citing 'patriarchy, power politics'

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Actors Revathy and Padmapriya resigned from the primary membership of the Association of Malayalam Movie Artistes (AMMA) on Monday. "...Our resignation is not in haste and not about a single incident," they said in a joint statement online.

"For nearly a decade, the ask was simple. Safer workplaces. Dignity. Accountability. Equal treatment. The minimum every member deserves. And values we genuinely believed all of us could unite around. The price of asking, for us, has been silence and distance. From



Revathy, left, and Padmapriya are founding members of Women in Cinema Collective. FILE PHOTO



colleagues, from friends, from spaces that once felt like home. Still, we stayed. For hope has a remarkable ability to survive disappointment," they said.

The actors, who are the founding members of the Women in Cinema Collective, said the resignations

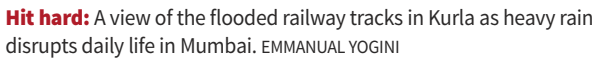
that followed the release of the Hema Committee report on the problems faced by women in the Malayalam film industry were not an act of principle.

"They were an escape from accountability. Once the attention faded, the same old order returned.

Power keeps finding new ways to protect itself. The faces change. The methods change. But the structures enabling inequality remain untouched," they said.

They pointed out "AMMA was meant to stand as a collective voice... But it has become increasingly shaped by patriarchy and power politics, weakening its founding ideals. Walking away for us is not defeat. It is self-respect."

"We have unwavering faith that the Malayalam film industry can become what it should be, where women do not fight the same battles their seniors did. That belief never depended on a membership," said the statement.

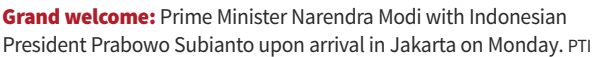


Chinmay Gaikwad
MUMBAI

The State Legislative Assembly was adjourned for

Nationalist Congress Party (SP) MP Supriya Sule said Maharashtra has been “paralysed in a single rain”.

Press Trust of India
JAKARTA

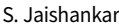


Mr. Modi said he will hold discussions with Mr.

Temple complex in Yogyakarta. This will ensure closer cultural linkages bet-

Kallol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

The bid will also require substantial diplomatic mobilisation by India as Tajikistan will be the other candidate for the seat meant for the Asia-Pacific region. While India has received support from coun-



tries such as Fiji, United States, Austria and Sri Lanka, it will have to do considerable diplomatic heavy-lifting as Tajikistan has already secured the support of the OIC bloc that consists of 57 member-states of the United Nations. That apart, both countries are members of the SCO that will hold the next summit meeting in Kyrgyzstan, adding a special significance to the summit from the point of view of UNSC

He will reach New York City for extensive consultations with India's partners at the UN. While India has been advocating a reform at the UNSC and also has been championing the needs of the Global South, recent trends however have not gone according to the plans. Earlier in May, India postponed the India-Africa Forum Summit that was to be held during May 28-31 citing the Ebola outbreak in Africa.

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh condemned the killing and conveyed his deepest condolences to the bereaved families. "The

However, the NSCN's "information ministry" trashed the existence of such a faction and said it was "neither involved in nor had any knowledge" of the ambush. "The organisation remains firmly committed to the ceasefire agreement with the government of India" the group said in a statement.

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The delegation focused on Section 16A(5), a clause in the proposed amendment that would empower a designated authority to take over or dispose of assets—buildings, schools, hospitals, and land—created with foreign contributions in cases where an organisation's registration is cancelled or not renewed.

Disrupt the functioning The Chief Minister highlighted how the proposed changes could disrupt the functioning of religious, educational, and charitable institutions that have long complemented government efforts in community development.

He said any regulatory changes must take into account Meghalaya's unique circumstances and ensure that genuine institutions engaged in public service can continue their work without undue disruption. He requested the Centre to adopt a consultative approach that recognises the contributions of these organisations while addressing regulatory concerns.

Mr. Sangma is the national president of the National People's Party (NPP), a constituent of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance. The BJP is a minor partner of the NPP-headed Meghalaya government.

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

As vacancies to all Houses, including the Rajya Sabha, are considered separately, polls are conducted individually for each of the seats. The Rajya Sabha by-polls would take the NDA's numbers to 154 leaving it just nine short of a two-third majority in the Upper House at a time when the government is planning to bring in certain constitutional amendments Bills.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Mr. Kumar also demanded the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and called for an inquiry into his alleged links with the paper leak mafia. He also sought a comprehensive reform of the examination and recruitment system,

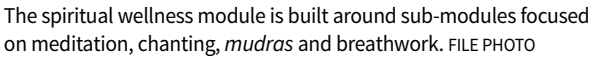


NSUI president Vinod Jakhar alleged that student union elections were being stifled across campuses to tighten the grip of “BJP-RSS affiliates”. He also questioned repeated extensions granted to the Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University, and said the NSUI would launch campus-level organisational elections through an app-based system that would be “free, fair and transparent”.

M. Kalyanaraman
CHENNAI

The initiative, called “Sagar Mein Yog” (SMY), will be delivered through a dedicated Learning Management System. It requires all seafarers holding a valid Indian Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC) to complete the course within one year, and mandates that all candidates at DGS-approved Maritime Training Institutes (MTIs) finish the modules.

The SMY is structured around 10 thematic wellness pillars spanning a cumulative 19 hours and 14



minutes of instruction. The longest module, social wellness covers interpersonal skills, teamwork and conflict resolution both on-board and ashore, while occupational wellness addresses adjustment to ship-board life, career growth and feedback practices. Physical wellness takes in nutrition, hydration, fitness routines and even sexual health, and intellectual wellness focuses on critical thinking, risk management and cognitive sharpness at sea.

Other pillars include economic wellness – covering budgeting, investment and taxation for seafarers – cultural wellness, built around cross-cultural com-

The spiritual wellness module is built around four sub-modules focused on meditation, chanting, *mu-dras* and breathwork. It opens with exercises and guided meditation techniques aimed at helping seafarers build a daily practice, before moving into chants.

A separate segment introduces hand *mudras* such as the *Dhyana Mudra*, associated with meditative focus, and the *Apana Mudra*, linked to detoxification and grounding.

Shrimansi Kaushik
NEW DELHI

Based on the statement of Akriti's mother, the police registered a case under BNS Sections 80 (dowry death) and 85 (inflicting cruelty upon a married woman by her husband or his relatives against Mr. Sikka and his sister, Agastika.

Search is on

A search is on for Ms. Agastika, the officer added. Initial investigation showed injuries on Akriti's left arm and thigh, but it is not yet clear if these injuries were the result of the fall or the alleged assault.

"We are examining all angles, and further investi-

gation is under way," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Anant Mittal. He added that Akriti had been living with her husband and his family in Pushp Vihar.

"Arastu had been unemployed for some time. His father is a Section Officer in the Labour Department, and the family lives in government quarters in the south Delhi neighbourhood," the DCP added.

My sister hid much of the abuse until a day before her death, hoping that things would eventually improve, Amay Sutar, younger brother of Akriti, said.

According to him, Akriti believed that if she returned to work, saved enough money and bought things for the household, the harassment would eventually stop.

A magisterial inquiry has been initiated into Akriti's death, and her mother's statement has also been recorded before a Sub-Divisional Magistrate. (Those in distress can contact Tele MANAS at 14416 to seek help) *(With PTI inputs)*

‘Absurd for VHP to seek action against Opposition leaders’

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Mounting a scathing attack on the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) over its letter to the Ayodhya police seeking action against Opposition leaders who have alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram Temple, the Congress on Monday described the move as a “classic case of the pot calling the kettle black”.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said the letter was an attempt to deflect attention from allegations against those linked to the temple Trust.

On July 5, the VHP had written to the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Uttar Pradesh Police, asking them to examine claims made by several Opposition leaders, including Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, and Aam Aadmi Party convener Arvind Kejriwal regarding the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram Temple. The VHP had urged the SIT to summon Opposition leaders to substantiate their allegations.

“The demand is as absurd as it is shameful. Hav-



K.C. Venugopal

ing itself come under the scanner, the VHP has neither the moral authority nor the credibility to point fingers at the Opposition,” the Congress leader said. The party reiterated its demand for an independent, Supreme Court-monitored investigation, with Mr. Venugopal describing the current SIT probe as “an elaborate mechanism to protect the plunderers of Ram Mandir”.

“The trust was set up by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Its general secretary Champat Rai is a VHP vice-president and RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) pracharak..The Centre and the State government are BJP-ruled. In such a situation, how are Priyanka Gandhi, Akhilesh Yadav or any other Opposition leader relevant to the matter?” Mr. Venugopal asked.

Trust accepts resignations of Champat Rai, Anil Mishra

Beset by claims of embezzling temple donations, Ram Temple Trust appoints Krishna Mohan as acting general secretary; forms three-member committee to select a CEO to run the organisation

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust on Monday accepted the resignations of its general secretary Champat Rai and trustee Anil Mishra in the wake of allegations of embezzlement of temple donations and appointed Krishna Mohan as the acting general secretary.

The temple trust held a meeting chaired by its president, Mahant Nritya Gopal Das, at the guest house in the Ram Janmabhoomi complex in Ayodhya.

“General Secretary Champat Rai and trustee Anil Mishra resigned on moral grounds after the preliminary report of the Special Investigation Team (SIT). The Trust accepted the resignation. The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust organised the meeting to address allegations concerning financial irregularities and potential misappropriation of donations and offerings at the temple. This situation has prompted an internal review and discussions regarding accountability



Ram Temple Trust chief Mahant Nritya Gopal Das and his disciple Kamal Nayan Das leave for the meeting in Ayodhya on Monday. PTI

within the Trust’s management,” a press statement said.

The Trust said it had completed the construction of the Ram Temple in less than six years after its formation in 2020 and added, “The trustees were profoundly troubled by the reported embezzlement. What truly distresses us is the environment that has emerged. It is our duty to reflect on this situation.”

It formed a three-member committee to select a chief executive officer (CEO) for the organisation. The committee comprises Justice Pramod Kohli (retd), Lieutenant-General Vishnukant Chaturvedi

(retd), and trustee Suresh Haware.

‘A serious crime’

A separate committee has been formed to propose additional measures to prevent the recurrence of any wrongdoing, and indicated that further decisions regarding appointments and structural reforms would be made following the final report from the Special Investigation Team (SIT).

Calling the theft a serious crime, the Trust said it was cooperating with the probe and wanted all individuals responsible to be brought to justice. It claimed some people were

attempting to take advantage of the situation and indulge in propaganda.

The Trust said it had received ₹3,264 crore in donations and contributions since its inception, and ₹2,370 crore of the sum had been spent on construction and related work. It added that offerings received till March 31, 2026, totalled ₹582 crore, of which ₹391 crore had been spent on temple operations, while the remaining had been deposited in banks. It stated that its financial details had been periodically shared with the media.

The meeting took place amid two parallel investigations into the embezzlement allegations at the Ram Temple Trust: one led by a Special Investigation Team (SIT), and another by the local police based on a first information report (FIR). As of now, no FIR has been filed against Trust functionaries. However, lawyers from the Faizabad Bar Association have submitted a formal petition to the police, requesting an FIR against Champat Rai, Anil Mishra, Gopal Rao, and one other individual.

Won’t allow govt. control of temple at any cost, says VHP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

At a time when the debate over the change in the administrative structure of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya gathers pace, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Monday reiterated its opposition to government control of the shrine.

The organisation, however, said it had no objection to appointing a professional chief executive officer (CEO), provided the person was not a serving bureaucrat and was accountable to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, VHP joint general secretary Surender Jain said, “We are against government control of the Ram Temple. We will not allow it at any cost. This has been our stance since the beginning, not only for the Ram Temple in Ayodhya but for all other Hindu temples in India.”

Mr. Jain said the organisation was not opposed to the appointment of a professional to oversee the temple’s day-to-day administration.

“We are not against appointing a professional to

Not opposed to a professional CEO overseeing day-to-day administration of the temple: VHP leader

manage the day-to-day affairs of the Ram Mandir, but the person must not be a serving bureaucrat and should be accountable to the Trust, not the government,” he said, adding that the CEO should be appointed by the Trust rather than the government.

Mr. Jain’s remarks came on the day when Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust accepted the resignation of its general secretary Champat Rai, amid the ongoing Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the alleged donation theft.

The call for the appointment of a CEO was first made by the Ram Temple Construction Committee Chairman and former IAS officer Nripendra Misra, who advocated adopting a Tirupati-like model with a professional CEO to oversee daily operations.

“No one is asking that the trust deed or bylaws should be changed...,” Mr. Misra had said.

Congress targets Prime Minister on foreign policy

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday stepped up its attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the foreign policy front, accusing his government of eroding India’s global standing and abandoning the country’s moral voice on West Asia.

In separate posts on X, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge questioned the decline in the ranking of the Indian passport, while Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh assailed Mr. Modi’s silence on Israel’s actions in Gaza. Mr. Kharge said the government’s policies had hurt India’s global reputation.

In another attack on the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramesh called out his “stony silence” on “Israel’s genocide in Gaza”, after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu cited support from India while pushing back against remarks by U.S. Vice-President J. D. Vance that Washington was Israel’s only powerful ally. “Getting a certificate from Mr. Netanyahu is no badge of honour, specially since he himself is isolated and has evoked frustration and anger even from Mr. Modi’s good friend in the White House himself,” he said.

Cooperative life insurance firm to be set up soon: Shah

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Monday said a cooperative life insurance company would be set up to boost the growth of cooperatives in the country. He said the Cooperation Ministry had given a new “lifeline” to India’s cooperative movement, which was “neglected” during the Congress rule.

Speaking on the fifth Foundation Day of the Ministry, he said cooperatives had expanded to many sectors and were not restricted to dairy, sugar, and fertilizer businesses. He said Bharat Taxi, a cooperative-based ride hailing platform, had been doing well and would be expanded to 500 cities in the next two years. Fertilizer cooperative IFFCO was already in the insurance business through a joint venture with a Japanese firm.

India has around 8.5 lakh cooperatives with more than 30 crore members. Mr. Shah listed out the initiatives taken by the Ministry in the past five years, including steps to bring transparency and professionalism into the cooperative ecosystem. He said the Ministry had created a database of the sector which will help in its ex-



Amit Shah

pansion. The Minister said the government was establishing the “Tribhuvan” Sahkari University at Anand in Gujarat, which will augment the country’s human resource.

Referring to the initial apprehension that the Cooperation Ministry would interfere in the working of the State governments, he said even the Congress-ruled States had not complained in the past five years about interference. “The Union Ministry is not for interfering in the State subject. It is for policy-making,” he said.

Mr. Shah laid the foundation stone and inaugurated several projects and initiatives, which include the transfer of 135 grain godowns with a capacity of 75,000 tonnes, the inauguration of 85 godowns, and virtually laying the foundation stone for 47 grain storage godowns.

Mamata camp submits response to EC, rejects rebel faction’s claim over party

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Mamata Banerjee-led group of the Trinamool Congress on Monday submitted its response to the Election Commission, rejecting the rival camp’s claim over the party and underlining that the Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Ritabrata Banerjee, who is leading the other faction, was not even a member of the party committee at the time of the last round of organisational elections in 2022.

Party members supporting Ms. Mamata asserted that the Trinamool Congress organisational committees remained valid till 2027 under the party constitution.

14-page reply

Speaking to reporters after submitting the response, Lok Sabha member Kalyan Banerjee said the party had filed a “very detailed reply” to the electoral body in response to a representation made by Mr. Ritabrata.

The 14-page response mentions the Trinamool constitution and also traces the formation of the party in 1998.

Rejecting the rebel faction’s principal contention that the tenure of the Trinamool committee and National Working Committee



Making a case: Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee, flanked by party leaders Mahua Moitra and Sagarika Ghose, speaking to the media in New Delhi after meeting EC officials on Monday. R.V. MOORTHY

expired in 2025, Mr. Kalyan said the party constitution had been amended over the years to extend the tenure from three years to four years in 2000 and subsequently to five years in 2006, with the changes communicated to the EC.

“The last organisational election was held in 2022. Therefore, automatically, the tenure of the AITC and National Working Committee remains for a period of five years. It will expire in 2027,” he said, adding that the allegation that the committee’s tenure had ended in 2025 was “incorrect and not supported by the constitutional provisions” of the party.

The memorandum submitted by the party said that in 2022, Ms. Mamata was elected unopposed as the party chairperson following the procedure under the party constitution.

“At the relevant point of time, the complainant Ri-

tabrata Banerjee was not even a member of the AITC committee,” it said.

Mr. Kalyan argued that the rebel leaders had themselves recognised the authority of the existing leadership by contesting the 2026 West Bengal Assembly election on the Trinamool symbol using candidature papers – Form A and B – signed by Ms. Mamata as the party chairperson. “If they say the party ceased to exist after 2025, then on what basis did they contest the election? Their own argument would make their election illegal. They should resign immediately,” he said.

Mr. Kalyan alleged that the rebel faction’s June 22 “special session”, in which it claimed to have reconstituted the party organisation, violated the Trinamool’s constitution.

According to him, the party constitution envisages a multi-tier organisa-

tional process beginning at the block level, followed by district and State committees, before the Trinamool Congress committee can be constituted.

“There was no media notification, no proper circulation of any notice and no notice to ex-officio members. The alleged AITC constituted by them is a great fraud on the AITC constitution itself,” the MP said.

Mr. Banerjee said the process adopted by the rebels broke every tenet of the party constitution. He accused the faction of illegally taking control of party offices with the support of the State administration.

The EC had asked both the Mamata Banerjee-led group and the rival faction led by Ritabrata Banerjee to submit their claims and counter-claims over authorised signatories and organisational polls of the party.

Jammu and Kashmir will have a government led by BJP in near future, asserts Nitin Nabin

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Bharatiya Janata Party national president Nitin Nabin on Monday said his party would form government in Jammu and Kashmir in the near future.

“Like Jammu, the lotus will bloom in Kashmir as well and Jammu and Kashmir will have a BJP government in the near future,”

said Mr. Nabin, who arrived in Jammu on a two-day visit to review the party’s organisational affairs.

Mr. Nabin’s visit to Jammu and Kashmir came on the 125th birth anniversary of Jana Sangh founder Syama Prasad Mookerjee, who died in a Jammu and Kashmir jail in 1953, and paid tributes to him. “Mookerjee devoted his life to strengthening the unity of

the country. His vision for Jammu and Kashmir was realised after decades. The BJP-led government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi accomplished Mookerjee’s vision for Jammu and Kashmir and ended the special constitutional status and integrated the region fully with the rest of the country,” said Mr. Nabin.

Reflecting on the chang-

es in Jammu and Kashmir after abrogation of provisions of Article 370 in 2019, Mr. Nabin said, “Previous governments had created an atmosphere. Hoisting the national flag in Srinagar’s Lal Chowk was viewed as a challenge to peace. The situation has changed under the Modi government and the Tricolour now flies without fear,” he said.

Manipur CM disburses ₹1 lakh to chronically ill displaced people

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Monday handed over ₹1 lakh each to 26 chronically ill internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The beneficiaries have been living at the Lamboikhongnangkhang relief camp in the State’s capital, Imphal, since the ethnic

conflict between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities erupted in May 2023. They are suffering from kidney ailments, cancer, and other diseases.

Distributing the cheques, the Chief Minister said the financial assistance was intended to provide relief to displaced persons as they continue to suffer while being unable to return to their

homes. “The special financial support is being provided to those suffering from chronic diseases,” he said, adding that the ailing IDPs would continue to get similar aid in future.

Manipur’s lone Rajya Sabha member, Adhikari-mayum Sharda Devi, said the government would provide weaving machines and other support to women IDPs in relief camps.

The ACC order said that he will serve as Director General, BPR&D from the date of joining of the post and up to June 30, 2029, which is the date of his superannuation or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

Mr. Garg, who is from Andhra Pradesh, is at present working as Director, SVPNPA.

He has been appointed head of the NCRB by temporary upgradation of the post to that of Director General level, from the date of joining the post till the date of his superannuation (October 31, 2027) or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

Why FDA nod for vepdegestrant is a major shift in cancer therapy

The approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration paves the way for drugs designed to remove harmful proteins from cells, rather than simply block them; this is an advance because these drugs can sidestep the barriers to treating diseases that involve hitherto ‘undruggable’ proteins

Manjeera Gowravaram

On May 1, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the drug vepdegestrant for patients with *ESR1*-mutated, ER-positive, and HER2-negative advanced breast cancer. It is the world’s first therapy that the FDA – whose lead many drug regulators worldwide follow – has approved that is based on PROTAC technology.

The approval paves the way for drugs designed to remove harmful proteins from cells, rather than simply block them. This is an advance because PROTACs can sidestep the barriers to treating diseases that involve hitherto ‘undruggable’ proteins. Researchers have been developing this technology for more than two decades.

How PROTACs work

‘PROTAC’ stands for proteolysis-targeting chimaera, which is a kind of molecule. These molecules are designed to remove specific proteins from a cell. A PROTAC has two ends: one binds to the target protein and the other binds to an E3 ligase, an enzyme involved in the cell’s protein degradation process. By bringing these components together, the PROTAC causes the target protein to be degraded by the cell. This is called targeted protein degradation.

Conventional drugs work by binding to a protein in a way that prevents it from performing certain roles in the body. This means the drugs or antibodies often need to be present for long periods in the body. PROTACs, however, act like catalysts: while the proteins they target end up being degraded, they themselves are not degraded. After triggering one degradation process, the PROTAC can detach itself and repeat it with another instance of the same protein.

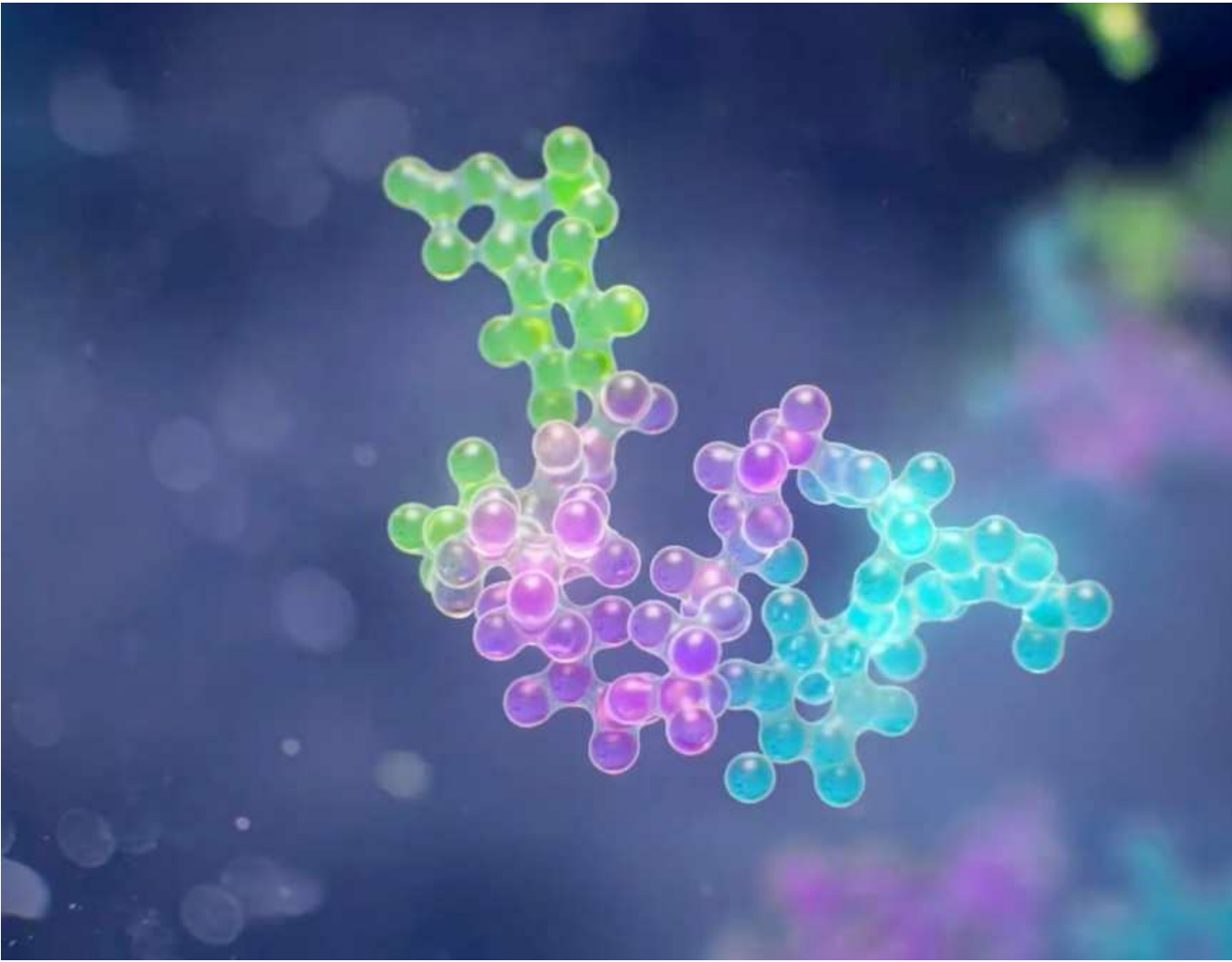
This mechanism allows a single PROTAC molecule to act multiple times. Because PROTACs remove the entire protein from the cell, they may also disrupt other roles the protein plays, such as controlling the activity of other proteins. Conventional drugs, however, usually block only one specific activity of a protein.

Early research to trials

In 2001, two research groups, at Yale University and Caltech, first demonstrated targeted protein degradation. They showed that a particular molecule was capable of recruiting a target protein to the cell’s degradation machinery. This molecule was a precursor to PROTACs. In 2003, a follow-up study by the same groups found that the same molecule could work inside cells to degrade proteins related to breast and prostate cancer.

At this stage, these molecules were mainly research tools and not suitable for use as drugs. Among other properties, they were large, unstable, and had poor pharmacological properties. But researchers made rapid progress in the 2010s: they improved the molecules’ designs and stabilised the interaction between the PROTAC, the target protein, and the E3 ligase, among other changes. The advances yielded molecules with better selectivity and other properties suited to a good drug.

In 2019, bavdegaltamide, a PROTAC developed by the U.S.-based



An artist’s concept of an Arvinas PROTAC molecule. PROTACs are designed to remove specific proteins from a cell. ARVINAS, INC./YOUTUBE

biotechnology company Arvinas, became the first drug of its kind to enter human trials. Bavdegaltamide was designed for patients with metastatic, castration-resistant prostate cancer.

Around the same time, researchers were developing vepdegestrant – developed by Arvinas and Pfizer – as an oestrogen receptor degrader. Vepdegestrant progressed through early-phase trials and began phase 3 trials involving patients with advanced breast cancer. By 2025, the drug had completed late-stage testing as well, with its developers submitting the data to the FDA for regulatory review.

The FDA approval brings the drug’s development timeline from initial concept to approval to just over two decades.

Potential and limits

The approval for vepdegestrant was based on results from a phase 3 trial that enrolled 624 patients who had previously been treated with CDK4/6 inhibitors and endocrine therapy – the current standard-of-care.

Among 270 patients with *ESR1*-mutated tumours, the typical length of time the treatment kept the cancer under control was five months for those treated with vepdegestrant versus 2.1 months for patients receiving fulvestrant, an established standard treatment.

Most side effects reported with vepdegestrant were low grade, including musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, nausea, constipation, and lower appetite, plus changes in liver-related enzymes (that resolve on their own) and heart rhythm (e.g. minor abnormalities in an ECG).

Vepdegestrant works by targeting the oestrogen receptor, an important driver of many breast cancers. In patients with

mutations in the *ESR1* gene, the receptor can remain active despite hormone therapy, leading to the cancer resisting the treatment. Vepdegestrant destroys the receptor altogether, giving patients with some advanced forms of breast cancer a new hope. The drug is taken orally once a day, which is more convenient than fulvestrant, which requires intramuscular injections.

Many proteins associated with diseases lack suitable points on their surface where a traditional inhibitor can bind, rendering the protein dysfunctional. PROTACs however need to bind to a protein just enough to bring it into contact with an E3 ligase.

Thus, PROTACs may also be able to target proteins previously considered difficult to treat. And because one PROTAC molecule can degrade multiple copies of a protein, these drugs may work effectively at lower doses than conventional inhibitors.

These potential abilities are why the PROTAC development pipeline is so wide today. Thus far, more than 40 PROTAC candidates have entered clinical trials, targeting more than 200 proteins across different disease areas. While the main focus is still cancer, researchers are also paying more attention to neurodegenerative diseases, inflammatory conditions, and muscle disorders, where abnormal or misfolded proteins contribute to disease.

Challenges to overcome

There are still several challenges to overcome. The PROTAC molecules are generally larger and more structurally complex than traditional small-molecule drugs, which are usually designed to be compact enough to pass through the gut

wall and into the bloodstream after a patient swallows a pill. But because PROTACs are bulkier, they can be harder for the body to absorb and distribute efficiently to different tissues.

Their activity can also vary with concentration. At very high levels, PROTACs may begin binding separately to either the target protein or the E3 ligase instead of bringing the two together in the same complex. As a result, fewer productive interactions occur and the drug can paradoxically become less effective.

Most current PROTACs also rely mainly on just two E3 ligases while human cells are known to have more than 600. Scientists are therefore trying to expand the number of ligases that can be recruited, which could improve tissue specificity and reduce side effects.

Resistance mechanisms may also emerge over time. For example, cancer cells could develop mutations that alter the cellular machinery that PROTACs rely on to destroy proteins, or reduce the availability of E3 ligases themselves, making the drugs less effective.

The FDA approval for vepdegestrant augurs targeted protein degradation as a viable clinical approach. At the same time, the field is still developing, and most PROTAC-based drugs are still going through clinical trials. Further study will determine how widely this new therapeutic pathway can be applied and how it will perform relative to existing treatments across different diseases, including long-term safety and real-world effectiveness across various patient populations.

(Manjeera Gowravaram has a PhD in RNA biochemistry and works as a freelance science writer. gmanjeera@gmail.com)



An artist’s impression of the quasar J059-4351, the bright core of a distant galaxy powered by a supermassive black hole. ESA

Oldest quasars found deepen ‘perplexing’ space mystery

Agence France-Presse

The Euclid space telescope has spotted the oldest quasars – the brightest objects in the universe – ever discovered, deepening a cosmic mystery that has been puzzling scientists.

A quasar is the intensely luminous core of a distant galaxy powered by a supermassive black hole. As gas spirals into the black hole, extreme amounts of gravitational energy are converted into radiation, making quasars shine with the light of a trillion suns. They provide valuable insights into the early evolution of galaxies and black holes. Because they are so incredibly bright – and looking deep into space also means looking back in time – scientists have been hunting for ancient quasars to learn more about the little-understood infancy of the universe.

In a study published on Monday, an international team of astronomers announced they had discovered 31 quasars, including the two oldest observed yet, using the European Space Agency’s Euclid telescope, which is at a stable hovering spot around 1.5 million kilometres from the earth. The light from the oldest pair comes from when the universe was roughly 670 million years old, just five percent of its current age of 13.8 billion years.

This beats the team’s previous record for oldest – and therefore most distant – quasar announced in 2021 by around 20 million years. Previous quasar hunts were mostly carried out with ground-based telescopes, but the launch of Euclid in

Quasars, the intensely luminous cores of galaxies powered by a supermassive black hole, provide insights into the early evolution of galaxies and black holes

2023 “has transformed this field,” Daming Yang, the lead author of the study in *Astronomy & Astrophysics*, said.

In just two years, Euclid has doubled the number of ancient quasars known to science, added Yang, a PhD student at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

Cosmic quandary

The newly discovered quasars date back to what is known as the epoch of reionisation. This when the first stars and galaxies began to form, bringing an end to the cosmic dark ages. “We can use quasars as a lighthouse to study the gas between us and them, so that we can trace how the universe was reionised through this cosmic history,” Daming Yang said. The quasars are also the latest example of a problem that has been increasingly baffling scientists.

As more powerful telescopes allow us to see further back in time, galaxies and other cosmic objects have turned out to be far bigger than had been thought possible at such an early age.

“Every step further back in time makes the puzzle more perplexing,” study co-author Joseph Hennawi said in a statement about the newly discovered quasars. “These monsters – weighing billions of times the mass of our sun – somehow already existed when the universe was in its infancy,” he said. “We don’t yet have a good understanding of how they grew so massive, so fast.” Hoping to find an answer, the scientists are searching for even older quasars. The far-seeing James Webb space telescope also recently observed the newly announced quasars, Daming said, and the team will soon begin sifting through the data it collected.

The team eventually hope to stitch together “a quasar chronicle of the first billion years,” Hennawi said.

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

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

The more things change, the more they stay the same

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

In the X process, nitrogen and hydrogen continuously combine to form ammonia while ammonia simultaneously breaks apart into nitrogen and hydrogen. At equilibrium, the forward and reverse reactions proceed at identical rates so the concentrations of the three gases is constant. This ‘symmetry’ is broken with high temperature and pressure. Name X.

QUESTION 2

Name the technology where energy is constantly supplied to one group of atoms, which get excited into higher energy states, while other atoms in the same system simultaneously return to lower energy states by releasing energy. The technology works by ensuring there are more excited atoms at a given time than relaxed ones.

QUESTION 3

In human blood, carbon dioxide, _____, bicarbonate ions, and hydrogen ions are

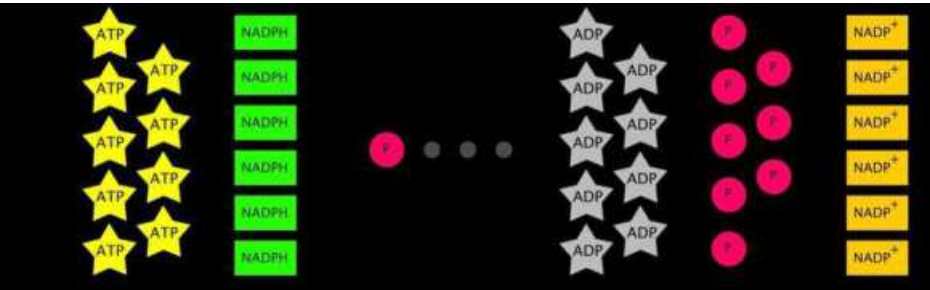
constantly converted into one another. These forward and reverse reactions proceed continuously and thus maintain a stable blood pH while metabolism and respiration constantly alter the carbon dioxide concentration. Fill in the blanks.

QUESTION 4

In a phenomenon called Y equilibrium, gravity continuously pulls a star’s material down while pressure generated in its hot interiors pushes it back out. These opposing forces are balanced throughout most of a star’s lifetime, allowing its size and structure to remain stable even as nuclear fusion and energy transport proceed continuously. Name Y.

QUESTION 5

As it moves through the atmosphere, soil, and living organisms, nitrogen is continuously transformed by _____, nitrification, assimilation, ammonification, and denitrification to different forms. When these processes are balanced over long periods of time, the sizes of the earth’s major nitrogen reservoirs remain roughly constant despite continuous chemical change. Fill in the blank.



Visual: During photosynthesis, plants consume and regenerate carbon compounds as they pass through the cycle shown here (black circles are carbon atoms). The concentrations of the cycle’s main compounds stay nearly constant because each is replenished as it is used. What is the cycle called? PUBLIC DOMAIN

Answers to June 30 quiz:

1. Disease caused by a Treponema pallidum infection – **Ans: Syphilis**
2. 15th century event that catalysed the spread of smallpox – **Ans: Columbian exchange**
3. First bacterium identified as a human disease’s cause – **Ans: Mycobacterium leprae**
4. Microbe that has caused seven pandemics

since 19th century – **Ans: Vibrio cholerae**

5. Rapidly mutating virus that constantly changes its genetic makeup – **Ans: HIV**

Visual: **Yersinia pestis**

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A IN-X

How the right to walk is integral to modernity

That we would need a court of law to remind us that the Right to Walk should be a fundamental right at this moment in history when activists are trying to stop government-corporations from restricting the natural flow of rivers cannot be just a coincidence. The Right to Walk on footpaths, to be specific. There is a restriction on the freedom of nearly all parts of the human body imposed by the state – the hands cannot touch whatever they want to, one can’t spit or defecate wherever one might want to, one cannot rest one’s back against every available wall, and our legs are prevented from taking us to anywhere the mind wants to.

Hence the unnoticed privilege of having a mind – “*Kothao aamar hariye jawar nei mana monay monay*” (I can get lost anywhere, in my mind), is a Rabindranath song sung as much with hope as with the intuitive acknowledgement that only the mind has that kind of unrestricted freedom. At the other end of the head are our legs, and one would imagine that they would also like a similar degree of freedom as the mind has in the Tagore song. It must be in acknowledgement of this need that the Supreme Court has asked for the Right to Walk on footpaths to be included as a fundamental right.

Walking with(in) literature
It seems almost tautological – the need for such a right. However, under a Facebook post from a decade ago, which detailed the experience of being a pedestrian in India, among the many disrespectful and inhuman responses was one by a young engineer. The pedestrian does not pay road tax and therefore cannot make a claim on the road, he said. The abrasive character of new capitalist energy soon became visible; he insisted that like the poor, the pedestrian was a burden on the Indian economy. What would he then make of the recent Supreme Court ruling that



Sumana Roy
teaches at Ashoka University, Sonipat, and is the author of ‘How I Became a Tree’ and ‘Provincials’

Even the gods had a history of walking: the goddess Lakshmi’s footprints, drawn as part of folk rituals of worship, are evidence of that

declared the Right to Walk safely on footpaths a fundamental right under Article 19(1)(d) (freedom of movement) and Article 21 (right to life), a ruling that gives pedestrians a claim on public pathways over automobiles?

Five kilometres away from the Supreme Court, where this ruling was given, Gandhi was walking, his walk frozen into a statue along with others in the piece of sculpture called “Gyarah Murti”, built by Devi Prasad Roy Chowdhury. Could that have played a role in the ruling? Or, since they knew the Indian Constitution so well, could they have been unconsciously thinking of Nandalal Bose, whose art frames the words that guarantees our relationship with this country, and whose linocut from 1930, “Bapuji”, which showcases Gandhi standing with the most well-known walking stick in the world, has conditioned the way we imagine Gandhi? Or could they have been thinking of Rabindranath’s song “*Aekla chalone*” (Walk alone), which sings of the conviction necessary to walk alone?

The judges who had delivered this judgment, Justices P.S. Narasimha and A.S. Chandurkar, must have been raised by a literary consciousness that would have influenced such an outlook. To give an example, a poem such as Jibanananda Das’s *Bonolata Sen*, that begins, ‘For a thousand years I’ve been walking earth’s paths,/from Sinhala’s seas to the waters of Malaya in night’s darkness’. A poem like that was in the air, and influenced the way a community spoke and loved and laughed. There were bound to be equivalents of this trust placed in walking in all literary and artistic cultures of India.

Walking has been integral to the creation of a political instinct in India – from Subhash Chandra Bose’s ‘Delhi chalo’ to Gandhi’s Dandi March, various protest marches have marked resistance before and after 1947. These had been sharpened by a spiritual

history that had been a harvest of walking – by figures such as Siddhartha, Nanak, Chaitanya, and other mendicant-seekers. Even the gods had a history of walking: the goddess Lakshmi’s footprints, drawn as part of folk rituals of worship, are evidence of that. As had ways of storing information or writing a poem or telling a story, for, ‘*pada*’ (foot), is a metric stanza and also a foundational group in Indic knowledge categories.

A symbol of modernity
At university, the author of this article had once told her teacher that modernity came to exist because Baudelaire – who coined the term in his 1863 essay “The Painter of Modern Life” – walked the streets of Paris. One wasn’t thinking specifically of the flaneur, but of walking without purpose, and what it does to our mind and its circulation of thoughts. We’ve all benefitted from walking unknotting the clots in our self-accusatory consciousness.

“The long poem of walking manipulates spatial organisations, no matter how panoptic they may be: it is neither foreign to them (it can take place only within them) nor in conformity with them (it does not receive its identity from them). It creates shadows and ambiguities within them. It inserts its multitudinous references and citations into them (social models, cultural mores, personal factors). Within them it is itself the effect of successive encounters and occasions that constantly alter it and make it the other’s blazon: in other words, it is like a peddler carrying something surprising, transverse or attractive compared with the usual choice. These diverse aspects provide the basis of a rhetoric. They can even be said to define it,” Michel de Certeau writes in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. The Supreme Court’s judgment, in rehabilitating the sense of life as a long poem, to “wander lonely as a cloud”, restores to Indians their quiet modernity.

A defection wave in Tamil Nadu

The switch-over of AIADMK MLAs is evidence of a deeper shift in the State’s politics

STATE OF PLAY

B. Kolappan

Tamil Nadu is witnessing an unusual political phenomenon ever since the Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK), led by actor-turned-politician C. Joseph Vijay, came to power. Several MLAs, most of them from the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), have resigned their hard-won Assembly seats to join the ruling party, hoping to be renominated by the TVK in the ensuing by-elections. Before their switch over, as many as 25 MLAs even voted in favour of the TVK government during the Assembly floor test.

Although the TVK emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly, it fell short of a majority by 10 seats. It eventually formed the government after the Congress switched allegiance from the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK)-led camp, while the two communist parties and the Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi initially extended outside support. The have now joined the government along with the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML). The ruling party, however, does not appear content with a working majority. Instead, it seems intent on strengthening its own numbers so that it need not depend on allies for its survival.

A trend reversal
The continuing stream of resignations and defections has been described by the Opposition as “horse trading” – a phenomenon largely unfamiliar to Tamil Nadu politics. So far, six AIADMK legislators have quit and joined the TVK. Governments in the State have traditionally enjoyed comfor-



table legislative majorities and, even when they fell short of the required numbers, have generally refrained from encouraging defections to secure their position.

The trend began with the shift in loyalty of S. Kamaraj, an MLA of the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) led by T. T. V. Dhinakaran. When Chief Minister-designate Mr. Vijay presented to Governor Rajendra Arlekar a letter of support purportedly signed by Mr. Kamaraj, Mr. Dhinakaran alleged that the document had been forged. The allegation, however, was soon disproved when Mr. Kamaraj voted in favour of the government during the confidence motion. He was then expelled from the AMMK.

What surprised political observers even more was the defection of MLAs from the AIADMK, a party that ruled Tamil Nadu for decades under towering leaders such as M. G. Ramachandran and Jayalalithaa. Within days of the election results, three MLAs – Maragatham Kumaravel, S. Jayakumar and P. Sathyabama – met Speaker J. C. D. Prabhakar and submitted their resignation letters. They were followed by Esakki Subaya. All of them joined the TVK right after.

More striking, however, was the decision of senior AIADMK leaders and former Ministers, including C. Vijaya-baskar, M. R. Vijayabaskar and

Udumalai K. Radhakrishnan (former MLA), to cross over to the ruling party. While they blamed former Chief Minister and AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami for their decision, their actions suggest a broader political calculation. They appear to have concluded that the bipolar political order that long defined Tamil Nadu – dominated by the AIADMK and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) – has come to an end with the rise of the TVK, and that an AIADMK bereft of a charismatic leader has little prospect of regaining power.

Counter allegations
As the trend continued, the DMK accused the TVK of inducing two of its MLAs – S. Austin and Anbazhagan – to resign their seats and join the ruling party. The allegation came close on the heels of the TVK’s charge that former Minister V. Senthilbalaji had attempted to lure its MLA N. Elaiyaraja with an offer of ₹35 crore. The police subsequently arrested a few persons in connection with the TVK’s complaint. The DMK also alleged that the TVK had sought to persuade two MLAs (who contested on its symbol), originally from the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, to resign and recontest.

The spate of resignations, which began barely 20 days after the formation of the new government, evoked strong reactions from the communist parties. They described the developments as an unhealthy trend that could undermine democratic norms. Yet they appear to have little influence over the unfolding events, watching helplessly as the political drama continues to play out day after day.

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Questions surrounding the Quad’s future

With the U.S. reversing the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command back to the U.S. Pacific Command, criticisms have been levelled against the relevance of the Quad

DATA POINT

Amit Kumar

Last week, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi was in New Delhi for the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit, her first visit to India since assuming office. The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. The reaffirmation, however, comes at a moment when the idea of the Indo-Pacific appears to be losing its principal champion. On June 16, the Pentagon renamed the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command back to the U.S. Pacific Command, reversing a change it had made in 2018.

The renaming of the Command in 2018, although symbolic, recognised the region’s growing significance and acknowledged India’s centrality to the U.S.’s regional strategy. The reversal suggests that the region no longer enjoys the priority it once did in Washington. In fact, the National Security Strategy released by the U.S. in November 2025 prioritises the Western Hemisphere over the Indo-Pacific and mentions the Quad only in passing. It also assuages Beijing, which has long resented the formulation. Washington’s approach to managing its relations with Beijing is undergoing a change under the current administration.

All of this has put the future of the Quad under the scanner. If Washington retreats from the idea, the platform built around it inevitably invites questions about its relevance. These anxieties only add to a set of older concerns. How relevant or securitised is the Quad? Is it doing enough? And the criticisms aren’t without substance.

The first criticism entails the hesitation to name China. If the objective is indeed to shape the balance of power in the region, the silence over Beijing’s military and economic aggression is bad optics. However, this is largely a normative criticism. One can argue that

the Quad’s reluctance to name Beijing is strategic, because positioning itself as an anti-China platform could dissuade smaller countries from associating with it.

Critics highlight the Quad’s hesitation to project itself as a security-centric grouping as another of its shortcomings. Given that Beijing poses hard security challenges to the region, any balancing effort has to be primarily security-centric. The extent of the grouping’s hesitation is evident in the members’ active effort to make an implicit distinction between Quad and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD). There is a reluctance to use them interchangeably, even as the members acknowledge the grouping’s origins to be rooted in the first QSD in 2004.

The Quad’s reluctance to elevate the partnership to a 2+2 format – a bilateral ministerial dialogue comprising Foreign and Defence Ministers – is another pain point. Even as each of the four countries has formalised 2+2 meetings bilaterally with one another, the Quad continues to host meetings only at the leaders’ and Foreign Ministers’ level.

Domain of cooperation

The alleged overwhelming focus on non-security or soft issues is a related criticism. However, a review of the Quad’s agenda tells a different story. Even though the Quad assumed its current form in 2017, there was a lull for the first four years. It only picked up steam in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the four countries held their first virtual leaders’ summit and announced a first set of initiatives. Within six months, the Quad held its first in-person leaders’ summit and expanded its areas of cooperation. The list today has grown to 37, of which 23 fall under security-related domains (**Chart 1**). Technology sovereignty, maritime capabilities and secure communications will be key in countering China in the years ahead.

Choosing the right areas of cooperation doesn’t necessarily reveal much, though. The type of cooperation and capital flows are key determinants in evaluating the seriousness of the grouping. But a review of the ‘type’ of cooperation in security-related domains suggests that Quad has a heavy focus on interoperability, data sharing, monitoring, and relief (**Chart 2**). While this is necessary and critically important for any security-focused grouping, Quad’s integration efforts are limited to civilian or non-military grade applications. Nonetheless, these integration exercises have dual-use capabilities and can be leveraged for even military-grade purposes.

The Quad’s focus on building capacity and resilient supply chains is also significant, especially as these relate to critical and emerging technologies, maritime, and communications – the domains where the bulk of contestation with China is expected.

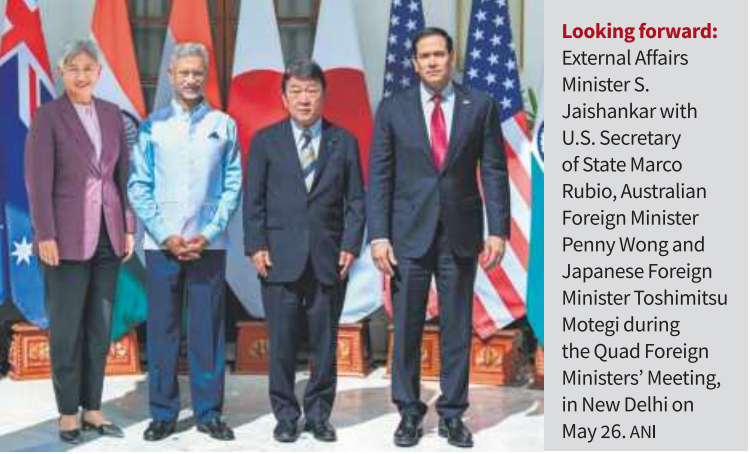
The Quad’s security focus is not matched by its funding pattern. Based on what is available in the public domain, health and climate have been the primary beneficiaries (**Chart 3**). One can argue that since most security-related initiatives focus on integration and standard-setting, they do not require the same scale of dedicated funding. But building resilient supply chains would require substantial capital commitment, and that is where the gap is most visible.

The Quad’s recent commitment to mobilise \$20 billion towards the Critical Minerals Initiative and Framework could change this picture. But it remains only a stated target at this point, with no funding committed or allocated. If security issues make up close to two-thirds of Quad’s initiatives, the funding allocation must follow suit.

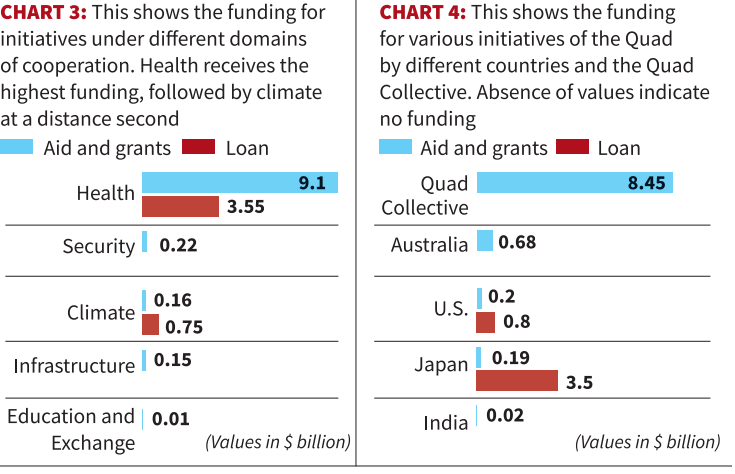
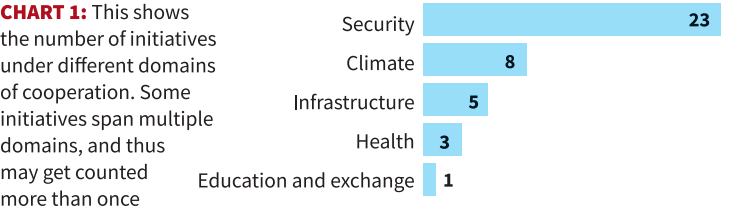
The questions surrounding the Quad’s future will not be settled by nomenclature in Washington. They will be settled by whether the grouping backs its security-heavy agenda with capital.

Uncertain course

Amit Kumar is a Staff Research Analyst with the Geostrategy Programme at The Takshashila Institution. The data for the charts were sourced by the author from his Quad Monitor dashboard



Looking forward:
External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi during the Quad Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, in New Delhi on May 26. ANI



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 7, 1976

Unauthorised accounts in foreign banks

New Delhi, July 6: Seventy bank accounts maintained abroad by Indian citizens resident in India without the permission of the Reserve Bank of India have been detected by the Enforcement Directorate during the first five months of the current calendar year, according to an official press release.

The total balances in the detected bank accounts when converted into Indian rupees, amount to Rs. 73.16 lakhs. The offenders include businessmen, doctors, and advocates.

The balances held in foreign currency abroad are 2,49,116 pound sterling, 92,283 U.S. dollars, 26,723 Malaysian dollars, 30,000 East African shilling, 1,94,347 Swiss francs, 15,500 Lira and 22,000 Australian dollars.

The Enforcement Directorate conducted during May 198 searches and seized foreign and Indian currencies valued at Rs. 1.48 lakhs.

Adjudication proceedings were started in 658 cases during the month and of this 486 cases were adjudicated under the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act and penalties amounting to Rs. 16.23 lakhs were imposed, besides confiscation of foreign and Indian currencies amounting to Rs. 425 lakhs. The Directorate also secured conviction in 10 cases.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 7, 1926

£45,000 paid for old Bible

Dia Reichspost Vienna, reports the sale of a well-preserved copy of the three volume Gutenberg Bible by the Benedictine Convent of Saint Pail, near Klagenfurt, in Carinthia, to an American dealer, for 1,500,000 Austrian shillings (about £45,000), with official permission. All bibliophiles will wait with breathless interest for further news, and particularly for the name of the American dealer. It is an open secret that Mr. Edward Goldston, of Bloomsbury, London, who recently sold another Gutenberg Bible to America for £21,800 had been in negotiation for the treasure now reported sold. He made a special journey to Austria some months ago, and opened negotiations with the Benedictine Convent. The prices of £60,000 was asked, Mr. Goldston regarded this as ridiculous, and Dr. Rosenbach, the American bibliophile, who saw him in London some time after agreed with him.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Illegal foreigners repatriated from Assam

31,789 Of those repatriated, 470 were deported, 29,663 were pushed back, 1,572 were sent back on Union government instructions and 84 were expelled, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma told the State Assembly. PTI

Deceased voters removed from Odisha draft electoral roll

8.32 in lakh. Around 8.32 lakh deceased voters have been removed from Odisha's draft electoral roll during the special intensive revision. It excluded 10.07 lakh shifted or permanently absent voters and about 14,000 entries for which enumeration forms were not received. ANI

Growth in India's steel consumption in Q1 FY27

8.3 in per cent. India's finished steel consumption grew 8.3% year-on-year to 41.6 million tonnes in the April-June quarter of FY27, outpacing production growth of 5.9%, according to the Ministry of Steel. The country remained a net importer of finished steel. ANI

Number of deaths in DR Congo Ebola outbreak

506 The confirmed death toll from the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo has risen to 506, according to the World Health Organization. The agency said 1,561 confirmed cases have been recorded since the outbreak was declared in mid-May. AFP

Chargesheets filed in Assam police cases since 2016

54 in per cent. Assam Police have filed chargesheets in 54% of the 9.69 lakh cases registered since 2016, the State Assembly was informed. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said chargesheets were filed in 5.21 lakh cases. PTI
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Will El Niño weaken India’s economy?

How could a weak monsoon affect farm output, inflation and economic growth? Why does El Niño remain a major risk for India's economy? How have past El Niño years affected agriculture and inflation? Is India's irrigation and water storage system prepared for another weak monsoon?

ECONOMIC NOTES

V. Nivedita

The story so far:

After the first month of this year's monsoon ended in a massive 40% deficit, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast that rainfall in July will also be “below normal” or less than 94% of what is usual for the month. “Below-normal rainfall can pose significant challenges for agriculture, water resources, hydropower generation, ecosystem sustainability, and drinking water availability,” the agency warned. The outlook for July comes on the back of weak rainfall in June. This comes weeks after Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan sounded the alarm, warning about the impact of a potential ‘super’ El Niño.

How could a poor monsoon damage India’s economy?

A poor monsoon can damage the economy in three ways: it affects agricultural output, reducing the sector's contribution to the economy; it hits rural income, denting aggregate demand; and it threatens to push up food prices, causing inflation.

India came into this kharif season from a position of strength – foodgrain output in 2024-25 jumped to 357.73 million metric tonnes, up 25.43 MMT from the previous year. A weak monsoon now puts that momentum at risk.

In a report, CRISIL notes that while paddy acreage is expected to expand in Punjab, Haryana and Bihar, maize acreage is expected to decline as farmers shift towards more remunerative crops. Farmers might also prefer pulses because of lower cultivation costs and water requirements, and may choose not to plant vegetables at all. Irrigation, MSP, procurement support and market conditions also factor in the decision-making process.

This could trigger food and beverage inflation. In its June bulletin, the Reserve



Several of India's worst droughts fell in El Niño years — 1972, 1982, 2009, and 2015. FILE PHOTO

Bank of India warned: “An adverse south-west monsoon, if materialised, may weigh on the domestic growth-inflation outlook.”

The report noted that daily price data up to June 18 showed food inflation continued to rise and the prices of edible oils, potatoes, onions and tomatoes edged up. A weak monsoon will only push them higher.

Agriculture accounts for only one-fifth of India's Gross Value Added (GVA) but employs 46% of the workforce and supports nearly 55% of the population. “It will have a direct impact on the lives of people,” said Prof. R. Ramakumar, School of Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

Prof. Bharat Ramaswami, Department of Economics, Ashoka University, believes farm incomes could fall by up to 10%. “The rural non-farm sector consists mostly of non-traded services such as construction. These sectors contract when agriculture is adversely affected. Industries that depend on rural demand will be affected,” he said.

This stress moves into the wider economy. Automobile sales are a reliable early signal; two-wheelers and tractors are among the first sectors to feel the squeeze, followed by real estate in smaller towns and cities. Kotak Mutual Fund, in a blog, has noted that a combined El

Niño-plus-drought scenario may shave 20-65 basis points off GDP growth.

Compounding the pressure are pests and fertilizer supply constraints caused by the Iran war.

The Union Cabinet approved a ₹41,533 crore Nutrient-Based Subsidy for Phosphatic and Potassic fertilisers for the kharif season, covering 28 grades. If output still falls short, the government will have to release buffer stocks and import commodities, widening the Current Account Deficit and putting pressure on the rupee.

India's agri-exports face a threat too. “Agriculture exports have clocked a CAGR of 8.2% between fiscals 2020 and 2025, contributing 12% to India's core exports,” said Dipti Deshpande, Principal Economist, CRISIL.

How did El Niño impact the economy?

Several of India's worst droughts fell in El Niño years – 1972, 1982, 2009, and 2015. “In the 11 instances of below-normal or deficient monsoon performance at an all-India level since 2000, six were classified as El Niño years by the IMD. Of these, five saw deficient rainfall,” Ms. Deshpande said.

The 2009 and 2015 failures illustrate the different impact poor monsoons can have on the economy. “Two subsequent

years of rainfall stress and all-India average irrigation cover less than 45%, caused agriculture output to suffer – crop GVA contracted 2.5% and 3.2% in fiscals 2009 and 2010, respectively. Inflation was in double digits,” she said.

El Niño conditions moved from weak to strong in 2014 and 2015, and both years saw monsoon disruptions. Crop GVA contracted, but the impact on inflation was different.

Unlike 2009, when food inflation spiked, inflation was rather muted in 2015 due to proactive food management, restrained MSP hikes, and a global commodity price slump, which kept inflation muted despite the monsoon failure, Ms. Deshpande noted.

Can India ‘drought-proof’ the economy?

Mr. Chouhan's presser raised an important data point: 315 districts are vulnerable to a poor monsoon, of which 111 across 12 States are of primary concern due to poor irrigation facilities.

On July 2, storage levels across the 166 reservoirs monitored by the Central Water Commission stood at 47.725 BCM, against 78.077 BCM in the corresponding period last year, and below the normal storage of 48.402 BCM for this time of year. While the system can provide water to meet requirements, a poor monsoon could strain it.

“A second successive bad weather will be more damaging,” Prof. Ramaswami said, adding that irrigation is crucial in adapting to water stress due to climate change.

India needs to ‘drought-proof’ its economy, said Prof. Ramakumar. He said the country must move from crop insurance to ex-ante risk reduction. “We need to pay attention to policies and interventions that reduce risk itself. That requires public investment, and that's lacking,” he said. He added that India needs enough drought-resistant, high-yielding crops, and that farmers must have access to them. “We have not invested adequately in any of these, and hence our disaster preparedness is very poor,” he said.

THE GIST

A weak monsoon and a potential super El Niño could reduce kharif output, depress rural incomes, fuel food inflation, slow GDP growth, and hurt exports.

Experts say India must move beyond crop insurance by investing in irrigation, drought-resistant high-yielding crops, and other risk-reduction measures, as prolonged rainfall stress could strain water storage and disaster preparedness.

Can Bar Associations refuse to represent an accused?

What has the Supreme Court said about Bar resolutions denying legal representation?

LETTER & SPIRIT

Rizmi Lia M.

The story so far:

The Faizabad Bar Association's resolution to not represent the accused in the Ayodhya Ram Temple embezzlement case has prompted the question of whether a Bar Association could collectively decide not to represent a particular accused.

What is the Supreme Court's take?

The Supreme Court has consistently held that every accused has the right to fair trial and legal representation and it is illegal, unconstitutional and contrary to professional ethics to deny that right.

In a Supreme Court judgment in 2010, *A.S. Mohammed Rafi v. State of Tamil Nadu*, the case arose out of a confrontation between lawyers and police personnel in Coimbatore.

Following the incident, a local Bar Association passed a resolution that none of its members would represent the accused police personnel. A Division Bench of Justices Markandey Katju and Gyan Sudha Misra held that such resolutions by Bar bodies were “wholly illegal, against all traditions and professional ethics”.

The court declared in the judgment that “all such resolutions of Bar Associations in India are null and void and the right-minded lawyers should ignore and defy such resolutions if they want democracy and rule of law to be upheld in this country”.

What is the accused's right to be defended?

Article 22(1) of the Constitution guarantees that no arrested person shall be denied the right “to consult, and to be defended by, a legal practitioner of his choice”. Article 14 provides for equality before the law and equal protection of the

laws within the territory of India.

The Supreme Court has recognised the right to a fair trial as an integral part of the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21.

Article 39A, a Directive Principle of State Policy, further requires the State to ensure that the legal system promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity and that no citizen is denied access to justice because of economic or other disabilities, including through free legal aid.

What do the Bar Council of India Rules say?

The ‘Standards of Professional Conduct and Etiquette’ chapter of the Bar Council of India Rules says that “an advocate is bound to accept any brief in the Courts or Tribunals or before any other authorities in or before which he proposes to practise at a fee consistent with his standing at the Bar and the nature of the case. Special circumstances may justify his refusal to

accept a particular brief.”

However, the Uttarakhand High Court in *Kuldeep Agarwal v. State Of Uttarakhand And Others* (2019) clarified that “special circumstances mentioned in Clause II, justifying refusal of an advocate to accept a particular brief, refers, by the use of the word “his”, to the advocate in his individual capacity, and not to the Bar Association whose members are advocates”.

Have such resolutions been passed before?

Yes. Following the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, a Bar resolution opposed legal representation for arrested terrorist, Ajmal Kasab. The legal aid lawyer initially assigned to him declined to appear, while another advocate who agreed to defend him faced political threats before a lawyer was eventually appointed under police protection.

After the December 16, 2012 Delhi gangrape case, lawyers at the Saket courts passed a similar resolution refusing to represent the accused. Likewise, lawyers declined to defend the accused in the 2019 Hyderabad veterinary doctor's rape and murder case.

How have courts dealt with such resolutions?

The Uttarakhand High Court had in 2019 declared null and void a resolution passed by the Kotdwar Bar Association

threatening to terminate the membership of any lawyer who represented an accused in the murder of an advocate.

In 2020, the Karnataka High Court criticised the Hubballi Bar Association after lawyers objected to advocates representing Kashmiri students accused of raising pro-Pakistan slogans. The Bench described the conduct of lawyers on the Dharwad court premises who prevented advocates from filing bail applications as “sheer militancy”. It also indicated that such resolutions could amount to criminal contempt.

More recently, the Madras High Court in *Manikandan Nair v. State of Tamil Nadu* in 2025 reiterated that Bar Associations cannot formally or informally prevent advocates from appearing for any accused.

In the case of *J. Jayalalithaa v. State of Karnataka* (2014), the Supreme Court observed that “fair trial is the main object of criminal procedure and such fairness should not be hampered or threatened in any manner. Fair trial entails the interests of the accused, the victim and the society. Thus, fair trial must be accorded to every accused in the spirit of the right to life and personal liberty and the accused must get a free and fair, just and reasonable trial on the charge imputed in a criminal case”.

Thus, the Supreme Court has consistently held that the right to legal representation is a core feature of a fair trial.

CACHE



Almost all of the components that make up e-rickshaws are imported from China. ANI

E-rickshaw battery ‘hacks’ and Bluetooth BMS vulnerabilities

The misuse of battery management apps exposed security flaws in imported e-rickshaw battery systems, rather than problems with the apps themselves; stronger supply chain oversight and security standards, not app bans, are needed to address such vulnerabilities

Karan Saini

The story so far: Over the last week, social media has been flooded with videos depicting individuals using mobile applications such as BAT-BMS, Lossigy and Epoch-ion to wirelessly disable the batteries of e-rickshaws using Bluetooth. The videos have largely been shared as “pranks” – however cruel, unethical and unlawful they may be – while some have speculated that the applications were designed for high-tech sabotage by China’s manufacturers. The reality is far less dramatic, yet still worth understanding carefully.

How are battery management systems diagnosed? Applications such as BAT-BMS exist to allow fleet owners and service technicians to easily diagnose battery problems such as overvoltage or undervoltage. In most vehicles, battery management and diagnostics require physical access to the module and the use of a computer or other device to gather information. Over time, manufacturers have begun equipping these modules with Bluetooth capabilities, making diagnostics and repairs easier without requiring extensive disassembly. Applications such as BAT-BMS are typically developed alongside the battery management systems they support and are almost certainly not intended to sow chaos by disabling as many vehicles as possible. Instead, they search for specific devices advertising themselves as battery management modules over Bluetooth, connect to one device at a time, display

diagnostic information, and provide basic debugging functions.

How are e-rickshaws built and why imported electronics matter? The BAT-BMS application is specifically designed to discover and connect to Battery Management System (BMS) modules manufactured by a Chinese electronics company, Jiabaida. A seven-year-old public discussion on the open source code sharing platform GitHub documented a lack of authentication in Jiabaida BMS modules, with the author even providing a hacky workaround for this obvious security flaw. Over time, this vulnerability appears to have been discovered and subsequently exploited by individuals who began popularising its misuse. In particular, some users circulated short-form “prank” videos demonstrating how it could be used to disable e-rickshaw batteries. Almost all of the components that make up e-rickshaws are imported from China. In fact, one could order almost all the parts required to assemble one from consumer websites such as Alibaba Group or AliExpress. Of course, one could go even further and import a fully pre-assembled e-rickshaw from China through these platforms, though the shipping fees and Customs duties might eat into your margin. Most manufacturers import the electronic components required to assemble e-rickshaws from China, leaving only the fabrication and assembly of the aluminium frame and chassis to be done domestically.

When technology is blamed for system vulnerabilities It appears that whenever something goes

wrong, the government is quick enough to attribute blame to digital platforms. Telegram was ordered to be blocked during the re-NEET period, reportedly to protect individuals from fraudsters claiming to sell leaked examination question papers in advance. Similarly, following viral “prank” incidents, the government directed Google and Apple to remove several popular battery management apps from their respective app stores. In both cases, the government has chosen to restrict access to applications rather than address the underlying issues in a meaningful way. While the two applications are fundamentally different – one being a widely used communication platform with social media features, and the other a set of utilities for diagnosing battery issues – the reasoning behind both decisions appears similar. In essence, when a particular technology becomes associated with harm, restricting access to that technology is seen as a way to eliminate the harm itself. Hypothetically, if the re-NEET examination were to be compromised, the breach would have to occur at the source or during transit – during question formulation, printing, or transport. The breach would not originate from, nor be enabled by, the Telegram platform itself. Blocking Telegram in this hypothetical scenario would only temporarily disrupt the sale of leaked question papers until sellers migrate to another platform of choice. Similarly, restricting battery management applications does not make vulnerable BMS modules any more secure. If anything, it might further inconvenience users who have been

affected and are trying to restore functionality to their vehicles.

How should supply chain regulation be structured? Contrary to popular belief, regulatory frameworks governing e-rickshaws do exist. Gazette notifications GSR 709(E) dated 8.10.2014 and S.O. 2590(E) dated 8.10.2014 define requirements related to overall dimensions, tyres, brakes, horns, and vehicle identification number standards, but do not provide detailed standards for electronic components. Globally, as security risks become increasingly associated with the supply chains, various strategies have been adopted to address vulnerabilities before a product reaches the assembly line. These include vetting suppliers, auditing the firmware of electronic components, and tracing the origin and capabilities of individual parts. Such measures can be mandated through regulation. A simple Google search conducted seven years ago could have alerted e-rickshaw manufacturers to the security issues in the BMS modules they use. Frameworks that establish standards, as well as responsibilities and liabilities for manufacturers, should ideally extend to all products containing electronic components, not just vehicles or specifically e-rickshaws. While sourcing parts from the cheapest available source might be suitable for building a quick prototype, the long-term production and marketing of products should require greater effort and due diligence than simply placing a few orders and setting up an assembly line. (Karan is an independent security researcher from New Delhi, India)



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

What is the difference between “The mango is too sweet” and “The mango is very sweet”? (P. Velayudham, Tiruvannamalai)

The first sentence has a negative meaning. When you say that the mango is too sweet, it implies that the mango is so sweet that you have problems eating it. In other words, it is excessively sweet. Similarly, when you say, “The candidate is too smart”, it has a negative connotation. Indirectly, you are implying he is much too intelligent for the job and you foresee problems dealing with him. If, on the other hand, you say, “The mango is very sweet”, you are paying a compliment. The degree of sweetness is just right; it is not excessive. Similarly, when you say, “The candidate is very intelligent”, it has a positive ring to it. You are saying that the candidate should be hired because he’ll be good for the company.

What is the meaning and origin of “Pandora’s box”? (K. Veena, Chennai)

This expression has its origins in Greek mythology. Zeus, the King of Gods, was fed up with mankind. (So what’s new? The Gods are always angry with us!) In order to teach them a lesson, Zeus created a woman - Pandora. The King of Gods then asked all the other gods to shower gifts on her; gifts which would bring about the downfall of man! (By the way, that’s how Pandora got her name; “pan” in Greek means “all” and “dora” means “gifts”.) The gifts given by the gods were put in a beautiful box, and Zeus presented it to Pandora warning her never to open it. If somebody gave you a beautiful box loaded with gifts and said don’t ever open it, what would you do? Well, Pandora did the same thing. She opened it and saw to her horror all the evils of this world escape. According to the story only “Hope” remained. You may ask, if the box contained all the bad things that the gods could think of, why was Hope inside? Ask Zeus!

When you say that something is a “Pandora’s box”, it implies that it is a source of complication, something that will create many new and unexpected problems. The idiom commonly used these days is “open a Pandora’s box”.

“The Finance Minister’s reforms opened a Pandora’s box of industrial problems.

There are different versions of this story. According to some scholars, it wasn’t Pandora who opened the box, but her husband, Epimetheus, who did. Very convenient wouldn’t you say? Now men can accuse women of being the cause of all their problems, and vice versa.

What is the meaning of Adam’s ale? (M. A. Gopalkrishnan, Tirupati)

“Adam’s ale” is a term humorously used to refer to water. You could say, “Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of Adam’s ale!” By the way, did you know that many of the hard drinks that some of us are addicted to actually mean water? The word “whisky”, for example, comes from a Gaelic word meaning “water of life”. The French word “eau-de-vie” meaning brandy also means “water of life”. Any idea what the Russian drink “vodka” means? It means “little water”! If your boss or your father ever asks you whether you drink, you can look him straight in the eye and say, “I have a little water once in a while!”

Published in The Hindu on March 6, 2001

THE DAILY QUIZ

Here is a quiz on personalities born on July 7

Mohammed Hidhayat

- QUESTION 1**
The eighth Sikh Guru, born in 1656, would go on to lead the faith at just five years old. Who was he?
- QUESTION 2**
Born in 1883, which scholar wrote *Usne Kaha Tha*, one of the earliest modern Hindi short stories?
- QUESTION 3**
Which Indian revolutionary, born on this day in 1854, served as the Prime Minister of the first Provisional Government of India established in Kabul, Afghanistan, during the First World War.
- QUESTION 4**
Born on this day in 1914, which composer introduced full orchestral music to Hindi cinema and is best remembered for his score in the film *Kismet* (1943)?
- QUESTION 5**
This 1981-born cricketer captained India to titles in three major white-ball ICC tournaments. He famously wore the number 7 jersey. Who is he?



Visual Question: Born in 1963, identify this director well known for films such as Rang De Basanti, Delhi-6 and Bhaag Milkha Bhaag. FILE PHOTO

- Questions and Answers to the previous day’s daily quiz:**
1. When he won the crown at 18 years and 195 days, whose record did D. Gukesh break to become the youngest undisputed World chess champion? **Ans: Garry Kasparov**
2. Who notched up a 214 to become the youngest woman to hit a century, aged 19 years and 254 days, in 2002. **Ans: Mithali Raj**
3. Which Indian teenage sensation made history in 2023 as the youngest World archery champion in the World Cup-era (post 2006) and also claimed India’s first-ever individual title by winning the compound gold? **Ans: Aditi Gopichand Swami**
4. Though not yet a teen, Arati

Saha became the youngest-ever to represent India at the Olympics when at the age of 11 years, 10 months and 305 days she took part in the 1952 Helsinki Games. In which event? **Ans: Swimming (200m breaststroke)**

5. Which Olympic medalist holds the distinction of being the youngest Khel Ratna recipient at the age of 18 in 2001? **Ans: Abhinav Bindra**

Visual: He became the youngest-ever Arjuna Award winner at 14 for his Guinness World Record feat in 1994. Who and what achievement? **Ans: R. Kutraleshwaran who swam six channels, including the Palk Strait and English Channel, in 1994**

Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan | Arun Kumar Singh | Piyali Tuli | Prem Nath Tiwari | Varghese Joseph

Word of the day

Appetence:
a feeling of craving something

Synonyms: yearning, urge, drive

Usage: *The team’s appetite for success was obvious.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/appetence

International Phonetic Alphabet: /æptɪtəns/

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

INBRIEF



Rupee falls 25 paise against U.S. dollar, closes at 95.43

The rupee depreciated 25 paise to close at 95.43 against the U.S. dollar on Monday, as a strengthening greenback weighed on emerging market currencies. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 95.25 against the American currency and traded in a range of 95.22-95.48 during the session. The rupee finally closed at 95.43, down 25 paise from its previous close. PTI

NSE targets to launch ₹30,000-cr. IPO in September

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) is targeting to launch its much-awaited initial public offering (IPO), estimated at around ₹30,000 crore, in September, people familiar with the development said on Monday. The mega IPO is expected to value the country's largest stock exchange at over ₹5 lakh crore. The exchange will soon begin roadshows for the IPO. If successful, the issue will surpass Hyundai Motor India's ₹27,870-crore IPO launched in October 2024. PTI

Granules secures FTF status for CNS depressant generic

Granules India has secured sole first-to-file (FTF) status for its abbreviated new drug application (ANDA) for Sodium Oxybate extended-release for oral suspension, the generic equivalent of Lumryz ER oral suspension of Alkermes plc. This is Granules' second sole FTF ANDA. LUMRYZ (sodium oxybate) ER oral suspension is indicated in the U.S. for the treatment of excessive daytime sleepiness in patients with narcolepsy.



The BSE logo at the entrance of the building in Mumbai.

Markets rise for fourth straight session

Ashokamithran T
MUMBAI

Benchmarks Nifty 50 and BSE Sensex traded positively for the fourth straight session with the indices improving almost 0.7% each to 78,285.07 and 24,430.35 on Monday.

The last time the indices rose for straight sessions was between June 12 and June 18 when investors were upbeat for five consecutive days. However, this four-day rally is weaker than the previous one as on all the four days, the rise was not more than 0.7%. On the other hand, the June instance began with the first day closing 2% higher and the second day almost 1% over the previous close.

Despite the winning streak, 1,700 of the 3,400 stocks that traded declined on Monday. However, most of the sectoral indices delivered positive returns with just four of the 21 indices, declining.

“The index continues to trade comfortably above previous week's high and 20- and 50-day EMAs (exponential moving average, an indicator used to track a stock's price trend over a period), highlighting sustained strength,” said Bajaj Broking Research team.

Will record FPI Indian bond flows be sustainable?

NEWS ANALYSIS

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

The overall inflow of foreign investor money into India's bond market crossed a record ₹55,518 crore in June. Experts, however, aired concerns over sustainability of the momentum as the macroeconomic climate had not turned fully conducive.

In early June, the Centre waived Long Term Capital Gains (LTCG) tax on foreign investment in bonds. The RBI and the Centre further expanded the Fully Accessible Route (FAR) to include new long-term Government Securities with 15-year, 30-year, and 40-year tenors, as well as Sovereign Green Bonds

The steps came in the backdrop of net outflow of foreign funds from Indian capital markets and a constantly depreciating rupee.

“The reforms are poised to attract long-term institutional investors such as pension funds, insurance companies and sovereign wealth funds, leading to more stable and sustained capital inflows. They are also expected to boost foreign exchange inflows and strengthen resilience of India's financial markets,” the Ministry of Finance said. The question of whether tax cuts can deliver more inflows is a topic of debate among economists and financial analysts.

“Tax tweaks can serve as a catalyst but rarely override core fundamentals like policy consistency and external conditions. India's progressive liberalisation through the FAR has often mattered more. While taxation was a constraint— especially for debt— it was secondary,”



Inflows stood at ₹55,518 crore in June 2026 . AFP

said Lekha Chakraborty, Professor, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP).

The inflows, however, did come and they were across the bond market. FPI investment under general limit debt securities, which contains both corporate bonds and government securities, came in at ₹55,518 crore in June 2026.

Investments under the FAR were the highest since September 2024 when it was introduced. FAR recorded an inflow of ₹21,652 crore in June 2026. Put together, they more than compensated for the significant outflow of ₹49,340 crore from equities.

Many factors at play

“Attributing the recent increase in FPI inflows solely to the removal of capital gains tax or withholding tax would be an oversimplification. A combination of factors has contributed to the improved sentiment in India's debt market,” said Venkatakrishnan Srinivasan, managing partner, Rockfort LLP.

“Overall, June has been a positive month for the bond market. The easing of geopolitical concerns surrounding the Strait of Hormuz, expectations of India's possible inclusion in the Bloomberg Global Aggregate Bond Index and improving market senti-

ment on RBI's recent policy steps have all supported investor confidence and foreign investor interest,” Mr. Srinivasan continued.

The sustainability of the inflows, which the tax cut was aiming at, cannot be definitely guaranteed as the underlying economic data doesn't suggest that things have changed completely positively for the debt investors.

In all, bond market experts and economists, while certain the inflows cannot be directly attributed to the tax cut, do not discount the benefits of such a move.

Benefits of the tax cut

Benefits of the tax cut include 'diversifying inflows away from equities, deepening debt markets, and supporting external balances,' while fundamentals dominate in determining flows, said Ms. Chakraborty.

However, others in the policy-making space are more careful in evaluating the utility of cutting taxes to bring in capital market investments. Former Finance Secretary S.C. Garg said the move did not have much of a deeper policy thought and was 'more a desperate attempt at bringing in foreign exchange.'

“If you have to try something to get forex and there is no measure available for FDI or FPI in equity, you end up going for FCNR B and government securities,” he said.

Now that the tax policy constraint on foreign investment into Indian debt securities has been removed, attention would shift to the macroeconomic climate which would have to be as lucrative for investors to show the same level of interest in bonds as it did in June 2026.



Shifting gear: Tractor retail sales stood at 1,00,818 units, a growth of 25.31% year on year and 21.33% month on month. AFP

of the India growth story and the widening aspirations of Bharat,” he added.

Two-wheeler retail sales stood at 18,28,458 units, up

segment grew 4.25% MoM, while rural sales declined 4.55% MoM, reflecting the late onset and uneven progress of the south-west monsoon, which kept rain-fed markets in a wait-and-watch mode.

Commercial vehicle retails were at 90,972 units, a 16.88% YoY growth and the best June on record for the segment. Light commercial vehicles (LCVs) grew 21.10% YoY, medium commercial vehicles 16.81% and heavy commercial vehicles at 8.26%.

Dealers cited steady freight activity, e-commerce-linked movement and normalising supplies.

Share of commercial

electric vehicles (EVs) rose to an all-time high of 3.53% from 1.57% a year ago.

Passenger vehicle retail sales stood at 4,10,853 units, a growth of 28.63% YoY and 2.05% MoM.

Share of alternative-fuel PVs – CNG, Hybrid and EV combined – crossed the 40% mark for the first time, at 40.35% (CNG 24.33%, Hybrid 8.27%, EV 7.75%).

Passenger EV retail sales stood at an all-time high of 31,823 units.

The total EV retail sales across categories touched 3,06,220 units – the highest for any month – taking the overall EV penetration to about 12.5%.

SEBI said to ease short stocks by nearly doubling those eligible for borrowing

Reuters
MUMBAI

India's markets regulator aims to make it easier for investors to short stocks by nearly doubling the number of shares eligible for lending and borrowing and by cutting collateral requirements, two people with direct knowledge of the plans said.

The changes are aimed at boosting the cash equities market and drawing investors away from the country's far larger derivatives market, which has

The changes are aimed at drawing investors away from the far larger derivatives market

seen explosive growth but carries far larger risks for retail investors in particular.

Stock scam scandals led India to develop strict requirements for its cash equities market, with rules tightened in the early 2000s and then again in the period 2017 to 2020.

That has meant that while the National Stock Exchange, which accounts for about 95% of India's cash equities market, has some 2,600 companies listed, only 176 are currently eligible for borrowing and lending.

By nearly doubling that number, Indian authorities hope to include the majority of liquid shares, the people said.

The three main criteria determining eligibility include liquidity, trading volume and the stock's ability to support exposure to de-

Microsoft joins AI-led tech layoff wave, to axe 4,800 jobs

Reuters

Microsoft is cutting about 2.1% of its workforce, or roughly 4,800 jobs, as the Windows maker restructures parts of its commercial and Xbox businesses, joining other tech titans in a wave of layoffs as they shift investments towards AI infrastructure.

Big Tech's historic AI outlays, set to top \$700 billion this year, are piling pressure on companies to show returns from the

technology and offset the rising cost of rolling it out across their businesses. Amazon and Meta Platforms have also laid off thousands of employees this year. In a memo to employees, Chief People Officer Amy Coleman said AI was changing how work gets done by automating some routine tasks, but said the layoffs were part of a broader effort to realign resources and operating structures with the company's priorities.

Why India's top earners are ditching outright purchases for dream cars

Amit Mohile
MUMBAI

When 51-year-old Gurugram-based multinational executive Rajan Wadhwa began shopping for a new luxury car this year, he believed he had the perfect workaround India's rising prices. Living at DLF Camellias and commuting barely 10-12 km daily to DLF Cyber City, he fit neatly into the profile luxury carmakers prize most – affluent, urban and predictable in usage.

BMW's 360° programme allowed him to reduce the monthly cost of owning a ₹50-70 lakh BMW X1 or electric iX1 from nearly ₹1.5 lakh under a conventional loan to ₹70,000-85,000 by financing only the vehicle's expected depreciation over three years, instead of its full purchase price.

As an icing, BMW guaranteeing a pre-agreed residual value after 36 months. At the end of the tenure, he could pay the balloon amount and retain the vehicle, refinance the balance, or simply return it



In luxury EVs, adoption is even higher, with two out of every three sold under some form of structured ownership programme. FILE

under the programme. Structured ownership products combine Guaranteed Future Value (GFV), balloon financing and pre-agreed buyback or return options, allowing customers to finance only a vehicle's expected depreciation rather than its full purchase price.

Luxury brands including BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Audi and Lexus have taken to this model through programmes such as BMW 360°, Star Agility+, Audi Assured Buyback, and Lexus Smart Ownership, while some manufacturers are extending the concept through leasing-led ownership models.

Mr. Wadhwa is not an exception. BMW estimates the country's structured ownership ecosystem at ₹4,500-5,000 crore, while Mercedes-Benz Financial Services alone has built an assets-under-management (AUM) book of around ₹1,500 crore. Industry executives estimate that penetration of these products has nearly doubled over the past three years – from 18-20% of luxury vehicle sales in FY24 to 35-40% today. In luxury EVs, adoption is even higher, with two out of every three vehicles sold under some form of structured ownership programme. The model, however, comes with a ca-

veat. Most programmes assume annual driving of just around 15,000 km; customers exceeding those limits face deductions in the guaranteed buyback value.

“We are seeing a clear shift in customer behaviour, especially in the premium and emerging EV segments, where buyers increasingly want flexibility, lower monthly ownership costs and confidence around future value,” said Hardeep Singh Brar, President and Chief Executive Officer, BMW Group India.

The playbook is now moving beyond luxury brands into the ₹15-35 lakh premium passenger vehicle segment. Volkswagen and Skoda have introduced assured buyback programmes on models such as the Taigun. Maruti Suzuki is pairing the upcoming eVitara with Guaranteed Future Value plans, while Tata Motors, JSW MG Motor and Mahindra are expanding similar ownership structures across their premium EV portfolios.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

Airports Authority of India eyes entry into pilot training ecosystem

Rohit Vaid
NEW DELHI

State-owned Airports Authority of India (AAI) is preparing to enter the country's pilot training ecosystem by establishing Full Flight Simulator (FFS) and Type Rating Training Organisation (TRTO) facilities across its airport network, marking a strategic diversification beyond its

traditional role as an airport developer and operator, sources told *businessline*.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) document reviewed by *businessline* showed that the AAI had invited bids to appoint a consultant for preparing a comprehensive implementation strategy for establishing FFS and TRTO facilities at suitable air-

ports under its network.

The move assumes significance as it signals the entry of a government-backed entity into a segment that has so far largely been dominated by private training providers.

Besides, this comes at a time when India is expected to witness a sharp rise in demand for trained commercial pilots. According to the Ministry of Civil

Aviation, the country currently has 10,261 valid Airline Transport Pilot Licence (ATPL) holders. The government has projected that India will require around 30,000 pilots over the next 15 to 20 years to support the induction of more than 1,700 aircraft already on order by Indian airlines.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

From shampoo to cookies, consumer products get AI makeover



World absorbs Iran war oil supply loss, but depleted stocks bring risks

SK Hynix unveils \$28 bn U.S. listing on AI wave

More Brazil firms go for out-of-court debt fixes on high rates

CMYK

Israeli strike in south Lebanon kills four, including three women



Thousands flee homes as wildfires continue across southern Europe



Ebola outbreak death count in DR Congo crosses 500, says WHO



Landslides at Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh kill eight



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The highly beneficial coastal ecosystems are imperiled by warming oceans, pollution, and overfishing. AFP

East African women adapt livelihoods to changing oceans

Associated Press
MALINDI

Across East Africa’s coast, fisherfolk are increasingly turning to tourism, ecosystem restoration, and other conservation-based businesses, reinventing their relationship with the sea as climate change, overfishing, and declining ocean health threaten their livelihoods.

In Kenya, women are turning restored mangrove forests into sources of income through bee-keeping and ecotourism. In Tanzania’s Zanzibar archipelago, fishing communities are protecting coral reefs through locally managed closures. In Mozambique, sea grass restoration is creating jobs while reviving marine habitats. Together, these efforts are redefining resilience, not as leaving the ocean behind, but as restoring it while building enduring livelihoods. “Communities that depend on the ocean are also its best stewards,” said Andreane Martel, project director for a conservation programme dubbed ReSea. “When local people, especially women, lead conservation, they protect biodiversity while creating more resilient and inclusive livelihoods.”

Mangroves, coral reefs, sea grass meadows and nearshore fisheries provide food, protect coastlines from storms and store vast amounts of carbon. But those ecosystems are imperiled by warming oceans, pollution, habitat loss and overfishing. “Coastal communities are on the frontlines of climate change and declining ocean health, but they are also among the strongest drivers of resilience,” said Jerry Mang’ena, co-founder and executive director of Action for Ocean, a Tanzania-based organization that restores mangroves along its coastline.

NATO push to raise defence spending strains European members’ budgets

Under pressure from U.S. President Trump, members of the 32-country military pact had agreed at last year’s summit to boost defence spending to 5% of GDP by 2035; But opposing camps have emerged since then of nations with fiscal space to raise spending and those struggling to do the same

Reuters
LONDON

The Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Mark Rutte, is expected to insist at this week’s summit of the military alliance that member states are keeping their promise to boost defence spending. Yet progress has been uneven and the push is already stretching some national budgets.

Under pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump, members of the 32-country military pact agreed at last year’s summit to boost defence spending to 5% of GDP by 2035 – just over double the overall level for European states and Canada in 2025.

But since then, two camps have emerged: one is led by Germany and the mostly Nordic and eastern European nations which have found the fiscal space to raise spending; in the other are several big players struggling to do the same.

“The U.K. is not managing, for example. France is not and Italy is not either,” Guntram Wolff, senior fellow at the Bruegel economics think tank, said of the three largest economies in Europe behind Germany.

NATO says its European members plus Canada spent an extra \$90 billion on defence in real terms last year compared to 2024 as they seek to raise core



NATO chief Mark Rutte in Ankara, Turkiye on Monday ahead of the leaders’ summit . REUTERS

military spending to 3.5% of GDP by 2035 with a further 1.5% GDP on security-related items.

New spendings

Before the summit, Mr. Rutte has stressed that last year’s new spend amounts to a bigger \$139 billion tally in nominal terms and that there is a “strong commitment” to hit the combined 5% target on time.

Germany will use a rule change exempting defence items from strict borrowing limits to double its spending to over \$228 billion between now and 2030, according to a bud-

get draft seen by Reuters ahead of a cabinet review on Monday.

Poland, Lithuania, and Estonia – countries where the perception of the threat posed by Russia is at its sharpest – are already well on their way to making the new targets, with Warsaw notably having devoted 4.3% of GDP to defence last year.

Elsewhere the push faces political and fiscal roadblocks.

Budget challenges

Britain last week announced plans for an extra \$20 of defence spending,

partly funded by cuts elsewhere. But it emerged that one-third was still unfunded, creating an early budget challenge for the likely new Prime Minister Andy Burnham.

More fundamentally, the plan was criticised by Opposition politicians and former military chiefs for failing to set out when defence spending would reach 3% of GDP, on the way to meeting Britain’s NATO commitment to spend 3.5% of GDP by 2035.

“Defence spending will likely remain one of the biggest fiscal pressures fac-

ing the U.K. in the medium term,” said Max Warner, senior research economist at the Institute for Fiscal Studies, a think tank.

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni is due to tell the summit that Rome, despite one of Europe’s largest debt burdens, will lift core and non-core defence spending to 2.8% of GDP in 2026, roughly 0.71 percentage point higher than last year.

Election pressure

But with higher military spending unpopular with many voters ahead of next year’s national elections, most of the increase will come from domestic security spending such as police duties.

Plans detailed by France in April would lift its defence spending to 2.5% of GDP by the end of the decade from about 2% now, even as it attempts to bring its overall deficit into line with euro area rules – a tough budget goal as it heads towards next year’s presidential elections.

Spain’s socialist government, meanwhile, is not seen budging from its refusal to spend more than 2.1% of GDP on defence, with new resources set to be heavily skewed towards technologies with civil applications. Elsewhere, NATO officials have queried the assertion of three countries – Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Albania – that they had met the old

alliance target of 2% of GDP and asked them to review and re-submit their spending figures.

“Credible commitment” “For us, the challenge is to ensure that allies remain on the credible path towards that 3.5% commitment, if you keep on bumping along at 2%, then you’re not on the credible path,” a senior NATO official said.

Bruegel’s Mr. Wolff noted that, unlike at last year’s summit in the Hague, European leaders can look Mr. Trump in the eye and argue they have stepped up to shoulder the burden of a Ukrainian war effort that has shown it is able to resist Russian advances.

Still, even if European publics may be starting to accept that more money should go on the military, some observers argue that arms suppliers will need to be convinced that government defence spending will remain high before they make the investment needed to increase their capacity.

“There has been a before Trump, and there will be an after Trump, so this 5% target can change any time,” said Ana Boata, head of economic research at Allianz Trade. “So I think there is a bit of scepticism from European defence companies to actually ramp up investments in order to ramp up production,” she said.

Floating childhood



Makeshift pool: Displaced Palestinian children take respite from the summer heat in a water tank near buildings destroyed during the Israeli offensive in Gaza City on Monday. REUTERS

U.S. plans new ICE facility that could speed up deportations of children

Associated Press
NEW ORLEANS

The Donald Trump administration in the U.S. is planning to open a 528-bed holding facility for migrant families and unaccompanied children next to an airport hub, positioning itself to speed up deportations.

The location in Alexandria, Louisiana, would remove logistical headaches caused by wrangling children from foster homes and shelters across the country and not having anywhere to keep them during final preparations for flight. Those obstacles were apparent last year when Guatemalan children were awoken at night and given almost no time to get to Harlingen, Texas, where they waited on an airport



Activists have expressed concerns over the new facility noting that it represents a departure from how migrant children are managed. AP

tarmac for hours.

A federal judge prevented their deportation, but the chaotic episode illustrated the challenges authorities face because they do not have anywhere to put families and children near the airport. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is calling

the Alexandria facility a “staging area,” not a detention centre, and says people would only be there a few days at most.

However, several immigration advocates expressed concern that children could be held at the new facility for weeks or months, which happened

at other federal immigration holding sites. These advocates are also concerned about oversight, and say the facility represents a departure from how the government manages those children.

Unaccompanied children who are in the U.S. without parents or close relatives are not taken to facilities overseen by ICE. Instead, the law says they must be swiftly placed in the care of state-licensed shelters and foster care programmes.

Instead, the facility would be run by a nonprofit arm of LaSalle Corrections, a private prison contractor, according to Ralph Hennessy, executive director of the England Airpark Authority. He said it could be operational as early as August.

Hemingway’s masterpiece on Spain’s bull runs turns 100 with its allure intact

Associated Press
PAMPLONA

Bill Hillmann has been gored three times while running with the bulls in Spain, but he would not miss this year’s San Fermin festival for anything.

It marks the 100th anniversary of the publication of Ernest Hemingway’s book *The Sun Also Rises* that launched the future Nobel Laureate to literary fame and put Pamplona on the map for millions of people around the world.

On Monday, the festival kicked off with a firework blast over a jam-packed plaza. The first of eight bull runs is on Tuesday.

Hemingway’s 1926 novel captivated generations of

readers with its tale of American and British bohemians trying to fill some inner void with the distractions of exotic travel, vast quantities of alcohol, and the anguishing pursuit of impossible love.

Its success established *The Sun Also Rises* as a cornerstone of the American literary canon, right up there with F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*.

It also popularised the term “lost generation” to describe the tight-knit group of early 20th-century writers expatriated in Paris and Hemingway’s terse style forever changed American literature.

Mr. Hillmann, who hails from Chicago, was 19 when Hemingway’s vivid depic-

tion of the bull running festival first enthralled him, especially descriptions of average Spaniards risking their lives sprinting through the streets to guide the bulls to the bull ring during the nine-day festival.

“I sat there for about six hours, well past midnight, reading the book,” Mr. Hillmann, 44, said in Pamplona as he looked down on the pen where the bulls are held before being set free on the cobblestoned route. “And by the time I was done with that book, I was going to be a writer and I was going to be a bull runner.”

Since that literary encounter, Mr. Hillmann has run with the bulls in Spain



Bullish culture: Revellers run alongside fighting bulls during the previous San Fermin festival in Pamplona, Spain in July 2025. AP

hundreds of times, counting both his trips to Pamplona and his participation in dozens more bull runs in other Spanish towns. His infatuation with Hemingway and Pamplona has never waned, even though he nearly died one time that he was gored by a bull

horn.

Mr. Hillmann is just one of many Americans inspired to travel to Spain to see the festival firsthand. While running with bulls is a cherished local custom for Spanish daredevils, Americans are still the leading group of foreigners

who run at the San Fermin festival.

In 2022, 16% of the bull runners were Americans, the largest percentage among foreigners and four times more than those from neighbouring France, according to Pamplona’s City Hall.

Dallas-based tour operator Bruce Anderson, whose company ‘Running Of The Bulls’ has helped thousands of Americans attend San Fermin over the years, says that Hemingway’s work made the festival a bucket-list destination.

This year, his company is bringing 1,400 people to the festival, with over two-thirds from the United States.

“There is a lot of energy, a lot of excitement around just remembering that book and the impact that it has had,” said Mr. Anderson, himself a lifelong Hemingway fan.

He spoke in Pamplona’s art deco Café Iruña, which features heavily as a drinking spot in *The Sun Also Rises* and today houses a life-size statue of Hemingway bellying up to the bar.

And Mr. Anderson, with his thick white beard, is something of a Hemingway look-alike. Local Spaniards often call out to him: “Papa!” - a nickname for their adopted hero.

Hemingway is etched into the landscape of Pamplona. Hotels and bars have busts of him or signs

up that he was once there. Outside the Pamplona bull ring, which also has a statue of the writer, a huge banner hangs in honour of the novel, including a quote that shows how the festival left the writer speechless: “At noon of Sunday, the 6th of July, the fiesta exploded. There is no other way to describe it.”

Hemingway’s local legacy, however, is mixed.

Beside a feminist critique of his hyper masculine public persona, Hemingway has drawn criticism from the animal rights movement for his praise of bullfighters. In *The Sun Also Rises*, he spills far more ink on descriptions of their bravery than on the bull runs.

A male cyclist wearing a yellow helmet and a white jersey with 'UAE EMIRATES XRCF' and rainbow stripes is celebrating with his arms raised. The background is blurred, showing spectators and banners.

CMYK ☐

A tennis player, likely a woman, is shown in a celebratory pose. She is wearing a white sleeveless athletic top with a small black logo on the chest and a white visor. She is holding a tennis racket with a blue frame and yellow strings, and she has her arms raised in the air, smiling broadly. The background is a blurred crowd of spectators.

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R. Kaushik

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