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IN BRIEF

Ex-Rajasthan CM flags demolition of religious sites

NEW DELHI
Flagging the demolition of Muslim religious sites in Rajasthan's border areas adjoining Pakistan after Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Bikaner last month, former Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot alleged that the demolitions appeared to be motivated solely by the objective of creating "political polarisation and disrupting the social fabric". He alleged that "the government has begun identifying and demolishing religious sites belonging to the Muslim community in Rajasthan's border areas adjoining Pakistan under the pretext of removing encroachments". » Page 4

EDUCATIONPLUS
» PAGE 2, 5 & 19

Two die in ammonia gas leak at T.N. seafood unit

Over 60 people, mostly migrant workers, hospitalised after leak; CM announces three-member inquiry panel, ₹2 lakh for kin of the dead, both from Odisha; company's owner, manager arrested

R. Srikanth
Deepa H. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

Two migrant workers from Odisha were killed and more than 60 hospitalised after an ammonia gas leak at a shrimp processing unit in Tiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu on Sunday. Of those in hospital, 23 have been admitted to the Intensive Care Unit.

The Tiruvallur district police said the private company, Peter & Paul Seafood Exports Pvt. Ltd., at Kannagiper village near Periyapalayam was engaged in processing shrimps and exporting them.

At the time of the accident, there were 67 people at the site, mostly migrant women, who worked in the factory and lived in the accommodation provided within the premises. The deceased have been identified as Jumani Juang and B. Malothi.

National Disaster Response Force personnel at the seafood unit in Tiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu after the gas leak on Sunday. PTI

The police arrested the proprietor of the company and the factory manager, who both have a case pending against them for previous violations of industrial safety norms.

During inspection, it was found the company did not have a suitable alarm system, a fire hydrant, or a Form 12 register for the Employee State Insurance scheme.

The company had also not obtained a revised plan approval when new equipment was installed, including an ice flaking machine.

Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay set up a three-member panel to probe into the incident and ordered ₹2 lakh each to be paid to the families of the two dead workers. An official statement said the panel had been tasked to submit an interim report in 24 hours and final report in three days. To prevent the recurrence of such accidents, the government has mandated immediate joint inspections of all hazardous industries, it added.

Mr. Vijay also directed that the bodies of the victims be transported to their native places for final rites at the Tamil Nadu government's expense.

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T.N. CM CONSTITUTES PANEL
» PAGE 4

More than 20 lakh take NEET re-test under heavy security

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

More than 20 lakh candidates appeared for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) re-test at 5,440 centres across India and 14 centres abroad on Sunday, the National Testing Agency (NTA) said.

While the NTA has not stated the exact number of students who appeared for the re-test, it is likely that the number is lower than the 22.05 lakh who had appeared for the test in May, which was later cancelled following a paper leak.

Around seven lakh officials, including police teams, observers, and examination staff, were mobilised across the country to conduct the examination, with the NTA also drawing the support of the Central Armed Police Forces, the Department of Posts, the Department of Financial Services, the National Informatics Centre, and the Indian Air Force.

Take two: Medical aspirants appearing for the NEET re-test wait outside an examination centre in New Delhi on Sunday. R.V. MOORTHY

While the re-test, held in 13 languages, including Hindi and English, remained NCERT-focused, students found the paper more demanding than the cancelled test due to a longer, more calculation-heavy physics section.

Many students said physics was the hardest section while chemistry was moderately challenging. Biology questions were largely NCERT-based, they added.

The re-test also came with its share of academic, financial, and psychological hurdles for those who chose to take it, with some aspirants and their families flagging commuting difficulties in reaching the examination centres.

Last-minute centre-specific rule changes and security checks led to confusion, with some students denied entry due to delays.

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CALL FOR PROBE
₹5,000 cr. misused in Ram temple: Kharge
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CRIMINAL RECORDS
NCRB's DNA database crosses 1 lakh entries
NEWS » PAGE 12

India-U.S. interim trade deal needs 'final touches': officials

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

With the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), Jamieson Greer, set to visit India this week, two separate sources in the government have told *The Hindu* that an interim trade deal required only "final touches" and that the U.S. was keen on seeing a deal in place.

Mr. Greer is scheduled to meet Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and other officials during his two-day visit. However, while the provisions of the deal are nearing completion, Mr. Goyal has indicated that its implementation will still require the U.S. to first finalise various tariffs.

Jamieson Greer

"USTR Greer is scheduled to visit India on June 23 and 24," a senior Commerce Ministry official confirmed, adding that Mr. Greer would meet Mr. Goyal and that the discussions would be centred on "giving final touches to the framework deal".

The USTR's visit comes weeks after Assistant USTR Brendan Lynch visited New Delhi from June 1 to 4.

Mr. Goyal on Saturday indicated that recent U.S. investigations on forced labour and fresh tariff announcements were a major reason for the delay in finalising the agreement.

"We cannot implement the FTA [free trade agreement] until we secure a competitive advantage," he told presspersons. "The issue currently pending is that our duties need to be lower compared to those of competing nations; once this is settled, the trade agreement will be implemented."

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Forward posture

Army personnel take part in a yoga session in Ladakh. The International Day of Yoga was observed on Sunday. PTI (REPORTS: PAGE 14)

Maritime sector a major engine of economic growth, says Modi

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said no nation could emerge as a major power without strong maritime capabilities.

He was speaking at an event here after commissioning three indigenously built naval ships – *INS Dunagiri*, an advanced stealth frigate; *INS Sanshodhak*, a survey vessel (large); and the *INS Agray*, an anti-submarine warfare shallow watercraft.

Describing the event as a milestone in the journey towards "an *Aatmanirbhar Bharat*, a secure India, and a developed India", Mr. Modi said the government viewed the maritime sector not as an isolated industry but as a major engine of employment and economic growth. "The country whose maritime strength is robust, its economic and strategic influence will be equally robust. India is preparing itself for this," he said, asserting that India did not wish to be merely a buyer in the defence sector.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Krishna Swaminathan at the ceremony in Kolkata on Sunday. PTI

"The strength of the nation's military cannot be measured by its dependence on global markets but by its ability to become self-reliant. India seeks to become a producer and a manufacturer, because nations that manufacture become decisive players on the global stage," he said.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Opportunity to 'turn over a new leaf' with Iran, says Vance as two sides gather for talks in Switzerland

Associated Press
OBBUERGEN

U.S. Vice-President J.D. Vance said on Sunday that there was an opportunity to "turn over a new leaf" with Iran as the two sides launched talks aimed at building out the interim deal to end the war in Iran reached by the two sides last week.

Mr. Vance is holding talks with Iran's parliamentary Speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, at a Swiss mountainside resort near Lake Lucerne. The Vice-President was joined by special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner. Mediators from Pakistan and Qatar were in the room for the direct engagement.

The Iranian team, including Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Speaker Mohammed Bagher Ghalibaf, in Switzerland on Sunday. AP

The U.S. is looking to get Iran locked into negotiations over its nuclear programme amid concerns it may be used for military purposes, which Iran denies. Mr. Vance also wants to push Tehran to commit to keeping open the Strait of Hormuz.

But the ongoing conflict in Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah, the Iran-backed militant group, continues to threaten to derail the peace efforts.

"The question before us now is how much more can we accomplish together? Can we turn over a new leaf?" Mr. Vance said in brief comments as the talks, dubbed the "Lake Lucerne Summit", got under way. "Can we change relations in the Middle East permanently, or do we go back to doing things the old way, which is not our preference, but is certainly very much something that can happen," he said.

Iran's state-run IRNA news agency suggested that talks have "entered a difficult phase" after what it described as an "insulting" statement by U.S. President Donald Trump. The U.S. President earlier made multiple provocative warnings to Tehran, including to "hit Iran very hard again" if it did not stop Hezbollah from "causing trouble".

Iran later warned the U.S. to be careful with its statements. "They would do better to be careful with their statements; our armed forces are ready to respond... No matter what they say, we are the ones who act," Mr. Ghalibaf said.

While Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said before the meeting that the Islamic Republic will maintain its right to a nuclear programme, the country's state broadcaster said that nuclear programme had not been discussed on Sunday. "No negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear programme took place during the 80-minute first round of talks," it said, adding that it was not clear whether the talks would continue or be suspended.

'TROOPS FREE TO ACT'
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A ND-NDE

PWD repairs over 2,000 potholes in a day: Parvesh

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Public Works Department (PWD) repaired more than 2,000 potholes across Delhi on Sunday in a special drive held ahead of the monsoon, PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh said.

The Delhi government has launched a series of measures for heavy rainfall, including desilting drains in waterlogging-prone areas and repairing damaged roads.

"Many potholes being repaired today are on roads constructed several years ago, when quality standards were not maintained," Mr. Singh said, adding that all new roads being built by the PWD would be covered by a five-year maintenance clause.

Timings
DELHI

MONDAY, JUN. 22		
RISE	05:24	SET 19:22
RISE	12:46	SET 00:09
TUESDAY, JUN. 23		
RISE	05:25	SET 19:23
RISE	13:42	SET 00:38
WEDNESDAY, JUN. 24		
RISE	05:25	SET 19:23
RISE	14:37	SET 01:07

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	39	29
Safdarjang	39	29
Palam	39	26

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

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
38°C The weather will be hot and uneasy. Morning will be comfortable. Chances of duststorm and thundershower. Night also will be comfortable.

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NEET re-test held across 97 centres amid tight security

Delhi students say cancellation of May 3 test disrupted preparation, describe new exam paper as tougher than the old one; re-test will delay admissions and impact alternative career plans: parent

Alankrita Ray
NEW DELHI

Thousands of students in Delhi on Sunday appeared for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) re-examination held under heightened security after the original test was cancelled over allegations of a question paper leak.

More than 22 lakh students took the test conducted by the National Testing Agency across 5,440 centres in 551 cities nationwide. In Delhi, the re-test was held at 97 centres with elaborate security arrangements in place. Many candidates said female students underwent double frisking at security checkpoints. "We were even asked to open our hair and undergo a thorough physical check by the security personnel," said a student who did not wish to be named.

Security check: Students being frisked outside an examination centre in New Delhi on Sunday. R.V. MOORTHY

Fatigue and anxiety

For many candidates, the weeks between the cancellation of the original May 3 exam and Sunday's re-test were filled with uncertainty, fatigue and anxiety. Meemansa, a resident of Palam who was allotted a centre at PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalaya, Masjid Moth, said the disruption had affected her preparation. "I was not able to study with the same determination as I had given my 100% in the first exam. All these days went in stress and self-doubt, and I just don't know if I would be able to perform at the same level," she said.

Another student said the re-test initially felt like an opportunity. "Now, I just want this day to pass so that I can get rid of the stress," the student said.

A parent waiting outside an examination centre in Dwarka Sector 2 said, "The re-test will delay the admission process, which will affect other alternative career plans."

Most students described the re-test paper as slightly tougher than the original examination, with physics emerging as the most challenging section.

CM, L-G join thousands in celebrating Int'l Yoga Day

Anisha Jyotirmayee
NEW DELHI

@BJP4DELHI

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta and Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Taranjit Singh Sandhu performed *asanas* as Delhi marked the International Day of Yoga on Sunday, drawing thousands, including students, youth, women and senior citizens.

Ms. Gupta participated in a special yoga programme along with Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa and Delhi government's senior officers at Neeli Jheel in Asola-Bhati Wildlife Sanctuary. She said yoga is a "priceless heritage" of Indian culture and a matter of pride for the entire nation.

"People in almost every country of the world are making yoga a part of their lives. Yoga is not merely a form of physical exercise but a complete way of life that brings balance between the body, mind and soul while shaping one's consciousness and lifestyle," the CM said.

'Civilisational ethos'

Mr. Sandhu began the day at the Yamuna Sports Complex. Under the theme 'One Delhi, One Yoga', programmes were held across all 70 Assembly constituencies. In a post on X, Mr. Sandhu said yoga is rooted in India's "civilisational ethos" and has evolved into a global movement. "It was heartening to see women taking a leading role, along with growing participation from senior citizens," he said, adding that yoga enables active and dignified lives. Beyond official venues, parks and public spaces also saw community yoga sessions.

(With inputs from PTI)

Doctor accused of killing domestic help sent to 14-day judicial custody

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Sunday remanded dermatologist Manish Gupta in judicial custody for 14 days in connection with the murder of his domestic help at his East of Kailash residence.

Delhi Police on Friday sought two days' custody of Mr. Gupta to recover the clothes worn during the offence and gather additional evidence.

Allowing the petition, the court directed the police to conduct the accused's medical examination and produce him before the Duty Magistrate after the custody period.

On completion of the two-day police remand, Mr. Gupta was sent to judicial custody.

The case came to light on June 18 when Mr. Gupta was found beside the body of Mina Haldar, 58, at his residence. A neighbour had alerted the police after noticing her lying in a pool of blood.

According to the police, Mr. Gupta had admitted to the killing during the initial inquiry.

Police said a bat allegedly used to bludgeon the house help and a knife suspected to have been used to slit her throat were recovered from the house. Haldar, a native of Kolkata, had worked for the family for 16 years.

Three arrested in Shahdara death granted bail; two juveniles sent to observation home

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police arrested three persons and apprehended two juveniles on Sunday in connection with the assault that led to the death of passenger Pankaj Dhama at Shahdara railway station, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Railways) Bharat Reddy, said.

The three adults - Sagar, Prince and Akash, all 18 and residents of Vishwas Nagar in Shahdara - were granted bail by the court the same day while the juveniles were sent to an observation home, said the officer.

Police said one of the accused also struck the victim with an iron bracelet

Dhama, a resident of Baghpat in Uttar Pradesh, was allegedly assaulted while trying to board the Yoga Express from Platform 3 after an argument over boarding the train.

A video of the incident, which surfaced on social media, showed Dhama being dragged towards the platform by a Railway Protection Force officer.

Police said that he was taken to Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Police said they identified the accused from the footage in which people were seen punching and kicking Dhama.

"One of them also struck the victim with an iron k*ada* (bracelet)," said a senior police officer.

The accused have been booked under Section 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita at Old Delhi railway police station, said a senior police officer.

A ND-NDE

INBRIEF

Sukhu announces ₹150 cr. for medical college laboratories

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Sunday announced a corpus of ₹150 crore for the modernisation of laboratories in medical colleges across the State. Mr. Sukhu made the announcement while addressing the people after he laid the foundation stone of an ultra-modern critical care block on the new campus of Dr. Radhakrishnan Government Medical College in Hamirpur. The campus at Jol Sapper is coming up at a cost of around ₹35 crore. The Chief Minister said that the block would become operational in the first week of July. PTI

Three injured in leopard attack in Rajasthan's Alwar

Three persons were injured after a leopard attacked them in Ballupura village in Rajasthan's Alwar district on Sunday morning, officials said. The injured were identified as Gila Yadav, 45, Jairam Saini, 40, and Babli Yadav, 39. They were admitted to a hospital, from where Mr. Gila was later referred to the district hospital in Alwar due to the severity of his injuries. According to villagers, the leopard was first spotted moving through agricultural fields in the morning. A group of villagers attempted to drive the animal away, following which it attacked the three. PTI

T.N. CM constitutes panel to probe ammonia leak at seafood processing unit

Three-member committee to submit interim report within 24 hours, final report in three days; CM Vijay directs IT Minister R. Kumar, officials to ensure best possible care for those under treatment

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Following the death of two workers after an ammonia gas leak at a seafood processing factory in Periyapalayam in Tamil Nadu's Tiruvallur district, Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay on Sunday ordered the constitution of a three-member inquiry committee to probe the incident.

Panel members

The Director of Industrial Safety and Health, Member Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board, and Additional Director of Public Health will be the members of the committee, which has been directed to submit its interim report within 24 hours, with a final report set to follow in three days.

In a release, the Chief Minister stated that 60 women and four men, who were on duty at the factory, were affected by the gas leak. He added that two women lost their lives while the rest are being treated in the intensive care units of government and private hospitals.

Taking stock: Information Technology and Digital Services Minister R. Kumar at a private hospital on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Mr. Vijay said he was shocked and saddened to learn of the tragedy and expressed condolences to the family members of the two deceased persons.

The CM also instructed officials to ensure proper medical treatment for the affected persons and directed officials to provide compensation to the deceased and the affected under the Employees' State Insurance scheme.

He directed Minister for Artificial Intelligence, Information Technology, and Digital Services R. Kumar and Monitoring Officer for Tiruvallur K.P. Karthikeyan to ensure the best possible care for the affected in coordination with the district administration.

Several Ministers, including K.G. Arunraj (Health and Family Welfare) and Rajmohan (School Education), visited the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH) on Sunday evening. Mr. Arunraj said 10 affected people had been admitted to RGGGH while seven had been admitted to the Stanley Medical College Hospital.

PM condoles deaths

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his condolences to the families of the victims. In a post on X, he said: "Deeply pained to hear about the loss of lives due to a mishap in Tiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu. My condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. Praying for the speedy recovery of the injured."

Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar also offered condolences to the bereaved families.

Madras HC takes up PIL *suo motu* to protect people from stray dogs

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court has taken up *suo motu* a public interest litigation (PIL) petition to ensure that the recent orders passed by the Supreme Court for protecting people from stray dogs are implemented strictly in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

Chief Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and Justice G. Arul Murugan will hear the case on Monday. The Chief Secretaries and the Secretaries to the Animal Husbandry, Health, and Municipal Administration Departments in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry have been arrayed as respondents.

On June 19, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court held that "unchecked population of dogs has become increasingly feral, and such animals have no place in areas densely populated by human beings owing to the serious threat they pose to public safety". The Bench, comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta, and N.V. Anjaria, also wrote, "Compassion for animal life, howsoever important, cannot be interpreted in a manner that compels citizens to endure recurring threats to their own lives, safety, and bodily integrity."

On June 19, the apex court held that feral dogs have no place in densely populated areas.

Ground realities

The Bench further observed, "This court cannot also remain oblivious to the harsh and deeply disturbing ground realities emerging from various parts of the country." The judges had taken note of a news report titled, 'In just four months of 2026, Tamil Nadu records 2.63 lakh dog bites, 17 deaths', published in *The Hindu* on May 6, 2026, and expressed shock over 6.25 lakh dog bite cases and 34 deaths due to dog bites having been reported in the State in 2025.

Nagaland shifts Yoga Day events to June 22 following objections

Press Trust of India
KOHIMA

The Nagaland government has deferred the official programmes to mark International Day of Yoga to Monday following opposition from student organisations, tribal bodies, church groups and political outfits over holding the event on a Sunday in the Christian-majority State.

On Sunday, the School Education Department issued a revised order, directing the Directorate of School Education to postpone the observance of Yoga Day in all institutions to the following day.

The decision came after widespread objections to an earlier directive that had asked government and private schools to organise Yoga Day programmes on Sunday, ensure participation of students and staff, and submit reports along with GPS-tagged photographs. The Naga Students' Federation had described the earlier directive as insensitive to the religious sentiments of the State's predominantly Christian population.

The federation argued that Sunday is a sacred day of worship and that compelling schools to organise yoga programmes amounted to disregarding the constitutional rights and religious beliefs of people.

The Central Nagaland Tribes Council had stated that educational institutions should not be compelled to participate in programmes perceived to have religious or cultural connotations inconsistent with the faith of the majority community. The Nagaland Congress had also demanded the withdrawal of the original circular.

Gehlot flags demolition of religious sites in border areas

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Flagging the demolition of Muslim religious sites in Rajasthan's border areas adjoining Pakistan after Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Bikaner last month, former Rajasthan Chief Minister and senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot alleged that the demolitions appeared to be motivated solely by the objective of creating "political polarisation and disrupting the social fabric".

In a social media post tagging Mr. Shah, Mr. Gehlot alleged that "the government has begun identifying and demolishing religious sites belonging to the Muslim community in Rajasthan's border areas adjoining Pakistan under the pretext of removing encroachments". He claimed that "even historical religious sites that are several decades old are being targeted" as part of the ongoing action.

Questioning the intent behind the reported demolitions, Mr. Gehlot said, "This action, being carried out in a peaceful border region while specifically targeting one religion, appears to be motivated solely by the objective of creating political polarisation and disrupting the social fabric. This malicious action has generated intense anger among the local population. This sensitive and disturbing act deserves strong condemnation."

Ex-CM Ashok Gehlot

He has demanded an immediate stop to these demolitions. "The Ministry of Home Affairs should clarify its position on the matter, as maintaining peace, harmony, and security in border areas is also its constitutional responsibility."

The Congress leader stressed that the border regions, despite their diversity, have historically been free of communal discord. "Despite the presence of a diverse religious population in these sensitive areas along the India-Pakistan border, there has never been any communal tension in their history," he said, adding that places of worship "are interconnected and enjoy deep reverence among all sections of society".

'Communal harmony'

Mr. Gehlot also highlighted instances of inter-community harmony, stating that "there are several mosques and shrines across this area that have been cared for and maintained by the Hindu community for years". He said the "vocal opposition by local Hindus to this one-sided administrative action is itself a unique example of the deep communal harmony that exists here".

SPOTLIGHT

Fence that divides us and them

In Delhi's Dwarka, there is a segregation of common spaces and other amenities in residential societies meant to integrate housing for people from different economic groups. The agency concerned has been asked to mediate. Meanwhile, the fight over access, representation, and governance continues

Suruchi Kumari

The eight blocks of Dwarka Greens' beige-and-white apartments have the same façade. Other than the floor area, the houses in the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) housing at Dwarka's Sector 14, Pocket 5, have everything in common, including access to gig workers and domestic help. A gulmohar in full bloom redeems the standard-issue design: buildings with stilt parking, the blocks identified simply by the letters A to H.

But somewhere between F and G towers stands a partially erected fence with rust-coloured chain-link wire mesh gate. The panels of the gate now lie flat on the ground. G and H towers house residents from Delhi's Economically Weaker Section (EWS), with an annual family income less than ₹10 lakh. Those who own houses in A to F towers are from the low- and middle-income groups (LIG and MIG), with one- and two-bedroom houses respectively. The fence was meant to restrict access to common areas, say residents.

Dwarka Greens is one of the several mixed-income housing colonies that DDA offered under its Diwali Special Housing Scheme 2023. It placed EWS, LIG, and MIG flats within a single pocket and shared infrastructure: parking, parks, and open spaces. The brochure promised a 1.2-acre central community park accessible to all residents within a minute's walk. "Watch your kids play near your home," it stated. It said nothing about a fence, some residents say, while others, including the DDA, insist that the fence was always part of the plan.

Civil suit

In May 2024, just a month before homeowners were to take possession of the houses, nine allottees from the EWS group filed a civil suit against DDA in a trial court. They argued that the scheme had been marketed as a single integrated estate, that the brochure mentioned no fencing, and that restricting access to the central park and community centre violated what they had been promised.

The courts finally ruled in January 2026 that this was a matter to be decided by the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), which regulates the housing sector. Now, residents say that RERA has asked DDA to mediate and bring both groups to an understanding. The gate panels, partially installed, have been on the ground inside the society ever since.

Meanwhile, a residents' welfare association (RWA) has been formed by the LIG-HIG houses for their blocks. The EWS allottees argue that DDA collected a common corpus fund for the maintenance of the housing pocket.

What was meant to be an integrated neighbourhood is no longer so. The colony has become a site of wider anxieties over class, belonging, and who gets to claim the common space.

Ritu, a resident of G block, was sold on Dwarka Greens after she saw the site plan. The open area promised enough space for her children to play and for her family to exercise. Two years on, her children play just below their block of houses, and she needs to stay with them to monitor the movement of cars and bikes. She rarely uses the central park.

'No common events'

"There are no common events, no evening get-togethers where women, who are homemakers, meet and talk," she says. "I have never spoken to a woman from the other blocks. *Hum apna apna rehte hain, wo apna rehte hain* (We keep to ourselves; they keep to themselves)."

A few kilometres away, at DDA's Golf View Condos in Sector 19B, a tall black chain-link fence mounted on a low concrete wall encloses two apartment towers behind a separate entrance. The complex overlooks a golf course that DDA proudly claims is "the longest public golf course in India". It is close to the Yashobhoomi Convention Centre, and was sold in the same 2023 Diwali scheme. Penthouses here were priced at approximately ₹5 crore, Super HIG units at ₹2.5 crore.

Iron fences at Golf View Condos, Dwarka, Delhi. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Behind the fence are EWS towers, L and M. On the other side lie 14-storey A to K towers with playgrounds, sports courts, cycling and walking track, and 3.7 acres of green space. The fence went up without a recorded dispute.

Sonam Kumari, an EWS allottee in one of the two blocks, navigates the compound daily. When her son's school bus enters the compound through the main gate, she does not walk out through her block's exit. She cuts through a narrow passage through the fence leading to a community centre that is still not open, steps over pipes laid out on the ground, to reach him.

A senior DDA official, when asked about the fencing at Golf View Condos, says, "Fences are there because it is a different category of flat." The pocket has about 50% occupancy at present, with the handover of nearly 90% of units ongoing.

Of the 700 flats in Tower M, which houses EWS allottees, 364 were offered under a Community Service Personnel scheme.

Only existing allottees of penthouses, Super HIG, and HIG units could purchase these, for their service staff, through an e-auction. Subsidised pricing was removed for these transactions. According to a circular in March 2025, up to 325 of these units have been sold.

Mixed-income pockets have also been offered in Loknayakpuram and Narela under recent schemes.

DDA has not responded to a list of questions sent by *The Hindu*, including some asking about the reasoning behind fencing in these societies and measures to discourage conflict in composite housing colonies.

A resident of B block in Dwarka Greens pointed to DDA's Om and Kautilya Apartments, offered in the late 1990s, as a precedent. It has had two RWAs for decades: one for the LIG flats in Om Apartments and one for the MIG residents of Kautilya Apartments, both registered independently. The question of whether that model was ever regularised, or simply allowed to persist, has not been answered by DDA.

The RWA situation at Dwarka Greens has its own contradictions.

In October 2025, DDA had written to all allottees urging them to form a single RWA for the entire pocket, citing the lapse of the first year's upfront maintenance fund and completion of 80% allotments. But LIG-MIG residents obtained a certificate of registration, signed by the DDA Vice-Chairperson on December 29, 2025, for a registered agency covering Blocks A to F, excluding G and H, the EWS towers. However, residents say there was no election, but someone was named president.

After EWS residents objected to the partial registration, DDA clarified in an April 2026 circular that only one RWA could be recognised under a single housing pocket, as per its Management and Disposal of Housing Estate Regulations, 1968. The DDA is yet to respond to why the certificate had been issued in the first place without verifying the coverage of all allottees.

A.K. Jain, former Commissioner of Planning at DDA, says, "The housing management rules make it clear that a housing scheme will have a composite housing society for the whole area. It cannot be subdivided." On the fencing, he adds, "This is not legal. Whatever facilities DDA provides are for everyone."

The aspirations

Dwarka has changed considerably since DDA began developing it as the capital's largest planned sub-city in the 1990s. The Delhi Metro, proximity to the international airport, inauguration of the 16-lane Dwarka Expressway, and the upcoming Urban Extension Road II have repositioned the area as a sought-after residential address. Sectors that were once peripheral have attracted buyers from middle- and upper-income groups looking for planned neighbourhoods.

In what was DDA's first venture of luxury housing with Dwarka 19B's Golf View Condos, complaints of residents have emerged about substandard construction, including rusted iron fittings and seepage, just a few months into handing over of flats. For residents of Golf View Condos, the process of forming an RWA has not started.

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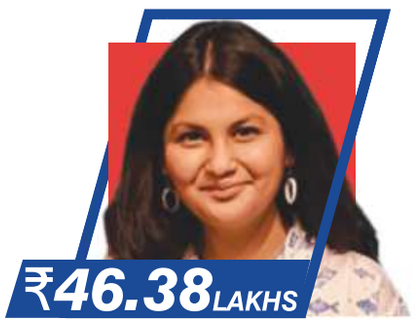
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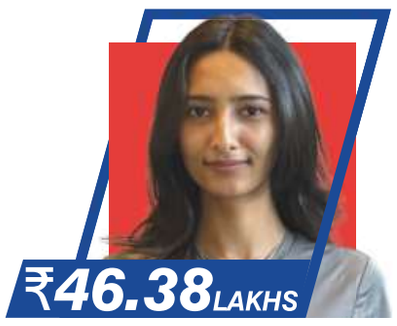
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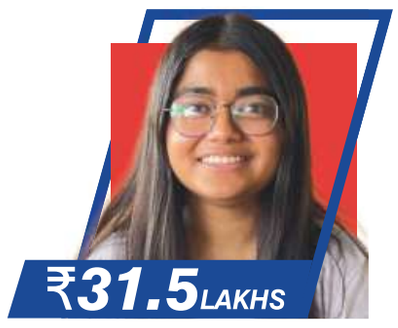
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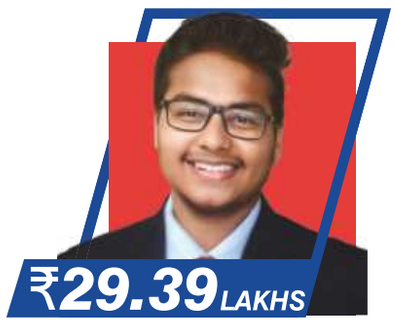
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INBRIEF

Permanent yoga centres will be set up in A.P., says Naidu

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday asserted that Andhra Pradesh's transformation into a "healthy, wealthy, and happy" State was possible through yoga. Mr. Naidu was speaking at the State-level events organised as part of International Day of Yoga. Yoga guru Baba Ramdev guided the session. Mr. Naidu expressed his resolve to create permanent yoga centres in the Swarna Grama and Ward Secretariats and appoint officials to supervise yoga programmes.

Kerala Assembly to discuss Revised Budget from today

The general discussion on Kerala's Revised Budget 2026-27 presented by Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan on June 19 will begin in the State Legislative Assembly on Monday. The House is likely to see heated debate on the Budget over the next three days as the Opposition Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have already criticised it for being flooded with announcements but lacking adequate allocations.

A.P. govt. forms SIT to probe 'custodial death' of youth

The Andhra Pradesh government on Sunday issued orders constituting a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to inquire into the alleged custodial death of Gade Sai Krishna reported in the NTR Police Commissionerate limits. Based on the complaint lodged by Sai Krishna's mother against Krishnalanka Circle Inspector S.S.V.V. Nagaraju, the SIT was constituted to ensure an impartial and transparent investigation. Inspector-General of Police M. Ravi Prakash will lead the SIT.

No internal conspiracy over RS nomination: Cong. leader

Telangana AICC in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan alleges that BJP's unfair tactics led to rejection of her Rajya Sabha nomination; accuses poll body officials of compromising democratic process

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader Meenakshi Natarajan on Sunday dismissed rumours that a conspiracy within the Congress led to the rejection of her Rajya Sabha nomination in Madhya Pradesh, asserting that no party leader had any reason to work against her. The BJP began spreading these rumours a day before the nomination was rejected, she alleged at a press conference here.

Responding to speculation that a Telangana Congress leader might resign to facilitate her entry into the Rajya Sabha, the AICC Telangana in-charge denied the reports. "No one is resigning for me. These reports are completely baseless," Ms. Natarajan said, adding that her political work would continue in Madhya Pradesh.

She alleged that the BJP resorted to unfair tactics in the rejection of her Rajya Sabha nomination and accused election authorities of compromising the democratic process.

She said the BJP, despite lacking the numbers to win a third seat, fielded a candidate as part of a "foul game plan." "After realising that it could not secure the third seat through legitimate means, the BJP attempted to influence the outcome through pressure and money power," she alleged.

Both the Returning Officers and the Election Commission (EC) had acted in a compromised manner, she said.

Referring to the legal dispute surrounding her nomination, she said such cases did not require disclosure in Form 26. The Congress leader alleged that the developments vindicated concerns raised by Rahul Gandhi over alleged "vote theft" and "seat theft" in the poll process over the past two years.

Clearing the air: AICC in-charge of Telangana Meenakshi Natarajan with senior party leaders at a press conference. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Suhrawardy Avenue renamed in Kolkata; Suvendu hails move

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Almost six weeks after coming to power in the State, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in West Bengal has announced its first rechristening exercise by renaming Kolkata's Suhrawardy Avenue as Gopal Mukherjee Road.

According to a notification published on June 20 and signed by the administrator of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), the "road known as Suhrawardy Avenue in KMC will be named and henceforth be known as Gopal Mukherjee Road".

The road, located in the city's Park Circus area, has often been criticised by right-wing groups because it is believed to be named after Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy (1892-1963), a prominent Bengali politician who served as the last Prime Minister of undivided Bengal and later as the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The BJP and other Hindutva groups hold Suhrawardy responsible for the communal riots in Kolkata in 1946, also referred to as the Great Calcutta Killings.

Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari was quick to commend the decision taken by the KMC, saying that "for decades, a major artery of our city bore the name of someone who wilfully misused State power as a weapon, orchestrating the massacre of innocent citizens for political gain".

However, scholars have pointed out that the road was not named after Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy but after his uncle, Hassan Shaheed Suhrawardy, a Bengali academic, scholar and art critic who had no connection to the communal riots.

Old editions of the *Calcutta Municipal Gazette* indicate that the road was named Suhrawardy Avenue in 1932-33, long before Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy emerged on the political scene.

West Bengal CM Suvendu Adhikari described Gopal Mukherjee as a 'fearless soul'.

'Historical justice'

The proposal to rename the road after Gopal Mukherjee, popularly known as Gopal Patha, has been backed by right-wing groups, which claim that he "saved" many Hindu families during the 1946 Great Calcutta Killings.

Mr. Adhikari described Mukherjee as a "fearless soul" who stepped up as a protector-in-chief to defend and save thousands of innocent lives. "Finally, restoration of historical justice will be achieved by honouring a true guardian and saviour. It is time West Bengal remembers, corrects and honours the real heroes," he said.

Mullaperiyar panel drops Kerala member

The Hindu Bureau
KOTTAYAM

Kerala has registered a strong protest against the Centre's decision to remove the State's representative from the Comprehensive Dam Safety Evaluation Committee, constituted to inspect the Mullaperiyar dam.

Water Resources Minister Mons Joseph on Sunday, said the State was not consulted before T.K. Sivarajan was removed from the panel and replaced by a person from Uttar Pradesh as a representative of IIT-Roorkee. "The Centre should have informed Kerala before taking such a step. Instead, the decision was taken unilaterally and the State was merely informed through a letter," the Minister said.

The dam issue is under the consideration of the Supreme Court and requires mutual consensus between Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Mr. Joseph added.

ED summons Veena again in CMRL case

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued a fresh notice to Veena T., daughter of Pinarayi Vijayan, the Leader of the Opposition in Kerala, asking her to appear before the Central agency for another round of questioning on June 29 in connection with the money-laundering probe in the Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd. (CMRL) pay-off case, sources said.

Ms. Veena was questioned by the ED on June 17 in connection with the case registered under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The ED then examined Ms. Veena's bank lockers in Thiruvananthapuram on June 19.

The ED probe pertains to allegations that CMRL made payments totalling ₹2.78 crore to the now-defunct Exalogic Solutions Pvt. Ltd., owned by Ms. Veena, without receiving any services in return.

BJP, Congress engage in a war of 'letters' in Telangana

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

A political row broke out between the ruling Congress and the BJP in Telangana, after BJP State president N. Ramchander Rao wrote to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy seeking an appointment with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to discuss the implementation of the Congress party's six guarantees.

Mr. Ramchander Rao's letter came in response to a recent communication by the Chief Minister to Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy, requesting him to facilitate meetings with other Union Ministers to secure approvals and clearances for key Telangana development projects, including the second phase of the Hyderabad Metro Rail.

Poll guarantees

In his letter, Mr. Ramchander Rao suggested that just as the Chief Minister had sought assistance from a BJP leader for appointments with Union Ministers, the Congress government should also arrange a meeting with Rahul Gandhi to review the status of the six guarantees promised to the people of Telangana before the Assembly elections.

The remarks triggered a sharp response from Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president Mahesh Kumar Goud, who accused the BJP of attempting to divert the attention from its own unfulfilled promises at the national level. He also questioned the BJP over issues such as the promise to bring back black money and the commitment to create two crore jobs annually.

Pride procession

Members of the Coalition for Sex Workers, Sexual and Gender Minorities' Rights (CSGMR), along with members and allies of the LGBTQIA+ community, take part in the Karnataka Swabhimana Habba Pride March on Sunday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Karnataka SIR: concerns rise over validity of residential certificates issued by State

Rishita Khanna
BENGALURU

With door-to-door visits scheduled to start across Karnataka from June 30 as part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), the State government has directed Panchayat Development Officers (PDOs) to issue residential certificates to those who require them as supporting documents for the exercise.

However, the Election Commission's guidelines do not accept a residential certificate.

The list of 11 approved documents specifically calls for a permanent residence certificate (PRC) issued by the "competent" State authority. Moreover, while the government has directed PDOs to issue residential certificates, as they are the authorities who usually issue such certificates, a permanent residence certificate can be issued only by a tahsildar, the competent authority for the same.

Answers sought

Against this backdrop, civil society groups such as 'My Vote, My Right,' have questioned the logic behind the government's direction. If residential certificates issued by PDOs are to be accepted during the SIR process, the government must clearly state so and ensure that they are not rejected during enumeration or scrutiny.

Citing the example of West Bengal, activist and columnist Shivasundar said that many residents submitted domicile certificates issued by the State government to establish their eligibility. These were not ordinary residence certificates but permanent residence or domicile certificates.

He pointed out that the commission insisted not only on the certificate itself, but also on how it had been issued. In West Bengal, only certificates issued under the relevant government order, by specifically designated authorities, were considered valid.

Shweta Menon-led Malayalam film body committee resigns

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The executive committee governing the Association of the Malayalam Movie Artistes (AMMA), headed by actor Shweta Menon, resigned on Sunday amid internal turmoil that led to controversies and even police complaints recently. Ms. Menon also quit the association, alleging an agenda to push her panel out.

The 17-member panel decided to step down after a section of the association moved a no-confidence motion against the leadership at a general body meeting held here. The leadership was accused of failing to run the day-to-day affairs of the organisation and resolve the disputes within the outfit.

The Shweta Menon-led committee was elected in August 2025.

Shweta Menon

Over 200 teak trees illegally axed in Chalakudy

K.S. Sudhi
KOCHI

Huge teak trees, numbering 273, were illegally sold in the territorial limits of the Chalakudy forest division, according to a preliminary investigation carried out by the Divisional Forest Officer of Flying Squad (Ernakulam). The trees were felled along an 18-km stretch from Vellikulangara junction to Vettilapala bridge. Trees on private holdings and assigned land were felled and sold cheaply, as per the report.

The trees that were felled for reportedly clearing the pathway for the State hill highway were sold to a Thiruvananthapuram-based wood industries firm for ₹8.52 lakh against its assessed value of ₹41.55 lakh, fixed by the Assistant Conservator of Forest (Social Forestry), Thrissur. The land along the road stretch was acquired by the Kerala Road Fund Board for the highway project, according to sources.

The Forest Range Officer (Pariyaram) also issued a No Objection Certificate for the firm to transport the felled trees under the provisions of the Kerala Promotion of Tree Growth in Non-Forest Areas Act 2005, according to the report. However, the Act specifies that a transport pass shall be issued to transport only those trees which are legally felled by the owner of the holding on which they are located.

The circumstances under which the officials permitted the timber firm that purchased the trees to axe and transport them should be probed, the report suggested.

Illicit trade: Trees were felled reportedly to clear a path for a State hill highway and then sold to a private firm. REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE.

Lack of documentation

No files on the holdings acquired for the road project – their survey numbers and status – and the details of the trees sold and to be axed were maintained at the Forest range office, Pariyaram, or the Social Forestry, Thrissur Division.

The report also pointed out that the firm, which purchased the trees, has also started cutting trees from the holdings.

No trees located on assigned land shall be illegally cut down, sold and transported, as their ownership is vested with the State government, pointed out another report by the Additional Principal Chief Forest Conservator (Vigilance and Forest Intelligence). In the event of cutting down such trees, they shall be transported to the timber depot of the department and sold outright. The revenue generated from such sales shall be credited to the government, said the report.

The report recommended initiating recovery proceedings for the lost funds and directed authorities to strictly prevent the illegal felling of trees on forest and revenue lands.

Stand-off in Uttarakhand: Nihangs take man hostage

Press Trust of India
RUDRAPRAYAG

A group of Nihangs, armed with spears and swords, allegedly stormed a gurdwara in Rudraprayag and took the manager hostage on the roof of the shrine demanding the release of four Nihang devotees who were arrested following a clash in Chamoli on June 16, the police said on Sunday. Heavy police force was deployed at the scene following the stand-off that began Saturday evening, and efforts were under way to persuade the Nihangs to come down.

The Rudraprayag District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police reached the site and urged the Nihangs to vacate the premises. However, the Nihangs, who have locked the third floor leading to the terrace, continued to remain on the roof of the gurdwara. According to the police, the Nihangs engaged in vandalism, then took the manager with them to the roof and started raising slogans.

Rahul meets five Punjab Cong. leaders, calls for a united front before poll

LS LoP tells senior leaders party has a 'very good chance' in the 2027 election; seeks their views on leadership amid speculation over possible organisational changes in the State unit of the party

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi met five senior members of the Punjab unit of the party on Sunday and urged them to fight the upcoming Assembly election collectively, asserting that the party has a "very good chance" in the 2027 poll.

The development comes amid speculation of organisational changes in the party's Punjab unit.

State Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly Partap Singh Bajwa, former Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, and senior leaders Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and Vijay Inder Singla met Mr. Gandhi at 10, Janpath, Sonia Gandhi's residence.

Leader of the Opposition in Punjab Partap Singh Bajwa (right) and former CM Charanjit Singh Channi were among the leaders who met Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi on Sunday. FILE PHOTO

"I put forward my viewpoint on what is best for the party, and I have said whatever decision you [Rahul Gandhi] take, we will stand by it. We are committed soldiers of the Congress. Our families have sacrificed for the interest of Punjab, for the unity and integrity of this nation," Mr. Bajwa told reporters after the meeting.

"The leadership decision is with Rahul. Whatever position he may give or not give, we stand by him," he added.

Mr. Gandhi met the five leaders separately to hear their views on the road map ahead of the Punjab Assembly election, according to leaders who attended the meetings.

'Fight collectively'

"Rahul Gandhi's message was, 'You have to fight collectively, Punjab is an important State, and we stand a very good chance.' The leaders shared their views on the leadership issue and the best way forward. Basically, he stressed that we must protect Punjab's interests," a source privy to the meetings said.

Earlier this month, the Congress named Ajay Maken, Meenakshi Natarajan and Bhajan Lal Jatav as All India Congress Committee observers to submit a report on the current political situation in Punjab. They have submitted their report to the leadership.

Govt. campaign on welfare schemes brings relief for some, dejection for others

Alankrita Ray
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government's three-day campaign launched across 42 locations to educate and provide residents with access to welfare schemes and services under one roof evoked a mixed response. While many residents welcomed the three-day initiative launched by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on June 18, some found their applications stalled by missing documents.

Alina, 17, who has just completed Class 12, visited a camp in Chandni Chowk to seek information on more than one scheme.

"I want to get a scholarship to study in Jamia [Millia Islamia] and know if there is any work-related scheme for me so I could support my family financially," she said.

She returned carrying brochures from the scholarship counter, but without any clarity on whether she qualified.

Like Alina, many visitors used the camps to explore benefits they had never previously heard of.

Others managed to complete paperwork in a single afternoon that would have taken multiple visits to different government offices. According to the government, 43,973 people visited the camps in two days to obtain information about welfare schemes and services, seek redress of grievances and complete necessary formalities.

People waiting for their turn at a camp organised by the Delhi government to provide access to welfare schemes. ALANKRITA RAY

'Simplifying things'

For some residents, the camps delivered immediate results. Ishrat, a resident of Daryaganj, got an Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) card made for her disabled daughter at the Chandni Chowk camp. "We are not educated, and camps like these help simplify things for us," she said.

Shahina Parveen, who also obtained an ABHA card, said she filled out a form to correct the spelling of her name on the ration card.

Sunil said a damaged eye had gone untreated because of complicated medical documentation requirements. "My eye lens is damaged, and I haven't been able to afford the treatment," he said.

He registered for an ABHA ID, which will digitally store his medical records for future hospital visits.

Counters run by departments, including the Delhi Jal Board and the House Tax Department, offered services related to Pink cards, ration cards, e-Shram cards, Jan Dhan accounts, Aadhaar registration, PM SVANidhi and PM Surya Ghar solar registration, among others.

Turned away

However, some left without their work getting done. At some ration card counters, applicants said they were turned away because they lacked income certificates or other supporting documents.

The experience served as a reminder that even a single-window camp cannot entirely replace the paperwork and verification processes needed for welfare delivery on the ground.

Gunfire at MLA's office shows law and order collapse: Hooda

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

Former Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Sunday described the firing at Congress MLA Balram Dangi's Rohtak office as "clear evidence of Haryana's crumbling law and order", warning that organised crime had resurfaced with 50-60 gangs now active across the State.

The police on Sunday arrested one of the accused, Aman of Lakhanmajra, after a brief encounter.

On Sunday, Mr. Hooda visited the site of the firing. Speaking to reporters, he said, "Organised crime has escalated to the point where 50 to 60 gangs are active. They not only carry out crimes but also openly claim responsibility. This shows they have no fear of the law."

Juvenile jailed for 2 months: NHRC orders spot probe, sends notice to U.P. Police chief

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken *suo motu* cognisance of the illegal confinement of a juvenile in Kasna Jail alongside adult prisoners for nearly two months before he was shifted into a juvenile home. In its June 19 order, the commission called attention to the serious human rights violation of the 16-year-old boy and issued notices to the Uttar Pradesh Director General of Prisons Administration and the Director General of Police, seeking a detailed report within two weeks.

The NHRC also directed its Director General (Investigation) to depute a team of officers to conduct a spot inquiry and submit a report within a week.

The juvenile was apprehended on April 14 following protests by factory workers in Noida seeking higher wages and better working conditions, which turned violent on April 13. He was shifted to a juvenile home on June 12 and was released on bail on June 18.

In a statement, the Campaign for the Release of Workers and Activists of Noida (CaRWAN) alleged that following the NHRC order, a U.P. Police team visited the juvenile's home and forced him to sign some papers. "They took a copy of his elder brother's Aadhaar and have been calling and pressuring him into recording a video claiming that the juvenile used his Aadhaar card to enrol in a factory," a CaRWAN member alleged.

THE HINDU
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PERSONAL
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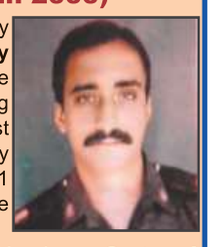
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For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of J&K e-tenders are invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Bidders as per Instruction to Bidder (ITB) and Terms of Reference at Annexure-I. The Bidder (Firm/Consultant/Agency/Company) should have the eligibility as per Annexure-II under Eligibility Criteria for the following work:-

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost of the Project (₹ in Lacs)	Advertised Cost (₹ in Lacs)	Cost of document (₹ in Rs)	Earnest Money (₹ in Rs)	Time and date of opening of tender	Type of Consultant
1	2	3	4	5	6	8	9
1	Providing Consultancy and other allied services with all working drawings (Digital Layout Plan, BOQ, Structural Design) including technical vetting of drawings from DIQC / NIT / IIT and Conducting of all required soil investigations for the "Construction of 12 mtr span Double lane bridge at Dharp near Ravidass Temple Sikanderpur" (3rd Call)	140.86	2.09	600	**4180**	(1300 Hrs) on or after 02-07-2026	Structural consultant

Position of AAA :- Submitted.
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1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	18-06-2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 18-06-2025 to 01-07-2026
3	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	20-06-2026 at 1300 Hrs. in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division R.S. Pura
4	Bid submission Start Date	18-06-2026
5	Bid Submission End Date	01-07-2026 upto 1600 Hrs
6	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	02-07-2026 on or after 1300 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division R.S. Pura. In case mentioned bid opening date happens to be a holiday then Bid shall be opened at the same time on the next working day
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

1 Every participating contractor to mandatorily disclose the bank account number which is linked with their GSTIN at the time of bid submission. No payments shall be released by the Government Department/Agency to any other bank account except the one linked with the GST registered number of the successful bidder. (As per circular No. 01(ADM) FD of 2025 Dated 08-07-2025 of J&K Finance Department) (The participating contractor may disclose his Bank Account as per the format, devised as Annexure- A of the NIT and submit/upload the same accordingly at the time of submission of the bid).
2 Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Receipt/e-challan in favour of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division R S Pura through Treasury, indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date, e-NIT No. and name of work duly crediting to 0059 (Revenue) and Earnest money/Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division R.S. Pura. The CDR/FDR/BG shall be valid for 45 Days beyond the bid validity period. The original instruments in respect of cost of documents, EMD and relevant documents of L1 be submitted to the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division R.S. Pura at the time of allotment.
- **The MSME firm if registered with NSIC (National Small Industries Corporation) agencies for tendered item then they are exempted for submission of EMD & Tender Cost.**

The MSME's who are interested in availing these benefits will have to enclose with their offer the proof of their beings MSME's registered with any of the above mentioned agencies.
3. All Bidders shall quote the rates in BOQ including GST.
4. The date and time of opening of Bid shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through e-mail message on their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the office of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division R S Pura
5. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of Opening of Technical bids.
6. **Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.**
a. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.
b. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get „Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)□as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.
c. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No Financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
d. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned above.
e. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with bid

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Executive Engineer
PWD (R&B) Division, R.S. Pura
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A ND-NDE

Changed reality

India must reduce its dependence on the Strait of Hormuz

Nations rise to power on the strength of their economies and, by extension, trade. Historically, countries such as the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States and China have combined economic prosperity with maritime dominance. India's weak shipping sector reflects its geopolitical position. Yet, its seafarers generate billions of dollars in foreign exchange while facing risks from piracy and geopolitical tensions. The recent conflict with Iran showed that control of strategic waterways can be as consequential as economic sanctions. By leveraging the Strait of Hormuz, Iran exposed a critical vulnerability in the global economy. Disruptions to energy flows imposed costs far beyond the battlefield and the economic consequences appear to have played a significant role in shaping the U.S. response. From a shipping perspective and its Hormuz stakes, Iran may have secured strategic gains despite the heavy damage inflicted on it by Israeli and U.S. Even as the attacks on Lebanon cast a shadow over the peace deal, Iran has announced that the Persian Gulf Strait Authority it set up during the war will be the sole authority that will handle Strait of Hormuz transits.

The memorandum of understanding envisages lifting sanctions on Iran and on ships serving Iranian trade. It also mandates Iranian talks with Oman and other Gulf states on maritime administration in the Strait of Hormuz. Previously, vessels transiting the Strait neither paid tolls nor reported to Iran or Oman. Whether or not the new framework results in transit fees is less important than the reality: that shipping companies must now account for Iran as a decisive stakeholder in the Strait of Hormuz. For India, the conflict has exposed a major strategic weakness. Despite the Strait of Hormuz being vital to its energy security, the disruption exposed the absence of a credible contingency plan for such eventualities. India's LPG strategy relies heavily on imports moving through the Strait of Hormuz, supported by a limited fleet of Indian-flagged carriers and a tightly scheduled supply chain with little long-term cavern storage. Similar vulnerabilities affected other fuel supplies too. Many countries are now reassessing their dependence on the Strait of Hormuz. The United Arab Emirates is pursuing a "zero Hormuz dependency" strategy by strengthening alternative infrastructure and routes. India must draw lessons from the crisis. Diversifying supply chains, investing in alternative maritime and land corridors, and strengthening strategic partnerships should become priorities. Projects such as Chabahar offered precisely such an opportunity but India gave up on it. For India, reducing dependence on the Strait of Hormuz is no longer just an economic goal; it is a strategic necessity.

Just truths

DNA test for paternity, allowed as a last resort, must not violate other rights

To protect children from the stigma of illegitimacy, the erstwhile Indian Evidence Act 1872 and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023 place the burden of proof on the party denying paternity rather than the party seeking confirmation. The Supreme Court of India first considered the challenges posed by DNA evidence in this regard, in *Goutam Kundu* (1993), where it held that DNA tests could not be ordered as a matter of routine and that courts must first assess whether a strong *prima facie* case had been made out. It reiterated this position in *Shri Banarsi Dass* (2005); both cases also reinforced the protection of legitimacy over any interest in forensic curiosity. Then, in the litigation mooted by Rohit Shekhar alleging that veteran politician N.D. Tiwari was his father, the Delhi High Court and the top court called for the test despite Mr. Tiwari insisting that his right to privacy was being violated. In *Nandlal Wasudeo Badwaik* (2014), the Court said that when reliable scientific proof confronts legal fiction, the former may prevail in the interest of justice; in *Dipanwita Roy* (2014), it acknowledged that refusing testing can lead to adverse inference. Both orders also confirmed the legitimacy of DNA tests based on need.

Then, in *K.S. Puttaswamy* (2017), as it encoded the right to privacy – including of genetic data – as a fundamental right under Article 21, the Court introduced a constraint that prior paternity jurisprudence did not have to reckon with. The threefold test it set up, of legality, legitimate aims, and proportionality, was brought to bear in *Aparna Ajinkya Firodia* (2023), which concluded that DNA tests should be ordered only where they are necessary and proportionate, and not if a dispute could be resolved based on other evidence. In *Ivan Rathinam* (2025), the Court said neither privacy nor knowledge were absolute and that the judiciary also has to negotiate stigma and necessity. Its order in *CP vs AP* (2026) tied all these contentions together as it upheld a trial court's direction for a DNA test on the grounds that the disputed question of paternity could not be resolved by the existing material record and required a scientific determination, by applying necessity and proportionality considerations. In the post-*Puttaswamy* era, then, the Constitution protects bodily autonomy and restricts compelled genetic disclosure – but courts could order a DNA test if paternity is directly in issue, there is no other evidence on record capable of resolving the question, and the test would serve the interest of justice. Thus, by positioning DNA testing as a last resort, the courts have to ensure that while science may be infallible, the pursuit of truth is only just when it respects a person's rights.

End the free rein of junk food advertising in India

Arun Gupta

Paediatrician, convenor of Nutrition Advocacy in Public Interest (NAPi) and co-author of the Lancet Series

Despite the Government of India's plans to amend advertising laws to curb the promotion of HFSS (high in fat, sugar and sodium) foods, such products continue to be advertised rampantly. As evidence of the health harms associated with industrially processed foods engineered to be highly palatable and potentially addictive continues to grow, restricting their advertising – particularly exposure to children and young people – may no longer be avoidable.

Try opening a YouTube video on politics, scrolling through Instagram reels, or scanning a newspaper, and you are likely to encounter advertisements for noodles, chips, biscuits, breakfast cereals, chocolates, sweetened beverages, or other ultra-processed food (UPF) products. Recently, there was a YouTube advertisement for a newly launched baked chips brand in India. The advertisement emphasised the product's cheese and tomato flavours and the "crunchiness" to appeal to consumers. What it did not disclose was that the product is a UPF with ingredients such as maltodextrin, nature-identical flavourings, flavouring substances, salt substitute (KCl/potassium chloride), acidity regulators (627, 631) and emulsifier (322). While prominently promoting selective attributes such as "baked", the advertisement omitted material health information, including the product's high salt and fat content and the presence of refined carbohydrates. Such marketing practices can create a misleading impression of healthfulness while obscuring the nutritional risks associated with these products.

While readers can recall their own experiences, there are a few other examples in the media. A female film celebrity is seen recommending a multigrain, "no maida choco cereal" for her son, despite it being a high sugar product. An entire family of actors promotes a "12-grain" breakfast cereal, while a popular film actor endorses a biscuit as a "good choice". Most of these products, however, are high in sugar, fat and/or salt, raising questions about the messages conveyed through such endorsements. Such selective disclosures create a false perception of healthfulness and deprives consumers, particularly children and adolescents, of the right to make an informed choice.

Review frameworks

The focus of this article is also to draw the attention of policymakers to the need for reviewing whether existing legal frameworks sufficiently serve the public interest. Clearer legal provisions may be required to effectively regulate the advertising of unhealthy food products.

Advertising is directly linked to increased consumption of UPFs, which is strongly associated with rising rates of obesity and diabetes. These advertisements often feature child actors and use emotionally appealing messages aimed at both children and parents, creating a desire for such products. The fact that in 2024, three major transnational corporations spent $13.2 billion on advertising underscores the volumes and the power of food product advertisements. Advertising does not merely reflect demand; it helps create it. In India alone, more than two lakh junk food advertisements in a month were backed by advertising expenditure of about ₹170 crore.

Evidence suggests that UPFs can encourage overconsumption through mechanisms that resemble those identified in addiction science. The health harms associated with UPFs appear closely linked to their industrial design and marketing strategies. But the food industry fails to disclose this fact to people. Recently, the City of San Francisco filed a lawsuit against 10 major UPF manufacturers, alleging child-targeted marketing, the development of highly compelling product formulations, and inadequate disclosure of health risks such as obesity and diabetes. Among other remedies, the lawsuit sought to prevent further deceptive marketing practices and pushed for corrective measures to address the effects of past false advertising.

A policy gap

The Government of India's National Multisectoral Action Plan (NMAP) for Prevention and Control of Common Non-Communicable Diseases (2017-2022) envisaged the prohibition/restrictions on the advertising of HFSS foods. Many pre-packaged foods are highly processed, containing additives such as colours, flavours, emulsifiers and sweeteners, and are often HFSS. The issue has gained policy attention. In February 2026, the Supreme Court of India, in response to a PIL on warning labels for packaged foods, observed that front-of-pack labelling is necessary to protect the right to health. The Economic Survey 2025-26 also highlighted concerns around unhealthy diets. Several Members of Parliament have called for stronger measures, including front-of-pack warning labels, advertising restrictions and taxation of UPFs. In 2024, the Court had noted that misleading advertisements can encourage the consumption of unhealthy foods by children, pregnant women and the elderly, with potentially serious health consequences. These developments point to a growing recognition that existing safeguards may be inadequate.

The Lancet Series on UPFs and Human Health, published three papers in November 2025 which presented scientific evidence linking UPF consumption to poorer diet quality, displacement of real foods, and a higher risk of obesity, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and other non-communicable diseases. Global and Indian data show that rising UPF consumption has coincided with increasing obesity rates. *The Lancet* made a strong case for policies in the food environments to reduce UPF consumption, with many experts arguing that policymaking should not wait for further evidence.

The food environment needs a fix

Children and adolescents in India are exposed daily to advertisements for UPFs and HFSS foods on television, digital platforms, social media, sports broadcasts and through influencers. This sustained and sophisticated marketing is designed to build brand loyalty and shape lifelong consumption patterns. The aim of the UPF industry is clear: to encourage the displacement of real culinary or cultural foods for profits. What children or youth eat cannot be separated from what they are persuaded to desire at schools, work places, cinema halls, other public places or even at home.

Experts in *The Lancet* Series contend that nutrition education and behaviour-change programmes alone cannot succeed in an environment that is saturated with aggressive marketing of unhealthy food products.

This situation underscores an important constitutional principle: when harm is foreseeable and populations are vulnerable, the state has a duty to protect public health and regulate the marketing of unhealthy food products. India committed in 2017 to restrict such advertising, but that objective remains unfulfilled. Given the scale of the problem, neither market forces nor self-regulation are likely to be sufficient. Therefore, there is a strong case for the Government of India to introduce stricter controls on the advertising and promotion of UPFs and HFSS foods such as planned in 2017 by amending advertisement laws.

If schools are to be protected spaces free from UPFs, HFSS foods and misleading nutrition messages, it is inconsistent to ignore the commercial environment that shapes children's choices outside school. The school environment itself requires clear policy direction, not merely advisories (as Brazil did recently). The Economic Survey has called for stronger regulation of UPF advertising and marketing. International experience, from Chile to Mexico, suggests that voluntary self-regulation is often ineffective, whereas enforceable legal measures can be more effective. Given its influence on children's food choices, advertising warrants stronger regulation as part of the broader right to health.

Restricting the advertising of unhealthy food products need not be viewed as anti-industry or anti-profit. In fact it could reduce company expenditure on advertising and encourage companies to redirect resources towards minimally processed foods and healthier local markets. Such a shift could help shape more sustainable and health-oriented food systems in the future.

Restricting the advertising of ultra-processed food (UPF) products and foods high in fat, sugar and sodium (HFSS) is a public health imperative

Britain after Brexit, divided, uncertain and stagnant

Priyanjali Malik

Writes on security and politics

Some anniversaries are merely observed. Ten years after the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union (EU), on June 23, 2016, and as it prepares for yet another change of Prime Minister, it is clear that whatever the benefits or drawbacks of Britain's divorce from the EU, Brexit has left it bitterly divided. 'Take Back Control' the Leave campaign had urged. Instead, Britain is floundering in a morass of indecision, low economic growth and a crisis of politics and governability that will likely produce a seventh Prime Minister in the decade since it voted by the narrowest of margins (52 to 48%) to separate itself from its continent and largest trading partner.

An imperial illusion

Brexit was always a trade-off in a quest by some to acquire more control over trade, regulation and immigration, tinged undoubtedly by nostalgia for Britain's imperial past. The idea that Britain could successfully swap access to the €18 trillion European economy for trade deals based on the ties of Empire – and thrive – was always for the birds, but nostalgia is powerful and illogical. Brexit began as a civil war within the Conservative Party amongst those resisting the EU's project of 'ever closer union' and railing against a perceived overbearing and over-reaching Commission that set rules for others to follow. The rules, however, were the conditions under which Britain gained access to the trading partner that, even after Brexit, accounts for 41% of its exports and 50% of its imports.

When David Cameron offered the U.K. an 'in/out referendum' to settle the war within his party, Brexit morphed into a protest vote. It stopped being about Britain's relationship with Europe and transformed into Westminster's relationship with the rest of the country, especially those parts that felt left behind. Brexit unearthed a raft of problems that had little to do with the EU's rules (which London helped shape as a member state), or the free movement of people (a precondition of the single market), even if the 2004 expansion brought a surge of Eastern Europeans settling in Britain for work. Britain's problems were structural. After the 2008 financial crisis, the standard of living for the vast majority stagnated or declined, hit by the years of austerity subsequently imposed on the country to balance its books. While the bankers and banks who precipitated the crisis came through unscathed, life became tougher for ordinary people left to contend with the increasingly underfunded public services they relied on – health care, education and local government.

The resentment this bred provided fertile ground for populism to thrive, and Brexit's focus on immigration provided just that. Immigrants, the siren song went, were taking their jobs, occupying their schools, clogging up their National Health Service (NHS) and pushing them to the margins in their own country: once Britain controlled its borders, life would improve.

Economic reality bites

Things have not improved. While estimates of Brexit's economic costs vary, most economists agree that the loss of unfettered access to Britain's largest trading partner and the end of free movement have acted as a drag on trade and investment, curtailed productivity, and significantly diminished the market for financial and other services. The beneficiaries of Brexit are largely those who facilitate the now voluminous customs paperwork and the additional civil service hires managing Brexit's complexity. And, ironically, those immigrating to Britain are from outside the EU.

For all the rhetoric about controlling immigration, this decade has seen a sharp rise in immigration, largely from outside the EU. Though the number of EU nationals residing in Britain declined gradually from 2016, the number of non-EU immigrants rose sharply from just under 100,000 to peak in 2022-23 at over a million before falling to about 400,000 now. After COVID 19, the NHS, unable to find qualified workers at home, recruited aggressively from abroad. With Europeans feeling unwelcome, doctors and nurses from India, Nigeria, Egypt, Pakistan and the Philippines came instead. Before Brexit, there were 10,000 nurses from India. Today, there are 40,000. Ironically, visibly non-white people were flocking to Britain and the immigration statistics continued to rise while the cost of living was battered by Brexit, COVID-19 and geopolitics.

An uneasy nation

The topic of immigration has become toxic. Hijacked by the far Right, it now represents all the broken promises of the social contract. Because Brexit split the country down the middle into solidifying tribal loyalties of Leavers and Remainers, no matter the unfulfilled promises of leaving, politicians across the spectrum remain afraid of honestly evaluating Brexit. Worse, electorally threatened by the populists (not known for their honesty) mainstream politicians across the political spectrum have focused on the bogeyman of immigration in search of populist votes. A former Home Secretary (of Indian extraction) spoke of the 'invasion of our southern shores' while in office. Out of office, her colleague publicly counted white faces in a Birmingham neighbourhood. And the current Prime Minister voiced concern about Britain becoming an 'island of strangers'. These are not words to unite a multicultural country, forge a middle ground and seek honest answers for Britain's economic problems. Ten years on, Britain is deeply divided about who it is and what it stands for. The centre ground lies vacant as politicians chase populist extremes, making politics a game of survival. The statistics speak for themselves: since Brexit, the U.K. has seen 10 Home Secretaries, nine Foreign Secretaries, eight Chancellors of the Exchequer and six Prime Ministers, with a seventh likely incoming. This is not a country at ease with itself or its place in the world.

Ten years after Brexit, Britain still searches for direction

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Israel must show restraint

Because of Israel's belligerent actions, efforts to secure a lasting truce in the war with Iran have once again become elusive, and the Strait of Hormuz faces renewed disruption (Page 1, June 21). While the U.S. and Iran have agreed to a ceasefire, Israel continues to undermine prospects for lasting peace. It is time for U.S. President Donald Trump to rein in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and insist on adherence to the agreement. Unless Israel withdraws from southern Lebanon and ceases repeated violations of the ceasefire, the hope of a durable truce will remain elusive.

Prabhu Raj R.,
Bengaluru

Ensure Census accuracy

The decadal Census is the bedrock of India's policy planning. However, recent field observations in my locality raise concerns about the integrity of the data collection process. I witnessed enumerators gathering residents from multiple households in a common area, rather than visiting individual units, and bypassing upper floors of residential buildings. While the hardships faced by our enumerators such as extreme heat and the immense physical labour of climbing floors are undeniable, such shortcuts risk creating systemic data gaps. An undercount in even a single neighbourhood leads to a decade of misallocated resources. I urge the authorities to implement a more transparent monitoring system where citizens can verify whether their specific household has been officially surveyed.

Kota Venkata Yogesh,
Proddatur, Andhra Pradesh

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

The lack of accountability within the NTA

Rahul Verma

Sociologist and independent researcher who writes on education, labour and social inequality in India

On June 21, more than 22.8 lakh candidates sat once again for NEET-UG after a paper leak led to the nationwide cancellation of the earlier exam. The response has followed two tracks. The first was prosecutorial, with the government handing the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation under the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024. The second was administrative, with a re-examination conducted yesterday and the examination fees refunded. However, neither response engages with the question of why one compromised paper can interrupt medical admissions for an entire national cohort, and what that design choice reveals about how the state looks at the costs of its own institutional failures.

The NTA's responsibility

The National Testing Agency (NTA) was created in 2017 as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 and not through an Act of Parliament, which means it operates without a codified liability standard toward the candidates it examines. When the NTA cancelled NEET-UG 2026, its formal obligation to candidates extended to just carrying forward registrations and refunding the examination fee, which is ₹1,700 for general category candidates. The institutional cost of failure beyond that narrow zone remains unaccounted for.

The design of NEET-UG amplifies that accountability gap directly. The examination is conducted nationwide in a single sitting on one day, with one paper and its score is used for admission across every government and private medical college in the country. And when that sitting is compromised, the state has only one instrument available, which is to cancel the test and convene a fresh sitting without any distributed fallback that would allow a limited breach to produce only a limited effect. Moreover, the interval between application, examination, and result has become a prolonged administrative cycle and every disruption stretches that cycle further while shifting uncertainty onto the candidates. In a system built around a single annual test, even a short advancement can alter an entire admission year.

The National Medical Commission's (NMC) seat matrix for October 2025 lists roughly 1.26 lakh MBBS seats against more than 22 lakh candidates, a ratio that structurally ensures that a substantial cohort of aspirants are always in their second or third attempt, having already committed resources with no guarantee of admission. For those candidates, the cancellation returns a ₹1,700 fee against a preparation year that costs several lakhs in coaching and accommodation, a gap the state has never formally measured because no government survey tracks what households spend on NEET preparation. The ASER 2024 report documents persistent learning gaps between government and private school students, which means candidates who entered the race with fewer academic and financial resources are also those least able to absorb a cancelled cycle and begin again.

While the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 prescribes penalties of up to 10 years imprisonment and fines up to one crore rupees for organised leak networks, it establishes no compensation mechanism for candidates when an exam is cancelled; creates no automatic re-examination right; and introduces no liability standard for the examining body. The legislature responded to a candidate-facing catastrophe with an entirely prosecutorial instrument, leaving the structural consequences borne by those who played by the rules entirely outside the law's concern.

> While the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 prescribes penalties and fines, it establishes no compensation mechanism for candidates when an exam is cancelled

The announced shift of NEET to Computer-Based Testing (CBT) does not resolve this structural problem. For in June 2024, the UGC-NET was cancelled after the question paper appeared on the darknet; the UGC-NET was already a CBT examination administered by the same agency. The leak arose not from printed papers but from a single session with no distributed architecture capable of containing the impact of a breach, which means that moving NEET to CBT changes only the delivery mechanism without changing the single point of failure.

The way ahead

Article 14 guarantees everyone equal protection before the law and prohibits state action that is arbitrary in design and disproportionate in effect, while Articles 41 and 46 of the Directive Principles place a positive obligation on the state to secure equal opportunity in education and protect weaker sections from structural disadvantage. A national entrance architecture that formally treats all candidates alike but transfers all costs of institutional failure onto those least equipped to bear them is precisely the kind of design those provisions are meant to prevent.

Three corrections must follow directly. First, the NTA should be given statutory basis with codified obligations to candidates and enforceable consequences for institutional failure. Second, a mandatory compensation mechanism funded from examination fee revenue should activate automatically when cancellation results from institutional failure. Third, multiple examination windows per year would distribute risk so that a compromised sitting does not collapse the prospects of every candidate in the pool.

The re-examination has, for now, closed this episode administratively, but as long as one compromised paper can force 22 lakh candidates to begin again, the problem is not only who leaked the paper, but why the exam was designed to break so completely when they did.

Kerala's battle with water-borne diseases

The State's under-investment in proper sewerage networks is costing it dearly

STATE OF PLAY

C. Maya

A State renowned for being the model of public health in the country and one which has consistently recorded some of the best health indicators nationwide, is now battling recurrent outbreaks of various water-borne diseases such as shigellosis. The irony is stark, for Kerala has demonstrated the responsiveness and resilience of its health system by having a firm grip on a disease as unpredictable and complex as Nipah.

Now, rapid urbanisation and social development on the one side and inadequate attention paid to environmental health, water quality measures, poor sewage and sanitation infrastructure on the other, is threatening to undo the State's reputation as a beacon of good public health. The explosion of water-borne diseases and zoonotic diseases in the State points to the system's failure to pay attention to the social and environmental determinants of health.

Scale of contamination

A look at the outbreaks of Acute Diarrhoeal Diseases (ADD), Hepatitis A, shigellosis and norovirus in recent years gives an indication of the impact of groundwater contamination on people's health.

Between four to five lakh cases of ADD are reported every year in the State. Since the past two decades, Kerala has also been experiencing several large and small Hepatitis A outbreaks. In 2025, the State reported 31,536 cases and 82 deaths due to Hep A. This year too, as of June 15, close to 9,000 cases and 25 confirmed deaths have been reported.

Amoebic meningoencephalitis, which has also emerged as a significant public health problem in Kerala, is being linked to the faecal contamination in domestic wells, in which free-living amoeba thrive. This infection has claimed the highest number of lives in the State, with 134 cases and 34 deaths reported as of June 15 this year.

Various studies have reported that groundwater resources in the State have been under increasing stress, with 62% of the population depending on ground water from close to 7 million wells.

Lack of sewage system

As of 2025, Kerala has less than 6% proper sewerage network coverage, with most major cities having virtually no household sewage collection systems. The CAG's 2025 report stated that at the closure of the AMRUT Mission, a Central initiative aimed at ensuring universal access to safe water and reliable sewerage connections across urban areas, Kerala's overall achievement was just 11.25% and only 0.13% households got sewerage connections.

While Kerala does have high sanitation coverage with a significant proportion of households relying on septic tanks or on-site sanitation systems, these septic tanks are poorly designed and located close to domestic wells which lead to groundwater contamination. The fact that Kerala is one of the most densely populated States with small landholdings and houses situated close to each other aggravates the issue. High levels of faecal contamination have been reported in over 70% of the open wells in the State by agencies such as the Centre for Water Resources Development and Management. A study in the urban areas of Thiruvananthapuram in 2018 had reported that coliform contamination was prevalent in 73% of wells and that well chlorination and cleaning practices were inadequate.

Recurring outbreaks of Hepatitis A and shigellosis in the State showed that almost all outbreaks had been in rural areas and were linked to the local source of drinking water. Epidemiological investigations have revealed that water for regional supply systems is often pumped into supply lines without adequate chlorination or filtration, and that these lines often run close to sewage drains – any breaks in the pipeline can lead to major contamination.

It is also true that most of the interventions to provide safe drinking water to people lie outside the health sector, demanding coordinated intersectoral efforts. Thus, rather than a failure of public health, the current problem of water-borne diseases seems to be the result of the State's under-investment in establishing proper sewerage networks.

Prevention of water-borne diseases requires long-term investments in urban planning, establishing safe water distribution systems, sewer networks, wastewater treatment plants as well as measures for environmental and water quality surveillance.

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The curious case of Kerala's committed expenditure

Despite grave concerns raised in the white paper, Kerala's budget was silent on measures to bring down the committed expenditure

DATA POINT

Devyanshi Bihani

The white paper, 'Kerala's Fiscal Health – A Status Report', released by the new United Democratic Front (UDF) government ahead of its maiden budget, raised serious concerns over the State's rising debt burden. The report in particular underscored the huge share of the State's "committed expenditure" – which includes salaries, pensions and interest payments.

It emphasised that nearly 78% share of committed expenditure in the total revenue receipts left little to no room for capital expenditure and contributed to mounting revenue deficits. Kerala's spending on salaries and pensions, as a share of its revenue receipts, is the highest among all States and its share of committed expenditure the second-highest **(Chart 1)**. The trend has more or less remained the same over the years **(Chart 2)**.

Noting that the State spends "almost 80%" of its revenue on committed expenditure, the white paper said, "The most direct structural explanation for Kerala's treasury stress is the share of its revenue that is pre-empted before any discretionary decision." "Now is the time for hard political decisions," it said, adding that measures such as increasing the retirement age and making pay commission revisions decennial should be considered.

Yet, the budget was conspicuously silent on any such measures, barring the exception that the National Pension System would be revamped. The silence is perhaps an acknowledgement of not just the difficulty in tackling this "structural problem," but the importance of high spending on salaries and pensions in achieving the progress the State has made on human development indicators.

Economist R. Ramakumar said retaining the idea of a welfare state requires welfare workers and pointed out that Kerala employs significantly more teachers, healthcare professionals and other public-sector workers **(Chart 4)**. "Kerala's achievements are due to this particular kind of salaries that you end up paying," he added. Moreover, he said that while the figure of over 75% highlighted prominently in the white paper has "shock value", a better parameter would be the committed expenditure's share in the total revenue expenditure and not revenue receipts, which would bring the share down to about 58-60%.

Economist Lekha Chakraborty, meanwhile, said the trend reflected public expenditure rigidity. "All that we can do is an episodic expenditure (sectoral) compression, given the committed nature of spending. While the state has shown revenue buoyancy, without meaningful public expenditure reforms, this pattern risks perpetuating revenue deficits and constraining Kerala's ability to sustain its social model," she said.

Kerala's State's Own Tax Revenue (SOTR) and overall revenue receipts have shown notable growth, but the tax buoyancy has dropped in recent years. Moreover, their respective Compound Annual Growth Rates (CAGRs) between 2015-16 and 2026-27 (budget estimates) show that the committed expenditure has grown faster **(Chart 3)**. The budget, presented on Thursday, estimates the debt-to-GSDP ratio to come down marginally to 33.5% in 2026-27, compared with 34.87% (2024-25) or 34.26% (2025-26), even though it projects the total outstanding debt to rise by 11.6% **(Chart 5)**.

These optimistic projections show that the new government is relying on a swift turnaround in tax buoyancy and GSDP growth – it estimates the GSDP to grow nominally by 14.15% and revenue receipts by 23.8% – while recognising that expenditure on salaries and pensions cannot be brought down, at least in the near future.

Challenges ahead: Kerala CM V.D. Satheesan presented the revised budget for 2026-2027 on Thursday, amid concerns over growing debt.

Structural hurdles

Data were sourced from Kerala's Revised Budget 2026-27, Kerala's Fiscal Health: A Status Report, the Reserve Bank of India, the CAG and Central Bureau of Health Intelligence

Chart 1: This shows the share of committed expenditure in the revenue receipts of each State. The data shown is for the year 2024-25, taken from RBI

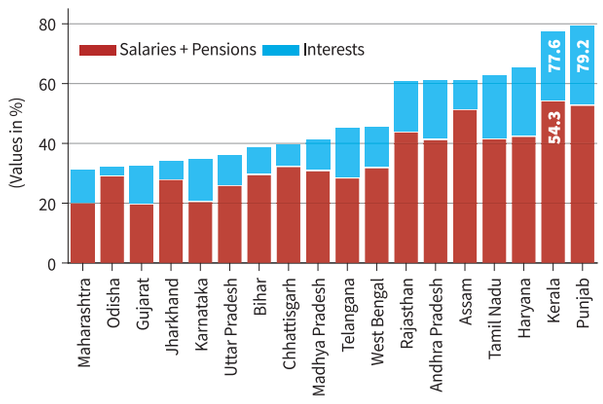


Chart 2: This shows year-wise committed expenditure (left axis) and its share in total revenue receipts (right axis) of Kerala

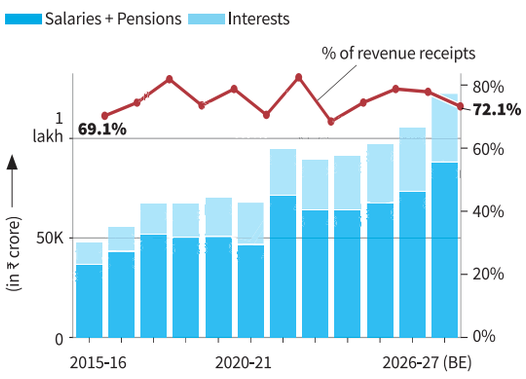


Chart 3: This shows the growth in overall revenue(●), State's Own Tax Revenue (SOTR) (●), and the committed expenditure (●), along with their respective CAGR between 2015-16 and 2026-27

CAGR of committed expenditure **8.17%** | CAGR of SOTR: **8.07%** | CAGR of revenue receipts: **7.78%**

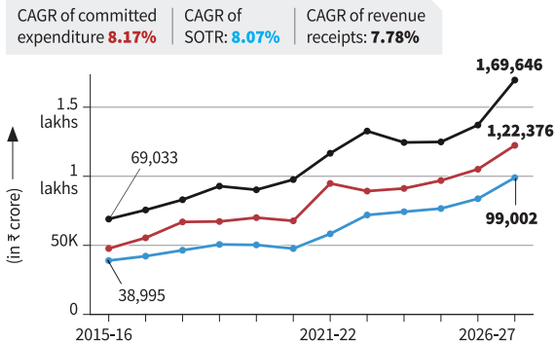


Chart 4: This shows the number of healthcare professionals per 10,000 people at national level and in the top five major States

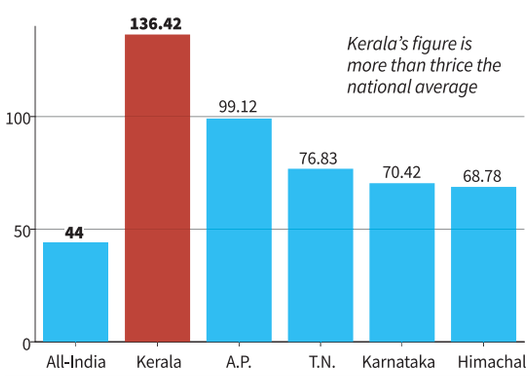
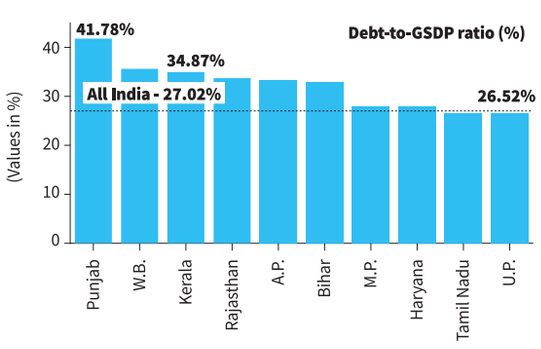


Chart 5: The debt-to-GSDP ratio of select States for 2024-25. Kerala has estimated its debt-to-GSDP ratio to come down to 33.5% despite the debt expected to grow by 11.6% to ₹ 5.46 lakh crore



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 22, 1976

Incentive to boost handloom exports

Madras, June 21: Export of handloom goods formed about 50 per cent of the country's total exports during 1975-76 and it was expected to be exceeded this year, in spite of the difficulties the industry faced, Mr. Mani Narayanaswami, Development Commissioner for Handlooms, said here to-day.

A coded system of classification and fixing standards for the export varieties by voluntary organisations would be useful, he added.

Inaugurating the annual meeting of the Handloom Trade and Industry Association here, Mr. Narayanaswami said the Government was having continuous dialogue with all interests concerned for the development of the industry and a co-ordinated effort was necessary to improve the economic condition of weavers.

He wanted big exporters to adopt certain areas and help the weavers so that they could see a definite transformation in their standard of living. The intention of the Government was to modernise handloom sector.

To encourage exports the Government had decided to make available cash incentives for a whole year from April this year.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 22, 1926

Madras news agency

Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti, the President of the Madras Corporation, performed last evening the pleasant function of opening the Mount Road Branch of the Madras News Agency. Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar presided on the occasion. There was a fair gathering. Mr. R. Balasundaram Mudaliar, the Editor of 'Doodle' uncle of Mr. T. Thanikachalam, the Proprietor of the Agency, received guests on arrival. The branch is situated in one of the rooms of the groundfloor of the Mahajana Sabha.

Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar in requesting Mr. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti to open the new branch, said that no public man could afford to ignore the Press in these days and the Press depended most on distribution.

The Madras News Agency, he understood, had been doing good work in the direction of distributing newspapers and magazines for the last four years. There lay great scope for these agencies in India and he wished prosperity for this undertaking.

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of jails in J&K to get CISF security cover

5 The Centre is set to deploy CISF security personnel to secure five more prisons of Jammu and Kashmir, following similar developments in the two central jails. A spokesperson said that "plans are under consideration" for extending the security cover of the paramilitary to the high security prison at Mahanpur and district jails of Jammu, Anantnag, Kupwara and Baramulla. PTI

Number of persons still hospitalised after food poisoning

79 Five days after a major food poisoning outbreak in Bhiwandi town of Maharashtra, 79 people continue to undergo treatment at a local hospital after consuming snacks at a popular eatery, a medical official said on Sunday. The Food and Drug Administration has launched a crackdown on food joints and sealed a prominent eatery in Thane district. PTI

Fund for modernisation of labs in Himachal medical colleges

150 ₹crore. Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on Sunday announced a corpus of ₹150 crore for modernisation of labs in medical colleges across the State. He made the announcement after laying foundation stone of an ultra-modern critical care block on the new campus of Dr Radhakrishnan Government Medical College. PTI

Acres of eco-sensitive land in Goa notified as no-development zone

1.13 crore square metres The Goa government has issued a notification declaring nearly 1.13 crore square metres of eco-sensitive land across the coastal state as a no-development zone, officials said on Sunday. The move aims to safeguard ecological assets and prevent indiscriminate development in environmentally fragile areas, they said. PTI

Number of Naxals arrested in Jharkhand on Sunday

7 Seven Naxals, including an area commander of the banned outfit PLFI, were arrested in Jharkhand's Khunti district on Sunday, police said. People's Liberation Front of India area commander Shravan Das was injured in a gunfight with the police when he allegedly snatched a firearm and opened fire on the law enforcers in a forest. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Are footpaths more than safe spaces?

Are footpaths, as a material resource, facing a situation akin to the 'tragedy of commons'? Have laws favoured vehicles over pedestrians? Does footpath promote equality in urban spaces? Does walking still hold significance in India? Who are responsible for protecting footpaths? Why does the court want a regulator?

EXPLAINER

Krishnadas Rajagopal

The story so far:

A Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Atul S. Chandurkar has, in its judgment (Maniyar Iliyaz@Shaik Riyaz versus P. Ayyappan), said a footpath's relevance is more than that of a narrow strip of land where the 'less-fortunate' ones take cover from being knocked down by vehicles speeding on multi-lane motorways.

Does the ruling deconnect the footpath from the theme of accidents?

Justice Narasimha's judgment divorces the footpath from the theme of motor accidents. The sole aim of a footpath is not to avoid accidents. The pathways have an identity and a purpose of their own.

The footpath caters to the most essential, the most fundamental of rights – the pleasure of walking. The court said the presence of a broad footpath is a reflection of civilisational advancement and respect for the freedom to walk. The tracks offer the public access to urban spaces through movement by walking.

The judgment declared that the right to walk on a comfortable and safe footpath held "priority over movement by motor vehicles". In a way, reasoning of the judgment suggests that footpaths suffer from a situation described in environmental law as the 'tragedy of the commons' or the degradation of a precious resource when many individuals use it. Safe and broad footpaths have become a scarce resource, riddled by encroachments, garbage and pavement trade. Secondly, the court has reasoned that broad footpaths, besides amplifying the beauty of cities, must also enable equitable access to all. Nothing should be done to thwart the public's free access to common spaces.

Sidelining safety: A row of police vehicles parked on the footpath in Cubbon Park forced the pedestrians to walk on the road during IPL match in Bengaluru in April. NAGESH PRABHU

Justice Narasimha has observed that access to common spaces, in both urban areas and rural areas, should be distributed in such a way that it was "not a monopoly of the motorised class alone". Article 39(b) of the Constitution mandates that material resources of a community must be distributed so as to sub-serve the common good. Authorities must consider the "common good" of both pedestrians and motor vehicle owner while designing a material resource like land to build roadways. A wide, well-demarcated and uninterrupted footpath could "change the beauty of and equitable access to our cities and towns".

Does walking still hold significance in the Indian imagination?

The court said that the act of walking have had diverse roles in the Indian imagination. Walking was a struggle for the not-so-unfortunate, a meditation in motion for many, resistance for others, discovery for the inquisitive, a cohesive strategy for sharp socio-political minds.

From the first sparks which ignited the national struggle for freedom to the complexities of modern politics, the idea of walking as a means of expressing an opinion or drawing public attention remains a constant. Walking was not just motion, but embodied the fundamental freedoms of speech and expression, of peaceful protest and the right to form associations and unions for gaining the just rights of workers.

Have the 'duty-bearers' neglected their duty to protect footpaths?

However, laws like the Motor Vehicles Act of 1988 paid homage to movement by wheels. They even "undermined the precious rights of walkers". Justice Narasimha said the tendency to subjugate safe and comfortable footpaths to motor transport was a civilisational problem.

The primary "duty-bearers" responsible for effectively managing footpaths are urban development authorities, municipal corporations, municipalities, and panchayats. Footpaths are held in trust by these bodies for the public's benefit. They are the material resources of the community.

Is there a need for statutory law and regulator?

The judgment is not satisfied by merely declaring the right to walk safely on a wide and clearly demarcated footpath as a basic right, but recommends to the government to implement the fundamental right through a statutory law, and moreover, establish a regulator to hear aggrieved pedestrians.

The court recalled the positive role played by Parliament and State legislatures in the past in enabling the effective exercise and enjoyment of fundamental rights on the ground.

It also noted that modern statutes have shaped a new framework of institutional governance by creating regulatory bodies. These bodies institutionalise continuity through perpetual succession and seal, embed expertise through specialisation, promote diversity through their composition, and ensure integrity through mechanisms of accountability.

One of the examples the court drew in this context was the Right to Education Act, which had declared the fundamental right to free and compulsory elementary education under Article 21A in Sections 3 to Section 5. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights was recognised as the regulator.

Justice Narasimha said a similar Act and a regulatory body must be devised by the legislature to protect the fundamental right to walk on demarcated footpaths. The statutory framework would not only ensure the working of the fundamental right on the ground but also identify the duty-bearers. The court said such an Act must also establish a full-time regulator to plan, enforce, and implement this precious right. The apex court has directed its Registry to send a copy of the judgment to the Central Ministries and the Law Commission of India to "reflect on the compelling necessity for initiating the necessary legal framework".

THE GIST

- The court said the presence of a broad footpath is a reflection of civilisational advancement and respect for the freedom to walk.
- The court has reasoned that broad footpaths, besides amplifying the beauty of cities, must also enable equitable access to all.
- The judgment is not satisfied by merely declaring the right to walk safely on a wide and clearly demarcated footpath as a basic right, but recommends to the government to implement the fundamental right through a statutory law.

Can police re-open probe without court approval?

Does Section 173(8) of CrPC permit filing of a supplementary report without Magistrate's permission?

EXPLAINER

R.K. Vij

The story so far:

The Supreme Court recently in *Paliniswamy Veeraraja & Ors. versus The State of Karnataka & Anr.* reiterated that the investigating authorities were required to obtain permission from the Magistrate to initiate further investigation after filing the closure report. In this case, the court quashed the First Information Report (FIR) and subsequent chargesheet noting that such permission had not been obtained.

Although an application seeking further investigation had been filed before the concerned Magistrate for a third time, no order granting permission was placed on record, the court said.

The investigating agency had earlier filed closure reports twice, stating that the dispute appeared to be entirely civil in nature. The court also relied on the principles laid down in *State of Haryana v. Bhajan Lal (1992)*, holding that the civil nature of the dispute was an additional ground for quashing the FIR and subsequent proceedings.

Can supplementary report be filed without Magistrate's approval?

The sub-section (2) of Section 173 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) provides for forwarding a report to the Magistrate after completing investigation in the prescribed form. The Section 173(8) CrPC says that in case the in-charge of a police station finds additional evidence after sending final report to the Magistrate, he may send supplementary report to the Magistrate. It is silent on obtaining permission from a Magistrate for filing supplementary report under sub-section (8). Section 193(9) of the BNSS is *pari materia* (dealing with the same subject matter) to Section 173(8) of the CrPC.

What has been held by the Supreme Court with regard to further investigation after filing a final report?

The Supreme Court in *Vinay Tyagi versus Irshad Ali (2013)* held that "though there is no specific requirement in the provisions of Section 173(8) of the code to conduct further investigation or file supplementary report with the leave of the court, the investigating agencies have not only understood but also adopted it as a legal practice to seek permission of the courts to conduct further investigation and file supplementary report with the leave of the court".

The court held that the requirement of seeking prior leave of the court to conduct further probe will have to read into, and is necessary implication of the provisions of Section 173(8) of the code. The court held that the doctrine of *contemporanea expositio* supports such an interpretation, as a practice that has been consistently understood and implemented over time, and is backed by law, should be recognised as an integral part of the interpretative process. This proposition has been approved by the Supreme Court in subsequent cases also.

While the newly added proviso to Section 193(9) of the BNSS (which is *pari materia* to Section 173(8) of the CrPC) mandates that the permission of the court is necessary if the trial has begun, the top court, in *Rama Chaudhary versus State of Bihar (2024)* reiterated that even though the statute does not require express permission, the law has developed and seeking permission from the concerned magistrate is essential. The Supreme Court, in *Robert Lalchungnunga Chongthu v. State of Bihar (2025)*, reaffirmed the ratio in Vinay Tyagi (supra), holding that obtaining the court's leave to file a supplementary chargesheet forms an integral part of the law.

Therefore, despite the new provision of the BNSS, once a chargesheet or closure report has been filed, further probe based on new evidence may be undertaken only with the permission of the court.

R.K. Vij is a former IPS officer.

THE GIST

- The Section 173(8) CrPC says that in case the in-charge of a police station finds additional evidence after sending final report to the Magistrate, he may send supplementary report to the Magistrate.
- The court held that the doctrine of *contemporanea expositio* supports such an interpretation, as a practice that has been consistently understood and implemented over time, and is backed by law, should be recognised as an integral part of the interpretative process.

CACHE

Facing off: A counter-protester holding an Israeli flag walks into the parking lot near a protest at Google Cloud offices in Sunnyvale, California, in 2024. REUTERS

What is Google's Project Nimbus, and why are students protesting against it?

Amazon and Google's Project Nimbus cloud contract with Israel has sparked protests over U.S. Big Tech enabling the Israeli military's violence against Palestinians; the row has intensified internal unrest within companies, with employees raising ethical concerns over how their work is being used

Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

On June 14, Google CEO Sundar Pichai's speech at Stanford was disrupted as more than 100 students walked out in protest. Some carried Palestinian flags, others draped black-and-white patterned *keffiyeh* as scarves, and they shouted, "Free, free Palestine!"

The students were protesting against Google's Project Nimbus, a tech contract between the search giant and the Israeli government that is linked with violence against Palestinian civilians.

What is Project Nimbus?

Project Nimbus is a technology contract between the Israeli government and Google and Amazon. It is worth over $1 billion. In May 2021, Google said the agreement would deliver cloud services to Israeli government entities, including ministries, authorities, and government-owned companies. The project was scheduled to run for an initial period of seven years, and the Israeli government could extend it for up to 23 years. A month later, Amazon said the Israeli government had selected Amazon Web Services (AWS) as its primary cloud provider, under the Nimbus contract for government ministries and its subsidiaries.

In 2024, an investigation by Israeli media outlets *+972 Magazine* and *Local Call* found that the country's army stored information on servers managed by AWS. That data came from the surveillance of Palestinians, as per the investigation. Sources quoted by the media outlets alleged such information could be used to help plan airstrikes.

Furthermore, the outlets reported an increase in Israeli service demands from Google Cloud, AWS, and Microsoft Azure since October 2023, as army units sought data storage and AI services.

Why are protesters against Project Nimbus?

Project Nimbus has been facing backlash since it was first announced. In 2021, an anonymous letter signed internally by 90 Google workers and over 300 Amazon workers criticised the partnership, per *The Guardian*. They condemned Project Nimbus and the Israeli military's killings of Palestinian civilians, claiming that their employers would be "selling dangerous technology to the Israeli military and government."

The workers claimed that cloud service technology would help expand the surveillance of Palestinians, as well as illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian land.

Opposition to Project Nimbus has grown since the Hamas attacks against Israeli civilians on October 7, 2023, followed by Israel's airstrikes and blockades in Gaza. In 2024, protesting Google employees even carried out sit-ins at Google locations in the U.S. Later, 28 employees were fired.

Pro-Palestinian protests by employees have also taken place at Big Tech company events, such as during Microsoft's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2025.

Last year, *The Guardian*, *+972 Magazine*, and *Local Call* cited leaked documents revealing that under the Project Nimbus contract, Israel mandated that Google and Amazon would not restrict how its governmental units used the tech companies' cloud services – even if Israel violated their terms of service.

However, Google has in the past stressed that Project Nimbus workloads are not related to the military, weapons, or classified intelligence. Amazon too highlighted its privacy commitments to its customers.

Which other tech companies have links to Israel?

A Palestinian-led movement, called Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS), has identified large technology companies that have formal contracts with Israel and its military sector.

The BDS website alleges these companies "technologically equip the Israeli military with computing systems as well as surveillance and communications technologies to accelerate the genocide in Gaza and automate apartheid in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem."

In September, Microsoft Vice-Chair & President Brad Smith said the company had "ceased and disabled a set of services to a unit within the Israel Ministry of Defense (IMOD)." This announcement came after media outlets *The Guardian*, *+972 Magazine*, and *Local Call* reported that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) was using Microsoft's Azure to store Palestinians' recorded phone calls data that could be leveraged for mass surveillance or even military action.

Did Microsoft truly sever its ties with Israel's defense surveillance systems?

While Mr. Smith said that Microsoft does not provide technology to facilitate the mass surveillance of civilians, he affirmed the company's "important work" to protect the cybersecurity of Israel and other West Asian countries.

In a conclusion to the external investigation that Microsoft commissioned after the Azure surveillance allegations, the tech giant said it would implement better review processes, provide more guidance to employees, and let employees anonymously report potential policy violations.

The No Azure for Apartheid group, which is made up of Microsoft workers, claimed on June 6 that Microsoft still allowed the Israeli military and government to host other surveillance projects on Azure. "Nothing short of cutting all ties with the genocidal Israeli military and government will be enough. We will show up to escalate, confront, and disrupt in every place, at every moment, announced and unannounced," said the group.

THE DAILY QUIZ

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

A quiz on International Day of Yoga that was observed on June 21

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
Why did Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his speech at the United Nations in 2014, suggest June 21 be observed as an International Day of Yoga?

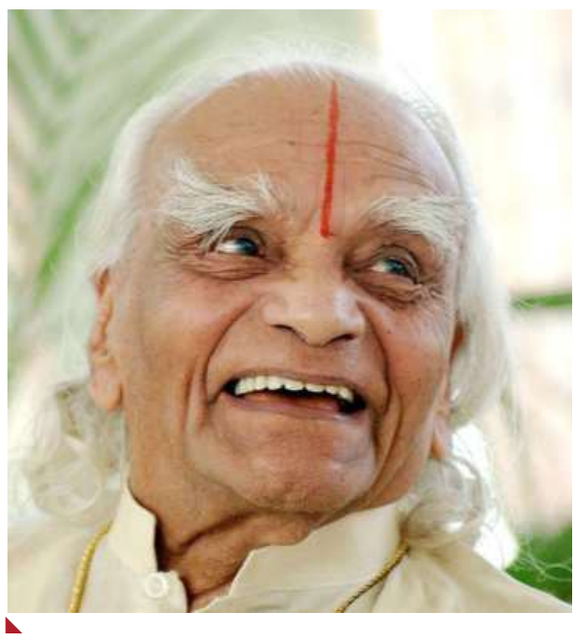
QUESTION 2
What was the theme for International Day of Yoga this year?

QUESTION 3
Of the traditional five broad classifications of Yoga, two are Bhakti and Karma Yoga. Name the other three.

QUESTION 4
Which sadhana: i) advocates appropriate food and food habits for healthy living; ii) dissociating one's consciousness from the sense organs that connect with the external objects.

QUESTION 5
From which animals are these asanas inspired: Catur Svanasana, Sasakasana, Ustrasana?

QUESTION 6
From where does the shloka 'saṃ gacchadhvaṃ saṃ vadadhvaṃ saṃ vo manāṃsi jānatām |devā bhāgaṃ yathā pūrve saṃjānānā upāsate' that traditionally starts a yoga session come from?



Visual question: Name this eminent yoga exponent. FILE PHOTO

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:

1. Which was the first World Cup to be held outside Europe and Americas and who hosted it? **Ans: 1970 with Mexico as the host**
2. Which World Cup final is called as the "Miracle of Bern" and why? **Ans: The 1954 final as the underdogs and semi-professional West Germany won the final beating the undefeated and unstoppable Golden team of Hungary 3-2 in the final. This is touted to be one of the greatest upsets of World Cup history**
3. Who holds the record as the oldest to score a goal in World Cup history? **Ans: Roger Milla of Cameroon – 42 years & 39 days**
4. Who holds the record for scoring the most number of goals in a single edition of World Cup? **Ans: Just Fontaine of France – 13 goals in 1958 edition**
5. Prior to Golden Glove award, what was the name of the trophy given to the best goalkeeper of a World Cup tournament? **Ans: Lev Yashin trophy named after one of the all-time greatest goalkeepers of the game from former Soviet Union**
6. Visual question: Identify and connect the two players with their unique feat World Cup history? **Ans: They are the only players to score a hattrick in the World Cup final. Geoff Hurst of England in 1966 and Kylian Mbappe of France in 2022**

Early Birds
Prem Nath Tiwari| Amit Saxena| Alisha Yadav

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

The family was distraught over the loss

The cancellation of the train left the passengers in the lurch

S. Upendran

What is the meaning and origin of the idiom 'left in the lurch'? (P. Keshav, Madurai)

'Lurch' rhymes with 'church', 'search' and 'perch'. The word comes from the French 'lourche', a board game played with dice that was popular in Europe - especially, France, in the 16th century. Today, very little is known about the game. It seems to have died a natural death by the end of the 17th century. The only reason we remember the game is because of the expression 'left in the lurch'. When playing the game, when someone was 'in the lurch', it meant he was in a terrible position – he was likely to be defeated by a huge margin. With the passage of time, the idiom changed to 'left in the lurch', and it began to be used in everyday contexts. Today, when you say that someone has left you in the lurch, it has nothing to do with winning or losing a game. It means the person who had promised to support you, abandons you at a time when you need him/her the most. The individual had promised to help you, and when you find yourself in a tough spot, the person chooses to do the disappearing act – you are left in a very awkward situation.

The builder was left in the lurch when fifty of his workers walked out on him.

Seema was left in the lurch when on the day of the big party, the cook decided to take the day off.

Which is correct? Ravi sat in a chair or Ravi sat on a chair? (Malini Nayar, Kochi)

Both sentences are grammatically acceptable; which preposition you choose to use will depend on the type of chair that you are sitting on/in. If the chair has arms on both sides, then you would say, 'I'm sitting in a chair'. If there are no arms, and nothing to restrict your movements, then you say 'sit on chair'. Similarly, you 'sit on' the ground or floor. You 'sit in a car/plane/bus/train' because you are in an enclosed space but 'sit on a bicycle/motorcycle/horse'.

Be careful siting in that chair. One of the arms is broken.

The chair that I sat on in the restaurant was very comfortable.

How is the word 'distraught' pronounced? (Neeta Mathur, Kolhapur)

The word consists of two syllables; the first sounds like the 'dis' in 'disturb' and 'distance', while the second syllable rhymes with 'caught' and 'fought'. The word is pronounced 'dis-TRAUGHT' with the stress on the second syllable. It comes from the Latin 'distrahere' meaning 'drawn in different directions.' Today, the word is mostly used to mean to be terribly upset. When you are distraught, you are so worried or nervous about something, that you are unable to think clearly. And what happens when you are unable to think clearly? Your mind begins to be 'drawn in different directions'.

The star player was distraught when he missed a penalty in the final minutes of the game.

We were all distraught when we heard the shocking news!

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Vestige
an indication that something has been present

Synonyms: trace, remnant

Usage: *These old columns are the last vestiges of the ancient temple.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/vestige

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˈvɛs.tɪdʒ/

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

From Page One

Two die in ammonia gas leak at T.N. seafood unit

The rescue team, comprising 30 personnel, rushed to the location equipped with necessary personal protective equipment, gas detection devices, and CBRN rescue gear.

The team rushed 46 workers to Vels Hospital in Manjakaranai and 21 workers to the Venkateswara Hospital in Red Hills, sources in the district administration said. From there, those in serious condition were rushed to the Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital, while seven others were sent to the Government Stanley Hospital in Chennai.

The police had earlier indicated that seven workers were feared killed, but the government later clarified that the death toll was actually two.

Industrial safety violations

The Periyapalayam police arrested Mohan, the owner of the factory, and factory manager Daniel, under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (punishable culpable homicide not amounting to murder).

Sources in the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health said a case had been filed against the company's owner and manager for various violations following inspections.

Even after giving due notice and conducting a second inspection, these violations were not rectified. A chargesheet was then filed against the company's owners and manager, and a case is already pending against them in the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Tiruvallur, officials said.

Over 20 lakh take NEET re-examination

Aadhaar-based biometric and face authentication, a total of 1,38,560 CCTV cameras, signal jammers, and two-layer frisking with the support of the State police forces were in place across centres. Command and control centres for CCTV monitoring were established at the national level – at the NTA and at the Ministry of Education – and at 34 centrally-funded institutions of the Department of Higher Education in every State and at District Collectorates.

Several States made arrangements for students and parents, such as shady waiting areas, water and food at centres. Ambulances and medical facilities were on standby, and in many States, free transportation was provided for candidates on exam day.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan reviewed arrangements for the smooth conduct of the re-examination at the NTA headquarters in Delhi. The NTA apprised Mr. Pradhan of the logistical and technical arrangements in place for the efficient and transparent conduct of the exam.

Interim trade deal needs 'final touches'

The office of the USTR in March launched an investigation under Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974 to look into whether its trade partners, including India, were taking enough steps to stop the import of goods made using forced labour.

As part of this investigation, the USTR in June proposed a 12.5% tariff on 54 countries, including India, alleging they had "failed to impose and effectively enforce" prohibitions on the import of goods produced using forced labour. The final hearing in the case will take place on July 7.

"The Section 301 investigation is legal and is following due process," the Commerce Ministry official said. "India has made its submissions to the U.S. The trade deal covers the entire gamut of trade relations, and whenever a deal is signed, we will have clear answers on Section 301 investigations."

The second official, too, said that they expect U.S. tariffs to remain "in one form or another" as they are part of a politically and strategically sensitive issue of bringing manufacturing and strategic sectors back to the U.S. However, the official added that the trade deal would still provide India an advantage over its competitors.

"The government believes that the U.S. will continue to offer preferential treatment to countries with which it has a trade agreement over those with which it does not," the official said.

Maritime sector major engine of growth: PM

Highlighting recent achievements in indigenous shipbuilding capabilities of the country, the Prime Minister noted that more than 40 indigenously built warships and submarines had been inducted into the Indian Navy over the past few years.

Mr. Modi emphasised that time had come for India to enter the next phase of maritime development, and the government had adopted a new vision for the shipbuilding sector and had introduced several policy reforms in recent years to enhance domestic manufacturing capabilities.

"The ₹70,000 crore incentive package announced for the shipping sector is not merely an economic measure but an investment in India's maritime future and industrial expansion. Initiatives such as Sagarmala reflect this comprehensive vision and are helping reduce logistics costs, accelerate industrial growth and create new opportunities in coastal regions," he said.

₹5,000 crore 'misused' in Ram Temple: Kharge

Congress chief calls for investigation into the alleged scam in the temple; referring to U.P. govt.'s inquiry in the issue, he says those looting money in the name of Lord Ram must be 'behind bars'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

(Right to left) D.K. Shivakumar, Mallikarjun Kharge, B.K. Hariprasad, Siddaramaiah, Randeep Surjewala, during the installation ceremony of KPCC president in Bengaluru on Sunday. J. ALLEN EGENUSE

Alleging that ₹5,000 crore had been misused in the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, All India Congress Committee (AICC) president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday alleged that the temple was built to loot money and sought an investigation to reveal those involved in the alleged scam.

"The temple has been constructed to loot money. Nobody gave any account of the money collected after [L.K.] Advani's Rath Yatra. Now, after the construction of the temple, ₹5,000 crore has been misused. There are reports suggesting that the priest has swindled money in the name of Lord Rama," Mr. Kharge said during the installation ceremony of new Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president B.K. Hariprasad in Bengaluru on Sunday.

"I have seen several temples being consecrated by spiritual leaders. However, he (Prime Minister Narendra Modi) installed the idol, inaugurated the temple and even cut the ribbon. Money is being looted from the temple. An investigation must be conducted to find out whether the money is being looted by his followers or by someone else," Mr. Kharge said.

Referring to the inquiry announced by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, he asked: "Why do you need 15 days to do so? When God, Mr. Modi and the temple are with you, put those looting money in the name of Rama behind bars."

'Rights being trampled'

The Congress president said that while people voted on the basis of religion and faith, looting was taking place in the name of dharma.

"The rights of people and students are being trampled upon and the poor are being inconvenienced. They want money from the Ram Temple, yet are fleecing the poor by taxing petrol and diesel. Because your (the National Democratic Alliance government's) administration is not functioning properly, you are conducting the NEET examination for the second time. The BJP and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan have betrayed lakhs of students," he said.

Mr. Kharge at the event urged Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and newly appointed KPCC president Mr. Hariprasad to work together. "Whatever differences that may crop up should be sorted out without going to the media, as it will affect the party and its workers," Mr. Kharge said.

Advice to leaders

Offering advice to Mr. Shivakumar and Mr. Hariprasad, Mr. Kharge said: "Identify genuine Congress workers and appoint them as chairpersons of boards and corporations. They will stand with you in the BBMP [Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike], taluk panchayat and zilla panchayat elections."

U.P. govt. must avoid targeting heritage structures, say MPs

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Muslim MPs from Uttar Pradesh on Sunday said State authorities should refrain from discriminatory demolitions of historical and heritage structures as they not only violate religious and cultural rights, but also give external adversaries opportunities to speak about India's internal matters.

The MPs were questioning Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari's comments on the alleged threat to the 1,000-year-old Masjid Ganj Shaheeda in Varanasi. They said that the Muslim community in Uttar Pradesh need not take lessons from the leader of Pakistan.

Statement condemned

Ghazipur MP Afzal Ansari said that in Uttar Pradesh, the government at times took one-sided action on heritage structures related to Muslims over encroachment claims. It was an attempt to infringe on religious and cultural rights and gave opportunities to external enemies to give lectures on minority rights to India and raise issues internationally, he said.

"I, in strongest words, condemn the statement of Pakistan's President. Muslims of India need no lessons from the Pakistan President. We are living peacefully, enjoying constitutional rights in our homeland India. The Muslim community in the State of Uttar Pradesh is capable enough to raise its concern over protection of historic sites within the robust democratic framework of India through an independent judiciary and system of governance," he said. Muslims in India were living in a far better condition than people of Pakistan, Mr. Ansari added.

Zardari's comments

On Saturday, a post on X by the official account of the President of Pakistan read: "President Asif Ali Zardari expressed deep concern over the demolitions and threats to historic Muslim religious sites in India, including the 1,000-year-old Masjid Ganj Shaheeda in Varanasi. He asked India to immediately stop such actions, warning that they risk leading to the disintegration and perennial chaos of India. He called for an immediate halt to such actions and urged the protection of minority rights and shared cultural heritage."

Javed Ali Khan, Rajya Sabha member from the Samajwadi Party, and Congress leader Shahnawaz Alam also condemned the comments by the Pakistan leader. "Foreign countries or heads of state have no rights to comment on internal affairs of India," Mr. Khan said.

Police begin collecting DNA records under 2022 law; over one lakh profiles generated

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The biological samples can be matched with records to identify habitual offenders.

The police in several States have started collecting DNA records, primarily from blood samples, of suspects arrested for heinous crimes. Along with DNA profiles, photographs, fingerprints, and iris scans, the government is creating a unique identification record of arrested persons and convicts that can be retained for up to 75 years.

Over the past five months, the DNA records of more than one lakh suspects have been stored in a central database operated by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the Union Home Ministry.

The samples are being collected under the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act (CrPI), a law passed in Parliament in 2022. More than 2,600 measurement collection units have been established across the country, and the CrPI system is now available in police districts and prisons. It is also accessible to Central agencies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation, the National Investigation Agency, and the Narcotics Control Bureau.

The contours of the CrPI system were showcased on June 19 at an NCRB event presided over by Home Minister Amit Shah.

"The samples are at present being collected by police in cases punishable by seven years. The DNA, mostly drawn from blood and in some cases saliva too, is then sent to a forensic laboratory, which generates a unique number. The NCRB preserves the code in its records. The sanctity of the samples depends on the police," an NCRB official said.

NAFIS

"CrPI Act, 2022 allows police and prison officers to take physical and biological samples of arrested and convicted individuals. To make these provisions effective, there was a need for a national platform that could integrate and make identification-related data useful across the country. In this direction, the NCRB launched the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) in the year 2022, which fully automated the fingerprint matching process. Today, with more than 1.27 crore fingerprint records, NAFIS has played a significant role in solving many old inter-State criminal cases," a presentation on the CrPI system said.

"Through CrPI, now all information related to identification, including face, iris, and biological samples is available in a national-level searchable database, making accurate and scientific identification possible within moments. Now, a photo obtained from a crime scene can be instantly matched with records across the country. CrPI functions as a unified system across the country, where every identification-based measurement is securely stored in a standardised system. As per standards, while taking photos, clarity of the eyes is ensured so that identification is not hindered despite any disguise or changes. CrPI ensures enrolment of face and iris measurements of arrested and convicted persons, and in special cases, registration of biological samples as well. There is a provision to retain all these measurements securely for 75 years," it said.

According to the NCRB presentation, biological samples recovered from crime scenes can be directly matched with existing records, enabling the identification of habitual offenders through scientific methods.

Video analytics feature

The NCRB said the CrPI system also has an advanced video analytics feature through which investigating officers can upload CCTV footage to identify faces of suspicious persons and match them with the national database. "What earlier took hours of manual investigation is now possible in just a few minutes. This feature also simplifies and speeds up identification of interstate criminals, as their records can be matched instantly across the country," it said.

HC panel tells Meghalaya to draw plan to curb illegal coal mining

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A one-member judicial committee appointed by the Meghalaya High Court has given the State government 15 days to address the "faceless" nature of illegal coal mining and transportation in the State.

In its 38th interim report submitted to the High Court on June 17, the Justice B.P. Katakey (retd) committee directed the State government to frame, within a fortnight, a comprehensive action plan that includes measures to hold officials accountable for allowing illegal coal mining and transportation under their watch.

The panel, constituted in April 2022, was mandated to ensure compliance with the Supreme Court's and the National Green Tribunal's ban on hazardous "rat-hole" coal mining and to keep a check on illegal transportation of coal in Meghalaya.

"Framing of a comprehensive action plan by the State Govt. for the entire State of Meghalaya, within a period of 15 days, to stop illegal coal mining activities including transportation, which is of utmost necessity," the committee's report said.

Observing that the illegal coal trade in Meghalaya had become "faceless", the Justice Katakey committee noted that authorities had struggled to identify the principal operators behind the illegal extraction and transportation of coal despite large-scale seizures and the existence of unmonitored open pits.

The National Green Tribunal banned rat-hole coal mining in Meghalaya in April 2014. The Supreme Court subsequently upheld the ban.

CJP invites farmers to join protest at Delhi's Jantar Mantar

Press Trust of india
NEW DELHI

The Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) on Sunday, on the second day of its protest over alleged examination irregularities and the NEET paper leak, invited farmer groups to join its demonstration at Delhi's Jantar Mantar.

CJP's founder Abhijeet Dipke said that the protest at will remain in place on Monday and is expected to draw larger participation.

Mr. Dipke sought support from farmer unions and reiterated the demand for Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation.

"The protest will continue tomorrow as well and the crowd is expected to increase as farmer unions have extended their support and will join us tomorrow," Mr. Dipke said, addressing the protest. "I appeal to farmers across India to come and stand with students at Jantar Mantar," he said, adding that students had supported farmers when they were fighting for their rights.

India-EU trade pact to be signed by December: Goyal

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Piyush Goyal

India and the 27-nation European Union will sign the free trade agreement (FTA) by December and are likely to implement the pact by February-March next year, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday.

On January 27 this year, India and the EU announced the conclusion of negotiations for the "mother of all deals".

"Now, with almost zero duty, almost the entire European market will be open for us. The EU's FTA (free trade agreement) will be signed by December and will be effective by February-March," Mr. Goyal said at an interaction with chartered accountants in Mumbai.

He also said that U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer is coming to India this week to hold trade pact talks with him. "The whole world is looking towards India," he added. Under the India-EU FTA, about 93% of Indian shipments will enjoy duty-free access to the 27-nation bloc, while imports of luxury cars and wines from the EU will become less expensive.

Taken together, India and the EU account for 25% of the global GDP and one-third (about $11 trillion) of international trade (about $33 trillion).

MVA boycotts customary tea party held by government

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance boycotted the Maharashtra government's customary tea party organised on the eve of the legislative session to protest against the "failed administration of the State government".

The MVA criticised the government for not providing satisfactory answers on many issues, including drought, farmers' issues, rise in atrocities against women, drug trafficking, and the deteriorating law and order in the State.

The government should make farmers' 7/12 extracts (*saat baara utara* land records) debt-free instead of trapping them in technicalities, the MVA leaders said.

The government's farm loan waiver is fraudulent and farmers have been trapped in terms and conditions, the MVA leaders alleged. Congress leaders in the State accused the BJP-led government of corruption, alleging that contractors had to pay large commissions to get bills for work. Funds allocated for the Jal Jeevan Mission, and many development works, were revised downwards, the Opposition said.

With 2 more MPs, Shinde says 'Operation Tiger' wins

Six of the nine MPs from the Shiv Sena (UBT) have signed a letter forming a separate group, and have also met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla; Ashtikar, Omraje Nimbalkar latest to switch sides

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

Operation Tiger is successful, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde announced on Sunday, adding he had never left any operation incomplete. Two of the six Lok Sabha members of the Shiv Sena (UBT) on Sunday announced that they were slated to join Mr. Shinde.

Nagesh Patil Ashtikar, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP from Hingoli, and Omraje Nimbalkar, the party MP from Dharashiv, cited lack of development funds as one of the primary reasons for taking the decision.

Mr. Ashtikar blamed the Shiv Sena (UBT) leaders for speaking ill against them, claiming that they took the decision only after Uddhav Thackeray's party leaders spoke in a derogatory manner against them. "Till June 18, we had not taken any decision," he said in a video statement.

Meanwhile, top sources in the Shiv Sena confirmed to *The Hindu* that all the six MPs of the Shiv Sena (UBT) had already signed a letter forming a separate group, and had also met Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. They are slated to merge with the Shiv Sena, a senior leader said. "There were quite a few obstacles at the last minute. But we have successfully overcome them. We had support from the central BJP leadership," a leader told *The Hindu*.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Deputy CMs Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Pawar in Mumbai on Sunday. PTI

When Mr. Shinde was asked about the developments on Sunday evening, he said, "Those who know me, know that we do not leave any operation incomplete." It referred to the defection of six of the nine MPs of Shiv Sena (UBT). The two-third majority would save them from disqualification proceedings, Sena leaders said. At least three of these six MPs are slated to hold rallies in their own constituencies on Monday.

"Operation Tiger is successful. The body is healthy," Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis added, while interjecting Mr. Shinde on Sunday.

Uddhav slams BJP

Amid the developments of Operation Tiger, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray hit out at the BJP on Sunday, during his public rally in Mumbai North East. "Though the Shiv Sena fought against the Congress for so many decades, the Congress never tried to break away our party. It is the BJP's sin," he said.

The six MPs who are slated to break away from the Shiv Sena (UBT) are – Sanjay Dina Patil, Sanjay Jadhav, Sanjay Deshmukh, Bhausaheb Wakchaure, Mr. Ashtikar, and Mr. Nimbalkar.

On Sunday, Mr. Nimbalkar held a closed door meeting with his party cadre in his home constituency. Thereafter, he announced his decision publicly. "We will go in the Shiv Sena Shinde group and we will work under the leadership of Eknath Shinde*ji*. I have not taken this decision for any position or for money. I have also discussed with my people. So far, I have only received the love and blessings of the Shiv Sena chief. And irrespective of whatever is being said against us by anybody, we will not speak a word against *Matoshree* (residence of the Thackerays)," he said.

Trinamool's minority cell head quits, joins the rebels 'for the sake of people'

Senjuti Sengupta
KOLKATA

Mosaraf Hossain, president of the Trinamool Congress's minority cell, joined the Ritabrata Banerjee-led rebel group in the West Bengal Assembly on Sunday.

Mr. Hossain, the MLA for Itahar in Uttar Dinajpur district, told presspersons that he had submitted his resignation letter to Mamata Banerjee citing family issues.

"My mother is not well. I just returned from Mecca after Haj. I can't even attend the Assembly sessions regularly due to her health condition. I need to be with her all the time. It is not possible for me to attend the Assembly session regularly. In such a situation, I have decided to resign," Mr. Hossain said.

The leader said he was in regular touch with Mr. Banerjee, the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly. After he rebelled, Mr. Banerjee was expelled from the Trinamool. He has claimed the backing of 65 rebel MLAs.

"Since the government has changed, it has not been possible to work like I used to do earlier. I have extended my support to Ritabrata for the sake of the people of my constituency and their development," Mr. Hossain said.

Mosaraf Hossain submitted his resignation letter to Mamata Banerjee citing family issues

Warm ties with CM

Praising Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari, Mr. Hossain said, "Our current Chief Minister had once served as an observer in Uttar Dinajpur during his stint with our party. I developed a wonderful relationship with him since then. My only target is the development of my area. I want to take part in all his development works in the future."

In a recent rejig in the Trinamool party organisation on June 5, Mr. Hossain was retained as the president of the minority cell. The restructuring was carried out two days after 59 Trinamool legislators joined a rebellion and backed Mr. Banerjee as the new Leader of the Opposition instead of Sobhandeb Chattopadhyaya in the Assembly. Mr. Banerjee and another MLA, Sandipan Saha, had alleged that their signatures were forged in the letter sent nominating Mr. Chattopadhyay as the Opposition leader.

Mr. Hossain was first fielded from Itahar by the Trinamool in the 2021 Assembly election by dropping the two-time MLA, Amal Acharya. He retained the seat in 2026.

His resignation comes amid the Assembly session, which started on Friday.

Since the BJP government came to power in the State, 59 Trinamool legislators and 20 MPs have openly rebelled against the party and some have accused Trinamool national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee of mishandling the party. Three Rajya Sabha members – Sukhendu Sekhar Roy, Sushmita Dev and Prakash Chik Barik – resigned from their parliamentary posts and organisational roles. Days after being appointed adviser to the party's national working committee, former Minister Jyotipriya Mallick quit on Friday.

Voting should be recognised as a fundamental right, says Ramesh

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The right to vote should be recognised as a fundamental right to ensure the highest level of judicial review and protection, along with safeguards against voter suppression or arbitrary exclusions during exercises such as the special intensive revision (SIR), senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said on Sunday.

Mr. Ramesh made the remarks in the context of the recent Supreme Court judgment declaring the right to walk on a footpath a fundamental right. Providing historical context on the evolution of fundamental rights and electoral provisions, he argued that while the top court has already in the past recognised voters' right to know candidates' criminal records, funding sources, and has protected ballot secrecy and enabled NOTA, but voting itself continues to remain a statutory right. "All related rights are fundamental, but not the core right they depend on," he said.

Jairam Ramesh

He said elevating the right to vote has become essential in the present context. "With the blatantly partisan functioning of the Election Commission of India working at the behest of the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister having been brutally exposed, it is now time to elevate the right to vote as a fundamental right that would offer it the highest level of judicial review and protection," he said.

"It would be a powerful step in putting in place safeguards against voter suppressions or arbitrary disqualifications that have taken place in different states in astronomical numbers under the SIR process. It would also mean greater Supreme Court vigilance over the functioning of the Election Commission," he added.

Referring to the Constituent Assembly debates, Mr. Ramesh said an Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas was set up under Sardar Patel. At its meeting on April 21-22, 1947, there was discussion on making the right to vote a fundamental right. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Babu Jagjivan Ram supported the proposal, he said, while Sardar Patel, C. Rajagopalachari and others opposed it.

"Sardar Patel himself took the position that universal adult franchise was, in itself, an implicit fundamental right. This is the background to Article 326 which provides for elections based on universal adult suffrage," he said.

He also cited Justice Ajay Rastogi's dissenting opinion in the *Anoop Baranwal vs. Union of India* judgment of March 2023, which held that the right to vote is a fundamental right.

BJP is set to script history in Punjab in upcoming polls, says Nitin Nabin

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

BJP president Nitin Nabin on Sunday said that Punjab was ready for change as its people were looking up to the BJP with "high hope and expectations". The State goes to the polls in 2027.

"Punjab not only protects India's borders but also safeguards the soul of India. Bringing Punjab out of the present crisis and making it secure, prosperous, and strong is the core agenda of the BJP. The BJP is set to script history in Punjab," he said at events in Jalandhar and Ludhiana.

"Punjab is the land of the Gurus' teachings, the penance of saints, and the blood of martyrs. It represents a living tradition of service, dedication and sacrifice," he said.

BJP president Nitin Nabin performs yoga on the occasion of the International Day of Yoga at Phagwara in Punjab on Sunday. ANI

"Every grain of Punjab's soil reminds us that a nation is not sustained merely by power; it is shaped by the values imparted by saints, and the soul of India resides in them. The rulers may change, but the soul of India has never changed. Whenever society has gone astray, saints have shown the right path. Whenever darkness increased, saints lit the lamp of hope, and whenever divisions arose in society, saints worked to unite people," he said.

Drug menace

Mr. Nabin, who is on a three-day visit to Punjab, said the State was grappling with the menace of drugs and there was a need for a unified crusade against drug abuse.

"Drug addiction has become a curse for the people of Punjab. We must reject it outright. It is destroying lives and devastating countless households. On this International Yoga Day, let us collectively pledge to eradicate this scourge from Punjab and the entire nation. We will not tolerate anything that weakens our roots or allows this poison to enter our society," he said.

"India is now marching forward with a singular national objective. The mantra of '*Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas*' remains the driving force guiding the country towards becoming a developed nation by 2047," he added.

Rahul's resistance plank needs viable pathway to power

NEWS ANALYSIS

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which recently completed 12 consecutive years in office at the Centre, has often ridiculed the "multiple relaunches" of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

To underscore its claim that Mr. Gandhi is not a serious political challenger, the BJP has frequently deployed a battery of spokespersons and Ministers to rebut his statements, often seeking to portray him as politically inconsistent.

Against this backdrop, Mr. Gandhi's address at the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) meeting on June 8 merits closer attention. The speech not only criticised the BJP but also framed the political contest in terms of neutrality of institutions and the need for organised resistance to the institutions' alignment with the BJP's narrative. This approach marks an evolution in the Opposition leader's political argument.

For years, he has accused the Narendra Modi government of undermining constitutional institutions. At the INDIA meeting, however, he advanced the proposition that Opposition parties were fighting their battle with outdated tools. Those instruments worked only when the Indian state "provided a fair field for them to operate in", he argued.

'No level-playing field'

"That field doesn't exist any more," Mr. Gandhi said. "The BJP controls the legal system. The BJP controls the bureaucracy. The BJP controls the intelligence agencies. The BJP even controls the Election Commission (EC)."

Beyond sending a message to INDIA bloc constituents, his repeated invocation of institutions serves a dual political purpose. First, it mobilises Opposition supporters by framing the contest as one

Rahul Gandhi

between constitutional values and political power. Simultaneously, it signals to officials in these institutions that their actions are being publicly scrutinised and recorded as part of a larger democratic struggle.

"The entire architecture – media, social media, the legal system, bureaucracy, intelligence agencies – is aligned to keep this government in power," Mr. Gandhi said.

These institutions, including the EC, are thus portrayed as active participants in furthering a particular political narrative. This is where the theme of resistance emerges as a significant trope.

"The Congress party is a party of resistance. It does not require the neutrality of the Indian state to operate. In fact, the more the institutions of the Indian state are throttled, the more aggressively the Congress party will fight to defend the Constitution," Mr. Gandhi said.

"You don't need the bureaucracy. You don't need the intelligence agencies. You need the act of resistance – meaning: I will resist. I will not allow injustice. Full stop, the end. It is a spirit. It is not an organisation," he added, invoking the Congress's role in the freedom movement.

Whether this strategy can translate into electoral success remains an open question. Resistance can mobilise supporters around questions of democratic accountability, but political parties require a compelling alternative narrative and a robust organisation on the ground to convert sentiment into votes.

The party must also build a coalition of interests among voters and devise effective messaging to translate dissatisfaction with the government into electoral support.

Effective messaging

Mr. Gandhi's emphasis on social justice and backward classes is yet to yield significant electoral dividends for the Congress. His latest outreach to students and Gen Z appears to be part of a broader effort to cultivate a new political constituency.

The challenge before Mr. Gandhi, therefore, is to convert a narrative of democratic resistance into a broad-based political project capable of persuading voters that the Congress can effectively take on the BJP's organisational and electoral dominance. If the resistance is to become more than a slogan, it must evolve into a political coalition, with a credible programme and path to power. Whether Mr. Gandhi can make that transition may well determine not only his own political future but also the trajectory of Opposition politics in India.

GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY
DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

NOTICE FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

EoI No. 13031/DIT/2026/01 Puducherry, Dated: 22-06-2026

"EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR PARTNERING IN SETTING UP OF AI CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN PUDUCHERRY"

Offers are invited from intending corporate / academic / research organizations registered under the Companies Act 1956 / relevant statutes of the Government of India / State Governments for PARTNERING IN SETTING UP OF AI CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN THE UNION TERRITORY OF PUDUCHERRY. The EoI details, terms and conditions, technical and operational requirements and time schedule are part of the document. The document can be downloaded from **https://py.gov.in** (Notice Board – Tenders). The offers with the required documents may be submitted on or before 06th July 2026.

DIRECTOR
DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

No: 82/DIP/AD(PRESS)/ADVT/2026-27

ODISHA CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION LIMITED
BHUBANESWAR, ODISHA,
PIN:751012, Tel No.(0674) 2562020
e-Mail: theoccltd@odishaconstruction.com;
GSTIN - 21AAACO2571K2ZM

"e"-Procurement Notice No. 07 /OCCL/2026-27 (on-line)

Tenders are invited on EPC-Turn Key basis for the following works :

Sl No.	Name of Work	Name of Division	Bid Identification No.	Approx. Value of Work	Bid Security (through On-Line transfer/as per DTCN) (in Rs.)	Period of Completion	Availability & Submission of Tender (on-line)
01	Separate pipe line from Salia Reservoir to Intake point at INS chilika (Solopokhari pump house) to supply water throughout the year to meet 60 Lakh litres per day including O & M of the project for a period of five years.	Khurda Irrigation Division	OCCL-HQP/01/2026-27	Rs.23.00 Crore	Rs.23,00,000/-	12 (Twelve) Calendar months	From 23.06.2026, 03.30 PM to 14.07.2026, 5.30 PM.

Procurement Officer : Managing Director, OCCL.
Date of Opening of the Tender : 15.07.2026, 12.00 Noon onwards.
Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal: https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in

34001/375/2627
MANAGING DIRECTOR
OIPR-34001/34120/1/26-27/0011

INBRIEF

CISF to be deployed at five more prisons in J&K

The Union Home Ministry is set to deploy the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) at five more prisons in Jammu & Kashmir, including a high-security prison in Kathua, a CISF spokesperson said on Sunday. The high-security jail, which will house inmates involved in serious offences, including terrorism, is yet to be operationalised, the official added. The CISF was earlier given the charge of providing armed security to the Central jails in Srinagar and Jammu (Kot Bhalwal) in October 2023. The force is responsible for securing both the inner and outer perimeters of these sensitive facilities through a combination of trained manpower, modern surveillance systems, and strict access control measures, the CISF spokesperson said.

CBSE announces Class 12 re-evaluation results

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) declared the revaluation results on Sunday for students who applied for verification and re-evaluation of their Class 12 Board exam answer sheets, with over 87% of the applications announced in the first phase. "The outcomes of the remaining applications will be available in phases, and the entire process is expected to be completed soon," it said. Students can check their updated marks on the official CBSE website results.digilocker.gov.in using their login credentials, the Board said. The Board was recently embroiled in a controversy after some Class 12 students said that the scanned copies of their answer sheets uploaded by CBSE did not match their handwriting, raising concerns over possible mismatches in the OSM system. PTI

Yoga has become world's largest celebration: Modi

The ancient practice plays a crucial role in promoting physical health, mental well-being, and active ageing, says Prime Minister while participating in International Day of Yoga event in Kolkata

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Leading the way: Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined 35,000 people at an event in Kolkata. DPR PMO

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said yoga united and brought everyone together, and had become the world's largest community celebration.

"June 21, in some parts of earth marks the longest day, and because of International Yoga Day, this day has also become the day of the world's largest collective celebration," the Prime Minister said while participating in an event here to mark the occasion.

Mr. Modi, who participated in yoga along with 35,000 people on Red Road here, referred to Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, Maharshi Aurobindo, and Lahiri Mahasaya, stating that they took the "yoga tradition to new heights".

Observing that the sense of connection is the very essence of yoga, the Prime Minister said the whole country and the entire world seemed connected to one another, which was the true power of yoga.

In September 2014, Mr. Modi proposed at the United Nations that June 21 be celebrated as International Yoga Day.

On December 11, 2014, the UN officially declared June 21 the International Day of Yoga, with support from 193 member states and 173 co-sponsors. Since then, Yoga Day is celebrated worldwide every year.

'Healthy ageing'

In Kolkata, the Prime Minister was seen interacting with the people and correcting the postures of some of them.

Referring to this year's Yoga Day theme, "Yoga for healthy ageing", Mr. Modi said the ancient practice played a crucial role in promoting physical health, mental well-being, and active ageing, thereby improving the quality of life.

Highlighting the benefits of yoga, the Prime Minister said the practice taught people to be lifelong learners of body and mind.

"Our goal should be to be more flexible at 40 than we were at 20; more energetic at 50 than we were at 30. It helps tune our bodies for flexibility, maintains high energy level," he said.

The Prime Minister said people should not restrict yoga to only particular occasions, and they must make it part of their lives.

"Let us pledge not to limit yoga to just one day or a single event. Let us make yoga an integral part of our lives, our families, and the lives of future generations," the Prime Minister said.

Grand event

This was the first time Yoga Day celebrations were held in Kolkata with a lot of fanfare. West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari and several other BJP leaders and Ministers were present. The venue and the Kolkata riverfront were decked up over the past several days. Screens livestreaming the event were set up in several parts of the city.

"Celebrating International Yoga Day in such a vibrant city is truly an honour," the Prime Minister posted on social media.

Army personnel of the Dorje Division perform yoga on the occasion of International Day of Yoga in Ladakh on Sunday. ANI

From mountains to seas, armed forces celebrate Yoga Day

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

From the icy heights of the remote Siachen Glacier to the vast Rann of Kutch, and from the hills of the northeast to the naval platforms at sea, the armed forces observed the International Day of Yoga across the country, reaffirming their commitment to physical fitness and mental resilience.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh led the celebrations in Shillong, as he, accompanied by Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh and other Air Force officers, took part in a yoga session hosted by the Eastern Air Command.

The Chief of Defence Staff, General N.S. Raja Subramani, led the Yoga Day celebrations organised by the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff at the National War Memorial in Delhi.

Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi fronted the celebrations with troops in Tezpur, Assam. "His participation alongside soldiers in the eastern theatre symbolised the Army's continued emphasis on fitness, resilience, and operational readiness in all terrains and conditions," a senior official said.

In the national capital, the Army hosted the event at the Cariappa Parade Ground at Delhi Cantonment. Defence attaches from more than 17 countries also joined the event, reflecting the global significance of yoga and its growing acceptance as a path to health, harmony and well-being, the Army official said.

Army jawans and others, positioned in a huge grid formation, stretched their arms and legs to perform various *asanas*.

Four killed, 30 injured in bus-truck collision in W.B.; rescue operation under way

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

At least four persons were killed and around 30 others seriously injured after a bus collided with a truck on National Highway 27 at Moynaguri in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district on Sunday.

Local MP Jayanta Roy said the bus was carrying around 40 passengers at the time of the accident. "At least 32 of them were injured and rushed to the hospital after the accident. Four of them died during treatment. The injured also include 15 women," he said.

Mr. Roy said senior police officials reached the spot soon after the crash, carried out rescue operations and launched an investigation into the incident.

Police personnel near the mangled bus after its collision on NH-27 in Bengal on Sunday. PTI

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari announced an ex gratia payment of ₹5 lakh for the families of each deceased. In a post on X, the said: "To assist the affected families during this incredibly difficult time, the State government will provide the following compensation: ₹5 lakh to the next of kin of those who lost their lives, ₹1 lakh for those grievously injured, and ₹50,000 for those who suffered minor injuries".

Mr. Adhikari said the entire cost of treatment for the injured will be fully borne by the State government. Expressing his condolences, the Chief Minister said the district administration and police were actively engaged in rescue and relief efforts.

Two killed as luxury car crashes into road divider in Thane

Press Trust of India
THANE

Two persons were killed, and another sustained serious injuries after their speeding luxury car crashed into a road divider and overturned multiple times in Thane district of Maharashtra in the early hours of Sunday, the police said.

The accident took place around 4 a.m. on a stretch of the Mumbai-Vadodara highway near Badlapur.

The deceased, Yogesh Dighe (26) and Rikeba Jacob (24), were residents of Badlapur. Another occupant, identified as Anand, suffered serious injuries and is undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Thane. According to initial probe, the car, a BMW, allegedly being driven at high speed, hit the divider, causing the driver to lose control, and overturned multiple times before coming to a halt. The police are examining whether the driver was under the influence of alcohol.

The wreckage of the luxury car in Thane district of Maharashtra on Sunday. PTI

Corps with a calm exterior take to the art of serenity

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Several members of the diplomatic corps in New Delhi on Sunday took part in a yoga session along with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to mark the International Day of Yoga.

"Joined the Diplomatic Corps at New Delhi to celebrate the #InternationalDayofYoga. As PM @narendramodi highlighted, we must strive to make yoga a part of our lives, part of our families, and a part of our coming generations. #YogaForHealthyAgeing," Mr. Jaishankar wrote on *X*.

The Australian High Commission and French Embassy here released special videos to mark the occasion.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and others perform yoga at an International Day of Yoga event in New Delhi. PTI

The video by the Australian High Commission was shared on X by the country's envoy Philip Green.

"From New Delhi to Chennai, Mumbai to Kolkata & Bengaluru - Team Australia in India is moving together! Watch our teams across India unite for a powerful #InternationalYogaDay celebration. Yoga truly connects us all across borders and cultures Australia India," he posted.

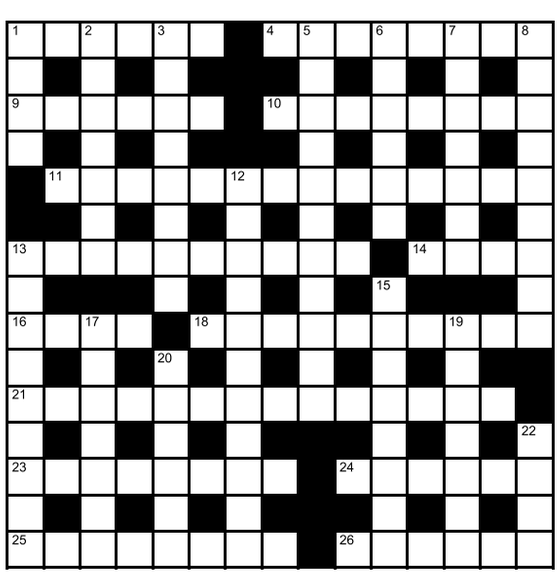
The French Embassy's video showed its members taking part in a yoga session on the embassy premises, with a cut-out model of the iconic Eiffel Tower in the backdrop.

TH CROSSWORD + 14826

(set by Hypatia)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Pick up spot for fish (6)
4 Events from India captured in records and poems (8)
9 Most terrible blight initially seen in low grass (6)
10 One popping a question in favour of sitter (8)
11 Singer abroad did release heavy metal covers (7,7)
13 Dismissed and sued her (7,3)
14 Starts to accept transactions through Amazon for staple food (4)
16 Collector's item from foundation returned on time (4)
18 Reverend asked to label a pretty girl's trinkets (10)
21 Squeal with rum or pleasing cocktail (9,5)
23 Say, men from the East bored by English book on nuclear physicist (8)
24 Secure link (6)
25 Rejects vitamin given to biased patients regularly (8)
26 Overhead ventilation surrounding entrance (6)

Down

1 Excited about starters from Bengaluru's sushi bars (4)
2 Bureau's chief of investigation probing gangster hurt from the bottom (7)
3 Showed cooks embracing recipe boosting cold soups (8)
5 Stroll around centre of Saudi - Arab temple complex (11)
6 Attire concealing standing order to kill (6)
7 Remains close to fighting in clean contempt (7)
8 Abandoned felines in cast (5,4)
12 Bananas contained in a trawler heading out to deep location (6,5)
13 Doctor died! Nurse - not needed! (9)
15 Let down beaten side replacing England's captain (8)
17 Those who censor advertisements? (7)
19 Somewhat cordial in eager race (7)
20 Mother often choosing an eternal phrase in prayer (6)
22 AI exchange in conversation generating note (4)

SUDOKU

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

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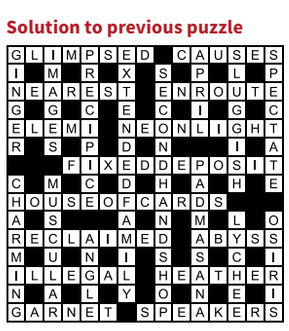
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

All convey the same truth

Sri Kesava Vajapeya Swamy said in a discourse that the Vedas contain the *Karma Kanda* (rituals and duties) and the *Jnana Kanda* (spiritual knowledge). However, Bhakti (devotion) is hidden within them. Just as the river Sarasvathī flows invisibly beneath the confluence at Prayag, devotion remains concealed within the Vedas. Karma and knowledge without devotion are incomplete and do not yield their highest benefit.

The Bhagavad Gita teaches that spiritual knowledge and devotion do not bear fruit unless one engages in righteous action. Following the scriptural duties prescribed by the Vedas removes sins and purifies the individual.

The Vedas describe many *samskaras* (sacraments). Since elaborate Vedic sacrifices are beyond the capability of most people in this yuga, ordinary devotees are encouraged to engage in nama sankirtana – the chanting of the divine names of God. Daily disciplines and rituals help control the senses and keep a person on the righteous path. Such practices contribute not only to personal spiritual growth but also to *loka kshema* – the welfare of the entire world. Ramanuja taught that for ordinary people, simply walking to a temple and worshipping the Lord with devotion is equivalent to performing a yajna. Sage Vyasa taught through the Bhagavata Purana that listening to the glories of the Lord (sravanam) itself is a form of yajna. Andal emphasised devotion through singing the Lord's names and contemplating Him with the mind: "Sing with the mouth and meditate with the mind." The Vedas, the Bhagavad Gita, the Bhagavata Purana, the Ramayana, the Azhwars and the great Acharyas all convey the same truth.

Hospital cover: pricey/costly either way

COVERNOTE

K. Nitya Kalyani

In the previous instalment of Cover Note we saw the angst over rising hospitalisation premium and revisited the idea, "Why not do away with the basic policy and keep only a top-up policy with, say, a ₹10 lakh threshold? A medical expenses fund can meet the first ₹10 lakh and further expenses can be claimed from top-up policy."

That would work up to a point. If you can't get a basic policy or failed to renew/lost coverage, then pick this option. If you are doing this exercise volitionally, how do you decide if it works? You have to start with some assumptions, educated guesses. What kind of hospitalisation am I likely to face in the future and maximum expense? If your answer is 'less than ₹10 lakh,' here are the options. If you have a basic policy, you can make a claim and if you don't, the medical expenses fund will come in handy. If you wind up with very expensive surgeries/hospital stays, the top- up policy will also come into play after ₹10 lakh is spent via the basic policy or from your pocket. So, top up is for catastrophic claims.

The math

The idea is sensible in principle. Look at the math. If you pay ₹50,000 for a ₹10 lakh cover, in 10 years you would have paid half the sum insured as premium. You can be peeved if no claim is made. Of course, over 10 years, the premium would have doubled so you may have paid more than half the sum insured! So, saving this as a medical fund is a reasonable idea but whether it works depends on age, medical status and whether you will keep the money for intended use.

The wins

Let us see the pros of the idea. We already saw we save on the bigger premium for the basic cover and pay only the smaller premium for the top up.

Plus, you don't have to deal with claims for the first ₹10 lakh, saving quite some effort, paperwork and tension. No waiting for pre-authorisation, wondering if your claim will be paid in full, hesitating to spend on a higher rent room and stressing about cashless approval or chasing reimbursement claims.

So, if you can set aside ₹10 lakh and for good measure, add the notional premium you would have otherwise paid each year, wisely invest it, make it grow and keep it intact till its time of use. The ability to do depends on economic status, liquid assets, stable income and whether or not about ₹10 lakh hospital bill worries you.

The fund option is more efficient economically than insuring the first tranche of risk. Large companies use this strategy of retaining small losses and insuring only catastrophic ones, thus saving on premium.

The flip side

Guessing the type/size of claims isn't easy. What if, instead of the rare ₹25 lakh expense, you repeatedly incur ₹5-₹10 lakh across many years. The base policy renews the ₹10 lakh cover every year and pays out. Your fund is a standalone protection and will run out after two/three such occurrences.

And then, there can be cancer or kidney disease with expenses recurring over many years, repeated hospitalisations and ICU care.

Not only surgery or hospital stay, diagnostics and medication are costlier too. Add to this loss of wages or employment due to illness, and the situation would be unbearable for a medium income family.

So, strategies must differ depending on financial resilience and assessment of healthcare needs. There is more and we will see them in the upcoming instalment of Cover Note.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history.)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

ILLUSTRATION-SAAI

Basis of your investment decisions, product choice

You have to cut through the hype and understand how the product is suitable so as to achieve your desired financial goal within the investment horizon set by you

THE RIGHT ONE

Joydeep Sen

The basis of portfolio allocation decision is financial goals, risk tolerance, investment horizon, etc. Here, we will scratch the surface on the multiple investment products crying for attention.

Underlying for product

Any investment product invests in the underlying market. Conventionally, underlying markets are equity stocks, bonds, and gold. There are also new concepts such as real estate where you can invest via Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and infrastructure via Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs). Potentially, there could be other investment assets like commodities (other than gold or silver), but these are yet to emerge as popular ones via investment vehicles. For HNIs, there are things like art but these are not available in the retail space.

The staple investment base is equity stocks and bonds, also known as fixed income or debt. Equity represents part ownership of the firm whose stock you are buying. As the firm grows, and new investors come in, the value improves and price increases. This leads to returns from investments in equity. Bonds represent 'I owe you' or loans given by the investor to the issuing entity. There is a defined interest payable on a defined date and maturity of bond or debenture is defined as well. The typical aspect is equity has given relatively higher returns than debt but has been relatively more volatile as prices fluctuate more. Gold is known as a 'portfolio diversifier;' with some allocation to gold, the volatility-adjusted return of a portfolio is better.

> At bottom of pyramid are bank term deposits where there is a defined rate of interest and maturity and the rate is not market dependent

> Every investment product will have an investment objective, portfolio disclosure and track record unless it is a newly launched product.

At the bottom of the pyramid, there are bank term deposits where there is a defined rate of interest and maturity. The interest rate is not dependent on any market condition. Bank FDs are not transferable. At the higher end of the pyramid, there are derivatives where the base is equity/government bonds/ commodities, which are more risky.

Investment vehicles

You can invest directly. You can buy equity stocks from the exchange via stock broker. These days there are multiple apps where you can do KYC online and start buying/selling stocks. For buying bonds online, there is Reserve Bank of India's platform called Direct Gilt, where you can buy government instruments. For buying corporate bonds, there are Online Bond Provider platforms (OBPPs). You can invest in gold via Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) or Electronic Gold Receipts (EGRs).

However, to manage a fund of equities and/or bonds, you need a professional. Therein comes the concept of investment vehicle: a fund management entity which will run a fund and will charge a fee.

The most popular investment vehicle is a mutual fund (MF), where you can buy units of a professionally-managed fund and liquidity is high. There are portfolio management services (PMS) with a minimum ticket size of ₹50 lakh and alternative investment funds (AIF) with a minimum ticket of ₹1 crore. Insurers offer Unit Linked Insurance Plans (ULIPs).

Choosing a product

The investment vehicles mentioned earlier, known as product manufacturers, offer a plethora of products, which are a combination of the base mentioned earlier with packaging.

You have to look at:

1. The risk in the underlying base: equity is more volatile than debt; within equity small cap or sectoral/thematic funds are relatively more volatile. In debt, higher rated bonds carry less credit risk.

2. Required investment horizon: historic performance of any asset i.e. equity or debt, gives an idea how volatile it has been, hence how long you should be in the product at the minimum.

Every investment product will have an investment objective, portfolio disclosure and track record unless it is a newly launched product. There is a concept called drawdown, which shows in the worst phase of performance, what was the return from that product. You need a horizon longer than the drawdown and recovery phase.

3. Liquidity: you may need cash flow at any time for an eventuality. You need to be aware upfront on product liquidity. Some products are not liquid by definition e.g. RBI Floating Rate Bonds. Equity is liquid but it is a function of the market level at that point of time. If the market is correcting you may redeem the fund subject to exit load but you would be taking home less.

While liquidity is desirable, it is not compulsory everything in portfolio should be liquid. There would be a certain liquid component, say 10% and a major 'saleable' or 'if required' component.

(Joydeep Sen is a corporate trainer (financial markets) and author)

Does age determine asset allocation?

THINKINVESTOR

For goal-based investments (the core portfolio), asset allocation is a function of the required return (called the minimum acceptable return) to achieve the goal and not your age

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

Asset allocation is a vital step in the portfolio construction process. We have said you need three variables to determine asset allocation viz. time horizon for the goal, the amount needed to achieve the goal (terminal wealth) and the amount you can save monthly to get there. Let's now address whether your asset allocation is also a function of your age.

Risk factor

Many consider age as a crucial factor in investment decision making. The argument is we tend to become less risky or more conservative as we age. That risk appetite gradually reduces as we age is mostly true. But should age be a factor to fix asset allocation?

To understand this, consider two individuals, one aged 30 and the other 45, both want to buy a house 10 years hence. The asset allocation for them is a function of the same three variables- time horizon for goal, terminal wealth and monthly savings earmarked for the goal. So, age does not directly impact asset allocation process. It could indirectly feed into your asset allocation process via aspirations. The individual who is younger may be risk seeking and aspire for a larger house, and therefore need larger terminal wealth. Or the individual may decide to save less for the same terminal wealth as the other. A larger terminal wealth for the same amount of savings or a lower savings amount for the same terminal wealth will both need higher allocation to equity.

Conclusion

The reason most consider age as an important factor in asset allocation process is a popular thumb rule based on it, which is 100 minus age. Based on this rule, two individuals, both aged 30, should have 70% allocation to equity. Unfortunately, the argument does not consider income volatility of the individuals. What if one individual has a stable income and the other has a large proportion of the income that is variable pay? Or what if one individual has stable employment and the other works in a cyclical industry in the private sector?

Also, the thumb rule does not consider that an investment earmarked to achieve a life goal has a finite time horizon. For goal-based investments (core portfolio), asset allocation is a function of the required return (called the minimum acceptable return) to achieve the goal, not your age.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges — Loan amount 5 lakh, Tenure 5 year — Loan amount 1 lakh, Tenure 5 years — (% of loan amount)

Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
HDFC Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	2,124 onwards	Up to Rs 6,500
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Flat Rs. 99
State Bank of India	10.00-15.00	10,624-11,895	2,125-2,379	Up to 1.50% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
ICICI Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	2,124 onwards	Up to 2%
Bank of Baroda*	10.15-18.00	10,660-12,697	2,132-2,539	Up to 2% (Max. Rs 10,000)
Axis Bank	8.95 onwards	10,367 onwards	2,073 onwards	Up to 2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Up to 5%
Bank of India	10.85-16.15	10,834-12,199	2,167-2,440	Up to 1% (Min. Rs 250; Max. Rs 15,000)
Canara Bank	9.70-15.15	10,550-11.934	2,110-2,387	0.25% (Rs 500 - Rs 2,500)
Punjab National Bank	10.25-16.80	10,685-12,373	2,137-2,475	Up to 1%
HSBC Bank	9.75 onwards	10,562 onwards	2,112 onwards	Up to 2%
Federal Bank	11.75 - 18.99	11,059 - 12,968	2,212 - 2,594	Up to 3%
Union Bank of India	8.90 - 12.65	10,355-11,287	2,071-2,257	Up to 1% (Max. Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	10.00-30.00	10,624-16,177	2,125-3,235	Up to 3.93%
Punjab & Sind Bank	9.60-13.85	10,525-11,595	2,105-2,319	0.50%-1%
Indian Overseas Bank	10.25 onwards	10,685 onwards	2,137 onwards	Up to 0.75%
UCO Bank	9.95 - 13.20	10,611-11,428	2,122-2,286	Up to 1% (Min. Rs 750)
IDFC FIRST Bank	9.99 onwards	10,621 onwards	2,124 onwards	Up to 3.5%
Bank of Maharashtra	9.75-15.00	10,562-11,895	2,112-2,379	Up to 1% (Max. Rs 10,000)
Central Bank of India	11.25 onwards	10,934 onwards	2,187 onwards	Up to 1%
IndusInd Bank	10.49 onwards	10,744 onwards	2,149 onwards	Up to 3.5% (2% for instant personal loans for limited period)

*Interest concession of 0.10% to customers opting for group credit life insurance.

Car Loans

Rates and Charges — Loan amount 5 lakh, Tenure 5 years — (% of loan amount)

Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
Union Bank of India	7.50-10.00	10,019 - 10,684	Up to Rs 1,000
Punjab National Bank	7.60-10.70	10,043 - 10,797	Up to 0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500)
Bank of Baroda	7.60 - 11.35	10,043 - 10,959	Up to Rs. 2,000
Canara Bank	7.45-11.45	10,007 - 10,984	50% waiver on [0.25% (Rs 1,000 - Rs 5,000)]
Bank of India	7.60-12.55	10,043 - 11,262	Up to 0.25% (Rs. 2,500 - Rs. 10,000)
UCO Bank	7.35-10.00	9,983 - 10,624	0.5% (Max. Rs 5,000)
State Bank of India	8.80 - 9.85	10,331 - 10,587	Rs 750 - Rs 1,500
IDBI Bank	7.75-9.30	10,078 - 10,452	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	7.45-11.75	10,007 - 11,059	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
Indian Overseas Bank	7.55-12.00	10,031 - 11,122	NIL
ICICI Bank	8.40 onwards	10,234 onwards	Up to 2%
HDFC Bank	8.15 onwards	10,174 onwards	Up to 0.5% (Rs. 3,500 - Rs. 8,000)
Karnataka Bank	8.12-11.62	10,167 - 11,026	Up to 0.60% (Rs. 2,500 - Rs. 11,000)
Punjab and Sind Bank**	7.50-14.00	10,019 - 11,634	0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 15,000)
Indian Bank	7.50-9.65	10,019 - 10,513	Rs. 1,200
IDFC FIRST Bank	8.99 onwards	10,377 onwards	Up to Rs. 10,000
Central Bank of India	7.60-9.30	10,043 - 10,452	0.50%(Rs. 2,000 - Rs. 20,000)

*0.25% concession for home loan borrowers/other customers having at least 6 months of relationship with bank
**Concession of up to 50% on processing fee for PSB Apna Vahan Sugam.

Rates and charges as on June 17 — **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

TAIPEI

Taiwan to hold five days of combat readiness drills: Defence Ministry

REUTERS

Taiwan's military will hold a five-day combat readiness drill this week, the Defence Ministry said, as part of modernisation plans to shift its training focus to more realistic exercises simulating war. The "Immediate Combat Readiness Exercise" would start on Monday and run until Friday, it added. REUTERS

KYIV

Ukraine's battlefield shift has not solved its humanitarian crisis: IRC

REUTERS

Ukraine's stronger position in the war with Russia has yet to relieve the humanitarian crisis felt by millions of displaced Ukrainians and worsened by a plunge in aid spending, the head of the International Rescue Committee said. The UN calculates roughly 10 million people displaced in Ukraine due to the war. REUTERS

LONDON

Man charged over suspected anti-Muslim attacks in Edinburgh

AFP

Scottish authorities said on Saturday they charged a man in connection with attacks in Edinburgh that wounded five persons with U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer saying the suspect "appears to be motivated by anti-Muslim hatred". Mr. Starmer added that "he will face the full force of the law". AFP

COLOMBO

Wife of detained ex-Sri Lankan spy chief alleges harassment by officials

AFP

The wife of Suresh Sallay, the former Sri Lankan intelligence chief arrested in the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings, has alleged harassment by the Criminal Investigation Department. According to the letter sent by Manori Sallay, after her son and daughter paid a visit to their father, they were followed by a CID official. PTI

'Soldiers in Lebanon free to take action if under threat'

Reuters
BEIRUT/JERUSALEM

Israeli soldiers are free to act without restriction to eliminate threats in Lebanon, Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Sunday, adding troops remained in position in what Israel refers to as a security zone. A ceasefire with Iran-backed Hezbollah took effect on Friday after months of escalating violence, but on Saturday Israeli strikes killed at least 20 people in Lebanon, Lebanon's state news agency *NNA* reported.

Israel said the strikes were a response to projectiles fired by the Iran-backed group at its troops in southern Lebanon, prompting attacks on what an Israeli official described as "Hezbollah targets".

Israel Katz

A Hezbollah official said the group was committed to the ceasefire as long as Israel adheres to it, adding that Israeli forces do not have the right to freedom of movement in south Lebanon.

The official said Hezbollah forces have not fired on Israeli troops since 6.30 p.m. on Saturday.

Security sources said that Israel had also launched no major strikes on Lebanon since the same time. That represents the longest spell without major strikes since the war in Lebanon between Hezbollah militants and Israel began on March 2.

Later on Sunday, Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem rejected any Israeli security zone in Lebanon, after Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed his troops would remain in the country's south for "as long as necessary".

Israeli troops "remaining on Lebanese land is impossible. There are no security zones for Israel... we have a national army which deploys, and it is responsible for preserving sovereignty, and it is who we cooperate with," Mr. Qassem said in a televised address.

Starmer mulls political future as resignation pressure builds in party

Burnham is expected to be sworn in as a Member of Parliament today, increasing the urgency around U.K. PM's next move; Trump predicts Starmer would resign, while a U.K. Minister says there's no reason to think Labour leader will leave the post

Reuters
LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer was considering his political future on Sunday, after rival Andy Burnham's decisive election victory to Parliament prompted more Ministers in the governing Labour Party to call for him to go.

Struggling with some of the lowest popularity ratings for any British leader in modern political history, Mr. Starmer could decide as soon as Monday whether to step aside or fight a leadership contest against Mr. Burnham, one source said.

Tough call: Keir Starmer walks with Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy as he visits a housing development in north London. AP

That's the day Mr. Burnham will be sworn in as a lawmaker in the House of Commons. The scale of victory Mr. Burnham won for a parliamentary seat in northwestern England on Friday has piled pressure on Mr. Starmer, with dozens of lawmakers and some Ministers privately calling for him to set out a timetable for his departure to clear the way for the former Greater Manchester mayor.

A source with knowledge of the matter said Mr. Starmer was spending the weekend thinking about and discussing his position with his family but that an expected conversation with Mr. Burnham would clarify matters. "Keir likes to think about things," the source said.

Adding to the pressure on Mr. Starmer, U.S. President Donald Trump predicted on his Truth Social platform that "Keir Starmer will resign as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom". Mr. Trump then repeated his view that Mr. Starmer had "failed badly" on cutting immigration and boosting North Sea oil output.

Mr. Starmer's unpopularity was laid bare by Labour's heavy losses in local elections in May, and polls of party members indicate Mr. Burnham would win a formal leadership contest.

Should Mr. Burnham take the helm, he would become Britain's seventh Prime Minister in the past 10 years.

Meanwhile, British Business Minister Peter Kyle said he has no reason to believe that Mr. Starmer is planning to announce his resignation on Monday.

Face to face

Conflicting ideals: Representatives of right-wing organisations line up on the street during a protest against the annual 'KyivPride' Equality March and in defence of 'traditional values' in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Sunday. AP

Conflict in Lebanon is 'main topic' in U.S. talks: Iran

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran said on Sunday that the ongoing conflict in Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah will top the agenda in talks with the U.S. in Switzerland, as well as issues such as frozen Iranian funds and the sale of the country's oil.

"The Zionist regime continues to violate its commitment in Lebanon," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei said in a video.

Iran has not officially disclosed the value of its frozen assets, though media reports have estimated them at more than $100 billion.

Ukrainian attacks kill five, injure 28

Reuters
MOSCOW

Four persons were killed and 28 wounded in a Ukrainian drone attack on the Russian-controlled peninsula of Crimea, the Russian-installed governor said. Separately, local authorities in Russia's Krasnodar region said one person was killed.

Crimean Governor Sergei Aksyonov said fuel stations across the peninsula suspended sales to the public and businesses, with supplies restricted to government agencies responsible for essential services.

Trump-backed lawyer faces leftist senator in Colombia election

Associated Press
BOGOTA

Deeply divided voters in Colombia are choosing the country's next President in a run-off on Sunday that pits a progressive against a conservative outsider, with both candidates tapping into fears of a renewed internal conflict in the country.

Their choice is between businessman and lawyer Abelardo de la Espriella and Ivan Cepeda, a lawmaker and heir to the political movement of outgoing President Gustavo Petro, the nation's first leftist leader. The two defeated nine other contenders in a May 31 vote.

Both are pitching strategies that they say will prevent the South American country from experiencing the non-stop merciless violence.

Differing solutions

While Mr. de la Espriella is proposing a heavy-handed approach that has earned him the endorsement of U.S. President Donald Trump, Mr. Cepeda is promising to continue Mr. Petro's efforts.

The two candidates also are offering differing solutions for the country's struggling health system, ballooning public debt and entrenched corruption.

Bolivia crisis begins to ease after emergency declared

Reuters
LA PAZ

Bolivia began showing signs of returning to normalcy on Sunday, a day after President Rodrigo Paz declared a state of emergency to resolve a 50-day social crisis that had blocked the nation's main highways.

Early on Sunday, the Legislative Assembly overwhelmingly approved Mr. Paz's decree, which aimed to restore transit and supply essential goods after protesting groups cut off key roads for weeks, stranding trucks and choking supplies of food, fuel and medicines to many areas.

Sunday's vote in congress coincided with several breakthroughs. In Santa Cruz, officials and protest leaders signed an agreement to lift a critical blockade in the town of San Julian.

Rodrigo Paz

Meanwhile, a prominent campesino federation in La Paz announced a pause in its protests, although it said the group's demands still stood.

While police and military forces remain deployed, the national highway authority reported that there were no active blockades remaining related to protests.

The conflict erupted after Mr. Paz, in office since November, abruptly cut longstanding fuel subsidies to shrink the deficit amid a worsening dollar crunch and talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Despite later steps to stabilise fuel prices and reverse unpopular land reforms, protests intensified, with unions demanding wage increases, an end to fuel and dollar shortages, and Mr. Paz's resignation.

STRAIGHT FACED

Curacao 'keeper Room jokes he deserves statue after heroics

REUTERS

Curacao goalkeeper Eloy Room joked that he deserves a statue on the Caribbean island after a jaw-dropping display. His tally of 15 saves is the most on record — since 1966 — by any goalkeeper in a World Cup match that did not feature extra-time. "I'm really proud of the team also... I think I need a statue in Curacao, I think now."

LANDMARK GAME

Smooth Japan strolls to victory over scratchy Tunisia

REUTERS

Japan marked the 1,000th game in World Cup history with a 4-0 thrashing of Tunisia in Monterrey on Saturday. Ayase Ueda scored twice while Daichi Kamada and Junya Ito were also on target as the Asian giants joined the Netherlands on four points at the top of Group F. Tunisia can no longer get a place in the knockout rounds.

CULTURAL CHANGE

Bielsa feels hydration breaks have altered the very nature of football

REUTERS

Uruguay coach Marcelo Bielsa has criticised the hydration breaks introduced at the FIFA World Cup. "Playing four times instead of two alters the conception of what had been culturally built to interpret football. I will just say that before this decision, football had a characteristic; now it has another".

RACE AGAINST TIME

Brazil's Raphinha to have 'intensive treatment' on thigh injury

AP

Brazil forward Raphinha will undergo "intensive treatment" after suffering a muscle injury to his right thigh in its World Cup win over Haiti, the Brazilian football confederation said on Saturday. Brazilian website *Globo Esporte* reported he could be fit to return for a possible game in the last 16, which starts in two weeks.

Spain finds its scoring boots again as it slams four past Saudi Arabia

The former champion puts behind the horrors of failing to break the deadlock against Cape Verde in the first round with a masterclass in control as it runs the Asian side ragged; Oyarzabal bags a brace and also sets up Yamal's opener

FIFA WORLD CUP

Ayon Sengupta
ATLANTA

Easy pickings: Oyarzabal bundles the ball in from up close for Spain's third against Saudi Arabia. AP

Spain had arrived in Atlanta needing a response. Ninety minutes later, it left with relief, having rediscovered the goals that had deserted it against Cape Verde to secure a 4-0 win over Saudi Arabia and breathe life back into its stuttering World Cup campaign.

While the temperature outside hovered around 30 degrees Celsius and humidity pushed past 70%, inside the covered stadium, it was a comfortable 22 degrees, ideal conditions for Spain's preference for a quick-passing game.

Luis de la Fuente's side started with far greater purpose than in its opening match. Lamine Yamal, handed a place in the starting XI, hugged the right touchline and immediately gave Spain a direct outlet to stretch the Saudi defence.

Two corners arrived within the opening 10 minutes, and Spain, frustrated by its failure to score against Cape Verde, showed a willingness to shoot whenever any space opened up.

The breakthrough arrived in the 11th minute as Spain moved the ball from left to right with the ease of a tide rolling across a shoreline. Mikel Oyarzabal's low cross flashed across the face of the goal, and Yamal, arriving unseen at the far post, guided home his first World Cup strike.

The second goal came moments before the hydration break as Saudi Arabia dithered in clearing a corner, allowing Oyarzabal to finish from close quarters. Spain's attacks were now rolling in one after the other, with each wave more damaging than the last.

THE RESULTS

Group E: Germany 2 (Undav 68, 90+4) bt Ivory Coast 1 (Kessie 30); Ecuador 0 drew with Curacao 0.
Group F: Tunisia 0 lost to Japan 4 (Kamada 4, Ueda 31, 83, Ito 69).
Group H: Spain 4 (Yamal 10, Oyarzabal 21, 24, Al-Tambakti 49-og) bt Saudi Arabia 0.

Barely a minute after the restart came the third, with Oyarzabal grabbing his second after Dani Olmo had squared Marc Cucurella's header across goal, leaving the Real Sociedad forward with hardly any work left.

Saudi Arabia's misfortunes continued when an unmarked Cucurella's left-footed strike cannoned into goalkeeper Mohammed Al Owais and then ricocheted off Hassan Al Tambakti to trickle over the line, draining the last remnants of Saudi resistance.

Substitute Ferran Torres twice had the chance to add further gloss to the scoreline, but the Barcelona winger's finishing remained as wayward as it had been in the opening game. Even his stoppage-time effort was ruled out for offside.

But after it was left stranded in still waters by Cape Verde, Spain found a current in Atlanta to carry its World Cup ambitions forward.

As the noisy *La Roja* faithful spilled into the humid Georgia evening, the tide had once again turned in favour of one of the tournament's early favourites.

Undav fashions Germany's back-to-the-wall victory

Agence France-Presse
TORONTO

Germany reached the World Cup knockout phase for the first time since 2014 with a dramatic come-from-behind 2-1 victory over Ivory Coast on Saturday.

Substitute Deniz Undav scored twice, including the crucial goal four minutes into injury time, triggering a massive roar from the overwhelmingly pro-German crowd here.

Germany had not advanced from the group stage since winning the 2014 tournament in Brazil, and coach Julian Nagelsmann had been under huge pressure to make that breakthrough.

He paid tribute to Undav's clinical finishing – and said it was "not out of the question" that he could start the next game against Ecuador.

Germany was chasing its opponent in the first half and the Ivorians surged ahead when Franck Kessie struck in the 30th minute. Kessie turned in from close range following strong work by teenage Ivorian phenomenon Yan Diomande.

The Ivorian defence held firm until the 68th minute, but ultimately the Germans broke through when Undav volleyed in a cross by Nadiem Amiri.

His second, thanks to an assist from Felix Nmecha, sent Nagelsmann and the German crowd into wild celebrations.

Tuesday's matches

GROUP I
France vs. **Iraq,** 2.30 a.m.
Norway vs. **Senegal,** 5.30 a.m.

GROUP J
Jordan vs. **Algeria,** 8.30 a.m.

GROUP K
Portugal vs. **Uzbekistan,** 10.30 p.m.

The day and time(s) pertain to India

Stat attack

1 Sweden became the first team to win by four goals (5-1 vs. Tunisia) and then lose by four goals in successive matches in the same edition since Turkey in 1954 (beat South Korea 7-0, lost to West Germany 7-2)

1 The Swedes suffered their worst loss in the football showpiece since 1950 (1-7 vs. Brazil)

1 Undav is the first German (after Klose in 2002) to score in each of his first two World Cup games

3 Ueda became the first Japanese player to net a brace and have three goal contributions in a World Cup contest

3m 27s Kamada scored Japan's fastest goal in the global extravaganza

4 Japan became the first Asian team to find the target four times in a World Cup game

5 Netherlands equalled its record for most goals in a World Cup match

8 The Dutch became the eighth nation to score 100 goals in the quadrennial showpiece

11 Germany's longest winning streak (in all competitions) after the 12 consecutive victories between May 1979 and June 1980 (under Derwall)

12 The Germans progressed to the knockout stages for the first time in 12 years

UNDAV

15 Room recorded the most saves in a World Cup game (in regulation time) and also kept a clean sheet

16 Germany extended its record for most comeback wins in World Cup history

16m 12s Brobbey netted the quickest brace from kick off in the World Cup since Podolski in 2006 (11m 35s, Germany vs. Sweden)

21 Neuer became the goalkeeper with the most World Cup games, surpassing France's Lloris (20). Only Matthaus (25) and Klose (24) have played more World Cup games for Germany

29y 183d Kessie became the second-oldest Ivorian scorer in the global event after Drogba in 2010 (32y 101d)

100 Gakpo's second goal was the 100th scored in this edition

1000 Tunisia and Japan played the 1000th match in World Cup history

COMPILED BY ANIRUDH VELAMURI

Room shines as Curacao gets off the mark

Agence France-Presse
KANSAS CITY

Curacao goalkeeper Eloy Room was the hero against Ecuador on Saturday, keeping out a barrage of shots to help the tiny Caribbean nation claim its first ever World Cup point in a goalless draw that keeps alive its hopes of reaching the knockout phase. Ecuador, which finished second in South American qualifying, had 28 shots, including 15 on target but Room stood firm in an astonishing display.

His 15 saves are the most on record, since 1966, by any goalkeeper a World Cup match that did not feature extra-time.

The South American team ended the first half with 65 percent of possession but nothing to show for its dominance.

The Curacao players swarmed around Room at the end of the match, celebrating an extraordinary point.

All eyes on Messi and Argentina

Ayon Sengupta

Milestone beckons: Messi needs just one more goal to become the all-time leading scorer in the World Cup. GETTY IMAGES

Lionel Messi has spent the better part of two decades bending football's sense of time. Records that once looked permanent have become milestones in his journey through the game. Defenders have changed, managers have changed, even the shape of Argentina around him has changed, but the central question has remained stubbornly familiar – how do you stop Messi when a match begins to orbit around him?

Austria will be the next team asked to find an answer to that question.

After scoring the 61st hat-trick of his career, 50 for clubs and 11 for Argentina, in the 3-0 win over Algeria, Messi stands one goal away from moving past Miroslav Klose as the World Cup's all-time leading scorer. If he strikes against Austria, the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner will also become only the third player in the tournament history to net in six consecutive World Cup matches.

Just Fontaine did it for France in 1958 and Jairzinho followed for Brazil in 1970, both across single tournaments. Messi's run began with Argentina's win over Australia in the round of 16 during its long-awaited triumph in Qatar four years ago and continues into what is expected to be his final World Cup.

Nearing 39, his influence shows little sign of fading. Against Algeria, he had a direct hand in eight of Argentina's 10 shots, taking six himself while creating two chances. Yet while Messi stole the headlines, Argentina's defensive authority was just as important. Lionel Scaloni's midfield, led by Alexis Mac Allister and Enzo Fernandez, expertly shielded its defence and did not allow Algeria a single shot on target.

Austria arrives in Dallas after a 3-1 win over Jordan and will look to extend its four-game winning run in all competitions.

"We know how good Argentina are," young midfielder Paul Wanner said. "We respect them, but we are confident in our strengths. If we bring our qualities to the pitch, we will pose problems for any team."

Austria's pressing game will try to disrupt Argentina's rhythm, but coach Ralf Rangnick has injury concerns. Captain David Alaba, Stefan Posch, who wore a specially designed protective mask after breaking his jaw against Jordan, and Alessandro Schopf have all trained separately and are racing against time to be fit for the all-important game. Argentina, too, is worried about the fitness of defender Gonzalo Montiel, who is still recovering from a hamstring injury.

If the South Americans beat Austria and Jordan fails to defeat Algeria, Scaloni's side will be guaranteed a place in the knockout rounds as the winner of Group J.

For Argentina, this is another step towards the ultimate goal of another World title. For Messi, it is another opportunity to claim yet another record that once seemed untouchable.

Good performances over chasing success for Neeraj

Uthra Ganesan
NEW DELHI

A nine-month break to recover from multiple injuries forcing a late start to the season saw Neeraj Chopra finish fourth in his maiden competition, at the Doha Diamond League, this year. Coupled with his eighth-place at the 2025 World Championships, this is the longest the Olympic and World champion has gone outside the podium.

A year ago, it would have been a certified disaster. Now, the 28-year-old admits it is simply a step towards regaining his form and fitness, preferring to focus on going big at major events rather than chasing success at every outing.

"There was no pressure (at Doha), I just wanted to play. I wanted to do what I was doing in training and not do anything extra. I only wanted a good throw and I got that with 85.69m, which felt good because I wasn't going that far in training.

Neeraj. GETTY IMAGES

"If I had been fourth or even third earlier, I would have never accepted it. For that matter, I would have never accepted an 85m throw either. But this time I knew my situation, where I was coming from, what I was coming back from. My preparation was good and I knew we have to move forward step by step. I was happy with whatever I got," Neeraj told *The Hindu* on the sidelines of the Indian Athletics awards.

> My preparation was good and I knew we have to move forward step by step

"Right now, I am working on my training. The body is feeling better now. It's not the same as it was before, I am not the old Neeraj but I am slowly coming back. It took a long time because it wasn't just one injury, there were several. I had an Achilles injury in my blocking leg, in my back, I had some issues in my shoulder and elbow. And I have been having trouble with my groin for a long time.

"So after Tokyo, we decided to do rehab first, start slowly, not take any pressure and not be in a hurry to return to competition. Which is why I started throwing only in May this year, usually it starts in January itself. But such is the life of an athlete, you always carry your injuries like medals," he laughed.

Kapp's all-round show takes South Africa past India

The veteran follows up her two-wicket haul with an unbeaten 45-ball 81 as the Proteas chase down 159 in the final over; poor fielding hurts the Women in Blue as their semifinal hopes suffer a setback

T20 WORLD CUP

P.K. Ajith Kumar
MANCHESTER

They all got starts. They all promised. None delivered.

India's batters disappointed, yes. But the South Africans deserve credit. They bowled with a plan and their hearts out. And then Marizanne Kapp produced an innings she or her team will not forget anytime soon.

South Africa delivered a body blow to India in what was always going to be a crucial match in the Women's T20 World Cup. The Proteas won by six wickets with five balls to spare at Old Trafford here on Sunday.

With the red-hot Australia on top of Group A with three wins in as many games, the battle is between India and South Africa for a spot in the semifinals.

After reducing India to 158 for seven, South Africa survived a scare posed by Shree Charani, who removed the South African captain Laura Wolvaardt and Annerie Dercksen in a maiden over.

But Kapp stayed firm. She took her team home, remaining 81 not out (45b, 7x4, 4x6). Her third-wicket stand of 97 with Tazmin Brits (40, 36b, 2x4, 1x6) took the game away from India. Poor fielding compounded the problems for Harmanpreet Kaur & Co.

Earlier, it was a case of South Africa getting just about everything right, and India getting most of it wrong. The bowlers were marshalled superbly by their captain, who brought in the right bowler at the right time. And all that meant the Indian innings did not really get going despite a brisk, confident start by Smriti Mandhana and Shafali Verma.

In fact, their opening stand (30) and 33-run partnership for the fifth wicket between Harmanpreet (24) and Deepti Sharma (29) were the two biggest of the innings.

Wolvaardt and her bowlers never allowed the Indian batters to settle.

Pumped up: Kapp was at her best both with the ball and bat as South Africa edged India. GETTY IMAGES

The way Smriti and Shafali started off, it had looked as though the large number of Indian supporters – the diaspora travels from different parts of the country, wearing blue and cheering loudly and tirelessly – would get to witness the famed strokeplay of the Women in Blue.

All they got was a glimpse. In the second over, Smriti caressed the pacer Shabnim Ismail through the off-side, and then swivelled to pull the next ball for another boundary. But, in the next over, she for once looked ungainly, walking across for a scoop against Kapp and was bowled.

Kapp's expression showed how much that wicket mattered. Smriti had come into this match after making 68 and 74 in her two innings in the tournament.

Shafali, who had also been looking good, joined her senior partner in the dressing room. She backed away only to glove an express delivery from Shabnim. She began her walk back before the DRS verdict came.

This was an opportunity for the Indian middle-order to come good. But it didn't, for the third time in as many matches. And for once Richa Ghosh didn't explode.

So India had to be content with a score that seemed well within reach of South Africa. Or Kapp, on this day.

Other scores: Group B: Sri Lanka 98 in 19.4 overs (Nilakshika Silva 30, Hayley Matthews 3/15, Karishma Ramharack 2/15) lost to West Indies 99/5 in 16.1 overs (Kavisha Dilhari 2/22).

Toss: West Indies; **PoM:** Matthews.

On Saturday: Group B: England 200/5 in 20 overs (Sophia Dunkley 57, Alice Capsey 40, Freya Kemp 39 n.o., Dani Gibson 30 n.o., Kirstie Gordon 2/30) bt Scotland 162/7 in 20 overs (Sarah Bryce 34, Sophie Ecclestone 2/23).

Toss: Scotland; **PoM:** Dunkley.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA

Smriti Mandhana b Kapp 17 *(12b, 3x4)*, Shafali Verma c Jafta b Ismail 31 *(15b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Yastika Bhatia lbw b Khaka 15 *(13b, 3x4)*, Jemimah Rodrigues c & b de Klerk 12 *(14b, 1x4)*, Harmanpreet Kaur b Ismail 24 *(22b, 2x4)*, Deepti Sharma c Kapp b Mlaba 29 *(21b, 3x4)*, Richa Ghosh c Khaka b Kapp 15 *(14b, 2x4)*, Arundhati Reddy (not out) 6 *(7b)*, Prema Rawat (not out) 3 *(2b)*; Extras (w-6): 6; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 158.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-30 (Smriti, 2.6 overs), 2-54 (Shafali, 5.4), 3-67 (Yastika, 7.2), 4-83 (Jemimah, 10.2), 5-116 (Harmanpreet, 14.4), 6-137 (Deepti, 17.3), 7-153 (Richa, 19.2).

SOUTH AFRICA BOWLING

Kapp 4-0-27-2, Ismail 4-0-28-2, Tryon 2-0-23-0, Mlaba 4-0-33-1, Khaka 4-0-31-1, de Klerk 2-0-16-1.

SOUTH AFRICA

Laura Wolvaardt c & b Shree Charani 20 *(21b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Tazmin Brits c Shree Charani b Shafali 40 *(36b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Annerie Dercksen b Shree Charani 0 *(2b)*, Marizanne Kapp (not out) 81 *(45b, 7x4, 4x6)*, Nadine de Klerk b Shree Charani 5 *(7b, 1x4)*, Chloe Tryon (not out) 10 *(4b, 2x4)*; Extras (lb-4, w-1): 5; Total (for four wkts. in 19.1 overs): 161.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-25 (Wolvaardt, 5.2), 2-25 (Dercksen, 5.4), 3-122 (Brits, 16.1), 4-137 (de Klerk, 17.5).

INDIA BOWLING

Shafali 4-0-22-1, Nandani 2.1-0-17-0, Arundhati 3-0-29-0, Shree Charani 4-1-24-3, Prema 2-0-21-0, Deepti 4-0-44-0.

Toss: India; **PoM:** Kapp.

South Africa won by six wickets with five balls to spare.

India's next match: June 25 vs. Bangladesh, Manchester, 7 p.m. IST.

Kohli's participation depends on fitness clearance; no spot for Jaiswal

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

Virat Kohli has been named in India's ODI squad for the three-match series against England in July, but his availability is subject to fitness clearance.

Kohli injured his hamstring in the IPL final late last month and subsequently missed the home series against Afghanistan. Yashasvi Jaiswal, who took Kohli's place and even scored a century in Chennai on Saturday, is not in the touring party.

Kohli's fellow ODI-only specialist Rohit Sharma, whose middling form had recently given rise to a few murmurs, will look to build on his two promising knocks of 48 and 79 against Afghanistan. Star pacer Jasprit Bumrah is back in the roster, and so is left-arm spinner Axar Patel. Speedster Prince Yadav and left-arm tweaker Harsh Dubey have made way.

Gurnoor Brar, who took seven wickets across three fixtures against Afghanistan, has retained his place while the fit-again Harshit Rana will travel too.

Meanwhile, Varun Chakaravarthy has been excised from the squad for the two T20Is in Ireland later this month as he is still recovering from the foot injury he sustained during the IPL. The 34-year-old will now aim to be fit for the five-match T20I series versus England that commences on July 1.

Hard done by? Jaiswal found no place in the touring party after Kohli was picked in the squad. FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

ODI squad for England: Shubman Gill (Capt.), Shreyas Iyer (Vice-capt.), Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli (subject to fitness clearance), K.L. Rahul (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Washington Sundar, Axar Patel, Nitish Kumar, Kuldeep Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah, Prasidh Krishna, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh and Gurnoor Brar.

The schedule: First ODI: July 14, Birmingham (3.30 p.m.); **Second:** July 16, Cardiff (5.30 p.m.); **Third:** July 19, Lord's, London (3.30 p.m.).

Updated squad for Ireland T20Is: Shreyas Iyer (Capt.), Tilak Varma (Vice-capt.), Abhishek Sharma, Sanju Samson (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Shivam Dube, Nitish Kumar, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Ravi Bishnoi, Harshit Rana, Arshdeep Singh, Prince Yadav, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Prasidh Krishna.

The dates: First T20I: June 26, Belfast (6 p.m.); **Second:** June 28, Belfast (6 p.m.).

All timings are in IST.

Henry... a lethal spell. AFP

Henry gets the job done as the Kiwis level series

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Matt Henry took four wickets for no runs in just 12 balls as New Zealand thrashed England by 253 runs in the second Test at the Oval on Sunday for a series-levelling win.

New Zealand only needed 48 minutes on the fifth day to complete a crushing victory as England was bowled out for 209, with Henry's six-wicket haul in the second innings giving him match figures of 11 for 109.

Stokes back

Ben Stokes will return as England captain for the third Test in Nottingham, head coach Brendon McCullum announced.

The scores: New Zealand 391 & 362 bt England 291 & 209 in 58.1 overs (Root 77, Brook 58; Henry 6/29). **PoM**: Henry.

India regains Nations Cup, back in women's Pro League

Press Trust of India
AUCKLAND

India defeated host New Zealand 2-0 in the final to win its second FIH Women's Nations Cup title and secure a promotion to the FIH Women's Pro League here on Sunday.

Navneet Kaur gave India an early lead in the fourth minute before Sunelita Toppo doubled the advantage in the 15th.

The team then produced a stellar defensive display to protect the lead and emerge triumphant. India had won the inaugural edition in 2022.

Lalremsiami won the Player-of-the-Match award, while Deepika with six goals finished as the joint-top scorer in the tournament along with USA's Ashley Sessa.

India remained unbeaten throughout the campaign, defeating USA 3-2, Japan 2-1, and Uruguay 3-2 in pool matches before routing Chile 6-0 in the semifinal.

To recognise the team's achievements, Hockey India has announced a cash award of ₹ three lakh for each player and ₹1.5 lakh for each member of the support staff.

Cock-a-hoop: An ecstatic Salima celebrates the triumph with her teammates. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The result (final): India 2 (Navneet 4, Sunelita 15) bt New Zealand 0.

SNAPSHOTS

India gets the better of the Netherlands

The Indian men's hockey team notched up a 3-2 win over the Netherlands in its last match of the FIH Pro League Rotterdam leg on Sunday. Goals from Jugraj Singh (18th minute), Abhishek (27), and Rajinder Singh (56) helped India secure its second outright victory of the leg against the Dutch side. Pepijn van der Heijden (19) and Koen Bijen (59) scored for the hosts.

Delighted: The Indian players celebrate a strike. FIH

Para shuttler Thulasimathi earns two gold medals

India's Thulasimathi Murugesan won two gold and a bronze in the France Para Badminton International in Mulhouse on Sunday.

In the women's singles final (SU5), Thulasimathi defeated France's Maud Lefort 21-11, 21-14 and in women's doubles (SL3-SU5), she combined with Manasi Joshi to overcome Indonesia's World No.1 pair of Leani Ratri Oktila and Khalimatus Satiyak 19-21 , 21-15 , 21-11. Thulasimathi and Nitesh Kumar lost to Indonesia's Leani Ratri and Himat Ramdani 14-21, 7-21 in the mixed doubles (SL3-SU5) semifinals.

Thulasimathi.

Vritti breaks 800m freestyle record

Vritti Agarwal clocked 9:05.47 to smash Richa Mishra's 15-year-old women's 800m freestyle record and win the gold medal on the concluding day of the National aquatics championships in Ahmedabad on Sunday. Telangana swimmer Vritti's record-breaking performance helped her register the 'best Indian time' as well. Rishabh Das went below two minutes (1:59.90) to better his own mark and win men's 200m backstroke with another 'best Indian time'.

Aryan, who claimed three gold and a bronze and set two new records, and Saanvi Deshwal, who bagged three gold and a silver and rewrote one record, were chosen as the best swimmers.

The results (winners only): Men: 400m freestyle: Aryan Nehra (Guj) 3:55.34; **200m backstroke:** Rishabh Das (Mah) 1:59.90 (NMR, Old 2:00.65, Rishabh Das, 2025); **50m breaststroke:** Danush Suresh (TN) 28.38; **200m butterfly:** Bikram Changmai (RSPB) 2:02.50.

Women: 800m freestyle: Vritti Agarwal (TG) 9:05.47 (NMR, Old 9:06.31, Richa Mishra, 2011); **50m butterfly:** Nina Venkatesh (Kar) 27.67 (NMR, Old 27.74, Nina Venkatesh, 2023); **4x100m medley relay:** Karnataka (Nina Venkatesh, S. Lakshya, Tanishi Gupta, Dhinidhi Desinghu) 4:18.72 (NMR, Old 4:23.65, Maharashtra, 2023).

Champions: Velavan, left, and Abhay.

Abhay-Velavan duo wins at Asian Doubles C'ships

Sports Bureau

Abhay Singh and Velavan Senthilkumar won the men's crown for a third consecutive year at the Asian doubles squash championships in Sarawak, Malaysia, on Sunday.

The Abhay-Velavan combine, seeded No. 1, rallied to beat Pakistan's second seeds Nasir Iqbal and Noor Zaman 7-11, 11-7, 11-2 in 47 minutes, in a repeat of last year's final.

Clark leads by six shots as Scheffler makes his move

GOLF

Associated Press
SOUTHAMPTON

Not even Shinnecock Hills and its strongest test of the week in the U.S. Open could match the toughness of Wyndham Clark on Saturday.

Clark had a collection of par saves around the turn as Scottie Scheffler was making a move.

He poured it on with a fairway metal to four feet for an eagle on the par-5 16th for a par 70 that gave him a six-shot lead.

The course did its part, even after the strongest wind subsided. Only two players managed to break par in the third round – Emiliano Grillo and World No. 1 Scheffler with a 69.

Clark nearly joined them. After all his great saves, he missed a five-foot par putt on the final hole and finished at seven-under 203, the lowest 54-hole score ever at Shinnecock Hills, to give himself a chance to add another U.S. Open title to the one he captured in 2023.

Good going: Scheffler, one of two players to go under par on Saturday, was six strokes behind Clark. AFP

Scheffler, who fell nine shots behind with a pair of bogeys at the start, shot 32 on the back nine by chipping in from 65 feet on the 14th for the start of three straight birdies. His one big lament was missing a 4-foot birdie putt on the final hole. He moved into the last group when Shinnecock Hills did a number on everyone else.

Sam Stevens, who closed within two shots of Clark on the front, started the back nine with three straight bogeys and closed with six straight pars for a 72. Tom Kim dropped two shots at the wrong time and also shot 72. Sahith Theegala had one birdie, one bogey and 16 pars for a 70.

All of them were at 1-under 209, leaving only five players under par.

Top scores: 203: Clark 64-69-70; **209:** Scheffler 72-68-69, Theegala 72-67-70, Kim 70-67-72, Stevens 68-69-72; **210:** Mitchell 70-70-70, Grillo 73-70-67, Burns 71-68-71, Schauffele 71-66-73; **211:** Fleetwood 70-71-70, Morikawa 73-65-73, Fitzpatrick 67-70-74.

Harshit and Akshat do a 1-2 for India

ASIAN GYMNASTICS

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Indian gymnasts Harshit Damodaran and Akshat Bajaj secured a gold-silver finish in the junior men's vault event at the Asian Artistic Gymnastics Championships in Zunyi, China, on Sunday. Harshit topped with 13.649, while Akshat finished second with 13.433. "It is a great achievement by the boys," India men's artistic gymnastics coach Rakesh Patra said.

EDUCATIONPLUS

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How learners learn

If every student is to be a productive learner, a paradigm shift from generic delivery to individualised mode is essential

K. Elango

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

"Attending classes is a waste of time. What I learn in a one-hour lecture, I can grasp in five minutes from YouTube. I am better informed of the latest trends in a flawless and fluent presentation." This statement from my college-going son during a conversation disturbed me deeply.

While the claim may be true in his case, it gave rise to a nagging question: 'Why do learners remain at the same level of academic competence throughout the 12 years of schooling?' This led to a close observation of the performance patterns of students passing through our system.

Even if we categorise students as advanced, average and mediocre, ideally, as they progress through the educational ladder, their capabilities should be enhanced as a result of the teaching-learning processes. But their performances remain static, especially in the latter two categories. This leads to the question: Does the teacher-learner interface really make any difference?

Mismatch exists

Several pedagogical methods – inquiry-based, project-based, and activity-based learning – were adopted to make learning effective for all. Further, shifts to learner-centric and communicative approaches were trumpeted as leading to a better learning ecosystem. Despite all this, the mismatch between teaching and learning exists, which is evident as the three categories of learners largely continue to persist.

The myth of learner learns what teacher teaches has been debunked. Following textbooks and attentively listening doesn't automatically result in learning. The oft-quoted, "If they can't learn the way we teach, we need to teach the way they learn" demands an urgent transformational trajectory.

At the high-school level, students must be made aware of what learning is and how to learn. They must be steered to reflect metacognitively and identify whether they are visual learners, auditory learners, reading/writing learners, or kinesthetic learners. This shift calls for teachers to use multi-modal approaches, even within a 40-minute class period, alongside the prescribed text. Other print texts such as excerpts from newspapers and magazines, e-texts in multiple formats such as blogs, vlogs, infographics, videos, film clips, reels, and music must feature in every class to keep all the learners hooked. Such a practice validates Howard Gardner's concept of multiple intelligences and facilitates different learners benefitting from the varieties of texts, clubbed with multiple activities.

The architecture of educational institutions with rows of classrooms, each stacked with benches and desks, scarcely provides any space for learner-centred engagements. It is solely designed for teacher-centric modes. Yet, the open spaces within campuses allow us to adopt Tagore's visionary model of Santiniketan. The availability of classrooms need not restrict students, as they eagerly welcome activities conducted outdoors.

Linguistic skills

There is also the issue of acquisition of linguistic skills: speaking can be learnt only by speaking, writing only writing, listening by listening and reading by reading. The lament of poor English-speaking skill is rooted in dual realities: the rarity of speaking activities in classes and the emphasis on formal presentations. Instead, if students could be divided into pairs, triads or small groups and speaking activities conducted outdoors, with a stress on informal communication, could lead to mastering the skill. The informal communicative competence gained in this manner is sure to help them perform better in formal contexts and not vice versa. Likewise, other skills could be mastered by resorting to the same principle.

Yet another significant aspect to trigger learning among students is employing different classroom strategies such as challenge, persuasion, competition, praise, reward, embarrassment, stimulation, and goal-setting. These must vary with individuals and even with the same student over time. If we were to cultivate the habit of productive learning in every student, a paradigm shift from generic delivery to an individualised mode is a must. Only such an approach can elevate average and mediocre students to higher levels, transforming classroom dynamics and the nature of learning. For the classroom interface to become purposeful, the central concern ought to be not how teachers teach but how learners learn.

The writer is a retired Professor of English, Anna University, and Chief Executive Chair of English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI).

Ranking for reality

The percentage-percentile conundrum in NEET

P.V. Navaneethakrishnan

A recent proposal submitted to the National Medical Commission suggested replacing the percentile-based cut-off for NEET-UG with a percentage model to decide the merit list for admissions to programmes including MBBS and BDS. Percentiles become redundant only when the same set of questions is used for all candidates, as is done in this exam. Unlike raw marks, percentiles cannot be negative; hence, they can be used to prescribe a low or even a negative cut-off eligibility mark.

Recently, after the second round of counselling for admission to PG programmes in medicine, the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences reduced the eligibility cut-off in the percentile ranking in NEET-PG for SC, ST, and OBC categories to zero (equivalent to minus 40 raw marks). The repeated relaxation of admission standards may be detrimental to the importance of the NEET-PG exam. Several academic experts have argued that a negative final score in the raw marks should be considered a disqualification, as it may indicate a lack of minimum level of competence required.

One solution could be to conduct NEET-PG at least twice a year for a higher number of eligible candidates, which in turn could allow a higher cut-off in the percentile list. Another way is to remove negative marking for wrong answers. A third option is to make candidates with negative final scores ineligible for admission and debar them from appearing for the exam for a year or two.

The Inter-se-merit of Candidates in the Information Bulletin NEET (UG)-2026 lists Physics as a tie-breaker for the same marks in Biology and Chemistry. This is redundant because the tie occurs due to the same total marks in the three subjects. Clause 'h' also states that the final stage will be resolved by a random process with the guidance of an independent expert committee. In fairness to students, information on this process should be part of the bulletin.

Views are personal

The writer is Former Director, Entrance Exams and Admission, Anna University, Chennai.

Map the future

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help

OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

My granddaughter is in Class 11 and to wants to do Aeronautical Engineering. Which are the good institutes for this and how should she prepare? Kumar

Dear Kumar,

Aeronautical Engineering requires a strong foundation in Physics and Maths. Top institutes include IITs in Mumbai, Chennai, and Kanpur; IIST, Thiruvananthapuram; PEC Chandigarh; MIT, Manipal; and Amrita University, Coimbatore.

For studies abroad, leading destinations include MIT and Stanford University in the U.S., Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, and TUM in Germany.

Most leading colleges require JEE Advanced so specialised coaching can be helpful. Alongside, she can explore the practical side of aviation through Microsoft Flight Simulator or X-Plane. Building and flying model aircraft offers hands-on experience while learning Python or MATLAB is useful because modern aeronautics relies heavily on computer simulations.

I am doing my Bachelor's English Language and Literature and am interested in literary and film criticism. How can I pursue this as a career? Anagha

Dear Anagha,

Build a strong digital portfolio by publishing regularly on platforms like Substack or Medium. Aim for one substantial essay a month that moves beyond reviews into criticism, connecting books or films to broader social, historical, or artistic ideas.

Most universities have literary journals or film clubs. Taking on an editorial role will help you understand how writing is shaped and refined.

Literary and film criticism require different skill sets. For literary criticism, move beyond plot summaries and learn concepts such as Formalism (how a text is constructed) and Intertextuality (how texts relate to one another). Read contemporary critics to see how scholarly insight can be combined with accessible writing.

For film criticism, learn the language of cinema. Develop an understanding of mise-en-scène, cinematography, sound design and major critical frameworks.

If your goal is to write for academic journals or teach, a Master's degree or Ph.D. is often necessary. Consider programmes in Film and Screen Studies or Comparative Literature. Explore institutions such as JNU, EFLU and FTII. Fellowships and exchange programmes also support research in arts criticism.

For a stable income initially, consider complementary careers in publishing, editorial work, script consultancy, film festival programming or cultural organisations. Networking is essential. Once you have a solid body of work, apply to organisations such as the Film Critics Guild (India) or FIPRESCI. Platforms like Letterboxd and Goodreads can also help connect with fellow critics and professionals.

I am in Class 11 and want to be a commercial pilot. What steps I should take? Manoj

Dear Manoj,

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) requires students to have studied Physics and Maths in Class 12. Most flying academies and cadet programmes expect at least 50-55% in English, Physics and Maths.

Before investing in training, ensure you are medically fit to fly. Obtain certification from a DGCA-authorised medical examiner. This includes blood tests, an ECG and eye examinations. Your vision must be 6/6, and colour blindness is a disqualifier.

There are two main routes to a Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL). The first is through a conventional flying school, where training takes about 1.5 to 3 years and costs roughly ₹45-65 lakhs. Students must complete 200 flying hours before applying to airlines.

The second route is through an Airline Cadet Programme, where candidates are selected by an airline before training. These programmes are structured, usually last 18 to 24 months, and cost approximately ₹80 lakhs to ₹1.1 crores.

Leading training institutes in India include IGRUA (Fursatganj), CAE Gondia (NFTI), The Bombay Flying Club, and Dunes Aviation Academy.

Focus on scoring well in Physics and Maths. If possible, visit a flying school and complete your Class 2 Medical to confirm eligibility. In Class 12, apply for your Computer Number on the DGCA Pariksha portal. After board exams, clear the DGCA ground subjects to save time and money during flight training.

I have an ECE degree and have worked in IT. Lately I have become interested in Psychology. Is there any way I can become a clinical psychologist? Hridhaya

Dear Hridhaya,

In India, becoming a Licensed Clinical Psychologist is regulated by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) and requires specific clinical training and licensing.

Doing an M.A. in Clinical Psychology does not legally qualify. To work in hospitals or run a clinic, you need RCI registration.

Most Clinical Psychology programmes require a psychology background. You will need to complete a Master's degree in Psychology first. Some universities, however, admit students from non-psychology disciplines through entrance examinations.

Your background in ECE and IT can actually be a strength in emerging areas such as Computational Psychology, Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), Neuroengineering and Data Science in Mental Health.

You could also consider becoming a Counselling Psychologist. With an M.A./M.Sc. and relevant training, counsellors typically work with everyday life challenges and emotional well-being rather than severe clinical disorders.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge

SCHOLARSHIPS

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Offered by the AICTE
Eligibility: Girls in the first year of a diploma/degree or in the second year through lateral entry in an AICTE-approved institution and whose annual family income is less than ₹800,000.
Rewards: ₹50,000
Application: Online
Deadline: October 31
www.b4s.in/edge/ASSST3

AICTE Swanath Scholarship
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INBRIEF

India boxers punch their way to 12-medal haul in Czechia

India's Commonwealth Games-bound boxers finished with a rich haul of 12 medals, including eight golds at the invitational 56th Grand Prix Usti nad Labem in Czechia.

The results (final): Women: 51kg: Sakshi Chaudhary bt Mayssoun Bourega (Fra) 5-0; **54kg:** Preeti Pawar bt Jeyssa Marcel (Fra) 5-0; **60kg:** Priya Ghanghas bt Barbora Maxova (Cze) 5-0; **65kg:** Luca Mamori (Hun) bt Parveen Hooda 4-1; **75kg:** Lovlina Borgohain bt Melissa Gemini (Ita) 5-0.
Men: 55kg: Jadumani Singh bt Abdul Burton (Eng) 4-1; **60kg:** Sachin bt Veres Rohland (Hun) 5-0; **65kg:** Giacomo Giannotti bt Aditya Pratap Yadav 3-2; **80kg:** Ankush bt Florian Daniel (Cze) 5-0; **90kg:** Roselin Bachevski bt Kapil Pokhariya 4-1; **90+kg:** Narender bt Davit Chaloyan (Arm) 3-2.

Jyoti wins 48kg gold in World Boxing Cup 2

Jyoti Gulia outclassed Uzbekistan's Farzona Fozilova 5-0 in the women's 48kg final to clinch India's lone gold medal at the World Boxing Cup 2 in Guiyang on Sunday. India added three silver medals. In 51kg final, Minakshi lost 0-5 to China's Wu Yu, Prachi went down 0-5 to Uzbekistan's Nigina Uktamo in the 57kg final and Deepak came second in the 70kg category after going down 0-5 to Kazakhstan's Ablaikhan Zhussupov. India had already confirmed two bronze medals (Jugnoo in 85kg & Nikhil in 55kg).

India begins with easy win in AVC Men's Volleyball Cup

India began its AVC Men's Volleyball Cup campaign with a 25-23, 25-19, 25-14 win over New Zealand in Ahmedabad on Saturday.

Asian Relays: Indian women's 4x100m team wins gold

India's Srabani Nanda, S.S. Sneha, Sudeshna Shivankar and Tamanna clinched the gold medal in the women's 4x100m relay, clocking 43.85 seconds, on the final day of the Asian Relays C'ships in Shaoxing on Sunday. The mixed 4x400m relay team (Theerthesh Shetty, Poovamma M.R., Bharath Sridhar, Neeru Pathak) won the silver, behind Kazakhstan (3:17.06). The mixed 4x100m team of Pranav Gaurav, Tamanna, Animesh Kujur and Sneha won the bronze behind Thailand and China.

Sooryavanshi's blistering knock powers India-A to tri-series title

The teen smashes a record 11-ball fifty en route 94 off 29 deliveries to take the visitors to 377 for nine before the bowlers do the job

CRICKET

Shayan Acharya
DAMBULLA

A final is supposed to be a contest. But Vaibhav Sooryavanshi had other ideas.

The 15-year-old's record-shattering 29-ball 94 (10x4, 8x6) laid the foundation for India-A's imposing 377 for nine before the visitors thrashed Sri Lanka-A by 66 runs to lift the tri-series title at the Rangiri International Stadium on Sunday.

A sizeable crowd had turned up hoping the home side would make the most of familiar conditions. Instead, it witnessed a batting exhibition by the Indian teen.

Sooryavanshi's first five deliveries disappeared to the boundary – three fours and two sixes. Eleven balls into his innings, he had already raced to a fifty, the fastest in List A cricket. With the Sri Lankan bowlers repeatedly missing their lengths, the southpaw punished anything in his arc as India-A surged to 100 in just 6.3 overs.

Priyansh Arya played the perfect foil after being handed an early reprieve while Sooryavanshi dominated the attack in the 132-run stand. For a while, the fastest List A century looked inevitable. But Sri Lanka-A captain Sahan Arachchige induced a miscued hit that was held at mid-off, ending a breathtaking knock.

By then, however, the damage had been done.

After both openers departed, Ruturaj Gaikwad and captain Tilak Varma put on an 84-run stand for the third wicket. The scoring rate dipped, but India-A remained firmly in control. En route his 90-ball 67, Tilak stitched another half-century partnership with Kumar Kushagra, before three quick wickets briefly threatened to stall the charge.

Late cameos from Vipraj Nigam (27 off 20) and Anukul Roy, whose unbeaten 39 came off just 15 balls, ensured India-A finished with the highest total of the tournament.

Sri Lanka-A put up a fight despite setbacks.

Ashok Sharma, replacing Anshul Kamboj, impressed with his pace, while Yash Thakur's three wickets kept Sri Lanka-A on the back foot. Sadeera Samarawickrama and Arachchige briefly revived the chase with a 53-run stand until Ashok struck.

Wanuja Sahan and Vijayakanth Viyaskanth added 77 for the seventh wicket, but Vipraj's three wickets meant India-A was in command. The day, though, belonged to Sooryavanshi, who saved his best for the final and turned the title clash into a spectacle.

The scores: India-A 377/9 in 50 overs (Sooryavanshi 94, Ruturaj 40, Tilak 67) bt Sri Lanka-A 311 in 47.1 overs (Samarawickrama 52, Sahan 62, Yash Thakur 3/45, Vipraj 3/60). **Toss:** Sri Lanka-A. **PoM:** Sooryavanshi.

Smiles all around: The India-A players delivered when it mattered most to clinch the crown.

Kanitkar sir gave me a free hand to play freely: Sooryavanshi

Shayan Acharya
DAMBULLA

A couple of days before the tri-nation series final, as Vaibhav Sooryavanshi walked out of the nets after a long and gruelling batting session under the scorching sun, a handful of local fans gathered around him, hoping to click pictures.

The teenager obliged to most requests, but the demands kept growing. One picture led to two, two led to three, and so on...

It reached a point where Sooryavanshi had to rush to catch the team bus as the India-A team was leaving the Rangiri International Stadium premises.

As the local security staff eventually escorted him away, one of them joked: "Let him score first... give him some time."

The runs weren't flowing for the young southpaw yet. Coming on the back of a remarkable IPL season, Sooryavanshi couldn't convert his starts in the tri-nation series. The pressure, naturally, was mounting.

Hearing the remark, he smiled and quietly boarded the team bus. Who would have thought that the 15-year-old was saving his best for the last?

In the final against Sri Lanka-A on Sunday, Sooryavanshi's modus operandi was simple: miss your line or length and I'll make you pay.

"There was no pressure on me," Sooryavanshi said. "The idea was to execute what I had planned for in the first 10 overs and then take it forward. That was the plan and it worked."

When runs weren't coming, he consulted India-A coach Hrishikesh Kanitkar to sort things out.

> The idea was to execute what I had planned for in the first 10 overs and take it forward

"The conditions were challenging here, and I was not able to execute my plans in the last few games. But I could address that with the guidance of the coaches. So, it was about going out there and executing the plans," he added.

"I sat down with Hrishi sir to discuss a few things and he gave me a free hand to play freely," Sooryavanshi told *The Hindu*.

Having worked with him since the under-19 days, Sooryavanshi knew that Kanitkar's advice would be crucial.

"Even when I struggled, he told me that, '*tu apna natural game khel, zyada soch mat*' (you play your natural game and don't think too much about anything else). That motivated me and I continued to back myself... I'm happy that things worked out well."

While a record-breaking innings will forever remain special, he doesn't want to think too much about the missed hundred (94, 29b, 10x4, 8x6) in the final.

As he leaves for Ireland and England with the Indian senior men's team, Sooryavanshi will start afresh with a lot of confidence.

"Many people don't know, but I have played some One-dayers... so it was good to take on the bowlers today," he said with a smile, after being adjudged the Player-of-the-Match.

Take it easy: Sooryavanshi said the coaches ensured there was no pressure on him. SLC

D'artagnan triumphs

BENGALURU: P. Shroff-trained D'artagnan (G. Vivek up) won the Zavaray S. Poonawalla Colts Championship Stakes (1,600m), the chief event of the races held here on Sunday (June 21).
The winner is owned by Mr & Mrs. Vijay B. Shirke & Mr. Jay V. Shirke rep. Horse Haven Breeding and Racing Pvt. Ltd., Mr & Mrs. Farouq K. Rattonsey rep. Hyperion Bloodstock Pvt. Ltd., Mr. Mehernosh H. Deboo, Mrs. Liane Luthria, Mr. Milan Luthria & Mrs. Daisy K.D.B. Mehta & Mr. Darashaw Keki Mehta rep. Darashaw Racing & Breeding Pvt. Ltd., Mr & Mrs. Farouq K. Rattonsey, Mr. Sameer F. Rattonsey & Mr Zaheer F. Rattonsey rep. by Hyperion Bloodstock Pvt. Ltd.
Vivek confidently kept his colt a handy second last position till the bend before manoeuvring the mount from wide outside in the home stretch. D'artagnan responded well, started galloping tremendously and overtook the leader Stud Poker while passing 200m to win resolutely.

THE RESULTS:

1. GUINDY PLATE (DIV. II), 1,200M: AMAZING STORM (Bhawani S) 1, Anzac Parade (Aditya W) 2, Dr. Colchester (Arul) 3 and N R I Millenium (A. Asbar) 4. 1-3/4, 1-3/4 and Nk. 1m, 15.54s. ₹155 (w), 34, 12 and 25 (p), SHP: 30, THP: 81, FP: 474, Q: 167, Trinella: 12,566/5,385, Exacta: 48,608/20,832. Favourite: Anzac Parade. Owner: Mr. S. Saleem Shah. Trainer: M. Rajendra Singh.

2. BERGAMO PLATE (DIV. II), 1,100M: MAGESTIC PERSONA (Vishal) 1, Aphelion (Sandesh) 2, Super Kind (Salman Khan) 3 and CR Seven (Kiran Rai) 4. 8-1/4, 3 and 3-1/2. 1m, 06.61s. ₹25 (w), 13, 10 and 17 (p), SHP: 23, THP: 41, FP: 36, Q: 16, Trinella: 180/132, Exacta: 341/101. Favourite: Aphelion. Owners: Mr. R.M. Ramaswamy & Mr. M. Venkatarama. Trainer: V. Lokanath.

3. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA PLATE (1,200M): RIZZ (Sandesh) 1, Osaka (Suraj) 2, Flavianus (Neeraj) 3 and Astrid (Arvind K) 4. 5-1/2, 3/4 and 1. 1m, 13.18s. ₹44 (w), 14, 10 and 23 (p), SHP: 26, THP: 53, FP: 151, Q: 39, Trinella: 568/419, Exacta: 3,621/1,773. Favourite: Osaka. Owners: Diamond Band Rac Syn Pvt. Ltd., M/s. Rapar Galloping Stars LLP, Mr. Jehan Jehangir Sataravala & Dr. Syed Ainuddin Arif. Trainer: Adhiraj S. Jodha.

4. NOBLE PRINCE PLATE (1,800M): DARDANUS (Antony) 1, Stentorian (Darshan) 2, Mandate (Aleemuddin) 3 and Oxytocin (Kiran Rai) 4. 1-1/4, 1/2 and 2-1/4. 1m, 52.94s. ₹26 (w), 10, 41 and 14 (p), SHP: 177, THP: 35, FP: 645, Q: 658, Trinella: 3,099/1,123, Exacta: 62,553 (carried over). Favourite: Dardanus. Owner: Mr. Joydeep Datta Gupta. Trainer: Bharath Singh.

5. CIVIL SERVICE CUP (2,000M): PROKOFIEV (Akshay K) 1, Caccini (G. Vivek) 2, Ice Of Fire (A. Asbar) 3 and Star Studded (Yash) 4. 2-1/2, 10 and 1-1/4. 2m, 05.94s. ₹30 (w), 22 and 13 (p), SHP: 25, THP: 24, FP: 54, Q: 24, Trinella: 60/31, Exacta: 154/105. Favourite: Caccini. Owners: Poonawalla Racing & Breeding Pvt. Ltd. rep. by Mr. Zavaray S. Poonawalla, Mrs. Behroze Z. Poonawalla, Mr. Yohan Z. Poonawalla, Mrs. Michelle Y. Poonawalla, Ms. Delna Z. Poonawalla, Mrs. Simone Poonawalla Pandole, Mr. Rishad N. Pandole & Ms. Tania Y. Poonawalla. Trainer: Prasanna Kumar.

6. ZAVARAY S. POONAWALLA COLTS CHAMPIONSHIP STAKES (1,600M): D'ARTAGNAN (DEAUVILLE-EXCEPTION) G. VIVEK 1, Stud Poker (Kameko-Cat's Claw) Antony 2, Knotty Emperor (Gusto-Par Excellence) Suraj 3 and Zayyan (Ten Sovereigns-Call Me Sweetheart) Yash 4. 1-1/4, 4 and 5. 1m, 36.37s. ₹16 (w), 10, 11 and 13 (p), SHP: 23, THP: 31, FP: 37, Q: 14, Trinella: 76/31, Exacta: 162/84. Favourite: D'artagnan. Owners: Mr & Mrs. Vijay B. Shirke & Mr. Jay V. Shirke rep. Horse Haven Breeding and Racing Pvt. Ltd., Mr & Mrs. Farouq K. Rattonsey rep. Hyperion Bloodstock Pvt. Ltd., Mr. Mehernosh H. Deboo, Mrs. Liane Luthria, Mr. Milan Luthria & Mrs. Daisy K.D.B. Mehta & Mr. Darashaw Keki Mehta rep. Darashaw Racing & Breeding Pvt. Ltd., Mr & Mrs. Farouq K. Rattonsey, Mr. Sameer F. Rattonsey & Mr Zaheer F. Rattonsey rep. by Hyperion Bloodstock Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: P. Shroff.

7. BERGAMO PLATE (DIV. I), 1,100M: STEFFEN (Vishal S) 1, Hushed (Vishal) 2, Supreme Success (Yash) 3 and Zayana (Pavan) 4. 2, 1-3/4 and 7. 1m, 07.18s. ₹60 (w), 18, 10 and 18 (p), SHP: 32, THP; 38, FP: 173, Q: 51, Trinella: 197/243, Exacta: 1,299/481. Favourite: Hushed. Owner: Mr. P. Arun Kumar. Trainer: S. John.

8. GUINDY PLATE (DIV. I), 1,200M: MY SOLITAIRE (Antony) 1, Legendary Impact (Vishal) 2, Estefania (Shreyas S) 3 and LG's Script (Vaibhav) 4. 1/2, 1-3/4 and 3/4. 1m, 14.60s. ₹30 (w), 17, 21 and 17 (p), SHP: 41, THP: 68, FP: 120, Q: 55, Trinella: 433/166, Exacta: 2,456/1,052. Favourite: My Solitaire Owner: Mr. R. Ramesh. Trainer: S. Shoban Babu.

Jackpot: ₹4,616; runner-up: 408; mini jackpot: 1,674; treble (i): 822; (ii): 456.

SNAPSHOTS

Matsuyama wins men's foil gold

Kyosuke Matsuyama won gold in the men's foil on a day of upsets in the 26th Asian senior fencing championships at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Sunday.

Hong Kong's Cheung Ka Long, a reigning two-time Olympic champion, suffered a shock defeat to South Korea's Im Cheolwoo in the quarterfinals. Cheolwoo went on to claim silver.

Defending champion Ryan Choi was also knocked out in the quarters.

In women's epee, Irina Bakaldina clinched a first-ever individual gold for Kazakhstan in this category by defeating Hong Kong's Kaylin Hsieh.

Bengal T20 League women's final postponed

The Bengal T20 League women's final between Adamas Howrah Warriors and Murshidabad Kueens in Kolkata was postponed to Monday due to heavy rain on Sunday.

Australia sweeps T20I series

Mitchell Marsh smashed 60 (28b, 7x4, 4x6) as Australia completed a 3-0 T20I sweep over Bangladesh, winning by seven wickets in Chattogram on Sunday.

The scores: Bangladesh 109/8 in 20 overs (Towhid 61 n.o.) lost to Australia 112/3 in 11 overs (Marsh 60). **Toss:** Bangladesh. **PoM:** Marsh; **PoS:** Renshaw.

NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

In this Hon'ble High Court, Chennai monitored auctions (in Crl.O.P.(MD)No. 15498/2024 and batch cases), commercial properties of defaulted financial establishment, namely Neomax Properties Pvt. Ltd. and its sister concerns, are proposed to be brought for sale by way of E-tender cum E-auction through the MSTC website **(https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/nmgp/index.jsp).** The interested bidders may participate in the event by registering in MSTC and depositing Pre-Bid EMD on the website.
Further, for the details of the properties and updates, the bidders may visit the EOW website **(www.tneow.tn.gov.in).**

Sl. NO	Name of the Project	Details of the Asset	Land Area Extent	Built-Up Area (in SFT)
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2.	**KODAI ROAD- DRIVE IN HOTEL.** Jambudurai Kottai Village, Nilakottai Taluk, Dindigul Distric	Drive-in Hotel constructed in Tress Work & STP Plant (Dining area, Party Hall, Kitchen, Servant shed (Gents / Ladies), Toilet (all with GI Sheet Roof) Upset price : Rs. 5,06,25,000 /- Prebid EMD : RS 50,62,500/-	2.64 Acres	13132.44 Sq.ft (approx.)
3.	**KODAI ROAD- CATERING INSTITUTE.** Jambudurai Kottai Village, Nilakottai Taluk, Dindigul District	Catering Institute (Ground floor and Portico with RCC roof, Storage shed, connecting shed with GI sheet roof) Upset price: Rs. 5,72,50,000 /- Prebid EMD : RS 57,25,000/-	3.12 Acres	12395.25 Sq.ft (approx.)
4.	**PAVER BLOCK FACTORY** Keelachinnampatti Village, Vadipatti Taluk, Madurai	Factory Building with Lands (Main Building with GI Roof, Side Building ACC Roof, Office Building RCC Rood) Upset price : Rs. 1,42,18,125 /- Prebid EMD : RS 14,21,813/- (Property attached by ED, No-objection has been given by the ED to auction the property, as per the Hon'ble High Court order. translate to tamil)	2.49 Acres	11319 Sq.ft (approx.)

Important Schedule & Information

Date of site inspection and document verification:	22.06.2026 to 21.07.2026
Date of Assistance to the bidders by the MSTC officials for Registration in the MSTC Portal (at the EOW office Madurai)	02.07.2026 and 03.07.2026
Date and time of auction	22.07.2026, 10.30 AM to 23.07.2026, 5.00 PM (Auto extension applicable)

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*Neomax depositors who claim exemption from Pre-Bid EMD can view their status in the excel sheet posted on the EOW website.
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India's GenNext pace battery – hungry, promising and effective

With two of the next three Test series in the subcontinent, the coaching group's brief will revolve around keeping the quicks fresh, relevant and topped up skill-wise with the 50-over World Cup in southern Africa next year as the ultimate goal

R. Kaushik
CHENNAI

Ruthlessly efficient. How often have we used those words in conjunction to describe India's fast bowlers on home turf? And not just any fast bowlers, but those young in both age and experience so far as international cricket is concerned.

It's been a productive fortnight for the national team, not because it completed expected conquests of an out-of-its-depth Afghanistan in the one-off Test in New Chandigarh and the three One-Day Internationals that followed, but for the personnel that drove these outcomes. True, the established names stepped up - skipper Shubman Gill and K.L. Rahul and Ishan Kishan readily spring to mind from a batting standpoint, with Rohit Sharma and Yashavi Jaiswal just a half-notch below. But it's the success of a slew of relative newcomers in the bowling department that has sparked genuine excitement and the promise that tomorrow might not be as bleak as feared.

India bid goodbye to the magic of R. Ashwin some 18 months back. The Tamil Nadu off-spinner's destroyer-in-arms, fellow tweaker Ravindra Jadeja, isn't too far from riding away into the Test sunset. Mohammed Shami seems to be permanently out of favour for no fault of his other than, one suspects, ruffling the egos of a few good men. Jasprit Bumrah's protesting body needs careful monitoring, Kuldeep Yadav seems to have hit a trough. A host of fast bowlers who arrived with hype and hoopla are gasping for relevance, among them Mukesh Kumar, Akashdeep Singh and Anshul Kamboj. Among the fans, if not among those who have been carefully charting the progress of the next rung, a sense of despondency was beginning to creep in.

It's against this uncertain backdrop that the developments of the last two weeks must be viewed, weighed, measured and judged. The temptation to write off early successes as the by-products of a combination of beginners' luck and a weak opposition might be huge, but it's worth remembering that the likes of Manav Suthar and Gurnoor Brar and Prince Yadav themselves aren't exactly established household names. In some ways, they were in the same boat as their opponents, having to conquer gremlins of self-doubt, having to grapple with thoughts of whether they belonged at the highest level. Which is exactly what makes their early statements at the highest level so impressive.

Suthar has stolen an early march in the quest to become a long-term weapon in the spinning arsenal in the red-ball game. The decision-makers in Indian cricket have been tracking him for a couple of years and, convinced that in the longer version his left-arm spin was a more potent threat than the same brand offered by Harsh Dubey, threw him into the deep end in New Chandigarh. The 23-year-old didn't disappoint; he got a wicket with his fourth ball in Test cricket, went on to pick up six wickets in his first innings as a Test bowler and finished the game with the Player of the Match award. It was a grand debut for one so young and with so much to offer. That he has since travelled to England to play for Warwickshire in the English County Championship is great news because even though the county game is no longer the finishing school as it once used to be, there is so much to learn for a young overseas spinner in England at this time of the summer when there isn't a lot of assistance from the playing surfaces.

With Nitish lining up as a fast-bowling all-rounder, a rarity in Indian cricket, alongside Hardik, and Harshit, Gurnoor, Prince and Nabi slotting in as serious contenders, the Indian fast-bowling cupboard looks a lot fuller than it was a couple of years back

India play two Tests in Sri Lanka in August and Suthar can expect to link up alongside Jadeja (if fully fit) and Washington Sundar should the leadership group opts to look for greater batting depth too and therefore looks beyond Kuldeep. But as heartening as Suthar's initiation has been, it's the emergence of a small bunch of faster bowlers that will gladden the hearts of Gill and head coach Gautam Gambhir.

Surprise pick

Gurnoor was a somewhat contentious selection to the Test squad, ahead of Auqib Nabi, the 29-year-old from Jammu and Kashmir who has taken more than 100 wickets in the last two Ranji Trophy seasons and whose 60 wickets were crucial to the State lifting the title for the first time earlier this year. Gurnoor, 26, has fewer First Class wickets in a three-year career than Nabi in the season gone by alone, but his height (1.94 metres) and high pace are the points of difference. In the highest decision-making echelons, Nabi is seen as a bowler reliant on conditions - even though he took wickets across pitches of varying character throughout the whole of the last two years - whereas Brar is perceived as someone who can extract life anywhere, owing to his ability to procure steep bounce and his speed through the air.

Given the slant towards spin and the presence of Mohammed Siraj and Prasidh Krishna, the heroes of the series-levelling win in the Oval Test last August, Gurnoor warmed the bench in the one-off Test but impressed on his international debut in the truncated ODI in Dharamshala with three for 27. He took three more wickets in Lucknow on a shirtfront on which India posted more than 400, and rounded off the series with a somewhat expensive one for 49 at Chepauk on Saturday. Seven wickets from three home ODIs are terrific returns for a 26-year-old in his first international foray and he has already made an early pitch for consideration for the 2027 50-over World Cup, which will be played on fresh, early-season pitches in South Africa, among other places, from next October.

"Yes, he did tick most of the boxes but there are some things that he can only learn from experience and hopefully, he is going to keep growing as a bowler," Gill acknowledged. "If I am to be really critical, he did go for a little bit of runs. He was a little bit inconsistent at times, but he is young, he is playing his first series at the top level and he is bowling quick. He has got all the good signs that we want from a young, tall, fast bowler. And with experience, he is only going to get better."

It's obvious that chief selector Ajit Agarkar and his panel have invested a lot in Gurnoor, part of the targeted players that the BCCI and the CoE believe have the skills and the potential to make it to the next level and perform consistently there. Gurnoor is clearly a work in progress, which is only to be expected, but his height and pace are assets that should come in handy going forward. Hitherto, India's pace bowling has revolved around Jasprit Bumrah (of course) and Siraj, with Harshit Rana looming as a third option when he isn't injured. Now, there is a greater pool of players making a strong pitch, among them Prasidh, also tall like Gurnoor and also pacy, but with a lot more experience than Gurnoor, Prince and Nabi.

Prasidh finally seems to have shaken off the injury bug that has blighted his career; armed with greater confidence after his exploits in England, he is a more potent force who understands his bowling and the conditions a lot better. The fuller lengths he hit in bouncy Chennai on Saturday netted him his maiden international five-for, a definitive shot in the arm as he seeks to continue to be the prime force among the next crop, behind Bumrah and Siraj and Arshdeep Singh, who is only now beginning to get a decent run after a largely exclusive T20I career.

With Nitish Kumar lining up as a fast-bowling all-rounder, a rarity in Indian cricket, alongside Hardik Pandya, and Harshit, Gurnoor, Prince and Nabi slotting in as serious contenders, the Indian fast-bowling cupboard looks a lot fuller than it was a couple of years back. Much of it has also to do with the streamlining process in which the Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru, under the stewardship of V.V.S. Laxman, has had a big but hardly publicised role to play. Troy Cooley worked tirelessly with the upcoming crop and can reflect on a job well done as he puts his feet up, having now exceeded the age threshold of 60. There was a time, when the leadership duo of Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri ruled the roost, when India's pace battery was the envy of most of the rest of the cricketing world. India haven't yet got there, but there is no reason, if these young men keep their feet on the ground and are disciplined enough to ward off fitness-related injuries, they can't reach those lofty heights again in the next couple of years.

"It's fantastic," Ryan ten Doeschate, the assistant coach, crowed the other day of the influx of pace riches all over again. "One of the big things when this coaching staff started out was always going to be the transition of the bowlers, particularly with guys like Shami not playing anymore. A couple of weeks ago when we got together in Chandigarh, to see those three young guys coming in and bowl, it was literally like a wow moment. The way Gurnoor has bowled in his first two games, to see a young Indian pacer hit 147, 148 (kmph) again, I'm sure you guys are all excited as we are.

"To balance the experience that this (ODI) team has – the guys have played a lot of cricket and won a lot of trophies - and to augment the talent and the experience and get them up to speed really, really quickly is going to be the challenge. We have to pick the best guys to do the job, which is obviously going to be the final piece of the puzzle. You need both elements – you need the experience and you continuously need to fill the pipeline with new guys coming in. You'll agree that this squad is going to be in a very good space."

With two of their next three Test series in the subcontinent, the coaching group's brief will revolve around keeping the quicks fresh, relevant and topped up skill-wise with the longer World Cup as the ultimate goal. A larger pool will work as an insurance against injuries and loss of form, a luxury that hasn't always been available to the Indians in the recent past. The signs are encouraging, but these are very early days yet and it's important for all concerned to dip into the past and realise that the need of the hour is cautious optimism (well merited), not self-defeating, over-the-top grandstanding.

THE GIST

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Prince made his ODI debut in the second match of the reent series against the Afghans at the Ekana in Lucknow

Biochar offers a way to turn India's farm smoke into 'black gold'

When added to poor, degraded soils, biochar can increase their ability to store water and stimulate the growth of beneficial microbes; studies have indicated that it can improve crop productivity by 10% to 30% and water-holding capacity by 10% to 25%, particularly in soils low in nutrients

Vinaya Kumar H.M.
Vikram Patil

India's agriculture faces a serious paradox: a large amount of biomass that could improve soil health is instead being burned. This threatens soil health and food security. Punjab and Haryana burn more than 20 million tonnes of paddy straw in their open fields every year. This is due to the short post-harvest periods and a lack of practical alternatives.

Burning these residues releases large quantities of greenhouse gases and fine particles into the air and soil, causing serious air pollution in the region as well as a major loss of organic matter that could otherwise be returned to the increasingly depleted soils.

At the same time, large tracts of agricultural land, from the black soils of Maharashtra to the red soils of Kerala, suffer from very low soil organic carbon, poor water-holding capacity, and rapid loss of nutrients, reducing crop productivity even with better seeds and irrigation.

Both these problems are symptoms of the same larger failure to recycle natural resources efficiently.

A biochar mixture ready to be applied to soil. Biochar is made by heating agricultural waste in low-oxygen conditions. What remains is a carbon-rich material that breaks down very slowly in the soil. NAMIBIABCBU (CC BY)

THE GIST

- Biochar is made by heating agricultural waste in low-oxygen conditions
- Integrating biochar into the existing initiatives on natural farming, soil health management, and carbon farming can deliver environmental and economic benefits at scale
- As droughts, heatwaves, and erratic rainfall become more frequent and more intense, improving soil health will be crucial to sustaining agricultural productivity
- In India, however, biochar remains largely confined to research trials and pilot projects, and is very much alien to many farmers

Value to agriculture

This is where biochar emerges as a carbon negative solution. Biochar is made by heating agricultural waste in low-oxygen conditions. What remains is a carbon-rich material that breaks down very slowly in the soil, helping to keep carbon locked away for long periods of time. The benefits extend well beyond carbon capture. Biochar is highly porous and contributes to aggregating soil particles, holding water, and creating a suitable environment for microorganisms.

Given these properties, the value of biochar to agriculture should be obvious. When added to poor, degraded soils, it can increase their ability to store water and stimulate the growth of beneficial microbes.

Studies have indicated that it can improve crop productivity by 10% to 30% and water-holding capacity by 10% to 25%, particularly in soils low in nutrients.

Biochar derived from maize stalks and applied to black soils in Akola district of Maharashtra has improved soil organic carbon content and overall soil fertility in field trials. Research from Kerala has shown that biochar made from coconut leaf stalks increased soil quality in different cropping systems, emphasising the need to use local resources effectively. Perhaps most significantly, long-term studies have shown that biochar has the benefit of enhancing soil health and maintaining higher crop output over time.

Wider vision

This approach also supports India's wider vision of sustainable agriculture and climate resilience. As droughts, heatwaves, and erratic rainfall become more frequent and more intense, improving soil health will be crucial to sustaining agricultural productivity.

By increasing the water-holding capacity and the ability to use nutrients efficiently, thus, biochar can help crops withstand moisture stress while reducing dependency on external inputs. This is particularly important for small and marginal farmers who are often the most exposed to the climate's vagaries.

Integrating biochar into the existing initiatives on natural farming, soil health management, and carbon farming can deliver environmental and economic benefits at scale. Yet in India, biochar remains largely confined to research trials and pilot projects, and is very much alien to many farmers.

In fact, agricultural residues are generally seen only as a problem of disposal. But they are an important resource that can generate additional income, create jobs, can deliver environmental benefits, and could even support payments for ecosystem services.

Carbon credits

As one way forward, the government could package the activities of turning agricultural waste into biochar and putting it on soil into carbon credit markets, creating a strong economic incentive for mass adoption.

Biochar carbon already passes rigorous stability criteria for long-term sequestration, and it can be classified as a persistent carbon dioxide removal technology under internationally accepted accounting standards. For instance, VM0042 agricultural land management methodology quantifies both avoided emissions from residue burning and long-term carbon sequestration in soils. In this protocol, each tonne of certified biochar can generate 2-2.8 t carbon dioxide-equivalent in carbon credits. Depending on carbon market prices, certified biochar can thus provide an additional source of income for project developers, farmers, and cooperatives.

Biochar is highly porous and contributes to aggregating soil particles, holding water, and creating a suitable environment for microorganisms

This approach is already being tested in projects such as those using the KISAN kiln from IIT-Kharagpur, which allows smallholders to monetise farm waste.

Several international examples also illustrate the scalability of biochar systems. In Kenya, turning rice husks into biochar has produced thousands of certified carbon credits and improved soil pH and phosphorus content. Thailand has pushed biochar use through national initiatives on soil rehabilitation and carbon management, and tied certification to access to the national carbon registry system, providing a policy-to-market pipeline. High carbon retention and large yield gains have also been reported from Brazil's Embrapa Institute after using on-farm biochar generated from sugarcane bagasse.

These examples also show that success depends on integrated strategies that combine decentralised, appropriately scaled pyrolysis technology with strong measurement, reporting, and verification systems.

Urban organic waste

The feedstock for biochar is also not limited to agricultural waste and can encompass urban organic waste as well. India generates around 62 million tonnes of municipal solid garbage per year and more than 50% of that is biodegradable. Sewage sludge and crop residues can also be converted into biochar.

This is in keeping with the precepts of the circular economy, as organic waste is diverted from landfills that produce methane and is converted to a useful product for agriculture. By systematically implementing these measures, India can turn its large waste streams into 'black gold', thus ensuring a more resilient agricultural future while making a meaningful contribution to global climate mitigation efforts.

Overall, the value of biomass can only be realised through an integrated ecosystem that catalyses innovation, entrepreneurship, market linkages, investment, and cost-effective access to biochar for farmers.

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BIG SHOT

People gather at the ancient stone circle Stonehenge at sunrise to celebrate the Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year, near Salisbury, England on Sunday. AP

WHAT IS IT?

No alcohol when it's hot

Vasudevan Mukunth

In response to a new heatwave alert across Europe, France has partially banned the consumption of alcohol. The restriction is a public health measure as part of reducing heat-related illnesses.

Alcohol affects the body in many ways that become more dangerous if the person is also exposed to extreme heat. It causes the body to produce more urine, and thus increases the risk of dehydration. It impairs the body's ability to regulate temperature by dilating blood vessels in the skin and suppressing the hormone vasopressin. And it lowers their awareness of early warning signs such as dizziness and nausea and makes them less likely to seek shade or drink water.

These risks are compounded at large outdoor events like the annual Fête de la Musique, where people may spend hours standing in crowded spaces under direct sunlight.

As *Reuters* reported, "After a crisis meeting, Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu pre-emptively banned alcohol consumption on Sunday at the annual Fete de la Musique festivals and other public events" scheduled in the 35 regions with heat alerts. It added that Paris authorities had "ordered parks to remain open around the clock". Since the city is a concrete jungle, parks could keep people cool at night.

A person cools off from a public fountain near the Colosseum during a heatwave in Rome. REUTERS

Since the deadly 2003 heatwave in Europe, which killed nearly 15,000 people in France alone, French authorities have adopted more interventionist responses to heat, including opening cooling centres, checking on vulnerable residents, and restricting activities that could increase health risks.

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