

Sweden and finally returning to India in 2021.

While the internet may have just discovered "Pookie Professor", students and alumni of IIT-Ropar, one of the eight new IITs set up in 2008, say they have been feeling the shift since 2021, when Ahuja joined the institute.

From several new initiatives to ensure the physical and mental well-being of students to "being a guardian-like figure" on the campus, from "never saying no to justified demands" of students to writing reference mails and promoting innovative

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## ●K-shaped market

due to the continuously declining sales of entry level cars. But other interesting trends unfolded during the year: in terms of power-trains, CNG overtook diesel for the first time ever. The rural share crossed 40 per cent, again a new high.

While sports utility vehicles or SUVs continue to lead, the fastest growing segment was the MPVs (Multi-Purpose Vehicles), with rural or suburban sales accounting for a major chunk. Hatchbacks accounted for less than a quarter of the market, a new low. Hatchbacks and sedans put together, was less than a third of the market, and utility vehicles (SUVs, MPVs and vans combined) account for nearly 70 per cent.

First-time buyers are picking the more expensive SUV or MUV. But the industry is divided on who exactly is a first-time buyer – individual who buys her or his first car or a family getting its first car? These are not the same. In Creta's case, it is both, with monthly income ranging from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2 lakh.

What is certain though is a clear move towards premiumisation. According to Tarun Garg, Whole-time Director & Chief Operating Officer, Hyundai Motor India Ltd, the contribution of high-end features like ADAS-enabled cars increased almost six times to account for 15 per cent of Hyundai's overall sales in 2024. Also, 50 per cent of all cars Hyundai sells is equipped with a sunroof. "Furthermore, we are introducing high demand premium features in lower variants across models facilitating a wider audience to get a taste of advanced technology-led mobility features," Garg said.

But in case of the UV segment, customers are said to be largely opting for base variants or those just above the base, primarily reflecting the propensity to eke out maximum bang for the buck.

The entry-level car segment is in a bad shape, primarily due to two factors: higher price tag of Rs 4 lakh-plus due to better safety norms including six airbags, and sluggish income growth in the lower end of consumer base. The bigger problem is that an entry-level car costs nearly four times the prices of a scooter or motorcycle.

Slowing consumption growth is a trend that seems to be getting entrenched, despite some signs of recovery in rural areas. While real wage growth for rural agricultural and non-agricultural workers is providing some support to overall consumption growth, in the urban areas, new demand is simply not picking up to the levels seen in the post-Covid phase. As a result, corporates are seeing their

## ●Chirag

where crime is completely out of control. It is important to control this, otherwise, the way lives of Bihar and Biharis are being played with, Bihar will head towards a very bad outcome," he said, in a scathing indictment of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U), also an NDA ally.

Ahead of his visit to Gaya, Paswan said, "Look, one after another, Bihar has seen a series of criminal incidents, and the administration seems to be completely bowing down before the criminals. It is true that what happened is as condemnable and as shameful as it gets; action has also been taken, arrests have been made. But the first question is, why do such incidents keep happening in the first place? The way murders, kidnappings, robberies, dacoities, rapes are happening one after another in Bihar, it has become a series of such incidents, and now it seems as if the administration is completely failing to control them."

"And if things keep going like

performance tapering off, especially in urban centres.

According to industry data, sales performance of entry-level cars priced below Rs 5 lakh – a crucial indicator of demand in the economy given that this segment largely attracts first-time buyers – is dire. This segment used to account for nearly a million units a decade ago – 9,34,538 to be precise in FY16. It has since declined to just 25,402 units in FY25. The Maruti Suzuki Alto, for instance, sold more than 18,700 units in June 2019, and was the best-selling then. In June 2025, the Alto and S-Presso combined sold a little over 6,000 units.

Creta, a mid-segment car, on the other hand ranked number in the charts selling 15,786 units in June this year. Despite being the top-selling car, its June sales were less than the average monthly sale of 16,239 in the last financial year. A veteran industry executive said this is "clearly a K-shaped curve in car buying habits in India".

In April-June 2025, passenger vehicle sales declined 1.4 per cent over the same quarter last year, and passenger car sales declined by more than 11 per cent in the same period. As such, not only is the expected graduation in a growing economy from two to four wheelers not happening, the former's growth itself is stalling. The two-wheeler segment sales dropped 6.2 per cent to 46.74 lakh units in April-June 2025, pulled down by motorcycles and mopeds. When juxtaposed, suggests a dwindling of purchasing power at the lower and middle-class segments

In the cars' segment, it is the utility vehicles, which are not exactly entry level, or affordable, cars for a majority of Indians, that are saving the auto sector from a complete meltdown, a trend highlighted by the likes of the Creta and Ertiga being among the top sellers in June, accounting for nearly 66 per cent of all cars sold.

According to data collected by the NGO People Research on India's Consumer Economy – which some carmakers refer to internally – car penetration in Indian households that have a yearly income of less than Rs 4 lakh reduced to 1.4 per cent in FY20, from 1.9 per cent in FY16. Car penetration in households that earn between Rs 4 lakh to Rs 7 lakh annually also reduced to 8.3 per cent from 12.1 per cent in the same time period. Families with incomes of less than Rs 4 lakh and between Rs 4 lakh and Rs 7 lakh are said to make up for around 80 per cent of all Indian households. Though FY20 was the latest data available with a carmaker, they said the trend has not changed in the subsequent years.

this, it will create a very dreadful situation in our state in the coming days. Actually, such a situation has already arisen. Ask the families who have lost their loved ones about their condition. Ask the girls who have suffered such incidents about their condition," he said.

"Nowadays, it is even being said that, because of elections, anti-social elements are carrying out such activities. If elections are also a reason – and in some way, I too accept that perhaps elections are also one reason and maybe, to malign the government, some people are conspiring and executing these incidents – but even then, the responsibility lies with the administration to control them. How is any criminal able to commit such acts in your state when the administration is present? Either the administration is colluding with them, or the administration is trying to cover up these acts, or else the administration has become completely incompetent and is no longer capable of keeping Bihar and Biharis safe," he said.

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## Committed to supporting Maldives, says PM

the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

Besides the top political and military brass of the Maldives, several members of the Prime Minister's delegation including External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri also attended the event.

As he left for India in the evening, after winding up his two-day state visit, Modi said in a post on X: "The productive talks with President Muizzu will add significant energy to our bilateral relations."

"India and the Maldives share a deep-rooted partnership built on mutual respect, shared values and a long history of cultural and economic exchanges," Modi said in another post on X. "Our relationship continues to grow, shaped by people-to-people ties and cooperation in various sectors. India remains committed to supporting the aspirations of the Maldivian people and to working together for the betterment of our planet," he said.

Speaking to reporters after the conclusion of the Independence Day celebrations, Muizzu said: "India is one of the major countries that helps the Maldives with tourism. With PM Modi's visit, it is going to increase a lot. I am sure that this visit will boost people-to-people exchange between the two countries."

Asked about plans to visit India this year, Muizzu said: "I hope so. I don't know whether this year or not, but maybe in the near future." Emphasising India's role in the development journey of the island nation, he said: "We all have seen how India has helped the Maldives in the past, and nobody will doubt how India

will be a very crucial partner going forward".

At a state banquet held in honour of Modi on Friday night, Muizzu described the Indian Ocean as a living testament to long-standing ties between the Maldives and India, saying the two nations have forged a resilient and unbreakable bond that extends far beyond diplomacy. He expressed gratitude to the Indian government for its continued support and steadfast friendship. Muizzu said the 60 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries reflected the shared history and an enduring partnership.

Muizzu noted that the relationship between the two countries extends far beyond formal diplomacy, with deep-rooted connections dating back centuries, according to a statement issued by the President's Office. He referred to the Indian Ocean as a living testament to these long-standing ties, emphasising that the shared journey of both nations, as traders and neighbours, has forged a resilient and unbreakable bond.

He said the Maldivian Government is committed to building an inclusive and dynamic economy, empowering young people, and ensuring peace and security in the region. Muizzu acknowledged that India's partnership is instrumental in realising these ambitions. Reaffirming the Maldives' commitment to nurturing this special relationship, he expressed a wish for a flourishing Maldives-India partnership that brings lasting peace and prosperity to both nations.

Modi's visit to the Maldives is seen as a major turnaround in bilateral ties after a spell of strain and tension. It assumes signifi-

cance as Muizzu, known to be close to China, came to power in the island nation in November 2023 on the back of an "India Out" campaign. Muizzu's policies in the first few months of his presidency resulted in severe strain in ties. Within hours of taking oath, he had demanded the withdrawal of Indian military personnel from his country. Arguably, New Delhi's sustained efforts, including its assistance to the island nation to deal with economic woes, helped bring the relations back on track.

On Friday, Modi held wide-ranging talks with Muizzu and announced a Rs 4,850 crore line of credit to the island nation, saying that India is proud to be the "most trusted" friend of the Maldives. India also announced the reduction of Maldives' annual debt repayment obligations by 40 per cent (from \$51 million to \$29 million) and the launch of talks on a Free Trade Agreement.

Earlier on Saturday, Modi met several Maldivian leaders, including Vice President Uz Hussain Mohamed Latheef, Speaker of the Maldivian Parliament Abdul Raheem Abdullah and former President Mohamed Nasheed.

"PM Narendra Modi interacted with leaders of various political parties in Male today. He conveyed his warm wishes on the occasion of the Independence Day of Maldives. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment for a stronger India-Maldives relationship, building upon the vibrant people to people ties and the shared values between the two democracies. The Maldivian leaders thanked the PM for India's continued support on developmental assistance for the welfare of the Maldivian people," the Ministry of External Affairs'

spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X.

"Had a meaningful meeting with members of different political parties of the Maldives. The participation of leaders across the political spectrum underscores the bipartisan support for the strong and time-tested India-Maldives friendship. Our shared values continue to guide this important partnership," Modi said on X.

On his meeting with Latheef, Modi said: "Our discussions touched upon key pillars of the India-Maldives friendship. Our nations continue to work closely in sectors like infrastructure, technology, climate change, energy and more. This is greatly beneficial to our people. We look forward to deepening this partnership in the years to come."

On his meeting with Abdulla, Modi said: "Talked about the deep-rooted India-Maldives friendship, including the close relationship between our respective Parliaments". He also welcomed the formation of the India-Maldives Parliamentary Friendship Group in the 20th Majlis. "India remains committed to supporting capacity building in the Maldives," Modi said.

On his meeting with Nasheed, Modi said: "He (Nasheed) has always been a strong advocate of a deeper India-Maldives friendship. Spoke about how the Maldives will always be a valued pillar of our 'Neighbourhood First' policy and Mahasagar vision."

Modi also interacted with the Indian community in the Maldives and appreciated their contributions in building upon the strong and vibrant people-to-people ties between the two countries.

-WITH PTI INPUTS FROM MALE

## ●Meet 'Pookie professor' who won hearts on IIT Ropar's graduation day

projects and start-ups on campus – students say "Pookie Professor" didn't earn his title in a day.

"Other IITs such as Delhi and Mumbai may be ranked higher than us but we are proud that IIT-Ropar is in the news for making students feel good, for letting them express themselves and giving them the space that is required to be innovative and successful. Our Director sir has always been very clear – that we simply don't have to copy other IITs. The convocation was just a small example of how he is so different from the others. He never imposes his authority as a Director," says Aditya Sahu, a B-Tech mathematics and computing student who is among the new graduates.

Sahu, who was president of IIT-Ropar's student council, says, "We have a very strong student council. We recently built a student council room with all modern amenities. All I had to do was write an application and it was approved by the director with no questions. We told him that we needed more people to coordinate for placements and it was

done. He has publicly announced on campus that if a student faces any health issue and the family is unable to afford the treatment, he will contact the best doctors and ensure timely care. He is very approachable. That's why our college has always felt like home."

While the high-pressure IIT system is a given, students and faculty say they have avenues to reach out to. Among the several initiatives on campus is the appointment of 'faculty advisors', with each advisor in charge of 20-25 students with whom they interact on a personal level. "It is compulsory for faculty advisors to hold at least two meetings with students in each semester. If there's an issue – financial, personal, academic, less scores, mental pressure, anything – we can tell our advisor. We also have 'Sneha buddies' on campus with whom we can share just about anything," says a student, speaking on condition anonymity.

In March this year, when an IIT-Ropar student died by suicide, Ahuja had asked students to speak up, instead of suffering in silence.

He also urged them to choose shared accommodations over single rooms and reassured students that placement delays are not to be seen as failures. "Every IIT student is talented. No setback is worth sacrificing one's life," a student quotes Ahuja as telling them during the emotional meeting he held in the wake of the tragedy.

Kartik, a civil engineering graduate from Haryana's Rewari who only goes by his first name, who was among the first to ask the director to have "some fun" on the convocation day, says he asked Ahuja to pose in black shades, setting off a torrent of requests from other students. "I knew I could get away with it. He is a chill professor," says Kartik.

Tanisha Dahanwal, a B-Tech graduate and a fan of the Korean boy band BTS, got Ahuja to strike a 'Korean hearts' pose. "You really don't expect an IIT professor to do all this cute stuff on stage, but he readily agreed. That's how you earn respect. He allowed us to have our own special moments. He just asked me what this pose meant. Last year, he even let us

open a Fashion Club on campus," she says.

Shubham Singh from UP, who has a Master's degree from IIT-Ropar, says, "Though I graduated in 2018 and he joined in 2021, he helped me launch my air purifier start-up and put me in touch with the Punjab government. His office continues to follow-up, asking if we need any further help. Students look up to such professors."

Ahuja, however, doesn't make much of the sudden social media fame, except that he realises that "the times are different". "I cannot turn to my students and say 'haram time mein to aisa nahi hota tha (This never happened in our times)'," says Ahuja.

"Such is the pressure of studying in IITs that even your neighbour is interested in your salary after you graduate. Every student who comes to IIT is a topper and comes with that baggage to excel. I want to help students take off that pressure. In today's times, a teacher does not know everything. We need to learn from our students as well. I am just trying to do that," he says.

## ●EC's verification of citizenship defies past SC judgments: ADR

revision was carried out in Bihar – produce multiple documents to stay on the rolls, raising concerns about the potential disenfranchisement of a large number of electors and, eventually, prompting legal challenges in the SC.

Acting on the Court's directions, ADR – a non-profit that works on electoral reforms – filed its rejoinder on Saturday to the Commission's counter-affidavit submitted on July 21. In that filing, the Commission had argued that under Article 326 of the Constitution, it is within its rights to verify the citizenship of electors, and clarified that removal from the electoral rolls does not amount to termination of an individual's citizenship.

The matter is listed for hearing on July 28.

### Citizenship checks contradict SC rulings

Responding to the EC's argument that it has the authority to verify electors' citizenship, ADR said this contradicted previous Supreme Court rulings, including Lal Babu Hussain vs Union of India (1995), which held that the burden of proving citizenship lies with new applicants, not those already on the rolls. ADR also cited Indrajit Barua vs ECI (1985), where the Court held that being listed on the electoral roll was prima facie proof of citizenship, and the burden of disproving it rested with the objector.

Also responding to the EC's counter-affidavit, another petitioner, Yogendra Yadav, too, pointed to past judgments on

the presumption of citizenship of those already on the roll. "It is reiterated that automatic deletion of an existing voter from electoral rolls without giving the concerned voter a reasonable opportunity of being heard or basing the suspicion on reasonable grounds is violative of Article 10 of the Constitution (recognises the continuance of citizenship), the provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 (Section 22) and the Rules (Rules 4 to 23, 21A, and 25 of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960) framed thereunder," Yadav said.

He also expressed concern over how the drive would impact a state like Bihar "where 84 constituencies witnessed a margin of victory of less than 10,000 votes in the 2020 Assembly elections". He said if implemented as designed, the SIR could lead to a reduction of the electors-to-adult population ratio from the existing estimate of 97% to 88%. A healthy EP ratio is around 100%, meaning that the entire eligible population is enrolled, while the national average in 2024, using population projections from the Healthy Ministry, was 99%, according to Yadav.

The ADR rejoinder pointed to the EC's instructions for the Bihar leg of the SIR, which require all voters added after 2003 to submit documents from a list of 11 prescribed by the EC, effectively putting the onus on the electors to prove their eligibility, including age and citizenship. "...It is submitted that the SIR process shifts the onus of citizenship proof on all existing electors in a

state, whose names were registered by the ECI through a due process," ADR submitted.

It argued that the Commission had not explained why the established process under the Representation of the People Act and the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960, had to be replaced with fresh documentation requirements and a new enumeration form. Nor had the Commission furnished any data on complaints about foreign nationals or illegal migrants being included on the rolls, ADR said.

### Aadhaar exclusion 'absurd'

The poll body, in its July 21 counter-affidavit, did not accept the apex court's suggestion to consider Aadhaar, Voter ID, and ration cards as valid proof for the ongoing intensive revision in Bihar, arguing that Aadhaar is not a proof of citizenship and ration cards can be obtained through fraudulent or falsified documentation.

In its rejoinder, the NGO said the 11 documents originally prescribed by the EC are equally susceptible to being procured using fake or false documentation. "The fact that Aadhaar card is one of the documents accepted for obtaining Permanent Residence Certificate, OBC/SC/ST Certificate and for passport makes ECI's rejection of Aadhaar (which is most widely held document) under the instant SIR order patently absurd," it said.

### 'Grave fraud on voters of Bihar'

Calling the ongoing SIR a

"grave fraud on the voters of Bihar", ADR said reports from the ground suggest that the Commission's own June 24 guidelines are being violated by Booth Level Officers (BLOs).

As per the order, BLOs were required to visit each home and give each elector two forms. "Many voters have reported that their forms have been submitted online, despite never having met with any BLOs or signed any documents. Forms of even dead individuals have been reported to have been submitted," ADR alleged.

ADR also flagged the lack of any clear procedure for scrutiny of the enumeration forms or verification of documents, arguing that this has handed Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) "arbitrary, unbridled and excessive discretionary powers, which can disenfranchise a huge percentage of population in Bihar."

In its June 24 order, EC had said that the last intensive revision in Bihar was conducted in 2003, and the 2003 roll would serve as "probative evidence" of citizenship for existing electors. For electors born after July 1, 1987, the EC required proof of citizenship of at least one parent, though it allowed them to rely on the 2003 roll if their parents were on it. ADR, however, questioned this distinction, arguing that it puts electors registered after 2003 at "a larger risk of disenfranchisement."

It also questioned why the EC had not placed on record the order of the 2003 revision and asked the court to direct it to do so. In the case of a 2004 order for

## ●UK deal 'gold standard': Goyal

and so the sufferer will be the industry in the EU," Goyal said.

CBAM is a kind of carbon tax on imports of certain high-carbon-intensity goods such as steel, cement and aluminium. Companies exporting these may be required to monitor, report, and maybe pay a price for the carbon emissions, increasing their costs and eroding their competitiveness.

A government official had said India and the UK have arrived at a diplomatic understanding on CBAM, and that India will "rebalance" the negative effect of CBAM by taking countermeasures. It has communicated its concern over CBAM in a "note verbale". The rebalancing measure is, however, not part of the legal text, which has raised concerns over India's ability to address the CBAM issue legally.

The Indian Express had reported on May 6 that CBAM was a major point of contention between the two countries and had been holding up the agreement. India had proposed a "rebalancing mechanism" provision within the deal which would require the UK to compensate the Indian industry for losses incurred due to the regulation.

The paper reported that the 'rebalancing mechanism' article had been inserted into the 'general exceptions' chapter of the negotiating text between the two countries. This would have enabled India to claim compensation for its losses and ensure the UK does not raise a dispute against India at the World Trade Organisation (WTO). UK, how-

ever, likely did not agree to the same.

### Critical minerals

Goyal said India and the UK plan to address the issue of critical minerals together, stating that "concentration of certain supply chains in certain geographies" is a common problem, and both countries plan to work jointly on this.

The India-UK Vision 2035, a document outlining the broader collaborative goals of the free trade agreement between the two, stated that both countries will work together to develop cutting-edge technology and research, building on the Technology Security Initiative. This will focus on future telecoms, artificial intelligence and critical minerals, laying the ground for future collaboration on semiconductors, quantum, biotechnology and advanced materials.

To further cooperation in critical minerals, the two countries will also establish a UK-India Critical Minerals Guild to "transform financing standards and innovation", according to a joint statement by the two.

### On sensitive sectors

India has protected all sensitive sectors, including dairy, rice and sugar, in the trade agreement, Goyal said. "We have protected all the sensitive sectors of India... we have not opened those areas for the UK... Zero compromise and extensive benefits make it a phenomenal free trade agreement (FTA)," he said.

## ●JNU V-C skips meet

JNU hosted its own three-day conference on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) from July 10 to 12 – inaugurated by former Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar. However, the letter noted that the scheduling overlap had been taken into account and the ministry expected Pandit to attend at least on the second day.

"While acknowledging that this conference coincided with the conference on IKS at JNU, it was expected that you would join the Vice-Chancellors' Conference on the second day (11th July 2025), following the inaugural event at your university," the letter said, and asked Pandit to apprise the ministry of the reasons for her absence.

The Indian Express did not receive any response to calls, messages and emails sent to the V-C and the media relations officer. Higher Education Secretary Vineet Joshi declined to comment on the matter. However, a senior official in the ministry confirmed that the JNU V-C was the only institutional head to whom such a communication was sent, as she was the only one absent from the conference.

"She should have gone for both things – both were important. People could have benefited from her presence at the Vice-Chancellors' conference," the official said.

intensive revision in North East states, which is available publicly, only new electors were asked to supply documents, it said. The 2004 exercise was conducted over six months (July 1, 2004 to January 3, 2005), while the Bihar roll is being revised within a three-month window from June 25 to September 30, it said.

### 2025 revision already done

ADR said the EC had not explained why the SIR must be completed before the Bihar Assembly elections, or why the 2025 electoral roll, which underwent revision and was published in January, cannot be used for the upcoming polls.

It argued that updating the electoral roll is a continuous process that already accounts for migration, deaths, and other demographic changes. It cited a January 7 press release by the Bihar Chief Electoral Officer, which noted that the Special Summary Revision 2025 was conducted on the EC's directions and had resulted in the addition of 12.03 lakh names and the deletion of 4.09 lakh.

ADR also referred to the EC's instruction dated August 11, 2023, directing Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) of all states and Union Territories to delete names from the rolls in cases of shifting, demographic similar entries (DSEs), and death.

### No party sought 'de novo' exercise

In its counter-affidavit, EC had said the SIR was being held to address the concerns of political parties. To this, ADR said "not

a single political party had asked ECI for a de novo exercise such as the one prescribed in the instant SIR order. The concerns of political parties were on the issue of addition of non-existent votes and deletion of genuine votes supporting the Opposition parties and on the issue of casting of votes after closure of polls."

The legal challenge to the Bihar SIR was first heard on July 10 by a two-judge vacation bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Joymalya Bagchi. While the Supreme Court declined to restrain the Election Commission from going ahead with the exercise, it suggested that the poll panel also consider accepting Aadhaar, voter ID and ration cards – in addition to the list of 11 prescribed documents – for updating the rolls. The Court allowed the Commission to file a counter-affidavit by July 21 and listed the matter for further hearing on July 28.

The Commission's deadline for collecting enumeration forms ended on Friday. The EC said it had received forms from 7.23 crore electors, who would be included in the draft electoral roll. Around 65 lakh names would be deleted, as those electors were found to have died, shifted permanently, been enrolled in two places, or were untraceable, the poll panel said.

Additional deletions may follow after the draft roll is published, as documents submitted by the 7.23 crore electors will be scrutinised before the final roll is released on September 30. Those excluded from the draft roll will have the opportunity to file claims and objections between August 1 and September 1.



HARDLOOK: COACHING CENTRE DEATHS, 1 YEAR ON



THEN AND NOW: Outside the building that housed Rau's IAS Study Centre in Old Rajinder Nagar last year and this week. Gajendra Yadav, Amit Mehra

FOR NESIE DALVIN, a visit to the national capital would never be the same again.

Delhi once held fond memories — long Metro rides with her brother Nevin, navigating stations, discovering the Capital through his eyes.

"I've visited Delhi two or three times... I was always confused about which Metro to take... He gave me my first Metro card," says the 26-year-old PhD student who lives in Kerala.

"When I came to collect his belongings... after the incident... it felt like I saw him everywhere — at the Metro, in Rajinder Nagar..."

On July 27 last year, Nevin (28) had been studying in the basement library of Rau's IAS Study Circle in Old Rajinder Nagar. He was pursuing a PhD in Visual Arts from Jawaharlal Nehru University and was preparing for the UPSC Mains exam.

Around 6.30 pm, water began to collect on the road outside after heavy rain lashed the city. Suddenly, a Force Gurkha SUV drove through the stretch — forcing a wave of water that breached the gate and broke it. Water gushed into the building, flooding the basement. Several students were trapped inside.

Later that night, after frenzied rescue efforts, Nevin's body would be found along with two other UPSC aspirants — Shreya Yadav, 25, from Uttar Pradesh, and Tanya Soni, 25, from Telangana.

What followed were student protests, a political blame game, suspension of government officials for negligence, and several arrests that included the building owners, the coaching centre CEO — and even the SUV driver. The CBI took over the probe in August.

The Indian Express revisits the site of the tragedy a year later to see if things have changed on the ground.

On the ground

At 11B, Bada Bazar Road in Old Rajinder Nagar, stands the four-storey building that once housed the coaching giant. The big, bold blue letters displaying Rau's name has since been removed. The windows are covered

in opaque white sheets, and large 'For Rent' banners hang across the facade. A new black gate guards the entrance.

A court had last year said it cannot resume operations from the premises.

Alongside it are several well-known coaching institutes — Sriram's IAS, Insights IAS, and Shubhra Ranjan's Institute for Humanities.

Sachin, 23, who studies at Vision IAS Academy, watched the tragedy unfold on the news from his home in Madhubani. "I said to myself then that I won't go to Rau's," he recalls.

He moved to Delhi in May after clearing the UPSC prelims. "Many coaching centres have shifted their classes from the basement to upper floors. That's what I have heard," he adds.

The deaths put the spotlight on the unauthorised use of basements in the area, where many coaching centres and independent libraries had been operating commercial activities in violation of the MCD bylaws. These regulations permit basements to be used only for parking or storage.

According to the chargesheet filed by the CBI last October, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) initiated enforcement action in August 2024. Show cause notices previously issued to several establishments, primarily coaching centres, in the area were acted upon by officials from the Karol Bagh Zone.

In total, 83 show cause notices covering 123 units were served. Based on these, the MCD sealed 52 basements between August 4 and September 4, including those used by coaching centres, libraries, and private offices.

Sachin, however, claims that basement spaces remain in use — albeit for different commercial purposes. "I visit a library which is on the second floor of a building. In the adjacent building, a gym is operating in the basement. Until about a year ago, my library was in that same basement. But after the deaths, they shifted," he says.

One such commercial business that functions from a basement is Emerald Gym, a fitness centre chain, located about 300

Memory of a deluge

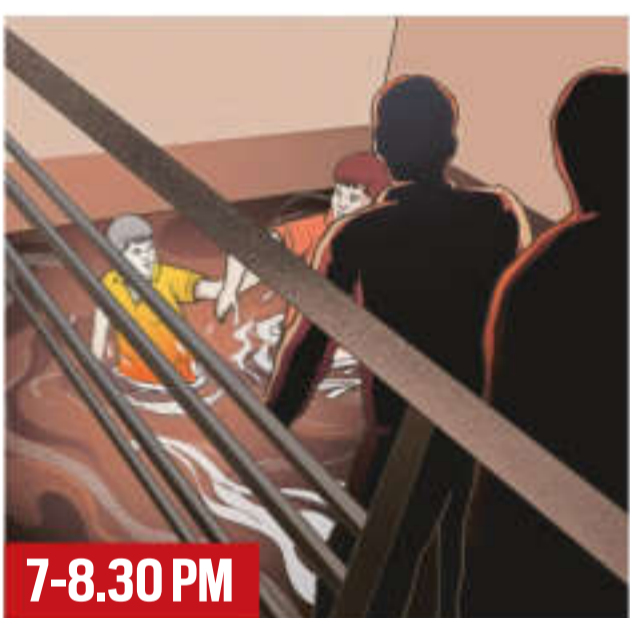
Last year, three UPSC aspirants drowned in a flooded basement of a coaching centre in Old Rajinder Nagar — which brought to light institutional apathy and civic irregularities. A year later, PRAGYNESH, SAKSHI CHAND & NIRBHAY THAKUR revisit the site to find out if things have changed

THE EVENTS OF JULY 27



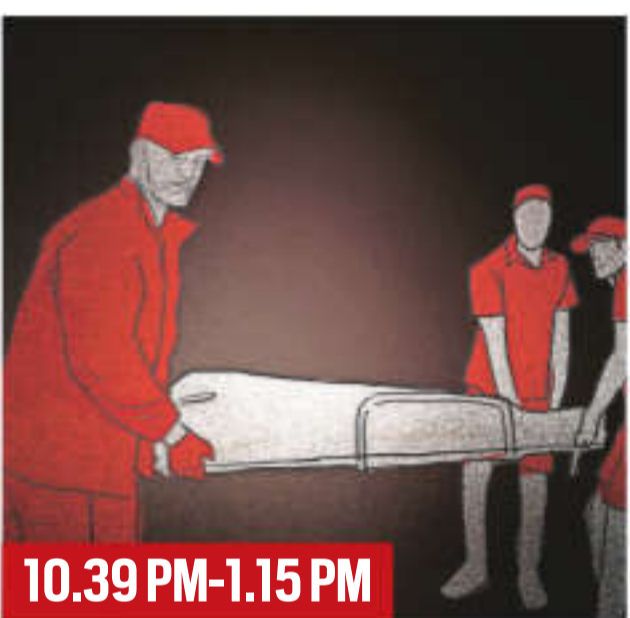
6.45 PM

Heavy rain leads to waterlogging on the road. The gate to Rau's IAS Study Circle breaks, and water gushes in, flooding the basement. There are 20-25 students in the basement, which doubles up as a library



7-8.30 PM

Some students run out, 3-4 people are pulled out. Teams from the police and fire services reach the spot with pumps to drain out the water. Divers from the National Disaster Response Force called in



10.39 PM-1.15 PM

Bodies of the three students — Nevin Dalvin from Kerala; Shreya Yadav from Uttar Pradesh; and Tanya Soni, 25, from Telangana — are recovered by the rescue teams

metres from the former Rau's IAS building.

Poonam, a representative of the Emerald Gym, says, "We have the required permission from MCD to operate the gym in the basement. We have complied with waterproofing and other requirements. We also applied for the fire safety certificate (FSC) about 90 days ago, but have yet to receive it. It's in the process."

Another such establishment is Mind Veda, a mental healthcare service also operating from a basement. When contacted, representatives say the space is used only for correspondence and storage.

"Mind Veda's correspondence office and storage are situated as shown. However, it's reiterated that we're functional on the ground floor..." a company spokesperson says. Questions regarding fire safety certification from the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) and clearances from the MCD are unanswered.

Libraries, meanwhile, are now on higher floors. Books and Brain Library, which began operations after the Rau's IAS tragedy, is on the first floor of a building in the area.

Puneet, its representative, says all mandatory safety protocols were duly observed. "We charge Rs 3,000-Rs 3,500 a month — slightly lower than other building-based libraries. Our FSC is valid until 2030," he says.

But the shift away from basements has come at a cost.

Vibhu, 25, a UPSC aspirant who took part in the 10-day protest following the deaths, says that the monthly fees of libraries have risen sharply.

"It used to cost Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000 a month but is now Rs 5,000-Rs 7,000. It's almost the rent of a PG room. The library owners say that rents are high in buildings, so charges will be as well. For many, it has become unaffordable to study in libraries," she says.

Coaching centres have also ramped up safety protocol. However, some face structural issues in the buildings they occupy.

Rahul Jain, a representative of IAS Hub — located opposite the building that used to house Rau's — recalls a fire that broke out in their premises in May. "The sprinklers activated immediately... We have a valid FSC and a proper open exit route. But the landlord had installed a small gate at the exit, which delayed evacuation... In such cases, our hands are tied," he says.

Jain adds that the MCD conducted multiple inspections this year across coaching centres to ensure compliance with the Delhi Master Plan 2021, particularly regarding floor plans and construction standards. "There was no waterlogging in our area during the recent heavy rain," he adds.

The many lapses

Six people were arrested in the case: Parvinder Singh, Harvinder Singh, Sarabjit Singh, and Tajinder Singh — the co-owners of the building where Rau's IAS was allegedly running the basement library; coaching centre CEO Abhishek Gupta; and centre coordinator Deshpal Singh. All of them are out on interim bail.

The Delhi Police had also arrested the SUV driver, Manuj Kathuria, 50, a businessman, in

connection with the case. He was accused of forcing the wave of water that breached the entrance and led to flooding in the basement. Stating that he was implicated by the Delhi Police in "over-enthusiasm", a Delhi court later granted him bail.

In its first chargesheet against the six accused filed in Rouse Avenue Court, the CBI had said the deaths were due to an insufficient drainage system, a highly unstable main entrance gate used as a floodwater barrier, and a cubicle with a lockable door at the entry point that got blocked, preventing students' escape.

In its 71-page supplementary chargesheet filed on April 27 against three public servants — a junior engineer of the MCD, an assistant divisional officer and a divisional officer of the DFS — the CBI said the MCD and the DFS had failed to report the unauthorised use of the basement as a coaching centre — despite conducting multiple inspections of the premises and having photographic evidence.

The chargesheet also accused CEO Gupta of criminal conspiracy, alleging that he appointed consultant Ashok Narang to liaison with DFS and MCD officials to get the fire clearance certificate quickly to ensure the basement could be used as a library-cum-study centre.

Rau's remained unavailable for comment.

The counsel for the accused persons had argued in court that the incident was "unprecedented and could not have been anticipated". They had also said the occupation of the basement was not prohibited and that the responsibility of owners of the building and the coaching institute couldn't be stretched beyond a point, when it was actually the civic authorities who were responsible for the "inaction and idle approach towards maintaining the drainage system".

When contacted for comment, a senior MCD official had earlier said an internal inquiry is underway. "The matter is sub-judice," the official added.

When asked whether a commercial establishment can

legally operate in a basement now, a DFS official replied: "Unless an FSC has been issued following all mandatory checks by DFS inspectors, no establishment — basement or otherwise — can begin operations. The FSC is the final proof of fire safety compliance."

Honouring Nevin

For the Dalvin family, the wait for justice has been unending. The family has grown weary of the long trial — especially after Rau's CEO get bail.

"He got bail so easily. Since then, we've only heard from lawyers about court proceedings and hearing dates. There's also a language barrier — my parents struggle to understand what the lawyers explain, because most of it is in Hindi. And, of course, they can't come to Delhi every time for court," says Nesie.

She also mentions the MCD's promise to set up four libraries in memory of the victims. She hasn't heard about any progress on that front.

"When we contacted them (Delhi government officials), we were told the government had changed, so it will take longer. They couldn't even make a memorial that they promised..." she says.

Earlier this year, the DDA's first 24x7 library, 'Aarambh', was opened in Old Rajinder Nagar by L-G V K Saxena. The L-G had asked the DDA to provide library and reading room facilities to students in the wake of the deaths. Five community centres have been identified to be converted into libraries.

In the meantime, Nevin's family has come up with its own way to honour their son's memory. Nesie has published two books in her brother's name based on his thesis. This Sunday, they will inaugurate a room inside their home which showcases all of his belongings.

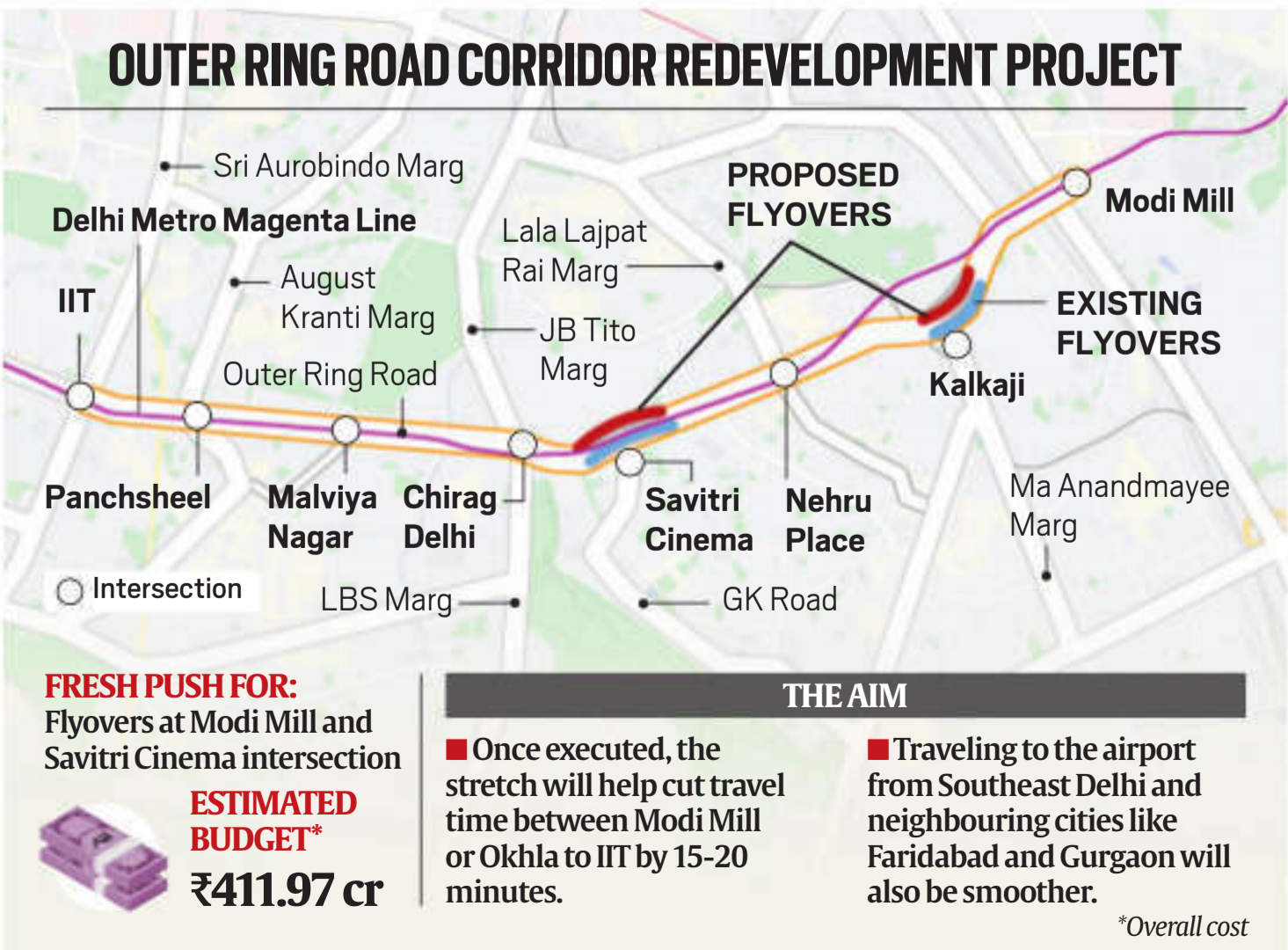
"We will also inaugurate a hall in his name, which can be used by students here as a research centre. Nevin would have wanted to do that. He always wanted to return home... and work for the locals," says Nesie.

Decongesting Outer Ring Road: Govt seeks aid from Centre

GAYATHRI MANI  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

EVEN AS it was first proposed in 2016, the Outer Ring Road Integrated Corridor Redevelopment Project, which aims to ease travel from Southeast Delhi to neighbouring cities and the Delhi Airport never took off. In a fresh push to the plan, the Delhi government has now sent a proposal to the Centre to seek funds for the construction of two half-flyovers at Modi Mill and Savitri Cinema intersection.

The estimated cost of this project, which aims to decongest a 7.2-km long stretch, is Rs 411.97 crore, said officials, adding that it will help cut travel time between Modi Mill or Okhla in Southeast Delhi to IIT-Delhi by 15-20 minutes. Traveling from Southeast Delhi to the airport and neighbouring Faridabad and Gurgaon will also be smoother. The mega corridor redevelopment project will also ease traffic in the upscale areas in close proximity.



Chief Minister Rekha Gupta recently reviewed the project at a meeting with the Public Works

Department (PWD). The Delhi government has sought funds from the Centre under the spe-

cial capital projects funds, said officials. "A proposal has been submitted to the Ministry of

Urban Development on July 21," said a senior PWD official.

There are six elevated corridors on the 7.2-km stretch — Khel Gaon, Nehru Place, Savitri Cinema, Chirag Dilli, Kalkaji, and Modi Mill (Okhla) flyover.

"The plan includes construction of two half-flyovers at Modi Mill and Savitri Cinema intersection. Currently, on this stretch, there are two single flyovers at Savitri Cinema and Kalkaji. The stretch provides one-way connectivity towards IIT-Delhi. However, those coming from IIT towards Okhla suffer as there is no parallel flyover. So, the department is planning to make two half flyovers, and extend the Modi Mill flyover to the proposed Kalkaji flyover," another official explained.

"Once, financial approval comes and departments receive the required budget for the project, the tendering process will begin," said the official, adding that with the integration of the flyovers, the traffic signals will be removed and the stretch will become signal free.

2.6-km Aqua Line extension to Greater Noida gets Centre nod

NEETIKA JHA  
NOIDA, JULY 26

THE CENTRE has approved the extension of Noida Metro's Aqua Line from Depot Station to Boraki in Greater Noida, said officials Saturday. The 2.6-km-long extension will boost connectivity and ensure ease of travelling," he said. As per a statement by the Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC), the estimated cost of the project is Rs 416.34 crore and it will be completed in three years.

After the extension, there will be connectivity from Noida's Sector 51 to Pari Chowk and from Pari Chowk to Boraki.

Speaking to The Indian Express, NMRC Executive Director, Mahendra Prasad, said, "The topographical survey is complete and the geotechnical investigation is in progress. Soon, we will begin land acquisition with help from the Greater

Noida Authority."

"The Noida International Airport at Jewar will soon commence its operations, and with the development of the Boraki Railway station in Greater Noida, we expect that approximately 60,000 passengers will be commuting daily by 2030. The extension will boost connectivity and ensure ease of travelling," he said. The official also confirmed that there is a proposal to develop a dedicated freight corridor at Boraki and a business centre for which 150 acres of land have been awarded.

According to officials, the upcoming Multi-Modal Transport Hub at Boraki will be developed as a major transit hub. It will comprise an integrated railway passenger terminal, interstate bus terminal, and city bus services. "The extension of the Metro will play an important role in ensuring seamless multimodal transport. This is not just a Metro

project, but part of a broader vision to create future-ready urban transport hubs," Prasad told The Indian Express.

On the status of the Metro line connecting Sector 51 (Noida) to Knowledge Park V at Greater Noida, Prasad said the project is awaiting appraisal from the Public Investment Board (PIB). "Further, a proposed Metro line connecting Sector 142 to Botanical Garden was also approved by the state government, which awaits the PIB's appraisal," said the director.

"Both projects have been recommended on merit and align with the long-term mobility plans of the region. The extension of the Aqua Line and the upcoming corridors mark a growing emphasis on building sustainable, interconnected public transit systems in the region, in line with the vision of both the Uttar Pradesh government and the Centre," added Prasad.

BENGALI-SPEAKING MIGRANTS ‘PICKED UP’ IN GURGAON DRIVE

4 holding centres shut, police set to round up only ‘confirmed foreigners’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
GURGAON, JULY 26

THE GURGAON Police has said it will round up only “confirmed foreign nationals” as part of its verification drive, as it shut four holding facilities that housed suspected foreigners.

The four facilities were at community centres in Badshahpur, Sector 10A, Sector 40, and Sector 1 in Manesar. A police spokesperson on Friday said the centres have been emptied.

Over the past week, several migrant workers — mostly daily-wage labourers — were allegedly rounded up by the police as part of the drive, sparking panic among the Bengali-speaking migrant community and prompting many to leave the city. Families had claimed they had valid documentation — Aadhaar, PAN and ration cards and voter IDs — but the police detained their loved ones.

“We have identified 10 Bangladeshis (staying here illegally) from those kept at the holding centres,” Gurgaon DCP (Headquarters) Dr Arpit Jain said

The move also left housing societies that depended on these workers for sanitation services struggling in terms of door-to-door waste collection.

Gurgaon Deputy Commissioner of Police (Headquarters), Dr Arpit Jain, told *The Indian Express* on Saturday, “We have identified 10 Bangladeshis (staying here illegally) from those kept at the holding centres. The deportation process is already underway for seven of them.”

Dr Jain added that while fur-

ther holding of suspected foreigners at these centres has been halted for now, the verification drive is on.

“Now, only those confirmed to be Bangladeshis, or those under strong suspicion of being foreign nationals, will be rounded up and taken to these centres pending verification,” he said.

Asked about the total number of men kept at the centres, the DCP did not share any figure. He, however, said many had been brought in across the week, and several were released the same day or within a day or two.

The men were released once the local district magistrate in their hometown confirmed the validity of their documents.

The police operations began following a letter from the Union Home Ministry, directing state governments to prepare a standard operating procedure to deport, in sufficient numbers, Bangladeshis and Rohingya staying illegally.

“... if any illegal foreign national is found living in any state/district, he will be detained and kept in a Special Holding Centre... the police is conducting special search operations for illegal foreign nationals to maintain law and order and peace in district Gurugram, for which Special Holding Centres have been acquired vide letter... dated 18.07.2025 of this office,” read a July 22 order from District Magistrate.

The police spokesperson on Saturday also asked citizens not to spread misinformation regarding alleged torture and violence on the part of the police during the operation.

“There is a lot of wrong information being shared online. So far, we have not received any such complaint; posts alleging torture are not genuine.”

On the background of the 10 men found to be Bangladeshi, he said it is a part of the investigation, and further information cannot be shared at this stage.

Man arrested for posing as gangster to extort money

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

A 50-YEAR-OLD man’s plan to make a quick buck by allegedly impersonating a notorious gangster and threatening a Delhi-based businessman to extort Rs 1 crore was foiled with his arrest on Saturday, said police. He was allegedly helped by an associate of the businessman to execute his plan.

Identified as Sanjay from Sonipat in Haryana, the accused was allegedly trying to pose as gangster Naveen Bali. He was arrested after a handwritten note bearing the businessman’s mobile number was found tucked in his pocket, said police.

“During the investigation, it was observed that the accused used a distinct Haryanvi accent. With the help of technical surveillance and manual inputs, we zeroed in on a suspect named Sanjay, from Rampur Kundal village in Sonipat. A trap was laid, and in a swift and well-coordinated operation, the joint team successfully apprehended the accused... During a cursory search, a handwritten slip containing the mobile number of the businessman was recovered from his possession,” said DCP (Northwest) Bhisham Singh.

Shaken after he received threats, the businessman had approached the Adarsh Nagar police station on July 24. He claimed that he had received a phone call from an unknown number on July 3. The caller claimed to be gangster Naveen Bali and demanded that he pay Rs 1 crore in four days or face serious consequences.

The businessman initially brushed it off as a prank. On July 20, however, he was again threatened. Realising that this was no joke, the man then turned to the police.

Delhi Police holds cyber awareness campaign

**New Delhi:** Delhi Police launched a city-wide outreach on cyber security and digital fraud awareness on Saturday. The campaign was inaugurated at the headquarters by Commissioner of Police Sanjay Arora, who also unveiled the campaign mascot, ‘Cyber Rakshak’. The initiative aims to educate citizens, said officials. **ENS**



**शिक्षता प्रशिक्षण बोर्ड (दक्षिणी क्षेत्र)**  
**BOARD OF APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING (SOUTHERN REGION)**  
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प्रशासनिक-सह-लेखा अधिकारी-01 पद (श्रेणी - अनुसूचित जाति) एवं सहायक निदेशक प्रशिक्षण-01 पद (श्रेणी - अनुसूचित जनजाति) के लिए आवेदन आमंत्रित किए जाते हैं।  
**Applications are invited for the post of Administrative-cum-Accounts Officer-01 Post (Category-SC) and Assistant Director of Training-01 Post (Category-ST).**

S. No.	पद का नाम एवं वर्गीकरण / Name and classification of Post	रिक्तियों की संख्या / No. of Vacancies	आवश्यक श्रेणी / Category of Reservation	7वें सीपीसी के अनुसार वेतनमान / Pay Scale as per 7th CPC	आवेदन प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि के अनुसार आयु सीमा / Age Limit as on the last date for receipt of application
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2.	सहायक निदेशक प्रशिक्षण ग्रुप-‘क’ / Assistant Director of Training (ADT) Group ‘A’	01	अनुसूचित जनजाति / ST - 01	सेल-10, 56100/- रुपये के प्रवेश वेतन के साथ / Level - 10, with entry pay of Rs.56100/-	अधिकतम 45 वर्ष / Maximum 45 years

योग्यता, आयु, अनुभव, कार्य विवरण, भूमिका और उत्तरदायित्व, नियम और शर्तें और अन्य निर्देशों से संबंधित पूर्ण विवरण के लिए कृपया “अन्य नवीनतम समाचार” के तहत हमारी वेबसाइट: <https://nats.education.gov.in/boat-srp.php> पर जाएं।  
For full details regarding Qualifications, Age, Experience, Job description, Roles and Responsibilities, Terms and conditions and other instructions, please visit our website: <https://nats.education.gov.in/boat-srp.php>. Under section “OTHER LATEST NEWS”

दिनांक 05.07.2025 को रोकना समाचार में ए.ए.ओ. - 01 (श्रेणी - अनुसूचित जाति) एवं सहायक निदेशक प्रशिक्षण - 01 पद (श्रेणी - अनुसूचित जनजाति) के पद हेतु प्रकाशित विज्ञापन के लिए सहायक दस्तावेजों के साथ सभी नियमों और शर्तों को पूरा करने वाला विभिन्न भर्त एप आवेदन पत्र, निदेशक, शिक्षता प्रशिक्षण बोर्ड (दक्षिणी क्षेत्र), तारमानी, चेन्नई को दिनांक 18 अगस्त, 2025 वा उससे पहले भेजा जाए।  
Further to the Advertisement published in Employment News dt. 05.07.2025, inviting Applications for the Post of AAO-01 (category-SC) and ADT-01 (category-ST) duly filled application satisfying all terms and conditions shall be sent along with supporting documents to the “Director, Board of Apprenticeship Training (Southern Region), Taramani, Chennai on or before 18th August 2025.”

उम्मीदवारों को यलाह दी जाती है कि वे ऑन के अपस्टे के लिए होम पेज के “अन्य नवीनतम समाचार” खंड के तहत लगातार हमारी वेबसाइट <https://nats.education.gov.in/boat-srp.php> पर जाएं। कृपया ध्यान दें कि इस संबंध में सभी जानकारीयें केवल हमारी वेबसाइट पर पोस्ट की जाएंगी।  
“Aspirants are advised to visit our website: <https://nats.education.gov.in/boat-srp.php>. Under section “OTHER LATEST NEWS”, in the home page frequently for further updates. Please note that all information in this regard would only be posted in our website.”

निदेशक प्रशिक्षण / DIRECTOR OF TRAINING  
शिक्षता प्रशिक्षण बोर्ड (द.क्षे), चेन्नई/ BOAT (SR), Chennai

L-G WITHDRAWS POWER FROM DELHI POLICE

Revenue department will now grant licences to cinema halls & theatres

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

DELHI LIEUTENANT Governor (L-G) V K Saxena on Saturday withdrew the power of granting licences to cinema halls and theatres from the Delhi Police, and authorised the Revenue department as the licensing authority.

According to an official from the L-G’s office, the move is aimed at liberalising the licensing regime and promoting ease of doing business in Delhi.

“A committee headed by the DM (district magistrate)/ DC (deputy commissioner) will have the authority to grant licences under the Cinematograph Act, 1952. The committee, comprising five officers, will make recommendations for grant

of such licences,” the official said.


The committee will comprise the deputy commissioner of the respective Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) zone; a structural engineering or building expert nominated by the Public Works Department secretary; a fire safety expert nominated by the chief fire officer of the Delhi Fire Services; an electrical system expert nominated by

the secretary of the power department; and a representative of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) to be nominated by the DC, the official added.

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**(A Central University) KONI, BILASPUR-495 009 (C.G.) INDIA**  
**M.Tech. (Master of Technology) Admission for Academic Session 2025-26**  
**Ref. No.584/Admission/Academic/25**  
**Bilaspur, Date-25.07.2025**

Applications are invited for admission to the M.Tech. program for both GATE qualified and Non-GATE candidates in (i) Computer Science & Engineering, (ii) Information Technology, (iii) Structural Engineering, (iv) Electronics & Communication Engineering, (v) CAD CAM & Robotics, (vi) Chemical Engineering, (vii) Mechanical engineering, (viii) Water Resources & Environmental Engineering, (ix) Geotechnical Engineering.

Eligible candidates can apply for admission to M. Tech programme as per details given on university website [www.ggu.ac.in](http://www.ggu.ac.in). The filled in application form along with the receipt of online payment (link available in website [www.ggu.ac.in](http://www.ggu.ac.in)), towards the application fee (Rs. 500/-for Gen/EWS/OBC Category, Rs. 300/- for SC/ST/PWD category applicants) is to be submitted through the Google form available on the University website, (as mentioned in General Instructions) on or before 13th August, 2025 (both GATE and Non-GATE Category). Admissions under Non-GATE category shall be conducted on the basis of the marks obtained in entrance test / merit of qualifying exam (as the situation permits).

Candidate with valid GATE score will be admitted based on the merit of valid Gate Score. Candidates with valid GATE Score will be eligible for scholarship as per AICTE norms except in the Water Resources & Environmental Engineering, and Geotechnical Engineering. Admission through local counseling / this advertisement is subjected to availability of seats after completion of CCMT-2025 counseling. Candidates should visit the university website <https://ggu.ac.in/> for further details and updates from time to time.

**Registrar (Acting)**



**गति शक्ति विश्वविद्यालय**  
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**Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya**  
(A Central University under the Ministry of Railways, Govt. of India)



**श्रीजो दीक्षांत समारोह | तृतीय दीक्षांत समारोह | 3<sup>rd</sup> Convocation**

**Chief Guest**



**Shri Rajnath Singh**  
Hon'ble Raksha Mantri,  
Govt. of India

**Guest of Honour**



**Dr. Hemang Joshi**  
Hon'ble MP - Vadodara  
To Address the gathering

**To Deliver Convocation Address (Online)**



**Scan for Live Streaming**

**Chancellor**



**Shri Ashwini Vaishnaw**  
Hon'ble Minister of Railways, I & B,  
Electronics & IT, Govt. of India

**Vice Chancellor**



**Prof. Manoj Choudhary**  
Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya  
Welcome Address and  
University Report

**Dr. Venkateswarlu Chintala**  
**Registrar (I/C)**

**Venue: Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Auditorium, Ajwa Road, Vadodara | Date: 27 July 2025 | Time: 11:30 a.m. Onwards**



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# 6 GOVT & POLITICS

NCERT working on 2 modules on Op Sindoor for classes 3-8 & 9-12

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

NCERT IS preparing two 'modules' on Operation Sindoor — separate publications that will not be part of the textbooks — one for Classes 3 to 8, and another for Classes 9 to 12, sources in the Education Ministry said.

The achievements of India and the Armed Forces will be described in the 8–10-page module. The aim is to make students aware about India's military power and Pakistan's defeat, sources said.

The NCERT has a set of modules — short publications on specific topics — including some that were launched in May this year. The modules for Classes 1 to 12 are available on the NCERT's website. Separate modules have been prepared for Covid-19 and its impact on public health and social life, 'India's digital success and power', the Chandrayaan-3 mission, the G20 summit that was held in India in 2023, and 'Swachhata'.

Each module contains stories, activities, and examples that illustrate the topics, and serves as additional material, beyond the textbook, that schools can use.

Operation Sindoor was launched by the Armed Forces in May in response to the Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 people were killed, targeting terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

During the ongoing Monsoon Session, Parliament is set to discuss the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor on July 28.

‘Congress will be dead stock’: After audio ‘leak’, DCC chief steps down

SHAJU PHILIP  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 26

A “LEAKED” conversation in which a Congress leader purportedly predicts a setback to his own party in next year’s Assembly election has left the party red in the face, resulting in the leader stepping down from his position.

Congress Thiruvananthapuram district committee president Palod Ravi had to step down after an audio purportedly had him saying the Congress would be “dead stock” after the Assembly polls. The person in the audio says: “you see what BJP is going to do in 60 assembly constituencies. They will bag votes after pumping money as they had done in the Parliament elections. The Marxists Party will continue in power. This is what is going to happen and Congress will become a dead stock after the elections”.

The voice goes on to say: “Those in the Muslim community will go to the Communist party and other parties. Men stated to be Congress will also go to BJP. Congress has no workers who can approach the people. We have only 10% of workers who can go to the people and work among them.” After the leak, Congress state president Sunny Joseph said the issue “is serious”. “He has not denied it. The party is consulting with the AICC leaders and there would be appropriate action,” he said. Congress also expelled a block level leader, A Jaleel, for allegedly leaking the conversation to the media.

## In game of thrones, why DMK, BJP vying for Chola emperor Rajendra I

ARUN JANARDHANAN  
CHENNAI, JULY 26

AN EMPEROR who ruled a thousand years ago has drawn two political heavyweights into the same arena, with Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin and PM Narendra Modi making separate efforts to honour the legacy of Rajendra Chola I (1014–1044 CE), the maritime monarch of the Chola dynasty.

While Stalin has declared the emperor's birth anniversary as an official state celebration and announced several initiatives to commemorate his rule, Modi is set to visit Gangaikonda Cholapuram in Ariyalur district, which was once the Chola capital, on July 27 to unveil a commemorative coin and inaugurate an exhibition

## SC to hear Justice Varma plea tomorrow

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

THE SUPREME Court will hear on July 28, Justice Yashwant Varma's plea challenging the legal validity of the in-house inquiry, which confirmed charges of recovery of unaccounted cash from his official residence in Delhi.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and A G Masih will hear the matter, including his “application for filing the petition without disclosing the identity of the petitioner/respondent.”

On July 23, CJI B R Gavai had told Justice Varma's counsel Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal that a bench will be constituted to hear the matter. Justice Varma, in his plea, said, “Primarily, the in-House House Procedure, adopted via a 1999 Full Court Resolution to handle complaints against judges and preserve judicial independence while maintaining public faith, unjustifiably extends beyond the intended scope of self-regulation and fact-finding”.

“By culminating in recommendations for removal from constitutional office, it creates a parallel, extra-constitutional mechanism that derogates from the mandatory framework under Articles 124 and 218 of the Constitution, which exclusively vest powers for removal of Judges of the High Courts in Parliament through an address supported by a special majority, following an inquiry under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968,” it said.

The judge had said that administrative or self-regulating procedures adopted by the Supreme Court “cannot circumvent or override the constitution-

ally protected tenure of High Court judges or imbue the Hon'ble CJI with unregulated authority to act as the arbiter of the fate of other judges of the High Courts/this Hon'ble Court”.

He also raised questions over the Supreme Court decision to make public the purported video of the alleged cash discovery at his residence as being “ex facie disproportionate and violative of the law”. It stated that this disclosure gave rise to a media trial, which the Supreme Court itself had barred in its own rulings.

“Unprecedented public disclosure of these unverified allegations via press release by this Hon'ble Court on 22.03.2025 subjected the Petitioner to media trial, resulting in irreparable damage to his personal reputation and career as a judicial officer,” the plea had stated. Justice Varma also challenged the conclusions of the report by the three-member in-house judicial panel.

Appointed by then CJI Sanjiv Khanna on March 22, a week after the alleged discovery of cash at Justice Varma's residence where a fire broke out on March 14, the panel comprised Justices Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana HC; G S Sandhawalia, Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh HC; and Anu Sivaraman, Karnataka HC judge. The panel found credence in the allegations against Justice Varma.

Contending that the findings of the report are without due process and inadequate, Justice Varma, in his plea, questioned every consequential action that flows from the report, including the CJI's recommendation urging Parliament to initiate impeachment against him.

## Cong slams ‘Govt’s selective outrage, silence on two judges’

‘Dhankhar’s fault was showing some minimal independence’

EXPRESS NEW SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

CONTINUING ITS offensive against the government over Jagdeep Dhankhar's resignation as Vice President, the Congress Saturday said the government was indulging in “petty politics” rather than bothering about constitutional principles and good governance by not admitting the Opposition motion to remove Justice Yashwant Varma in Rajya Sabha.

The Congress also said that “it appears Mr Dhankhar's showing of some minimal independence, possibly belatedly, was his real mistake. No other mistake.”

At a press conference at the Congress HQs Congress MP and spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi also alleged that the government was adopting “double standards” on the issue of judicial accountability by acting against Justice Varma but ignoring the motion against Justice Shekhar Yadav of Allahabad HC, who allegedly made a hate speech at a VHP event in December last year.

Singhvi said Dhankhar's resignation was a “political exit camouflaged as a constitutional



Cong leader Abhishek Manu Singhvi in Delhi, Saturday. PTI

lie”. He said the Congress is “very concerned” about the “selective outrage and selective silence on the issue of two judges — Justice Varma and Justice Yadav”.

“This is typical of BJP's double standards and yet another example of BJP's and the Modi Sarkar's ‘theatre of the absurd’. The BJP's game of motions is less about law and more about optics...”

“On judicial propriety, on anti-corruption movement and on judicial accountability, the BJP's mantra is ‘talk the talk, never walk the talk. Keep talking the talk’. It is the worst example of doublespeak and hypocrisy on this entire episode,” he said.

Singhvi also claimed that while creating this “confusion” on not taking up motions in both Houses to jointly constitute a committee, the government is “either deliberately or at best unwittingly, giving an additional ground or excuse to the legal challenges which Justice Varma has mounted and is entitled to mount”.

Singhvi said that on July 21,

Congress and other parties moved a constitutional motion in Rajya Sabha against Justice Varma and, in particular, for creating a statutory inquiry committee, as required by the statute. He said the motion of the Opposition had 63 signatures across parties. “Additionally, another motion had the signatures of 152 Lok Sabha members also cross-party,” he said.

“... When the Vice President was speaking, he was talking of a motion, physical thing in his hand and numerical requirements being satisfied,” he said.

He added that as per the Act of Parliament if there are two motions in the Houses, then the two have to be both joined to form a statutory committee. Singhvi said there is no doubt in the mind of anyone familiar with parliamentary affairs that Dhankhar intended to make the motion the property of the House that day and clearly proceed with it in collaboration with I.S. “Today, all this drama is being staged for what? The Modi government is insecure because it can't control the narrative,” he said.

“It shows many facets of this government... it ignores the clear cooperation, collegiality, the togetherness of both the Houses intended by provision to section 3 of the Act of Parliament,” he said. “Here, this government and this ruling party's talking of competition, a race as to who declares and announces first, was this the statutory intent.”



Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi at Drass in Kargil on Saturday. PTI

## Rudra all-arms brigades will make Army future-ready: Gen Dwivedi

NAVEED IQBAL  
SRINAGAR, JULY 26

CHIEF OF Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi outlined the Army's transformation into a future-ready force during his visit to Drass in Kargil on the 26th anniversary of Vijay Diwas Saturday.

General Dwivedi announced the establishment of ‘Rudra’ all arms brigades, ‘Bhairav’ light commando battalions, ‘Shaktibaan’ artillery regiments and ‘Divyastra’ batteries, drone-equipped infantry battalions, and indigenous air defence systems.

“Rudra is being established for which I gave an approval yesterday. Under this, we will have infantry, mechanised infantry, ar-

moured units, artillery, special forces and unmanned aerial units at one place to provide logistics and combat support,” he said.

During his address, General Dwivedi referred to Operation Sindoor and said that it was because of the trust of the people and “the strategic independence” extended by the government that the Army gave Pakistan an “organised, accurate and decisive” answer after the Pahalgam attack.

“India proved (in 1999) that no ill intentions will find success within India's borders. No harm will be allowed against India's unity and integrity. In continuation of that tradition, the Indian Army displayed the same courage and determination during Operation Sindoor in target-

### INAUGURATES ₹4,900-CR PROJECTS IN TN



PM Narendra Modi, TN Governor R N Ravi, Union Ministers Rammohan Naidu and L Murugan in Thoothukudi, Saturday. PTI

## Historic FTA with UK shows world’s trust in India: Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
TUTICORIN, JULY 26

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi Saturday described the recently concluded FTA between India and UK as “historic”, and said the trade pact showed the world's trust in the country.

As regards Operation Sindoor, he said weapons manufactured under the Make in India initiative played a great role during the cross-border military offensive in destroying enemy targets and made enemies lose sleep. The PM inaugurated, laid foundation stones and dedicated projects worth ₹4,900 crore and underscored the NDA government's commitment towards Tamil Nadu's growth.

After inaugurating the projects, Modi said he was blessed to directly land in Tamil Nadu after completing his foreign tour. “The

FTA with Britain adds pace to our vision of Viksit Bharat, Viksit TN,” he said.

Promising a developed India and Tamil Nadu, he said, “infrastructure and energy are the backbone of any state's development; our focus on infrastructure and energy in last 11 years shows our commitment to TN's growth.” The NDA government has constructed Atal Sethu, Sonmarg Tunnel, Bogibeel bridge in different parts of the country and these created thousands of job opportunities.

The inaugurated projects include a new state-of-the-art Tuticorin airport terminal building, developed at an estimated cost of around ₹450 crore.

On the occasion, he invoked legendary freedom fighters from the region V O Chidambaram Pillai, King Veerapandia Kattabomman and chieftain Veeran Azhagu Muthukon.

### TRIBUTES

This day symbolises the extraordinary valor, courage, and steadfast determination of our jawans

PRESIDENT DROUPADI MURMU

This occasion reminds us of the unparalleled courage and valor of those brave sons of Mother India who dedicated their lives to protect nation's pride

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

I pay heartfelt tributes to our bravehearts who displayed extraordinary courage, grit & determination in defending our nation's honour in toughest of terrains

RAJNATH SINGH  
DEFENCE MINISTER

On Kargil Vijay Diwas, we extend our heartfelt greetings to the brave soldiers of our Armed Forces, ex-servicemen, their families and all fellow Indians

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE  
CONGRESS PRESIDENT

I offer my heartfelt tributes and countless salutations to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives while protecting the nation

RAHUL GANDHI  
LS LEADER OF OPPOSITION

Java and Sumatra) that turned the Cholas into a pan-Asian maritime empire. In 1025 CE, he launched a naval expedition against the Srivijaya empire, targeting present-day Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand to assert trade dominance over the Malacca Strait. As historian Hermann Kulke has observed in Nagapattinam to Suvarnadwipa, the campaign was not a sporadic act of aggression but a deliberate assertion of maritime dominance and prestige.

### An engineering marvel

To commemorate his successful northern expedition, Rajendra Chola established Gangaikonda Cholapuram and ceremonially poured Ganges water brought back by his army into a vast man-made reservoir known as the

Cholagangam tank, locally referred to as Ponneri. This act was immortalised in copper plate inscriptions, including those cited by K A Nilakanta Sastri in The Cholas, describing how Rajendra created a “liquid pillar of victory (ganga-jalamayam jayastambham) using sacred water from the Ganga.

According to the Trichinopoly Gazetteer (1855 edition) by British civil service officer F R Hemingway, the Cholagangam tank once irrigated around 1,564 acres of land. Later reports note that the embankment extended some 25 km, with multiple sluices engineered to manage water flow.

The tank, once the hydrological heart of Gangaikonda Cholapuram and an engineering marvel, now lies in disrepair. As

recorded in the Trichinopoly Gazetteer by Hemingway, the tank embankments were fortified by laterite stone and sluices designed to control sediment flow. In Lords of the Earth and Sea, author Anirudh Kanisetty writes that the Cholas were master builders of systems that not only sustained urban capitals but expanded imperial legitimacy through ecological control. Rejuvenating the tank, experts say, will restore biodiversity, recharge groundwater, and revive the intricate agricultural web once nourished by its waters, echoing Rajendra's original vision of power drawn as much from land and water as from conquest.

The British dismantled much of the town's granite fortifications in 1832 to construct the Lower

Kollidam Anaicut, breaking promises to rebuild its outer wall. The destruction was resisted by locals who were reportedly punished for their defiance. “A promise was made that a brick wall would be built in place of the stone wall that was pulled down,” the 1855 Gazetteer mentions. “But it has never been redeemed.”

### Competing narratives

While Stalin's is one of regional pride, water security, and cultural preservation, linking it to Dravidian legacy, Modi's is a civilisational assertion that connects ancient Indian glory to present-day power.

In the lead-up to Aadi Thiruvathirai, Stalin announced a ₹19.2 crore redevelopment plan for the tank: ₹12 crore for bund

strengthening, desilting of 38 km of canals, renovation of sluices, and irrigation support for seven villages. Another ₹7.2 crore will be used for converting the area into a tourist destination, with walkways, parks, children's play areas, fencing, and CCTV surveillance.

Additionally, a museum will be built near the temple complex for ₹22.1 crore, a continuation of the state's push to embed the Cholas into Tamil Nadu's cultural-political imagination. “In 2021, we declared Aadi Thiruvathirai a government holiday,” Stalin wrote on X on July 23. “Now we are taking steps to showcase Rajendra Chola's greatness to the world.”

PM's visit also carries its symbolic weight. On Sunday, he will unveil a commemorative coin to mark the 1,000th anniversary of

Rajendra Chola's Gangetic campaign, while musician Ilaiyaraaja is set to perform. An exhibition will showcase trophies and miniature sculptures from Chola period.

By elevating figures such as Rajendra Chola, who expanded Hindu temple networks and maritime trade routes, BJP aims to politically articulate a version of Indian history that is expansive, powerful, and deeply rooted in pre-Islamic grandeur. But as Kanisetty writes, Chola imperialism was not strictly religious: it was pragmatic, often secular, and grounded in trade diplomacy. Tamil merchant guilds such as Manigramam and Ayyavole prospered under royal patronage, and epigraphs across Southeast Asia confirm commercial ties rather than religious zeal.



SALUTE THE SOLDIER

**BORDER SECURITY FORCE**  
**INSPECTOR MAHABIR PRASAD, PPMG**  
**06.02.1948 – 27.07.1998**  
Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Subordinate officer Insp Mahabir Prasad, PPMG on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he sustained fatal bullet injuries while fighting with militants in area of Wangipura, Srinagar (J&K) and made ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

	<b>SI</b> <b>MANMOHAN SINGH DHAMI</b> 19.03.1968 – 27.07.1991		<b>CT</b> <b>M RAJU</b> 10.04.1960 – 27.07.1991
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Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Subordinate officer Sub Inspector Manmohan Singh Dhami and Constable M Raju on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, they sustained fatal injuries in a bomb blast triggered by militants in Aliwal area, Punjab and made ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

**HEAD CONSTABLE VARGHEESE MORAIS I**  
**02.11.1954 – 27.07.1992**  
Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Head Constable Vargheese Morais I on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he sustained fatal injuries in a grenade blast triggered by militants in Srinagar area (J&K) and made ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

	<b>HC P V VERGHESE, PPMG</b> 08.10.1949 – 27.07.2000		<b>CT ASHOK KR SUREN, PPMG</b> 15.06.1975 – 27.07.2000		<b>CT BHANWAR LAL MEENA, SENA MEDAL</b> 26.01.1970 – 27.07.2000		<b>CT HEMANTA KUMAR MOHANTA, PPMG</b> 13.06.1976 – 27.07.2000
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Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawans on their Balidan Diwas. On this day, they sustained fatal bullet injuries while fighting with militants in area of Panglar, Rajouri (J&K) and made ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

**CONSTABLE MOHD AKRAM, PPMG**  
**06.02.1971 – 27.07.1994**  
Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Constable Mohd Akram, PPMG on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he sustained fatal bullet injuries while fighting with militants in area of Chundana, Srinagar (J&K) and later succumbed to his injuries.


**CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE**  
104 Battalion of CRPF was deployed in Assam for counter-insurgency operations. On 27 July 1996, Dy. Comdt. Shri Prem Prakash visited the Guwahati Zoological Gardens with fellow officers to assess potential deployment sites. As weapons were not permitted inside, the protection party remained outside. While inspecting the premises, they were ambushed from behind by the terrorists and all sustained bullet injuries. Despite attempting to evade further fire, Shri Prem Prakash was critically wounded and attained martyrdom in the line of duty.

	<b>Veer Balidani Dy. Comdt. Shri Prem Prakash</b> <b>104 Bn.</b> 26-6-1965 To 27-7-1996		<b>Veer Balidani Head Constable/ Fitter S.P. Sharma</b> <b>65 Bn.</b> 5-3-1965 To 27-7-2004		<b>Veer Balidani Constable Ravinder Kumar Mishra</b> <b>65 Bn.</b> 20-3-1973 To 27-7-2004		<b>Veer Balidani Constable Uday Singh</b> <b>126 Bn.</b> 1-8-1976 To 27-7-2004
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On 27 July 2004, two fidayeen infiltrated the camp of 65 Battalion of CRPF at Levard Hotel, PS Dalgate, Srinagar, through a window of an adjoining medical shop. Once inside, they opened indiscriminate fire and hurled grenades at the personnel. The sentry at the gate retaliated but was injured and attained martyrdom. One brave trooper swiftly engaged and neutralized a militant, while the other fidayeen took shelter inside the hotel. As more troops arrived, a cordon was established and a room intervention operation was launched. Amidst intense firing, Constable Ajay Kumar reached the room, attempted to breach it, and was shot and injured. Despite his wounds, he continued to engage the terrorist and eventually killed him by lobbing a grenade and firing back. In this valiant encounter, four bravehearts laid down their lives the same day while Constable Ajay Kumar succumbed to injuries the next day, attaining martyrdom. For his indomitable courage and supreme sacrifice, Constable Ajay Kumar was posthumously awarded the President's Police Medal for Gallantry.

	<b>Veer Balidani Head Constable Tota Singh</b> <b>10 Bn.</b> 10-6-1931 To 27-7-1973		<b>Veer Balidani Constable T. P. Parmeshwaran Pillai</b> <b>10 Bn.</b> 2-12-1947 To 27-7-1973		<b>Veer Balidani Constable Kanhaiya Ram</b> <b>10 Bn.</b> 10-10-1946 To 27-7-1973
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Head Constable Tota Singh, Constable Kanhaiya Ram, and Constable T. P. Parmeshwaran Pillai of 10 Battalion were deployed in Manipur during the peak of North East insurgency. On 27 July 1973, while advancing during an operation, they were ambushed by the hostiles. Despite sustaining injuries, they fought back valiantly, repulsing the attack. In the face of grave adversity, they laid down their lives, displaying extraordinary courage and unwavering devotion to duty.

  
**Veer Balidani Constable Sukumar Rai**  
**44 Bn.**  
14-12-1964 To 27-7-1991

44 Battalion of CRPF was deployed in Assam to conduct operations against insurgents. On 27 July 1991, while on an area domination patrol, the troops came under sudden fire from insurgents lying in ambush near a village. Despite being at a tactical disadvantage, they retaliated, leading to a close-range encounter. Constable Sukumar Rai led a flanking assault, advancing towards enemy positions. Though injured in the exchange, he pressed on, forcing the insurgents to retreat. He later succumbed to his wounds, displaying exceptional courage and devotion to duty. His valour and supreme sacrifice will always be remembered by the Force.

  
**Veer Balidani Constable Tirmali Santosh Sukdeo**  
**43 Bn.**  
1-6-1979 To 27-7-2006

On 27 July 2006, troops of 43 Battalion of CRPF launched an operation against Maoists in the villages of Halaminumyetta and Markabeda, PS Narayanpur, district Bastar. As the area was being combed, Maoists triggered a series of IED blasts followed by indiscriminate fire. The troops swiftly took positions and launched a fierce counterattack. While advancing, another wave of IED blasts occurred, in which Constable Tirmali Santosh Sukdeo sustained severe injuries. Underterred, he continued to engage the Maoists, forcing them to retreat. He was evacuated to Narayanpur Hospital but later succumbed to his injuries, attaining martyrdom. In the encounter, one Maoist was killed, and his weapon and ammunition were recovered.

Bengal Governor to move SC over control of state universities

**Kolkata:** In another escalation of the ongoing tussle between the West Bengal government and the Raj Bhavan over higher education governance, Governor CV Ananda Bose Saturday said he plans to seek clarity from the Supreme Court on whether ultimate authority over state universities lies with the chancellor (Governor) or the state government.

The move comes after a meeting between Bose and VCs of state-run universities at the Raj Bhavan. The meeting was attended by nine VCs, with most others remaining absent.

Several VCs who skipped the meeting claimed they faced obstructions from higher education department, while others alleged they were gheraoed or faced hostile conditions on campus. Some sought appointments with the governor to explain their absence.

Sources suggest absenteeism has not been taken lightly. "This is an issue that requires clarification. What is the role of the chancellor or the role of the government? The SC will be approached to determine who holds the ultimate authority over state universities—the chancellor (governor) or the state government," Bose said. **PTI**

**EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**

**NOTICE INVITING OPEN TENDER**

**On Line (E-Tendering) Danapur Division (Engineering Dept.)** The Divisional Railway Manager, E.C. Railway, Danapur is inviting online (E-Tendering) Open Tender for and on behalf of the President of India from reputed contractors with experience, financial capability including those registered / working with Railway / Irrigation / CPWD / MES or any other public sector undertaking for the following works :-

**Tender Notice No. : W-7/E-Tender/10/ Open/DNR/2025-26**

**Item No. : 1. Name of the Work with its location:** CTR (P) work-0.98 TKM, TRR (P) Work - 8.469 TKM, TFR-18.298 TKM, TRR (S) - 1.92 TKM and TTR-06 Nos. etc. and other misc. work under Sr. DEN/Track/DNR Section.. **Approx. Cost of work : 1,87,52,627.74, Bid Security: 2,43,800/-**

**Item No. : 2. Name of the Work with its location:** Provision of Limited Height Subway at trespass location at Km 81/24-26 between in Kiul-Gaya Section of Danapur Division.. **Approx. Cost of work : 5,79,73,964.23, Bid Security: 4,39,900/-**

**Item No. : 3. Name of the Work with its location:** Provision of Limited Height Subway at trespass location at Km 48/28-30 & Provision of RDSO type standard height Gauge at LHS No. 17 & 19 Between in Kiul-Gaya section of Danapur Division. **Approx. Cost of work : 6,02,03,414.01, Bid Security: 4,51,000/-**

**Item No. : 4. Name of the Work with its location:** Jhajha-Khusrupur - Provision of RDSO type standard height gauge at 28 nos. LC in section of Sr. DEN/2/DNR.. **Approx. Cost of work : 3,12,10,630.28, Bid Security: 3,06,100/-**

**Item No. : 5. Name of the Work with its location:** Cess Repairing/Standardization of bank under Sr. DEN/2/DNR (Total = 58.00 TKM). (Two Packet System).. **Approx. Cost of work : 14,67,30,351.44, Bid Security: 8,63,700/-**

**Item No. : 6. Name of the Work with its location:** Provision of RCC OH tank 50000 gallon capacity with water supply arrangement at Fatuha and Khusrupur stations under ADENL/P/NBE.. **Approx. Cost of work : 1,53,26,853.74, Bid Security: 2,26,600/-**

• **Date & Time for submission of tender and opening of Tender :** The tender have to be submitted online on [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) Upto 12.00 hrs. on the date of opening i.e. **16.08.2025** and will be opened on the same day after 12.00 hrs.

• **Website particulars, Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc. :** Detailed tender notice, eligibility criteria & tender documents can be seen from the CRIS website: <http://www.ireps.gov.in> & full details of notice can be seen on notice board. Amendments / modifications, if any shall not be published in newspapers, but the same shall be uploaded in the web-site. In case of any dispute in the English & Hindi version, modification / publication in IREPS will be acceptable. It is tenderer's responsibility to view web-site for amendments / modifications and submit his tender accordingly.

**Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.), E.C. Railway, Danapur PR/0673/DNR/ENGGT/25-26/96**

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER  
PROCUREMENT CIRCLE, KPDCL KASHMIR 190018  
email: epc2ndsrinagar@gmail.com.

**e-TENDER ABBREVIATED NOTICES**

For and on behalf of the Managing Director, KPDCL Kashmir, Superintending Engineer, Procurement Circle, KPDCL Bemina Srinagar Kashmir invites online e-bids from original manufacturers/Authorized dealers Having dealership Certificate and letter of authorization from OEM to bid for the instant tender for supply of material mentioned hereunder.

Sl.	Material Description	Quantity	Reference to e-NIT	FOR (Consignee)
1	Fresh Transformer Oil Confirming to IS 335 - 2018 supplied in Steel Drums as per guaranteed technical Particulars	196 KL in 934 Steel drums	SE/Proc/05/2025-26	ECSD Panipore

The complete tender document is available at website <http://jktenders.gov.in>. Interested bidder/tenderers may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bid online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below. Bidding Documents contain Qualifying Criteria for Bidders, Specifications, Bill of Quantities, Terms and Conditions of Contract and other details.

i)	Date and Time of downloading/Sale (Start) of Tender Document	26/07/2025 09:00 Hrs
ii)	Date & Time of Download/Sale (End) of Tender Document	18/08/2025 14:00 hours
iii)	Date & Time of Bidding Queries/Clarifications	26/07/2025 10:00 Hrs to 30/07/2025 16:00 Hrs
iv)	Date & Time of Bid Uploading (Start/End)	31/07/2025 09:00 Hrs to 18/08/2025 14: 00Hrs
v)	Submission of Hard Copy (end) Date & Time only in respect of Tender fee and EMD only	19/08/2025 up to 16:00 Hrs in the office of Chief Engineer, Planning and Procurement, Bemina, Srinagar.
vi)	Commercial/Technical Bid Opening Date & Time	20/08/2025 14:00 Hrs.
vii)	Financial Bid Opening	Shall be declared later on for the technically qualified bidders
viii)	Venue of Commercial/ Technical Bid Opening	Soft Copy Electronically
ix)	Cost of e-Bid document	Read cost of Bid Document as Rs.3000/- (Three Thousand only)
x)	Amount of Earnest Money Deposit	Read amount of EMD as 468600.00 (Four Lacs Sixty-Eight Thousand Six hundred only)-

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer  
Procurement Circle (KPDCL),

DIPK-NB-1353/25-DAT 26 JULY 2025

Lost Gujarat polls as EC acted like cheating umpire, says Rahul

**ADITI RAJA**  
VADODARA, JULY 26

CONGRESS LEADER Rahul Gandhi on Saturday likened the Election Commission (EC) to a "cheating cricket umpire" that cost his party the 2017 and 2022 Assembly polls in the state, senior leaders of the party said.

The remarks were made by Gandhi in Anand district, at the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee's (GPCC) inaugural session of a three-day training summit for newly-appointed district and city unit presidents of the party.

Calling Gujarat the Gangotri (origin) of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Gandhi told the leaders present that the Congress has to work hard in the state and bring out the "truth" about the ruling party's "bad governance".

According to senior Congress leaders, Gandhi said that for years, the Congress in Gujarat had been "like a cricketer, who wondered why he was adjudged out during his batting". According to the leaders, Gandhi said that "getting out constantly makes (a cricketer) feel they were not good enough," but the losses suffered by the Congress in Gujarat in 2017 and 2022 were "the doing of a cheating umpire (EC), which manipulated voter lists."

Gandhi said that the Congress workers were "babbar shers (lions)" who needed to "get back their roar", senior leaders said.



Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi speaks to the kin of Vadodara bridge collapse victims, Saturday. *Express*

Gandhi urged the party workers to regroup and "go in the midst" of people to "clean the Ganges of politics from Gangotri – Gujarat".

In his hour-long address at the closed-door session held in Nijanand resort, Gandhi likened the BJP-RSS combine to a temple, where devotees can pay obeisance but don't have a say in "what or how much prasad" they will have. Most Congress leaders that The Indian Express spoke to stated that Gandhi's mention of the EC in the context of "unfair results" in 2017 and 2022 struck a chord with party leaders.

Congress's Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Gujarat Assembly, Tushar Chaudhary told this newspaper that Gandhi emphasised that the party leaders must begin verification of voter rolls in advance. Chaudhary said, "Rahulji men-

tioned the fact that in 2017 and 2022, manipulated voter lists had a lot to do with the results... He enquired with us as to when we actually receive the electoral rolls. When he learnt that we receive it either on the last day or five days in advance, he said you can't do anything or verify the list in such a short time..."

Quoting Gandhi, Chaudhary said, "The issue of fake voters being added to electoral rolls is changing the results... incidents of 1.5 lakh fake voters found in Karnataka or Maharashtra were mentioned. So, it is a fact that when the updated electoral rolls are received, they have new voters who are of much older age whereas it should be young, first-time voters added to the list."

Gandhi told Gujarat Congress leaders that the BJP's roots in the state should be the party's goal in the upcoming Assembly polls.

NALSA launches scheme to strengthen legal aid to defence personnel, families

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

THE NATIONAL Legal Services Authority (NALSA) on Saturday launched 'Veer Parivar Sahayata Yojana', a scheme to strengthen legal aid for defence personnel and their families, during the North Zone Regional Conference held in Srinagar. The topic of the conference was 'Reaffirming the Constitutional Vision of Justice for Defence Personnel and Tribals'.

Presiding over the event, Supreme Court judge Justice Surya Kant, who is also the Executive Chairman of NALSA, said the scheme "seeks to build upon the existing framework of legal services clinics by establishing a dedicated network across Sainik Boards at the Zilla, Rajya, and Kendra levels". "These Boards already serve as vital nodal centres, where serving and retired personnel access welfare and support services... Henceforth, the

Thailand-Cambodia clashes: India 'closely monitoring situation', issues travel advisory

**DIVYAA**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

AS BORDER clashes continue between Thailand and Cambodia, India on Saturday said it was closely monitoring the situation and hoped both sides would take measures for cessation of hostilities.

The Ministry of External Affairs also urged Indian travellers in both countries to contact embassies in case they needed any assistance.

"We are closely monitoring the situation along the border between Cambodia and Thailand," said MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal while responding to media queries on the clashes between the two nations.

"India has close and friendly relations with both countries and hopes that both sides will take measures for a cessation of hostilities and prevention of further escalation," he said, adding, "Indian travellers in the region may contact our respective embassies in the two countries for any assistance."

India on Saturday also advised its citizens in Cambodia to avoid travelling to border areas as the clashes entered the third day. "In view of the ongoing clashes at the Cambodia-

Thailand border, Indian nationals are advised to avoid travelling to the border areas," the Indian Embassy said in a post on X.

On Friday, India issued a similar advisory to its citizens in Thailand, asking them to exercise caution and avoid travelling to seven provinces of the country. The Mission also urged travellers to check for updates from Thai official sources, including from the Tourism Authority of Thailand, before planning their travel. Thailand is a popular destination for Indian tourists. In 2024, around 2.1 million Indian tourists visited the country.

Over 30 dead

At least 32 people have been killed and nearly 1,50,000 displaced in the border clashes between the two Southeast Asian countries that erupted on Thursday. Both countries have recalled their ambassadors and Thailand has closed its north-eastern border crossings with Cambodia.

During an emergency meeting on Friday, members of the United Nations Security Council called for de-escalation and urged the regional bloc, the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), to mediate a peaceful solution.

very centres long synonymous with support for every veer parivar (family of soldiers) will also stand equipped to guide them through their legal challenges."

Justice Kant said the initiative "stands as a declaration of our intent to extend every possible support and opportunity in safeguarding the rights of our military and paramilitary personnel and their families. It is our pledge that while our soldiers stand vigilant at the nation's borders, we in the legal fraternity will stand equally vigilant in protecting their rights and their welfare at home."

He said "a robust back-end mechanism" has been created to support the needs of the armed forces.

The move "goes far beyond merely strengthening access to legal assistance through the Legal Services Authorities. Under this initiative, we are actively involving defence families and ex-servicemen by inviting them to serve as paralegal volunteers."

Odisha: Sanitation workers to get ₹10 L insurance, ₹30 lakh for death on duty

**Bhubaneswar:** Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday announced a life insurance cover of ₹10 lakh for sanitation workers, and a compensation of ₹30 lakh if they lose their lives on duty. Majhi announced this after inaugurating a two-day workshop on 'Transforming Core Sanitation Work – Safety, Dignity & Inclusion', organised by the Odisha government.

"It is our moral responsibility to provide sanitation workers justice, safety and dignity," he said, addressing the programme.

"Key sanitation workers, mostly engaged in cleaning swage and safety tanks, will be provided with life insurance cover of ₹10 lakh, assistance of Rs 30 lakh for loss of life in the field," he said. **PTI**

**EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**

**E-AUCTION NOTICE**

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, E.C. Railway, Samastipur for and on behalf of the president of India invites open e-auction only through IREPS (Indian Railway Web Portal) for awarding of contract for Supply, operation and maintenance of 02 (Two) Nos. of Battery Operated Cars (BOC) for carrying passengers on payment basis with advertisement on the body of BOC for a period of five years from the date of commencement.

**S.No. 01 Name of Station: Saharsa.**

**S.No. 02 Name of Station: Samastipur, Short Description of Contract :** Battery Operated Cars for Carrying Passengers on payment basis with advertisement on the body of BOC for a period of 5 years., Catalogue No. : **SPJ-MSS-BCA-2. Period :** Five years from the date of commencement.

**Instruction to Tenderers: 01.** Availability of e-auction document : E-Auction document is available on the website of Indian Railway Electronic Procurement System (IREPS). **02.** Date and Time fixed for bidding of e-auction. : **11.08.2025, 14:30 hrs., 03.** Details of Website where e-auction is to be submitted. : Tenderers are to be submitted online only through IREPS. For details, please visit website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). No Manual tender will be accepted.

**DRM (C), E.C. Rly.(C)/Samastipur PR/0675/SPJ/COMML/EAN/25-26/44**

**NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY**

**Open E- Tender Notice No. NER-LJN-2025-127**

On behalf of the President of India, Divisional Railway Manager/ Engineering, North Eastern Railway, Lucknow invites online tender for the following work, detail of which is as given below:

**E-Tender No. : NER-LJN-2025-127. Name of Work:** L&N Div. Raising of 07 nos. of Passenger platform from low level to high level with extension 26 coaches at 06 nos. of stations. (Laxmipur (LIR PF-2), Jahagirabad Raj (JBR PF- 1), Banuachak (BRCK PF-1), Motiganj (MOTG PF-1), Jhilahi (JLHI PF-1) and Parsa Tiwari (PATI PF-1 & 2). **Estimated cost (Rs.):** 16,20,93,410-03. **Earnest Money (Rs.):** ₹ 9,60,500.00. Completion Period: 12 Months.

**1.** The tender, for the above tender number NER-LJN-2025-127 can be uploaded up to 15:00 hrs. on 19.08.2025 and this tender will be opened after 15.00 hrs. on the same day. **2.** All the information related minimum qualification, complete details of terms and conditions of the above tender is available on North Eastern Railway website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) Tenderer should read the corrigendum (if any) available on the website related to this tender information before uploading the tender form and be sure to take into consideration as well.

**Div. Railway Manager(Engg.) CPROW-178**  
**Never travel on roof and foot boards.**

**e- Procurement Cell**  
**Office of The Executive Engineer,**  
**Building Construction Department, Building Division, Ramgarh.**

**अत्यकालीन ई-प्रोक्वायर्मेंट नोटिस**  
**ई-टेंडर रेफरेन्स नं०- BCD/EE/RAMGARH/ 10 /2025-26 दिनांक- 24.07.2025**

क्र०	कार्य का नाम	प्रारंभित राशि (रु०)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
1	Construction of Environment Awareness Centre, Ramgarh	3,61,73,300/-	11 (Eleven) Months.
i	वेबसाइट पर निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि		01.08.2025
ii	वेबसाइट में निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय		14-08-2025 को अपराह्न 3:00 बजे
iii	निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय		18-08-2025 को अपराह्न 3:00 बजे
iv	निविदा प्रकाशित करने वाले कार्यालय का नाम एवं पता		e-Procurement Cell Office of The Executive Engineer, Building Construction Department, Building Division, Ramgarh.
v	प्रोक्वायर्मेंट पदाधिकारी का सम्पर्क संख्या		8789037009
vi	ई-प्रोक्वायर्मेंट सेल का हेल्पलाइन संख्या		9340378587

● किसी भी प्रकार का बदलाव <http://Jharkhandtenders.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।  
● अन्य किसी भी प्रकार की सूचना <http://Jharkhandtenders.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।  
**note: UCAN Registration is mandatory for the bidders.**

**Nodal Officer**  
**e- Procurement Cell**  
**Office of The Executive Engineer,**  
**Building Construction Department,**  
**Building Division, Ramgarh.**

**PR 358267 Building(25-26).D**

# AI 171 crash: Interim compensation released to families of 166 victims

SUKALP SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

AIR INDIA has so far released ₹25 lakh interim compensation each to the families of 166 victims — 147 of 229 passengers and 19 people killed on the ground — of the flight AI 171 crash in Ahmedabad on June 12.

The crash claimed a total of 260 lives — 229 of the 230 passengers on board the Boeing 787-8 aircraft, 12 flight and cabin crew personnel and 19 persons at the accident site. It was the worst aviation disaster involving an Indian airline in four decades.

“Air India has, so far, released the interim compensation to the families of 147 of the 229 deceased passengers and also the 19 who lost their lives at the accident site. In addition, the requisite documents of 52 others have been verified, to whose families the interim compensation will be released progressively,” Air India said in a statement Saturday.

This interim payment will be adjusted against any final compensation that may be an-

nounced for the next of kin of the crash victims.

The exact compensation and legal proceedings vary depending on the jurisdiction and whether the flight was domestic or international, according to experts. Airlines typically maintain liability insurance that covers passengers or their families in the event of injury or death, regardless of the cause of the accident.

Compensation is largely governed by international or national aviation laws and the airline’s own policies. Under the Montreal Convention, applicable to most international flights, airlines are strictly liable for damages up to a certain threshold — currently around SDR (special drawing rights) 128,821 or approximately ₹1.50 crore per passenger — and can be held liable for higher amounts if negligence is proven.

In cases where foreign nationals are among the deceased, their families have the option to file claims in jurisdictions such as the country of the carrier, the place where the ticket was purchased, or the home country of the victim. Since nationals from Britain,

Canada and Portugal were among the victims, compensation-related legal proceedings in courts of various international jurisdictions cannot be ruled out.

According to insurance industry sources, the crash is expected to result in total claims of around ₹4,000 crore (approximately \$470 million), making it one of the most significant insurance events involving an aircraft accident.

The aircraft hull alone is estimated to cost insurers and reinsurers about \$80 million, with the engines valued at an additional \$45 million. Liability claims related to passenger deaths are expected to reach approximately \$350 million, though the final amount may vary depending on the number and nature of claims filed and the jurisdictions involved.

Apart from the interim payout announced by the airline after the crash, its parent Tata Sons also pledged an ex gratia payment of ₹1 crore for each of the deceased. The payment will be through the Rs 500-crore AI-171 Memorial and Welfare Trust set up by Tata Sons.



**GURU GOBIND SINGH  
INDRAPRASTHA UNIVERSITY**  
(A State University established by Govt. of NCT of Delhi)  
SECTOR-16 C, DWARKA, NEW DELHI-110078  
Website : [www.ipu.ac.in](http://www.ipu.ac.in)



**E-Tender(NIT) for Empanelment of Advertising Agency**  
The University invites e-tender on e-procurement website of GNCTD [www.govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in](http://www.govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in) from Delhi based DIP/DAVP empanelled advertising agencies under two-bid system (technical & financial) for empanelment to the University for its advertisement requirements. Estimated cost of the tender is **Rs 3 crore** inclusive of GST. Last date of uploading both the bids is now **11th August 2025 (Monday)** upto 3 pm. The pre-bid meeting in this regard is scheduled at 3 pm on **30th July 2025.**  
**Registrar**



**Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY DELHI**  
(Established by the Govt. of NCT of Delhi)

**Special Drive Admission Notice for Academic Year 2025-26 for Postgraduate Programmes**  
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University Delhi, a State University established by the Government of NCT of Delhi invites applications for admissions to its various PG programmes under different School of Studies in Kashmere Gate, Karampura, Lodhi Road & Qutab Institutional Area Campuses for the academic session 2025-26.

Particulars of Candidates who can apply	Last Date to apply online
CUET applicants who have not applied to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi in the first round	30th July 2025 (Wednesday) (Visit admission page on <a href="http://www.aud.delhi.gov.in">www.aud.delhi.gov.in</a> )
Candidates with UG scores only (Merit based admission)	

For the latest admission related information, kindly visit university website [www.aud.delhi.gov.in](http://www.aud.delhi.gov.in)  
Dated: 24.07.2025 [www.aud.delhi.gov.in](http://www.aud.delhi.gov.in)  
DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0160/25-26  
**Registrar**  
**DIRECTORATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI**

## UP teacher suspended over ‘objectionable’ remarks on Kanwar Yatra

MANISH SAHU  
LUCKNOW, JULY 26

A GOVERNMENT school teacher in Uttar Pradesh’s Sultanpur has been suspended after a female student allegedly accused him of making “objectionable remarks” about the ongoing Kanwar Yatra when she sought permission to meet a group of Kanwariyas that included some of her relatives.

The incident came to light after videos went viral — one in which the teacher Om Prakash, who is in his 50s, purportedly admits to his “mistake”, and another showing the student levelling allegations against him.

Suktanpur’s Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) Upendra Gupta, said the teacher has been suspended prima facie and an inquiry has been initiated against him. He added that in the viral video, students can be heard alleging that the teacher made “objectionable” remarks.

Om Prakash, a Dalit, was posted as an assistant teacher at the Composite School in Samratpur, Sultanpur.

According to a teacher, the alleged incident took place on Tuesday when a group of people reached the school and staged a protest against the teacher. The village pradhan, Rajesh Tiwar, also reached the spot and tried to pacify the students.

“People told me that a student informed them that on July 17, when she sought permission from Om Prakash to meet a group of Kanwariyas — which included some of her relatives — he not only denied her request but also allegedly made objectionable remarks about those participating in the Kanwar Yatra,” said pradhan Tiwari.

He added that a few minutes later, teacher Om Prakash came out of the school building and purportedly admitted to his mistake in front of the crowd.

## ED raids against Anil Ambani Group companies continue on Day 3

**Mumbai:** Enforcement Directorate searches against the companies of Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambani in Mumbai continued for the third day on Saturday with the agency recovering a number of documents and computer peripherals from multiple locations, official sources said.

The raids were launched on July 24 by the federal probe agency as part of an alleged ₹3,000 crore worth bank loan fraud-linked money laundering case apart from multiple other allegations of financial irregularities with crores of rupees by certain companies. The searches, being conducted under the PMLA, are continuing at some locations out of the more than 35 premises that were covered in Mumbai since Thursday, the sources said.

These premises belong to 50 companies and 25 people including a number of executives of the Anil Ambani Group companies.

**PTI**



**Government of India  
Ministry of Culture**

**Advertisement for the post of Director,  
West Zone Cultural Centre (WZCC), Udaipur**  
Applications are invited in duplicate from eligible candidates for filling up of one post of Director, West Zone Cultural Centre (WZCC), Udaipur, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. The WZCC, Udaipur is one of the Seven Zonal Cultural Centres set up by the Government of India to promote folk, tribal arts and culture of different regions across the country. The appointment will be on deputation / short term contract basis for a period of 3 years which is extendable by 2 years depending upon the performance of the incumbent. Officers who are working in the rank of Deputy Secretary Director to the Government of India and have experience of working in organizations related to Art & Culture, eminent cultural personalities (practicing artists, scholars or experts in the field of art and culture with atleast 10 years standing experience and also Minimum of 3 years administrative experience in running cultural institution(s)) are eligible to apply. The application complete in all respects should reach the office of the Hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan, Raj Bhawan, Jaipur within 45 days from the date of publication of the advertisement in Employment News/Rozgar Samachar. The application forms and other details are available on the website of the Ministry of Culture: [www.indiaculture.nic.in](http://www.indiaculture.nic.in) and WZCC: [www.wzccindia.com](http://www.wzccindia.com)  
**Note - The eligibility of the candidate shall be examined with reference to the last date of submission of application form, (Date of completion of 45 days from the date of publication in Rozgar Samachar).**  

**Director**  
West Zone Culture Centre, Udaipur

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
(Under paragraph 21(2) of the Drugs Price Control Order, 2013)  
**MANKIND PHARMA LIMITED**  
208, Okhla Industrial Estate, Phase-III, New Delhi 110020  
CIN No.: L74899DL1991PLC044843  
Website: [www.mankindpharma.com](http://www.mankindpharma.com)  
E-mail: [deepakgirdhar@mankindpharma.com](mailto:deepakgirdhar@mankindpharma.com)  
Phone No.: 011-46846700

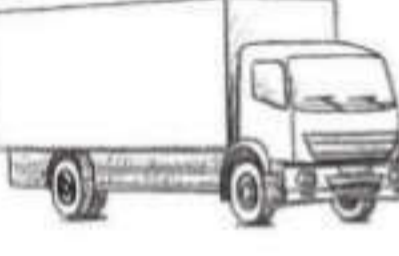
Attention of general public is drawn to the fact that M/s Mankind Pharma Ltd. having registered office at aforesaid address is marketing scheduled formulations namely Gudpres-XL 25 Capsules {Metoprolol (ER) Capsule 25 mg}, Gudpres-XL 50 Capsules {Metoprolol (ER) Capsule 50 mg}, Electrokind Sachet {Oral rehydration Salts}, Mupiways Ointment (Mupirocin 2.0% w/w) (hereinafter referred to as Medicines).  
M/s Mankind Pharma Ltd. wants to discontinue and stop the marketing of the above said products after a period of six months from the date of this notice.  
After discontinuation of the above Medicines, the same may not be available in the market. Therefore, patients using such Medicines may consult their doctor for prescribing alternate medicines. All the Doctors / Medical Personals may also make note of this.  

**DEEPAK GIRDHAR**  
DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER  
MANKIND PHARMA LTD.

## Transport Department

### Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi

5/9, Under Hill Road, Delhi-110054



### PUBLIC NOTICE FOR TRANSPORTERS

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in the National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas has issued **Direction No. 88** to curb rising air pollution from commercial goods vehicles entering Delhi.

**❌ Ban on Entry:**


- All transport/commercial goods vehicles viz. LGVs, MGVs, and HGVs- that are NOT BS-VI compliant will be **strictly prohibited** from entering NCT of Delhi from **01.11.2025**.
- Even non BS-VI compliant transport/ commercial goods vehicles carrying essential commodities/ providing essential services shall be permitted to enter Delhi for a limited period **up to 31.10.2026**.
- **✔ No restrictions:**

**There are no restrictions for entry, at any point in time of the year for following categories:**

- BS-VI compliant diesel vehicles
- CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) vehicles
- LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) vehicles
- Electric Vehicles (EVs)
- Commercial vehicles registered in Delhi

**Joint Commissioner (PCD)**

DIP-Shabdarth/Classified/0085/25-26



**INDIRA GANDHI TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY**  
**FOR WOMEN**  
(UNDER DELHI ACT 9 OF 2012, GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI)  
(ISO 9001 : 2015 CERTIFIED UNIVERSITY)  
St. JAMES CHURCH, NEW CHURCH ROAD, KASHMERE GATE, DELHI -110 006.

**RECRUITMENT NOTICE NO.: IGDTUW/RECRUITMENT/DEPUTATION/2025**  
**ADVERTISEMENT FOR VARIOUS NON-TEACHING POSTS IN IGDTUW ON**  
Indira Gandhi Technical University for Women [IGDTUW] - a Non-Affiliating Teaching-cumResearch University for Women and engaged in Education, Research, Technology, Incubation, Innovation and Extension work in Engineering and Technology, Architecture and Planning, Management, Applied Science and its allied areas, committed to foster excellence, invites applications for Non-Teaching staff from qualified candidates to fill-up the following vacancies on Deputation basis:-

SL. No.	Nomenclature of Post	Pay Level (as per 7th CPC)	Number of Posts	Mode of Recruitment
1.	Controller of Finance	Level-14	01	Deputation (Tenure of 5 years)
2.	Deputy Registrar	Level-12	01	Deputation
3.	Assistant Registrar	Level-10	01	Deputation
4.	Section Officer	Level -8	01	Deputation
5.	Private Secretary	Level -8	01	Deputation
6.	General Assistant	Level -6	01	Deputation
7.	Assistant (Accounts)	Level -4	02	Deputation

The detailed advertisement will be available on the University website [www.igdtuw.ac.in](http://www.igdtuw.ac.in). Candidates are advised to regularly visit the University website for updates etc. The candidates are required to fill-up the Online Application Form (link for application is given in advertisement available on IGDTUW website) and to send hard copy of the duly completed Application Form along with the desired/relevant documents to "Deputy Registrar (HR), Room No. 205, First Floor, Administrative Block, Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006".

The last date for submission of hard copy of application form is **29.08.2025 by 5.00 P.M.**

**[REGISTRAR]**  
DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0157/25-26.  
**IGDTUW, Delhi.**

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**  
**EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME**  
**STATION CELL (ECHS), AMBALA CANTT**  
**PHONE: 0171 2981162 Email: [echsstncellambala@yahoo.in](mailto:echsstncellambala@yahoo.in)**  
**EMPLOYMENT NOTICE**

1. ECHS invites applications to engage following OIC, Medical, Para Medical & Non-Medical Staff on contractual basis in ECHS Polyclinics under AOR of Station Cell (ECHS), Ambala Cantt for a period of 12/11 months renewable for additional period of 12/11 months/till attaining the maximum age subject to performance of candidates/other conditions according to the criteria as mentioned against each post:-

Appointment	Minimum Qualification	No of Vacancy		Fixed Remuneration
		ESM Only	Open (ESM/Civilian)	
Officer-in-Charge (OIC)	Graduate & Min five years experience in Health Care Institute or Managerial Positions	03 (Kaithal-1, Naraingarh-01 & Yamunanagar-01)		
Medical Officer	MBBS & Min 05 Yrs Experience after Internship Preferable Additional Qualification in Medicine/Surgery	07 (Ambala-03, Sonipat-01, Kaithal-02, Yamunanagar-01)	16 (Ambala-06, Sonapat-02, Panipat-01, Kamal-02, Kurukshetra-01, Kharkhoda-01 Naraingarh-02 & Yamunanagar-01)	Rs 75,000/-pm each
Dental Officer	BDS & Min 05 Yrs Experience	04 (Ambala-01, Nahan-01, Karnal-01 & Gohana-01)	02 (Kharkhoda-01 & Naraingarh-01)	
Medical Specialist	MD/MS in Specialty Concerned/DNB & Min 05 yrs Experience in the Specialty after Post Graduation	01 (Karnal)	04 (Ambala-01, Sonapat-01, Panipat-01, Yamunanagar-01)	Rs. 1,00,000/-pm each
Gynaecologist			01 (Ambala)	
Radiologist	PG Degree & Min 03 Yrs Experience after PG Degree		01 (Sonapat)	
Dental A/T/H	Diploma Holder in Dental A/T/H//Class-1 DH/DORA Course (Armed Forces) & Min 05 Yrs Experience in Dental Laboratory)	04 (Sonipat-01 & Nahan-01, Gohana-01, Kharkhoda-01)	02 (Ambala-01 & Panipat-01)	
Nursing Assistant	GNM Diploma/Class-1 Nursing Assistants Course (Armed Forces) & Min 05 Yrs Experience	01 (Kurukshetra)	02 (Ambala-01 & Kamal-01)	
Pharmacist	B Pharmacy or diploma in pharmacy from Recognised Institute Or 12th with Science stream from Recognised Bd & Min 03 Yrs Experience	07 (Ambala-02, Panipat-01, Gohana-01, Kurukshetra-01, Kharkhoda-01 & Yamunanagar-1)	01 (Kurukshetra)	Rs. 28,100/-pm each
Physiotherapist	Diploma/Class-1 Physiotherapist Course (Armed Forces) & Min 05 Yrs Experience	01 (Yamunanagar)	01 (Karnal)	
Laboratory Technician	B Sc (Medical lab Technology) Or 10th/12th with Science from Recognized Institute/ Board/ DMLT & Min 03 Yrs Experience in Laboratory Asst in a Medical Lab	03 (Kaithal-01, Yamunanagar-01 & Kharkhoda-01)	02 (Ambala-01 & Panipat-01)	
Laboratory Assistant	DMLT/ Class-1 Lab Tech Course (Armed Forces) & Min 05 yrs Work Experience in Laboratory.	04 (Panipat-01, Karnal-01, Kurukshetra-01, Naraingarh-01)	01 (Ambala)	
Radiographer	Diploma/Class-1 Radiographer Course (Armed Forces) & Min 05 Yrs Experience	01 (Kaithal)	02 (Karnal-01) & Kurukshetra-01)	
Driver	Class 8th Class-1 MT Driver (Armed Forces) Possess a Civil Driving Licence & Min 05 Yrs Experience as Driver	02 (Karnal-01 & Kaithal-01)	02 (Sonipat-01 & Yamunanagar-01)	Rs. 19,700/-pm
Clerk	Graduate/Class-1 Clerical Trade (Armed Forces), Computer qualified & Min 05 Yrs Experience	01 (Ambala)	06 (Sonipat-01, Nahan-01, Gohana-01, Kaithal-01, Kurukshetra-01 & Yamunanagar-01)	Rs. 22,500/-pm
Data Entry Operator		01 (Ambala)	01 (Ambala)	
Receptionist			01 (Ambala)	
Peon	Class 8th or GD Trade for Armed forces & Min 05 Yrs Experience	04 (Sonipat-01, Panipat-01, Gohana-01 & Yamunanagar-01)	01 (Naraingarh)	Rs. 16,800/-pm each
Chowkidar	Education (Class 8th or GD Trade for Armed Forces Personnel)		01 (Kurukshetra)	
Safaiwala	Literate & Min 05 Yrs Experience	04 (Panipat-01, Karnal-01, Gohana-01 & Kaithal01)	01 (Naraingarh)	
Female Attendant	Literate & Min 05 Yrs Experience in Civil/Army Health Institutions		03 (Ambala-01, Naraingarh-01 & Yamunanagar-01)	

2. For Terms & Conditions, Application Form & Remuneration, Website [www.echs.gov.in](http://www.echs.gov.in). Reservation will be given to Ex-Servicemen & Widows of service personnel including War Widows (Veer Naries). Selected candidates in the category of Medical Officer, Medical Specialist, Radiologist, Gynaecologist & Dental Officer will have to carry out 10 days On Job Training (OJT)/Handing/ Taking Over and obtain a certificate from OIC Polyclinic before signing the contract. The duration of OJT will remain unpaid and counted as mandatory before assuming charge as a contractual employee. Applicant, who have worked in any ECHS Empanelled Hospitals will have clear gap of one year from the date of job left from Empanelled Hospital for applying for ECHS Polyclinics and if any applicant has any stake in any empanelled hospitals/facility, he/she will be ineligible for applying for conflict of interest and this is full time appointment. The engaged person shall not accept any other appointment, paid or otherwise and private practice is strictly prohibited, if he/she selected.

3. Last date of receipt of application as per format given at our website. Application as per format, in only physical form alongwith self-attested photocopies in support of Education Qualifications, PAN & Aadhar Cards, Work Experience, Original copies of Latest Medical Certificate signed by SEMO/CMO & Character certificates, NOC from concerned Station Cell (If candidate working with any Army Organisation), Copy of Discharge Book and PPO for ESM and application duly endorsed the **AWPO registration No** (for ESM Officers Only) will be submitted in duplicate to OIC, Stn Cell (ECHS), Ambala Cantt by **11 Aug 2025 Till 01:30 PM**. An application received after **11 Aug 2025 (01:30 PM)** will not be accepted.

4. Interview Date, Timing & Venue. Interviews will be held between **09:00 AM to 01:30 PM** from **26 Aug 2025** onwards. Specific dates/ time will be intimated later. Candidates must bring all the original certificates/mark sheets/degree at at the time time of interview, No TA/DA is admissible. Only candidates meeting the Qualitative Requirements may apply & only screened candidates will be called telephonically for interview.

BRIEFLY

**BIHAR**  
Nitish govt hikes journalists' pension to ₹15K

*Patna:* Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday announced that the monthly pension for retired journalists had been raised from ₹6,000 to ₹15,000, adding that since they “played a vital role in democracy, their welfare should be prioritised”. “In the event of a journalist’s passing while receiving pension benefits, their spouse will now receive a monthly pension of ₹10,000 for life, up from ₹3,000. **ENS**

**One-year-old bites cobra to death, in hospital**

*Bettiah:* A one-year-old child in a remote Bihar village killed a cobra by biting it, local residents claimed. The incident took place in West Champaran district where the boy was brought to the government medical college and hospital. Hospital superintendent Duvakant Mishra said, “The boy was referred here by the primary health centre where he was rushed after he fainted soon after chewing on the live snake”. **PTI**

**MANIPUR**  
Arms, explosives seized from 5 valley districts

*Imphal:* Security forces in Manipur recovered a large number of firearms and ammunition in separate search operations on Saturday. Inspector General of Police Kabib K said that 90 weapons, along with ammunition and explosives, were recovered during multiple search operations in Bishnupur, Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal and Kakching districts. The team also recovered 728 assorted ammunition, including 21 hand grenades, six IEDs. **ENS**

14,000 MEN ALLEGEDLY GOT MONEY UNDER SCHEME

Will recover money from men who availed Ladki Bahin benefits: Ajit

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
MUMBAI, JULY 26

AMID ALLEGATIONS that 14,000 men had availed the benefits of the Ladki Bahin scheme, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday said those who fraudulently availed benefits under the women-centric scheme will face action and the money will be recovered from them.

“We have released the money to the beneficiaries of this scheme. We had started the scheme with good intention. There is no reason for men to take benefits under this scheme. If men have taken benefits under this scheme fraudulently, action will be taken against them,” said Pawar while speaking to reporters in Pune.

“We will recover money if men have fraudulently benefited from it,” he added.

Pawar’s statement came amid reports that at least 14,000 men were beneficiaries of the scheme, under which women



Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar during a meeting at Hinjewadi in Pune district on Saturday. *Express*

get ₹1500 per month as aid subject to certain conditions, including annual family income.

The scheme started in August last year prior to Maharashtra assembly polls and is credited as one of the prime reasons for the spectacular victory of the BJP-led Mahayuti in the Maharashtra assembly polls held in November last year. Following the election, the state government started proceedings to scrutinise the list

of beneficiaries. In February, around five lakh beneficiaries were removed as they were ineligible to avail the benefit. Later, around 2,289 beneficiaries were removed for being government servants. According to sources within the government, the state cabinet had till now maintained that money will not be recovered.

This is for the first time that the state government has said

that it will recover money if any fraud has happened. Currently, over 2.46 women are beneficiaries of the scheme and government spends around ₹3,800 crore per month.

‘No number of ST beneficiaries’

The state government does not have an exact figure of Majhi Ladki Bahin beneficiaries from the Scheduled Tribe community and the amount disbursed from the ST sub-plan is based on the percentage of ST community in the total population.

The Women and Child Welfare department informed this to the Tribal Development department. In July, the Tribal Development minister Ashok Uike had sought information about the exact number of ST beneficiaries of Majhi Ladki Bahin scheme from the Women and Child Development department following release of ₹335.70 crore from the ST funds for the fiscal 2025-26.

As Mamata calls for ‘Bhasha Andolan’, a look at key stirrs — Manbhum to Bangladesh

**ATRI MITRA**  
KOLKATA, JULY 26

LESS THAN a year before the West Bengal Assembly elections, Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo Mamata Banerjee has called for a statewide “Bhasha Andolan (language movement)” to protest the alleged harassment of Bengali-speaking people in the BJP-ruled states.

In Bengal, movements centred on language are not new. Historically, both halves of the erstwhile undivided Bengal have seen multiple language agitations. Now, beginning July 27, Mamata will lead the newest iteration of a Bhasha Andolan in the state.

Addressing the TMC’s “Shaheed Diwas (Martyrs’ Day)” rally on July 21 in Kolkata, Mamata accused the BJP of allegedly unleashing “linguistic terrorism” against Bengalis and called for a movement against the “harassment” of Bengali-speaking people in different states.

“Bangla bhashar upor sontras cholchhe (terror is being unleashed on the Bengali language),” she said. “Over 1,000 people detained, sent to jails in BJP-ruled states, including Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. This is a conspiracy against the Bengali language. Whoever speaks Bengali is being detained in BJP-ruled states.”

She said, “We have over 22 lakh migrants outside Bengal. But there are 1.5 crore migrants working in Bengal. We love Hindi language, we love Gujarati. But why do you (the BJP) conspire against Bengali language?”

Mamata said, “From July 27, we will hit the streets in protest. Every Saturday and Sunday we



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee

will protest in Bengal. I urge our MPs to protest in Delhi.

Bhasha Andolan

After the Partition of India in August 1947, the newly-formed state of Pakistan was divided into two parts on either side of India — East and West Pakistan.

The Pakistani government declared Urdu as the sole national language, sparking widespread protests among the Bengali-speaking majority in East Pakistan in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The “imposition” of Urdu was perceived as an attempt to undermine Bengali culture and identity, and politically marginalise those in East Pakistan. The movement peaked on February 21, 1952, when a peaceful demonstration was met with violent police action, resulting in numerous deaths. After years of unrest, the Pakistani government declared Bengali as an official language in 1956. In Bangladesh, February 21 is now commemorated as “Martyrs’ Day” to honour those who were killed during the movement. In 1999, the UNESCO recognised February 21 as the International Mother Language Day.

Manbhum stir After Independence, the Bengali-speaking Manbhum district remained part of Bihar whose government declared Hindi as its official language. This sparked an agitation in Manbhum to demand

Manbhum stir

Senior CPI(M) leader Sujan Chakraborty said: “By calling her fight against the harassment of Bengali-speaking people as ‘Bhasha Andolan’, Mamata has reduced the importance of the actual Bhasha Andolan.”

Red-faced over prison break, Pinarayi chairs meet to tighten security

**SHAJU PHILIP**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 26

ELECTRIC FENCING and CCTV cameras in four major prisons, periodic transfer of prison staff, and strengthening “intelligence” networks within — these are some of the major security measures the Kerala government is planning after the jailbreak of a rape convict has allegedly exposed chinks in system.

The decisions were taken at a high-level meeting that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan chaired Saturday, and comes a day after Govindachamy, a Tamil Nadu native who was undergoing life imprisonment in a 2011 case of rape of a young woman in a moving train, escaped after scaling the walls of the Kannur central prison. Although he was eventually captured, the incident has left the establishment red-faced. In a statement it issued, the Chief Minister’s Office said the jailbreak was one of “serious concern” and that it was decided that steps had to be taken after a thorough meeting. Apart from

electric fencing and CCTVs, the video conferencing system would be strengthened, facilities for prisoners would be improved and all prison employees who had completed five years would be transferred.

Apart from the ongoing jail departmental and police probes, the chief minister ordered that a two-member team of former DGP Jacob Punnoose and retired high court judge C N Ramachandran Nair will also look into the jailbreak. According to the police, Govindachamy broke out of his cell at 1.15 am and scaled a 7.5-metre-high compound wall at 5 am, with the police eventually finding him in an empty well in an abandoned building near the city. The 2011 assault on the young woman, an employee at a shopping mall in Kochi, had shocked the state with its brutality. The victim, who had been pushed out of a running train, eventually died of her injuries.

In 2012, a trial court sentenced Govindachamy to death. In 2016, the Supreme Court commuted his sentence to seven years in prison, although it upheld the trial court’s life sentence for rape.

WATER WAY

Commuters make their way through a water-logged road in Bhopal on Saturday. *PTI*



Odisha govt issues flood alert in 3 districts, major rivers in spate

**SUJIT BISOI**  
BHUBANESWAR, JULY 26

AT LEAST three Odisha districts are expected to face moderate to heavy flood Sunday as the water levels in three major rivers are on the rise due to heavy rainfall in their upper catchment areas.

Officials in the state’s water resources department said three major rivers — Subarnarekha, Jalaka and Baitarani — are in spate and flowing above the danger level at several places. The low-lying areas in Jajpur, Bhadrak and Balasore are likely to be affected due to the flood situation.

“The three district collectors

have been alerted to expedite evacuation and relief operations as and where required to handle the local flood situation. The state flood cell in the state water resources department is functioning round the clock and the situation is being closely monitored,” engineer-in-chief of water resources department Chandrasekhar Padhi said.

The water resources department further clarified that there is no flood situation in Maharandi or any other river basins despite heavy rainfall in the upper catchment areas.

The state government has deputed two senior engineers from the headquarters in Subarnarekha and Baitarani

basins to supervise the flood management in the two river basins. Chief engineers and river basin manager of major rivers are also monitoring the flood situation at the ground, said officials.

The state government has asked field staff to ensure 24x7 patrolling of vulnerable river embankments with support of local police and water resources department engineers.

The district administrations have also started preparations keeping the flood situation in mind. Bhadrak district collector Dilip Routrai said they expect a moderate to high-flood in the Baitarani River system and are preparing for the situation.

In purdah, Kerala film producer protests ‘male domination’

Files nomination to contest for Kerala Film Producers’ Association top post

**NARAYANAN S**  
KOCHI, JULY 26

SANDRA THOMAS, one of the few women producers in the Malayalam film industry, filed nomination to contest for the post of president of Kerala Film Producers’ Association (KFPA) on Saturday, intensifying her battle with the leaders of the association.

She arrived at the KFPA office in Kochi wearing a black purdah to file her nomination to contests in the upcoming executive committee elections scheduled for August 14.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Thomas said her gesture was a mark of protest against the “male-dominated” association and purdah was the “most appropriate

attire to wear” based on her past experiences with people leading the producers’ body.

“The producers’ association has been run by a coterie of 10-15 men for the last several years. There is no representation for women. They don’t even invite women to give a flower to someone on a dais during a function,” said Thomas, 38, who owns Sandra Thomas Productions.

She has previously filed a police complaint against four office-bearers of KFPA — president Anto Joseph, secretary B Rakesh, executive committee members Anil Thomas and Ouseppachan Valakkuzhi. In her complaint, she alleged that they used derogatory language during a meeting on film distribution.

A Special Investigation Team



Sandra Thomas in Kochi on Saturday

(SIT) probing the case filed the chargesheet before a court in Kochi in April. The KFPA office-bearers were booked under IPC Sections 354A (sexual harassment), 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman), 506 (criminal intimidation) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of a common intention).

“Those named in the case are set to contest the elections even

as the trial is yet to begin. Ideally, they should stay away from the elections,” said Thomas, whose run-ins with the KFPA began after she wrote a letter to the executive committee questioning the office-bearers for their silence over the findings of the Hema Committee report on the issues faced by women in the Malayalam film industry.

“I was sent a show-cause notice for my remarks, and I sent my explanation twice. Citing the explanation unsatisfactory, they expelled me from the producers’ association in November 2024,” said Sandra. She, however, got a reprieve from a court in Kochi as it stayed the KFPA decision to revoke her primary membership in December 2024.

“They also harassed me by sending a fake story about me to all producers in the annual report of the body,” said Thomas, who promised that she would break the monopoly and bring in

positive changes if she got a chance to helm the body.

“The producers’ association had over 600 members in 2016. Now, it has come down to 316 members with voting rights. It is being run on the whims and fancies of a select few who expel anyone expressing dissent over their actions. They are not giving membership to new people. The bye-law says that even if you have produced only one film, you are eligible for membership,” she said.

Thomas also alleged that the KFPA is not making efforts to help struggling producers and is denying pensions to them while giving them to wealthy producers. Meanwhile, KFPA vice president Suresh Kumar dismissed the allegations as baseless. “This is all part of a publicity stunt. Has any other woman producer raised the issue of discrimination? As for the criminal case against our office-bearers, there

is no law barring people accused in cases from contesting in elections of an association. In our country, even public representatives have cases against them,” said Kumar.

He also said it is wrong to say that the KFPA has not done anything for its members. “The producers’ association built a modern building in Kochi with assets worth over Rs 15 crore. It has the facility to make the master copy ready for digital distribution, such as UFO and Qube. It helps producers save the immense cost associated with content mastering,” said Kumar.

Thomas co-founded the production company, Friday Film House, with actor-producer Vijay Babu, and they produced movies such as *Amen*, *Philips* and *the Monkey Pen* and *Aadu*. Thomas and Babu parted ways in 2017. She is married to businessman Wilson John Thomas, and the couple has twin daughters.

SEVEN STUDENTS KILLED IN RAJASTHAN SCHOOL ROOF COLLAPSE

Centre orders safety audit of all govt schools

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

IN THE aftermath of a government school roof collapse in Rajasthan's Jhalawar that killed seven students on Friday, the Union Ministry of Education has written to the Chief Secretaries of all States and Union Territories, directing them to undertake a safety audit of all schools.

"All schools and public facilities used by children and youth must undergo safety audits in accordance with national safety codes and disaster management guidelines. Structural integrity, along with fire safety, emergency exits, and electrical wiring must be thoroughly assessed," reads the Ministry's communication.

States have also been asked to ensure that staff and students are trained in emergency preparedness, including evacuation drills, first aid, and safety protocols.

"Any dangerous situation, near miss, or incident involving potential harm to young individuals must be reported within 24 hours to the designated State or UT authority. Strict accountability should be fixed in cases of de-

lay, negligence, or failure to act," the communication noted.

Education departments and school boards have been asked to "act without delay" to implement these measures.

A senior official in the Education Ministry said that in addition to the incident in Rajasthan on Friday, other recent events — including part of a classroom ceiling falling in Madhya Pradesh and a roof collapse in a school in Jharkhand — prompted the communication to States.

States and UTs have also been asked to promote emotional well-being in schools through counselling services, peer-support systems, and community engagement.

"Parents, guardians, community leaders, and local bodies should be encouraged to be vigilant and report unsafe conditions in schools, public areas, or transportation used by children and youth," the Ministry's communication stated.

The incident on Friday at a government primary school in Jhalawar's Piplodi village killed seven students and left eight critically injured. The state government has ordered a probe and suspended five teachers.

In Piplodi village, promises of action and compensation offer scarce comfort

PARUL KULSHRESTHA  
PIPLODI (JHALAWAR), JULY 26

A WAIL pierces the muggy and rain-heavy air in Piplodi. Mournful and gut-wrenching, the wail drowns out everything — noise of the 'Rajasthan Sarkar' cars rumbling through the village, the chattering groups of policemen milling around in the village, and the hordes of VVIPs and media persons that have descended on the village.

Piplodi in Jhalawar is a village in mourning. On Friday morning, disaster struck in this usually quiet village of 350 houses when the roof of a government school caved in during morning prayers, killing seven students of the school and injuring 15 others — 11 critically.

Five teachers have been suspended after the incident and an FIR has been filed against them. The Rajasthan government has also announced that the school will be rebuilt and that the victims will be given a compensation of ₹10 lakh.

At 7 am on a rainy Saturday morning, the village held funerary rites for its lost children, attended by state government officials, politicians and the media. On the roads leading up to the village, rows and rows of government and media cars queued up, with groups of policemen stationed every 20 km "to prevent any violence and unwarranted media attention," according to one official.

In one of the houses, Kunti Devi lets out a grief-stricken howl. She lost both her children to the incident and can't have any more, a neighbour tells *The Indian Express*. "Both her kids died such a miserable death. Meena, 8, was a student of Class 7 and Kanha, 6, studied in Class 1. Their bodies had to be dragged out of the debris. Her husband Mohan has not been able to speak since it happened," the neighbour says.



Relatives mourn the death of children in Jhalawar's Piplodi village on Saturday. Parul Kulshrestha

In the house just opposite the school — which now stands in ruins — Harish's mother and grandmother are still deep in shock. Grandmother Bhanwari fainted after hearing of the roof collapse, a relative says.

While eight-year-old Harish was killed, his younger brother Vikram is among the children undergoing treatment at Manohar Thana Primary Health Centre (CHC) and is stated to be stable.

"We heard a loud crash, and ran to the school. There was chaos everywhere and we didn't know what to do," Harish's aunt Sambi says. "Then other villagers came and helped clear the debris. I thank God that at least one child is safe."

According to sources, heavy rain that the district had been witnessing in the last few weeks could have eaten into the foundation of the structure. In the immediate aftermath of the incident, the Rajasthan government has constituted special permanent committees to review the safety of government schools, hostels, colleges, medical and other government buildings to ensure repairs of unsafe structures are completed before June 15 every year.

Meanwhile, another permanent committee has been set up in the state for safety assessment and repairs of government buildings.

Jhalawar Collector Ajay Singh Rathore, who visited the village on Saturday along with Superintendent of Police Amit Budania, says a probe panel is investigating the incident. "The school will be temporarily moved to a safer building until the new one is built," he says.

But for victims' families, neither these words nor the ex-gratia announcement offers any comfort. Patwari Bai can't get the image of her son's broken head out of her mind. Her 10-year-old son Kundan was declared dead soon after he was taken to the hospital.

His sister Laxmi, a Class 10 student, was sitting by the school gate when the roof began to slide downward. "She made it out but her brother couldn't," Patwari Bai says, sobbing. At Manohar Thana CHC, doctors recall how parents ran into the hospital Friday morning carrying their injured children. "Five students were brought dead. We told the parents that students are no more but they refused to believe it. But we had to prioritise the injured," he says.

Those who escaped can't get over the panic and the trauma of the day. Varsha, 14, recalls how she spotted some chinks falling from the ceiling and alerted her teacher.

"We asked the teachers to let us out but they chided us and told us to stay inside. Suddenly, the building collapsed but since I was in the courtyard, I could go outside. I ran to alert others," she says.

Udaipur dental college student kills self, alleges 'torture' in note against 2 staffers

HAMZA KHAN  
JAIPUR, JULY 26

THE UDAIPUR Police Saturday lodged an FIR following the death of a final year Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) student who died by suicide following alleged harassment by the college officials.

The suicide has led to protests on campus, with students demanding action in the case.

Shweta Singh, who hails from Jammu and Kashmir, was found hanging in her hostel room at about 11 pm Thursday, officials said. In a suicide note left behind, she has alleged "torture" for two years by two staff members. The two have been expelled by Pacific Dental College and Hospital.

Udaipur's Sukher police station officials said that the FIR was lodged for abetment to suicide on Saturday following the arrival of the girl's family members.

Her relative Shashikant said that, "in her suicide note, she has levelled serious allegations against the college and on two particular individuals, that they had mentally harassed her because of which she was so troubled that she had to take this step. We have lodged a complaint and right now all we want is for them to be arrested".

The student was troubled at being allegedly held by the college on various pretexts and at being humiliated. Students alleged that her batchmates had become interns, yet her first "internal (examination)" of the final year was still being taken with the juniors "forcefully." Rahul Agarwal, Chairperson of the Pacific Group, said, "The management and all students are saddened by the suicide. I have heard from the students about the problems faced by them and assured them about resolving them in the next 2-3 days."

Magisterial inquiry, two cops suspended after J&K youth dies in 'police firing'

ARUN SHARMA  
JAMMU, JULY 26

THE JAMMU district administration has ordered a magisterial inquiry into the death of a Gujar youth in an alleged police firing on the outskirts of Jammu city. Simultaneously, the police have suspended two personnel and constituted an SIT to investigate.

Mohammad Parvez, a 21-year-old from Niki Tawi was allegedly shot dead in police firing near Sure Chak village on the city's outskirts. The police said he had neither criminal records nor links to drug peddlers.

An FIR has been registered at Satwari police station under Sections 109(1) and 3(5) of BNS and Section 3/27 of the Arms Act.

In his order initiating an inquiry Friday, Jammu District Magistrate Sachin Kumar Vaishya directed the officer to conclude probe in two weeks. Within hours of this, Jammu SSP Joginder Singh "suspended with immediate effect" Head Constable Baljinder Singh and Selection Grade Constable Pawan Singh through an order late Friday night.

"They shall remain posted in DPL (District Police Lines), Jammu, and will deposit uniform articles in the DPL Store," the order read, adding that "however, they are entitled to draw subsistence allowances as admissible under rule". In addition, police have also constituted a SIT headed by SDPO Domana Mudassar Hussain to look into the allegations of the deceased's family.

In a statement issued Thursday, the police said that some drug peddlers fired at

them and that "one unknown person" was injured in the exchange of bullets that followed.

The victim's family held his burial on Friday after they were promised action in the case.

Deeply regrettable: CM

The death drew strong condemnations from J&K's top political leadership, with CM Omar Abdullah describing the incident as "highly unfortunate and deeply regrettable". "The use of force by the police has to be calibrated and cannot be indiscriminate," Abdullah said on X, adding: "J&K has paid a heavy price in the past because of incidents such as these... This incident should be investigated in a transparent and time bound manner. I send my condolences to the family of Mohd Parvez. May Allah grant him Jannat".

PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti said on X: "Mohammad Parvez, a tribal youth, was killed by the police... He's now been labelled a drug dealer, but even if that is the case, we still live in a democratic country where justice is served through rule of law as opposed to khap panchayats or kangaroo courts." J&K Minister Javed Rana Saturday said some people after taking advantage of the dual power system in the UT and targeting the Gujar community by portraying them as "drug peddlers as part of a conspiracy".

Rana, who visited the family members of Mohammad Parvez and conveyed the CM's support to them, also asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi government at the Centre to restore statehood to J&K so that democratically elected government can also take care of law and order.



CONTAINER HITS 22 VEHICLES, 1 KILLED

A woman was killed and 21 others injured after a container hit 22 vehicles at Khalapur on the Pune-Mumbai Express Highway in Raigad district on Saturday. Police said a container on way to Mumbai lost control after its brakes failed near the new tunnel in Khopoli. PTI

Soren govt renames scheme after Mother Teresa, sparks row

Attempt to promote religious conversion, part of larger plot: BJP

SHUBHAM TIGGA  
RANCHI, JULY 26

THE HEMANT Soren government's decision to rename a healthcare scheme launched by the previous BJP government after Mother Teresa has kicked up a political storm, with the Opposition accusing it of "pushing a conversion agenda".

Earlier this week, the Jharkhand Cabinet decided to rename the Atal Mohalla Clinic.

Launched under the Raghuraj Das-led BJP government as a tribute to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the scheme aims at strengthening health infrastructure in urban slums and provides free primary healthcare services — including consultations, medicines, and diagnostic tests.

The decision to rename it 'Mother Teresa Advance Health Clinics' — much to the chagrin of the BJP — was taken at Chief Minister Hemant Soren's cabinet meeting earlier in the week. The chief minister also approved 20 other key proposals at this meeting.

The BJP has called this an attempt to "promote religious conversion", claiming it was part of a "larger conspiracy". The BJP has

long been alleging there's an attempt to convert the state's tribals to Christianity.

"What contribution has Mother Teresa made to Jharkhand?" senior BJP leader and former Leader of Opposition Amar Kumar Bauri said Saturday at a media briefing in Ranchi. "The blueprint for a separate Jharkhand was based on the BJP's Vananchal vision, which was a gift from Atal ji. Religious conversion is a serious issue in the state, and Hemant Soren is using this name change to further that agenda".

BJP's Godda MP Nishikant Dubey too raked up the name change, accusing the Soren government of "trying to erase Vajpayee's name". He then went on to call the government's ac-

After ADM responds in Hindi, HC asks 'can he effectively control an executive position'

AISWARYA RAJ  
DEHRADUN, JULY 26

WHILE HEARING a matter regarding the validity of the family register for panchayat electoral roll entries, the Uttarakhand High Court recently questioned whether an Additional District Magistrate can "effectively control" an executive position after he admitted he wasn't proficient in English.

As per a July 18 order, the division bench of Chief Justice G Narendar and Justice Alok Mahra questioned the ADM, Vivek Rai, when he responded in Hindi. He was asked if he knew English, and Rai said though he can comprehend the language while being spoken to, he cannot speak it.

Taking a note of this, the order says the court directed the State Election Commissioner and the Chief Secretary to examine if an officer of the cadre of Additional District Magistrate, "who claims to have no knowledge of English or in his own words inability to convey in English, would be in a position to effectively control an Executive post".

Rai is a senior Provincial Civil Service officer who has served as SDM of various areas before taking on the post of the ADM Nainital earlier this year.

The court was hearing the matter regarding electoral roll preparations.

It asked the assistant electoral registration officer whether an exercise had been carried out to authenticate the veracity of the entries of the family register, or whether any documents had been collected to ascertain veracity of claims made with the BL during the enumeration programme. The officers said that, apart from relying on the family register, there is no other material.

The court said that the legislature has not considered the family register as a document that can be relied upon by the Electoral Registration Officer to finalise the electoral roll of each constituency.

"Despite this, the glaring fact which stares at us is the consistent submission of the learned counsel for the State Election Commission and the officers, i.e. the ERO and the AERO, that the only document that has been relied upon to include names of voters is the Family Register maintained under the U.P. Panchayat Raj (Maintenance of Family Registers) Rules, 1970," it said, adding that if the sanctity of the family register as a valid document was of such a high degree, the legislature would have referred to it in the Uttar Pradesh (Registration of Electors) Rules, 1994, which came about after the 1970 rules.

The court said if this is being adopted for preparing electoral rolls across the state, the legality of the exercise becomes "questionable".

4 Maoists killed in encounter in Bijapur

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
RAIPUR, RANCHI, JULY 26

FOUR MAOISTS were killed in an encounter with Security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Saturday.

Based on intelligence inputs on the presence of Maoists in the south-western region of Bijapur, a search operation was undertaken by the security forces. The south-west region of Bijapur is where the most formidable force of Maoists army wing, Battalion 1 of People's Liberation Guerilla Army (PLGA), and west Bastar division cadres move.

The encounter broke out on Saturday evening and was still underway at the time of going to press. "So far, bodies of four Maoists have been recovered in the exchange of fire. A huge quantity of weapons, including INSAS and SLR rifles, explosive materials and daily-use items have been recovered from the spot," said IGP, Bastar range, Sundarraj P.

3 dead in Jharkhand

In Jharkhand's Gumla district, three suspected members of the Jharkhand Jan Mukti Parishad (JJMP), a banned Maoist outfit, were killed in an encounter with security forces on Saturday morning, officials said. The exchange of fire started during a joint anti-Maoist operation carried out by personnel of Jharkhand Jagur (JJ) and Gumla district police.

IG Operational, Michael Raj said they received a tip-off about the activities of Maoists in Ghagra forest.

"JJ" and the district police jointly initiated the operation. During the crossfire between the security personnel and the Maoists in the morning, three members of JJMP were killed," he said. An AK-47 rifle and two INSAS rifles were recovered from the site.

HC judge summons lawyer who accused him of caste, ideological bias, presides over case

On Saturday, eight retired judges issued a rare public appeal, asking Justices Swaminathan and Rajasekar to step back from contempt proceedings

ARUN JANARDHANAN  
CHENNAI, JULY 26

IN A move that has set legal circles in Tamil Nadu abuzz, Justice G R Swaminathan of the Madras High Court's Madurai Bench issued a contempt warning and lashed out at Advocate S Vanchinathan — while presiding over a case in which Justice Swaminathan was the subject of a complaint sent by the same lawyer to the Chief Justice of India, alleging caste bias and ideological misconduct.

The July 24 hearing, part of a routine writ appeal, took a turn when Justice Swaminathan, seated alongside Justice K

Rajasekar, summoned Vanchinathan to appear in person. The summons was not related to the appeal in question, but to confront the lawyer about a detailed representation he had submitted to the CJ, calling for an inquiry into what he alleged was caste-based favouritism and ideological partisanship in Justice Swaminathan's courtroom conduct.

According to multiple accounts, the courtroom atmosphere was tense. According to those present, the judge questioned Vanchinathan on whether he stood by his allegations. When the advocate requested a written order before responding, Justice Swaminathan reportedly made

a critical remark about him in open court.

The row

The row began when Vanchinathan, a practising lawyer and state coordinator of the People's Rights Protection Centre, submitted a 38-page petition to the CJ in June 2025. The petition sought no punitive action against Justice Swaminathan, only an inquiry by the Chief Justice under the Supreme Court's "in-house procedure" for judicial accountability — a system endorsed by the apex court in C Ravichandran Iyer Vs. Justice A M Bhattacharjee (1995), which holds that such complaints must be examined first by the Chief Justice, not the

subject judge.

While hearing an untreated case on Thursday, Justice Swaminathan noticed Vanchinathan's name as having earlier filed vakalat for one of the respondents. Although the lawyer had since returned the case papers, the judge summoned him to court the same day and questioned him in person.

When the advocate declined to verbally affirm or retract the petition without a formal query, the judge directed the Registry to issue a written questionnaire. In open court, the judge referred to Vanchinathan's past suspension by the Bar Council and cited Supreme Court precedents to argue that the lawyer's conduct

amounted to criminal contempt.

Some pushback

On Saturday, eight retired judges — including Justice K Chandru and Justice D Hariparanthaman — issued a rare public appeal, asking Justice Swaminathan and Justice Rajasekar to step back from contempt proceedings. "In the absence of any action taken by the Chief Justice of India on the petition, it is premature for the learned judges to initiate action," their joint letter read.

The statement invoked the Ravichandran Iyer ruling, reiterating that judicial impropriety, if alleged, must be examined under a controlled and impartial frame-

work — and not from the bench by the judge being accused.

This episode comes after the then Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud stated in November 2023 that contempt powers under Articles 129 and 215 of the Constitution exist "to safeguard the functioning of courts, not to shield judges from criticism." He reiterated that fair criticism of judgments is permissible and vital in a constitutional democracy.

The rare appeal by retired judges of the Madras HC on Saturday further stated: "If and when the Chief Justice of India is of the opinion that it requires an investigation into the truthfulness or otherwise, he can constitute an 'in-house inquiry' into

those allegations made against the judge."

"It is only when the in-house committee is of the opinion that there is a prima facie truth in the allegations made, he can take or order appropriate action in the matter. This is the established procedure as of now. The same procedure has also been followed in the recent case of Justice Yashwant Varma of the Allahabad High Court," said the appeal signed by retired judges Chandru, Hariparanthaman, CT Selvam, Akbar Ali, P Kalaiyarasan, S Vimala, K K Sasidharan and S S Sundar.

The contempt order issued by Justices Swaminathan and Rajasekar said that

Vanchinathan's conduct prima facie constitutes criminal contempt of court. "We, therefore, persisted with our query as to whether he continued to maintain that one of us (Justice Swaminathan) is being casteist while discharging his judicial duties. S Vanchinathan refused to answer this question. Instead, he requested that the query be posed in writing," the order said.

Vanchinathan has been asked to appear before the court at 1:15 pm on July 28 with a response to the question: "Whether you, S Vanchinathan, stand by your imputation of caste bias on the part of Justice G R Swaminathan in the discharge of his judicial duties?"

## Classifieds

### PERSONAL

It is, for general information, that I, Ram Poojan, S/o -Hari Ram, R/o -H.No. 74-B, Gali No.6, Gautam Colony, Narela, Delhi-110040, declare that, name of mine, and my father, has been, wrongly written, as Ram Pujan, and Hari Lal in my service-record &, other documents. The actual, name of mine, and my father, are Ram Poojan, and Hari Ram, which, may be amended- accordingly.

0040801893-6  
It is for general information that I Jitender Kumar S/o Satpal Singh R/o Raipur Khadar, Sector-162, Raipur Khadar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201304 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Jitendra Kumar in my minor daughter namely Lovely Chauhan aged 13 years in her birth certificate No.109/2015. The actual name of mine is Jitender Kumar which may be amended accordingly.

0040801865-1  
It is for general information that I Babita Chauhan W/o Tarun Kumar R/o House No.105, Village-Raipur Khadar, Sector-126, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201304 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written Babita Devi in my minor son namely Arnav Chauhan aged 11 years in her birth certificate No.108/2015. The actual name of mine is Babita Chauhan which may be amended accordingly.

0040801865-2  
I, saphiya S/O,Jaggu Ali,R/O H.No.45,phase-3,opposite DSii DC office Ishwar-colony,bawana north,west-Delhi-110039,Have changed my name to Mohammad shafi,for all,purposes.

0040801895-5  
I, mankiRan kaur girgla, d/O HARVINDER SINGH GIRGLA, residing at, 7- A,TAIMOOR NAGAR, GURUDWARA,NEW FRIENDS-COLONY,DELHI -110065,declare that mankiRan kaur girgla and mankiRan kaur, both are the same and one-person.

0040801894-5  
I, Yoginder Kumar S/o Rakesh Kumar R/o 283, Bijwasan, Delhi-110061 have changed my name to Yoginder

0070980716-1  
I,Manish Kumar Mankhand, S/o Rajinder kumar, R/o G-1/41, sector-11,Rohini,Delhi 110085, have changed my name to Manish Mankhand, for all, future purposes.

0040801894-9  
I, Mohd Shaheed S/o.Mahboob Hasaan, R/o J-409, GaliNo.3-J Block, Janta Mazdoor Colony, Welcome-Seelampur, Delhi-110053 Have changed my name to Mohd Shahid.

0040801891-2  
I,RAJIV PARASHAR,S/O-JAIHARI SHARMA, R/O-D-129, RAMESHWAR-PARK,LONI, GHAZIABAD,UTTAR PRADESH-201102,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RAJEEV PARASHAR.

0040801893-3  
I,RAVIA BEGAM W/O MOHD HAKIM R/O D-1/443 JJ COLONY BHALSWA DAIRY LIBASPUR DELHI-110042,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RABIA KHATUN.

0040801894-4  
I,Rajender Kumar,S/O,Shri Ram Bodh,R/O,C-78,Sanjay-Amar Colony,Shahdara,East Delhi,Delhi 110032,Have Changed My Name To Rajender,For All,Purposes.

0040801893-5  
I,Ramesh Kumar, S/o -Mahender Pratap,R/o-26/118, Block-26, Trilok-Puri,Delhi-110091,have changed my-minor daughter's name Vyakhya to Vyakhya Kumari. Aged-13-years.

0040801895-6  
I,Ravi Shankar, S/o-Kailash Chand,Address-Rz-54,Gali.no-25B Indira park Palam Colony Palam Village,Delhi-110045,have changed my name to Ravi shankar Swami.

0040801895-4  
I,SATISH KUMAR S/o Shyam Sunder Nagpal R/o -65 PP-Block 2nd-Floor Maurya,Enclave Pitampura Delhi-110034,have changed my name to SATISH NAGPAL.

0040801894-8

I,SHWETA BANSAL,W/o KAPIL BANSAL,R/o plot.no. 104,Mahadev Villa,Akshardham Colony, post-Modipuram,Distt. Meerut,Uttar Pradesh-250110,have changed my name to SHWETA RANI,for all,purposes.

0040801894-2  
I, Jelekha Khatun wife of Aladdin Residence of W-66/16, Krishna Colony, T-Camp, Kali Basti, Haststal, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059 after Marriage have changed my name Jelekha Khatun to Sabida Begam for all intents and future purposes. Inform that Jelekha Khatun & Sabida Begam both are one & same Person Name.

0040801817-1

I,Sakand Garg,S/O-Late Shri Suresh Kumar Garg,House Number-B-52,Gali No-6,Dashtrapuri,Palam-Village Delhi-110045,changed my name to Skand Garg,permanently.

0040801894-1  
I,Sanjay Kumar,S/o-Om Prakash Goyat,R/o,Flat.No.-101,Tower-A3, KLJ Housing Society,Sector-15, Bahadurgarh Distt Jhajjar (Haryana)-124507,have changed my name to Sanjay Goyat,for all,Purposes.

0040801893-1  
I,Sawan Goel,S/o-Deepak Goel R/O-D-17,Ashoka Niketan,Delhi -110092,have changed my Minor Son's name,from Rushank Goel to Athrav Goel,for all,Purposes.

0040801893-2  
I,Sheeba Bilgrami,W/o-Jonaed Hasan Khan,R/O Flat.no.905,Tower-9,Purvanchal Royal Park,Sector-137,Noida, Distt.Gautam-Budh-Nagar,U.P,hereby declare that my,name is Sheeba Bilgrami not Sheeba Bilgrami Khan and in future I would like to be known/called as Sheeba Bilgrami only.

0040801893-9  
I,Subhash Chander Garg,S/o-Babu Ram Garg,R/o/ A2/7,S.F.,Paschim Vihar New Delhi-110063,have changed my name to Subhash Chand Aggarwal,permanently

0040801895-2  
I,Tiwari Sunita Sabhajeet D/o Sabhajit Tiwari R/O-B-1/134, 3rd-Floor, Baba Karam Singh Marg,New Moti Nagar,Delhi-110015,changed my name to Sunita Devi Sabhajit Tiwari.

0040801894-6

0040801865-2  
I, Rakesh Kumar Manjhi S/O Sikin Lal R/O RZ B - 86 Gali no. 3, Part 2, Sita Puri, South West Delhi-110045 have changed my Name to Rakesh Kumar for all future purposes.

0050270863-1  
I,MOHD SADIK,S/O ABDUL R/O- H.No-B-/21, GALLI.No.4,BRAHAMPURI, SEELAMPUR,NORTH EAST DELHI-110053,INFORM THAT MOHD SADIK AND MOHD SADIK ALI, BOTH NAMES ARE SAME PERSON.

0040801893-10  
I,LAXMI W/O SHIVAJI CHAUHAN R/O PLOTNO.C-112-C GURU-NANAK DEV COLONY BHALSWA DAIRY LIBASPUR DELHI-110042,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO LAXMI DEVI.

0040801894-3  
I,Km Reena-Kausar & Reena-Nasir-Husain Khan & R/o,Rizwan Safdar R/o 474, StreetNo.21, Jafrabad, Delhi-110053 Have changed my name to Reena Khan.

0040801891-3  
I,Imtiyaz Hasan,S/O-Syed Zaki Hasan,R/o,Hasan Manzil,Rahat Road,Chapra Saran Bihar-841301,have changed my name to SYED IMTIAZ HASAN.

0040801895-3  
I,ISLAM CHOUDHARY,S/O GAJADHAR KHAN,resident of,G195 BLOCK-GOLDISHAD COLONY DELHI-110095,have changed my name to MOHAMMED ISLAM,permanently

0040801893-4  
I,Harshita Jain W/o-Akash Bucha R/o-F-125,Mansaarover Garden New-Delhi-110015,have Changed My Name to YOGITA BUCHA, permanently

0040801895-1  
I,FARID AHMED,S/o-SAGHIR AHMED,R/O-1169,GALI NO-38,JAFRABAD, DELHI-110053,Have Changed my name,from MOHD.FAREED to FARID AHMED,for all purposes.

0040801896-1  
I,CHARU W/O PANKAJ THAKUR R/O-43-D JHANG APARTMENT SECTOR-13,ROHINI, DELHI-110085,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO CHARU THAKUR.

0040801894-7  
I,Azeem S/o Mohd Ahmed R/O-T-35/10,Ward No.8,Mehrauli, Delhi-110030,have changed my name from Azeem to Md Azim.

0040801893-7  
I,Aquila Fatma,W/o-Syed Muhammad Eqbal Mohsin,R/o-A-804,8th-Floor, Plot No.18A,The Media CGHS Ltd. Dwarka,Sector-7,Delhi-110075,have changed my name to Akila Fatma.

0040801893-8  
I,Sharwan Kumar Mishra S/o Ram Chandra Mishra, R/o A-210, Satya Shanti Apartment, Sec-13 Rohini, Delhi-85, have changed my name to Shrawan Kumar Mishra for all future purposes.

0040801820-2  
I, Promila Mishra D/o Chandradeep Singh, R/o A-210, Satya Shanti Apartment, Sec-13 Rohini, Delhi-85, have changed my name to Pramila Mishra for all future purposes.

0040801820-1

0040801891-1

I, Mohd Saddique S/o Maula Bakshh R/O-F-93/4, Shaheen Bagh, Abul Fazal Enclave-2, Jamia Nagar, Delhi-110025 have changed my name to Mohd Siddiq

0070980703-1

I,Pravindra Kumar, son of Mahendra Singh, resident of House No. 43, Street No. 11, Om Sai Garden, Chipiyana Buzurg, Tehsil Dadri, District Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh, declare that my wife's name ANJALI KUMARI has been wrongly entered in my passport. Whereas, my wife's correct name is KM ANJALI RANI. 0070980705-1

I, MOHD SARTAJ S/O ABDUL SATTAR R/O H.NO. C-87/2, STREET NO. 11/4, NEAR BILAL MASJID, CHAUHAN BANGAR, NORTH EAST DELHI, DELHI-110053 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as MOHAMMAD SARTAJ in my minor daughter SUMYA KHATOON aged 15 years in her school records. The actual name of mine is MOHD SARTAJ. 0070980671-1

I, Tonik Mandal S/o Mantu Mandal R/o Newkadam Tola, Rahimpur, Dharampur, Malda, Manikchak, Bengal-732201, presently at Delhi. That name of mine has been wrongly written as Tonic Mandal in my minor son Aditya aged 06 years in his school leaving Certificate. That the actual name of mine is Tonik Mandal. 0070980679-1

I, Irfanullah S/o. Fakhruallah & Fakhruila R.o./1/218/21A, Masjid Qtrs, Sadar-Bazar, Delhi-110010 Have changed my name to Irfan Ulla.

0040801891-5  
I, Faiyaz alias Md. Faiyaz S/o Mohd Abbas alias Md. Abbas alias Abbas, R/o House No.18, Street No.21, Chetan market, Krishna Colony, Sector-91, Faridabad, Haryana-121013, have changed my name to Mohd Faiyaz for all purposes.

0040801855-1  
I, BHARATKUMAR RANJITWAL SEKHANI R/O B-13 Swasthya Vihar East Delhi-92 have changed my name to BHARAT KUMAR SEKHANI for all purposes.

0040801142-1  
I, Aamna W/o. Mohammad Wasim R/o.C-24/2, Gali-No.5, RK Marg, Chauhan-Bangar, Delhi-110053 Have changed my name to Aamna Fatima.

0040801891-4  
I Moh Abid S/O Navi Sher R/O Palakser PO Deball Bulandshahr Uttar Pradesh Have Changed My Name To Mohd Abid For All Future Purposes. 0070980688-1

I HARENDER KUMAR S/o ASHOK KUMAR, R/O H NO-69B, 3RD Floor, Navyug Block, Near Vandana Model School, Vishnu Garden, Delhi-110018 have changed my name HARINDER KUMAR to HARENDER KUMAR.

0070980677-1  
I,Movin alias Momen S/o Ali Mohammad R/O Behind Masjid, Bakhtawar Pur,North West-Delhi,Delhi-110036,have changed my name to Momen.

0040801880-2

## LOST & FOUND

I have lost the original documents of my flat no. UG-4, plot no. B-54, DLF Dilshad Extension-2, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad, UP 201005. Its book no. is 1, volume no.5227, page no.215 to 258, and serial no.8390. Its registry was done on 15/09/2008. Its use by anyone else would be illegal. If found please Contact Neha Saini 9810611120

0070980682-1  
I, Chanchal Sharma W/o Mohan Lal Sharma R/o D2-908,Shivalik Apartments,Sector-1, Manesar,Gurgaon, have lost my original Membership Letter dated 03/06/2005, Allocation of Flat Letter dated 07/07/2009, Allotment Letter of Flat dated 16/03/2010 and Possession Letter issued by HSIDC & Department of Industries Haryana Employees Welfare Association(SIDCO)in the name of Mr. Jagbir Singh for D2-908,Shivalik Apartments,Sector-1, Manesar,Gurgaon. Finder may contact above address

0040801883-1  
ORIGINAL PHYSICAL POSSESSION LETTER OF FLAT NO-2054 FLOOR-5TH CATEGORY-A IN THE SBI DELHI,BRANCHES CGHS LTD.AT PLOT,NO-19,BODELLA, PH-II,NEW DELHI-110018,IN THE NAME ALLOTTEE SH.K.K. SHARMA MEMBERSHIP NO-32 DATED-02-MARCH-2004 WAS LOST.FINDER CONTACT- 9810188087 0040801894-10

0040801893-7  
I,Aquila Fatma,W/o-Syed Muhammad Eqbal Mohsin,R/o-A-804,8th-Floor, Plot No.18A,The Media CGHS Ltd. Dwarka,Sector-7,Delhi-110075,have changed my name to Akila Fatma.

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I,Sharwan Kumar Mishra S/o Ram Chandra Mishra, R/o A-210, Satya Shanti Apartment, Sec-13 Rohini, Delhi-85, have changed my name to Shrawan Kumar Mishra for all future purposes.

0040801820-2  
I, Promila Mishra D/o Chandradeep Singh, R/o A-210, Satya Shanti Apartment, Sec-13 Rohini, Delhi-85, have changed my name to Pramila Mishra for all future purposes.

0040801820-1

0040801891-1

0070980703-1

0050269046-2

0090379661-1

0050269046-2

### MATRIMONIAL



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## PUBLIC NOTICE

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
This is to inform the general public that I, Saunvir Singhah, Advocate, acting on behalf of my client Mr. Harish Bajaj, resident of D-2020, Palam Vihar, Gurgaon - 122017, hereby state that my client has lost the original documents pertaining to his 50% share in Property No. 12, Kirti Nagar Industrial Area, New Delhi - 110015. Further, my client hereby expressly revokes and cancels:  
• The Will executed by him in favour of his daughter Ms. Gouri Sabharwal (Mobile No. 97110 18683); and  
• The General Power of Attorney (GPA) executed in his favour relating to his aforesaid 50% share in the property.  
Accordingly, any person who, hereafter, deals with Ms. Gouri Sabharwal in relation to my client's said 50% share in the above property, whether by way of agreement, transfer, sale, lease, or otherwise, shall be doing so entirely at his/her own risk and consequences.  
In case any person has already entered into any such agreement or arrangement with Ms. Gouri Sabharwal concerning my client's said 50% share, such person is hereby advised to immediately contact the undersigned. It is also clarified for public notice that Ms. Gouri Sabharwal had undertaken, at the time of execution of the said Will and GPA, not to act or deal in any manner concerning the said 50% share without the specific prior written consent of my client. Therefore, any such dealings or acts by her are illegal, unauthorized, and void.  
Saunvira Singhah Advocate  
Chamber No. V-29, Civil Wing, District Courts, Tis Hazari, Delhi-110054 Ph: 9818341523

0070980682-1  
I,Chanchal Sharma W/o Mohan Lal Sharma R/o D2-908,Shivalik Apartments,Sector-1, Manesar,Gurgaon, have lost my original Membership Letter dated 03/06/2005, Allocation of Flat Letter dated 07/07/2009, Allotment Letter of Flat dated 16/03/2010 and Possession Letter issued by HSIDC & Department of Industries Haryana Employees Welfare Association(SIDCO)in the name of Mr. Jagbir Singh for D2-908,Shivalik Apartments,Sector-1, Manesar,Gurgaon. Finder may contact above address

0040801883-1  
ORIGINAL PHYSICAL POSSESSION LETTER OF FLAT NO-2054 FLOOR-5TH CATEGORY-A IN THE SBI DELHI,BRANCHES CGHS LTD.AT PLOT,NO-19,BODELLA, PH-II,NEW DELHI-110018,IN THE NAME ALLOTTEE SH.K.K. SHARMA MEMBERSHIP NO-32 DATED-02-MARCH-2004 WAS LOST.FINDER CONTACT- 9810188087 0040801894-10

### PROPERTY

To be known to all that my client Sh. Ramandeep Singh Chandok son of Sh. H. S. Chandhok R/O A-156, Gujranwala Town, Part-I, Delhi-110009, the co-owned GPA holder of the Property bearing A-156, Gujranwala Town, Part-I, Delhi-110009. That the original Share Certificate, possession letter/Slip, Sub-Lease Deed, Map Plan, Sanction Letter, Form C & D, and other related documents in respect of the above mentioned property issued by the DDA, New Delhi, all in the name of Sh. Mangal Saini Channana, and further the Agreement to Sell dated 24.11.1978, GPA & Receipt duly registered on dated 29.11.1978 in the office of SR&I, Delhi, executed by Sh. Mangal Saini Channana son of Late Sh. Bhrat Dass Channana in favour of (1) Smt. Kulwant Kaur (2) Sh. Paramjit Singh and (3) Sh. Sawant Singh all wife & sons of Late Sh. Gurbachan Singh has been misplaced/und traceable or lost anywhere, and not traceable with best efforts.

A FIR/NCRLR No.3047522/2025 dated 25/07/2025 with the PS, Crime Branch, New Delhi, against this has been lodged. Any person claiming any right, title or interests, having any objection or found in possession of any original documents may write or contact the above names person at the above address/phone No. 9818889972 within 15 days from the date of publication of this NOTICE. The person claiming any rights, interests, objection with respect to the above said property can personally inform or write to The Deputy Director(CS)Director (CS), or to the undersigned.

Sd/-  
MADAN GOPAL VACHER  
Advocate  
Ch. No. 234, Civil Wing,  
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-110054

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Be it known to all that my client, SUSHIMA W/o Late VIDYA SAGAR W/O H.NO. 21A, PH-I, BDC, SEC-26, CHANDIGARH have severed all her relations with her son ARVIND KUMAR SHARMA has been disowned from all of her client movable and immovable property and assets, henceforth my client is not responsible for any of their acts, deeds and deals. In case anybody deals with my client's son and his heirs in any manner, he shall do it at his own risks and responsibility.

Sd/-  
SANDEEP SHARMA  
Advocate  
Ch. No. 505  
Patiala House Court, New Delhi

### NAME CHANGE

I, Avantika Rathore, W/O Ajay Pratap Singh, R/O A-59, Defence Colony, Agra Uttar Pradesh - 282002, have changed my name Avantika to Avantika Rathore.

I, VIRENDER VERMA S/O Sohan Lal R/O Flat No. 3011, Tower 3, ATS Homekraft Nobility, Sector-4, Greater Noida West, U.P. 201306, have changed my name from VIRENDER KUMAR to VIRENDER VERMA, Henceforth I would be known by the name of VIRENDER VERMA for all future purposes. 0040801671-1

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that my client, SUSHIMA W/o Late VIDYA SAGAR W/O H.NO. 21A, PH-I, BDC, SEC-26, CHANDIGARH have severed all her relations with her son ARVIND KUMAR SHARMA has been disowned from all of her client movable and immovable property and assets, henceforth my client is not responsible for any of their acts, deeds and deals. In case anybody deals with my client's son and his heirs in any manner, he shall do it at his own risks and responsibility.

Sd/-  
SANDEEP SHARMA  
Advocate  
Ch. No. 505  
Patiala House Court, New Delhi

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all concerned that my clients Shiv Kumar S/o Raj Pal & his wife Sarla, R/o BB-285, Ashoka Basti, Nahi Karim, Paharganj, New Delhi-55, disowned their son Deepak & his wife Preeti & their childrens, from their all movable immovable properties as they are abusing and quarreling with my clients and other family members and my clients have broken all relations from them and my clients have no concern with any liabilities or any transactions belongs to them in any manner.

Sd/-  
G.L. GOSWAMI  
Advocate  
Ch. No. 576, W.W,  
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-54

### PUBLIC NOTICE

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेरे मुकदमेदार श्रीमती देवी बोरु से: हरिश्च कुमार निवासी A-425 शॉर्टेड फ्लोर जॉर्जेरि नुमी दिल्ली-110023 ने अपने पुत्र पंकज एवं उनकी पत्नी अंशला एवं उनकी पुत्री हर्षिता को उनके गलत आचरण और व्यवहार के कारण अपनी सम्पत्त चले अंशला सेवी से वेदखल कर अपने सारे संबंध विच्छेद कर लिए हैं। भविष्य में यदि कोई इनसे किसी भी प्रकार का लेना देना और कुछ भी कर ले। और उनका निम्नलिखित वह खुद सेम सेम सेम प्रत्येक एवं उनके परिवार को खुद निम्नोली सारी होगी।

KAMAL SINGH (Advocate)  
ENRL.NO.D/748/2014

### PUBLIC NOTICE

Know all men by these presents that my client Harpreet Kaur W/o Sh. Kanwaljit Singh Bhatia R/o WZ-461, First Floor, Street No.25, Shiv Nagar, New Delhi-110013, the Original Property documents i.e Original Power of Attorney, Agreement to Sell, Will, Receipt, Possession Letter, Affidavit and all previous relevant documents of WZ-461, First Floor, Street No.25, Shiv Nagar, New Delhi, has been lost/misplaced . An FIR/NCR vide LR No.3042420/2025 dt. 24/07/2025 Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents may write/contacted with above named person at above address within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Sd/- B.N. DEO, Advocate  
S.R.lind,B Compus, Janak Puri,ND-58

### PUBLIC NOTICE

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेरे मुकदमेदार श्रीमती देवी बोरु से: हरिश्च कुमार निवासी A-425 शॉर्टेड फ्लोर जॉर्जेरि नुमी दिल्ली-110023 ने अपने पुत्र पंकज एवं उनकी पत्नी अंशला एवं उनकी पुत्री हर्षिता को उनके गलत आचरण और व्यवहार के कारण अपनी सम्पत्त चले अंशला सेवी से वेदखल कर अपने सारे संबंध विच्छेद कर लिए हैं। भविष्य में यदि कोई इनसे किसी भी प्रकार का लेना देना और कुछ भी कर ले। और उनका निम्नलिखित वह खुद सेम सेम सेम प्रत्येक एवं उनके परिवार को खुद निम्नोली सारी होगी।

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT IWE, (1) RITU ANAND W/O SH. SUNIL ANAND (2) SANJAY BHASHIN S/O SH. H. C. BHASHIN (3) SIMMI TANEJA W/O SH. DEPAK TANEJA, AWARE THE JOINT OWNERS OF SOCIETY BUILT-UP FLAT BEARING NO. B-24, DSIDE FRIENDS GHGS LTD., KNOWN AS SANGAM APARTMENTS, PLOT 01/23, 23 SECTOR 9, ROHINI, DELHI AND IWE HAVE MISPLACED/LOST ORIGINAL SHARE CERTIFICATE, ORIGINAL ALLOTMENT LETTER AND ORIGINAL POSSESSION LETTER. WE HAVE BEEN ISSUED BY THE SOCIETY IN THE NAME OF ORIGINAL ALLOTTEE SMT. INDRA BHASHIN IWE HAVE ALSO LOANED A FIR/NCR VIDE LR NO. 3048602/2025 DATED 26.07.2025 AT POLICE STATION, CRIME BRANCH, DELHI. IF ANY BODY FINDS THE SAID DOCUMENT, PLEASE INFORM NEWS AT THE ABOVE/SAID ADDRESS OR PAN NO. 9013211307.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Information is given to the general public at large that my client, Resa who is the owner of the property i.e. Built up land area measuring 50 Sq.yds., out of Khazra No. 842, bearing part of Property No. 4, 302, Situated in Village Ghodni Gurgaon (Kharid, in about of 2 Block, Delhi-110023, whereby the said property was acquired through GPA, ATS and WILL dated April 2025 executed by Mr. Ganesha Kumar who was attorney through GPA, ATS & WILL dated 30.03.2015 executed by Mr. Subhash Chand. Now, my client intends to sell the said property to intended purchaser.  
Any person(s), institution having any claim and/or objection in respect of the said property shall communicate the same to the undersigned at our address within 10 days from the publication of this notice with documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the claim, of such person and institution shall not be binding upon the said property or purchaser.  
Mohd K. Hussain (Advocate)  
2/34, Group 10, Near Kashiwan Park, ND-14, 8810351672

### PUBLIC NOTICE


Under instructions and on behalf of my client Smt. Aruna W/O Sh. Sanjay Jain R/O-7100 Aryan Street "60" Feet Road, Vishwas Nagar Shahdara Delhi-110032, I advise the following public notice: - That MIG FLAT NO. C-50 XA, C-Block MIG FLATES DILSHAD GARDEN DELHI belongs to Smt. Aruna W/O Sh. Sanjay Jain, after death of late Smt. Kanak Gupta W/O late Sh. Santosh Kumar Chaudha became owner on the basis of will and the original papers has been misplaced and untraceable if anybody deal with lost papers will do at his/her own Risk and if anybody have objection thenr contact at 8860902874 Sushil Advocate within 15 days.

Sd/-  
SUSHIL KUMAR  
Advocate  
Ch. No. 117,  
Old Court Compound  
Kashmere Gate, Delhi

### PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Dhananjaya Dutt Mishra, aged 27 s/o Sh Sanjay Kumar Misra and Smt. Sharda Misra R/o House No 737, Sector-9 A G

Across  
THE AISLE



PCHIDAMBARAM

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What broke the cordial ties between Mr Dhankhar and the RSS/BJP? The speculation is that Mr Dhankhar's decisions on the two motions broke the camel's back. I disagree; the two motions were light straws. Obviously, there were more

# Life is a mystery, not always beautiful

ON JULY 10, 2025, Mr Jagdeep Dhankhar cheerfully announced "I will *retire* at the right time — August 2027, subject to divine intervention." He was the Vice President of India and, *ex officio*, Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. On July 21, Mr Dhankhar quietly *re-signed* from the office of Vice President and, consequently, quit as Chairman.

What happened between July 10 and July 21 is what makes life a mystery.

Both Houses of Parliament began 'normally' on Monday, July 21. On the previous day, the government had convened the customary meeting of the floor leaders of political parties. The customary assurances of debate 'on all issues' and co-operation were exchanged between the government and the Opposition. Sadly, however, in the working of the Indian Parliament, there is currently no consensus between the Treasury and the Opposition on *what*, *when* and *how* the House may debate an issue of urgent importance.

## BONE OF CONTENTION

The Opposition in the Rajya Sabha usually insists on a debate under Rule 267. Rule 267 is a parliamentary device to defer the listed business and take up an issue of urgent importance. The motion is called an 'adjournment motion'. There is nothing sinister about invoking Rule 267. However, the NDA has considered a debate under Rule 267 as equivalent to a 'censure' of the government. (Perhaps, some governments in the past also took the same view). In the

## NO FAREWELL, NO FANFARE

The Chairman called a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) at 12.30 pm. Mr J P Nadda and Mr Kiren Rijiju attended representing the government. After some discussion, the meeting was adjourned to 4.30 pm. When the BAC met again, the two ministers were *absent*. Apparently miffed, the Chairman ad-

joined the meeting. He resigned at 9.25 pm, citing "medical advice".

It is a telling commentary that no Party or MP implored Mr Dhankhar to withdraw his resignation. On July 22, the Deputy Chairman tersely announced in the House the "occurrence of vacancy" in the Vice Presidency. Clearly, the government had decided to bid goodbye to Mr Dhankhar without fuss or fanfare or a farewell.

## BJP'S INGRATITUDE

The NDA government owed a lot to Mr Dhankhar. In American football parlance, he took upon himself the role of 'tackle'. He defended the RSS/BJP's position on One Nation, One Election (*ONOE*) and on the removal of the words 'secular' and 'socialist' from the Preamble to the Constitution. He criticised the Supreme Court for its judgement propounding the Basic Structure doctrine (*Kesavananda Bharati case*). He questioned the theory of judicial review of laws passed by Parliament. He asserted the right of the government to appoint judges to the Supreme Court and the High Courts, debunking the proposition that the judiciary has primacy in such appointments (*Second Judges case*). He slammed the Supreme Court for invoking Article 142 to direct governors (and the President) to grant or refuse assent to Bills within 3 months. Contradicting Article 105, Mr Dhankhar asked members to 'authenticate' documents or data cited in their speeches. He defended *sanatana dharma*.

He heaped fulsome praise on the RSS. His positions mirrored the conservative Right's views, and ought to have pleased the BJP.

At different times, Mr Dhankhar belonged to the Janata Dal, Samajwadi Janata Party (of Chandra Shekhar), Congress and BJP. His appointment as Governor of West Bengal resurrected his political career. His unwarranted run-ins with the state government may have burnished his pro-BJP credentials but tarnished the office of governor. His surprise elevation as Vice President showed the faith reposed in him by the RSS/BJP to bear the right-wing flag. His conduct of proceedings earned him the distinction of being the first Chairman against whom a No Confidence motion was moved.

What broke the cordial ties between Mr Dhankhar and the RSS/BJP? The idea of a motion to impeach Justice Yashwant Varma had germinated in a meeting of the Congress parliamentary strategy group on July 15. Signed by 63 members, the Opposition left Mr Dhankhar no choice but to admit the motion on July 21 (while a similar government-inspired motion had been lodged in the Lok Sabha on the same day). The motion forced Mr Dhankhar to act on the motion to impeach Justice Shekhar Yadav that he had held back for seven months. The speculation is that Mr Dhankhar's decisions on the two motions broke the camel's back. I disagree; the two motions were light straws. Obviously, there were more.

Life is a mystery, and sometimes ugly.

inside  
TRACK

COOMIKAPOOR



## SHOCK TREATMENT

While a silent behind-the-scenes tussle between Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and the BJP high command had been brewing for months, both sides were caught off guard by the speed at which matters blew up. Dhankhar believed he was untouchable during his five-year term as VP and was instigated by certain Congress leaders to fight for upholding the dignity of his constitutional post. The egotistical Dhankhar believed he was constantly undermined by the government, although in the official protocol ranking, he even preceded the Prime Minister. It rankled him that he was not permitted even a one-on-one meeting with his US counterpart J D Vance during the latter's India visit in April. Dhankhar also resented Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's complete domination of Parliament, apparently not permitting Dhankhar, as Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, to adopt a different course from the Lok Sabha. Worst of all, he was indiscreet in meeting Opposition members, including AAP leaders, to voice his grievances.

Matters came to a head this week when Dhankhar, despite reportedly being asked by ministers Kiren Rijiju and J P Nadda to not undercut the Lok Sabha motion to remove Justice Yashwant Varma, announced that he had received a motion on the same day in the Rajya Sabha. Top BJP leaders felt Dhankhar had crossed a red line and that, if he was left untouched, it would encourage other dissidents. Rajnath Singh's office was the scene of the action with NDA MPs and ministers called to sign a blank sheet of paper, amid confusion about what the signature drive was meant for. A shell-shocked Dhankhar could only retaliate with the surprise timing of his resignation — thus making the issue embarrassingly public. Some believe that the lesson the BJP should learn from this is to be wary in the future of appointing in a key position anyone who is not from among its own disciplined cadre. Dhankhar started his political career with Devi Lal and Om Prakash Chautala. Informed circles suggest a former SC Chief Justice, close to an NDA ally in the South, could be the BJP's choice for the new VP.

## PARADISE LOST

The tiny, tranquil Landour cantonment above Mussoorie hill station, with its scenic treks, a historic graveyard and ancient deodars, remained largely untouched for some 200 years. Landour falls under the jurisdic-

tion of the Indian Army, which ensured that rules and regulations were strictly adhered to. A decade ago, when an influential Mumbai hotelier, close to a famous cricketer, attempted to build a house several times its plinth area, it was speedily demolished. But three years ago, the Cantonment Board, which is meant to report back to the Army on violations of zonal regulations, was dissolved. Now the Himalayan slopes, which once consisted of 'Char Dukan' (four shops) and 24 houses, with only the sound of swaying pines and chirping birds to disturb the stillness, are the site of a loud, vulgar funfair and is a day trippers' selfie destination. During peak season, traffic jams lasting two to three hours can extend from the Mussoorie market to the top of Landour; in the wake of permissions granted for four new hotels and four restaurants by the CEO for Landour and Clement Town Cantonments stationed in Dehradun.

## THE X FACTOR

The X factor in the Bihar Assembly polls later this year is political analyst Prashant Kishor, who boasts that whoever he advises, becomes the king. Kishor, an upper caste, will cut into the NDA's vote share rather than that of the Mahagatbandhan, especially since Kishor is targeting NDA ministers for corruption. But Kishor's lack of humility has put the backs up of some voters. Recently, he invited former vice-chancellors, veteran journalists and literary figures to a get-together in Patna. He did not endear himself by addressing them with the less-than-respectful "Tum log (You people)". When an elderly gentleman asked why the people of Bihar should repose their faith in him, Kishor simply advised the questioner to leave the room.

## AAP KI PASAND

The defeat of the BJP in the Visavadar Assembly by-election in Saurashtra, Gujarat, to AAP candidate Gopal Italia last month is a warning more to the Congress than the BJP. The Congress can no longer count on a bipolar contest in Saurashtra, or on the AAP agreeing to be a junior alliance partner in an alliance. The Congress is losing out because of the growing impression that when Congresspersons get elected, they switch to the BJP. Even Rahul Gandhi, addressing the Congress Working Committee in May in Ahmedabad, referred to the unfortunate reputation of Congresspersons in Gujarat as weatherecks. In Visavadar, the MLAs elected the last two times, from Congress and AAP tickets, both defected to the BJP. Visavadar is an anti-BJP bastion which has not voted for the ruling party since 2007, after former BJP CM and heavyweight Keshubhai Patel, who represented the constituency, was thrown out of the party. AAP candidate Italia's plus point is his anti-establishment image, and the belief that he is not likely to be lured by the BJP.

history  
HEADLINE

MANAMAN SINGH  
CHHINA



SIXTY-TWO YEARS after it joined the Indian Air Force (IAF) at Air Force Station Chandigarh, the MiG-21 will fly into history from the same station in a poignant farewell ceremony.

It was in March 1963 that the first IAF Squadron equipped with MiG-21s was raised in Chandigarh. The No. 28 Squadron came up with Wing Commander (later Air Chief Marshal and Chief of Air Staff) Dilbagh Singh taking over its command on March 2, 1963.

The MiG-21s inducted into the No. 28 Squadron back then were the MiG-21 F-13 type, the older version of the Soviet aircraft. Seven officers had been selected by the IAF headquarters to be sent to Russia for training on the MiG-21s — Wing Commander Dilbagh Singh, Squadron Leaders MSD Wollen and S K Mehra, and Flight Lieutenants A K Mukherjee, H S Gill, A K Sen, Deniz Keelor and B D Jayal. Keelor could not complete the training due to medical reasons while Wollen later succeeded Dilbagh Singh as the Commanding Officer of the squadron and commanded it during the 1965 Indo-Pak war.

Incidentally, Wollen and Mukherjee were involved in the first MiG-21 crash near Chandigarh in December 1963 when two of the aircraft collided mid-air while practising for the 1964 Republic Day parade. The two survived the crash. Over the years, the MiG-21 and its variants would be in the news for several crashes, eventually earning it the pejorative sobriquet 'The Flying Coffin'.

The first six MiG-21s arrived in Chandigarh in April 1963 after they were flown from No. 2 Equipment Depot Bombay to Chandigarh via Agra. They were earlier received in Bombay in a disassembled condition and had been put together by a team of Soviet engineers and were test flown by their pilots.

The No. 28 Squadron rightly earned the name of 'The First Supersonics' with the induction of the MiG-21s and retain that name to date. The unit now flies the MiG-29 aircraft and is stationed in Adampur in Punjab.

The induction of the supersonic MiG-21s into the IAF was preceded by some hectic diplomatic manoeuvring by the USA.

In 1963, given India's war with China the previous year and continued tensions with Pakistan, a supersonic aircraft in the IAF arsenal was a pressing need. The USA had already supplied one of its newest aircraft, the F-104 Starfighter, to Pakistan and there was considerable anxiety in the

# 6 decades ago, how MiGs won out, joined IAF



The first six MiG-21s arrived in Chandigarh in April 1963. File

minds of the political and military leadership in India.

The US F-104 had also been considered by the IAF for induction, but the US was not very keen to supply them in large numbers in order to keep a balance between India and Pakistan. Incidentally, given its high accident rate, the F-104 Starfighter too ended up earning an unflattering reputation as 'The Widowmaker'.

Back in the late 1950s and early 1960s, there had been efforts on the part of several US officials posted at the embassy in India as well as the State department in Washington to urge their government to sell F-104s to India in substantial numbers. Their aim was to prevent India from entering into a deal with the Soviet Union as they feared that this would help the Soviets make inroads into the Indian military. They were proven right in the years to come.

Declassified records of the US State Department reveal correspondence with the US Embassy in Delhi where the latter pointed out that in the "absence of a favorable United States policy, India will go to Soviets for military equipment". The US Ambassador to India at the time, John Kenneth Galbraith, predicted that if India decides to buy MiG-21 and/or other types of major military equipment from the Soviet, it will lead to a large number of Soviet technicians being introduced into the Indian defence establishment.

"Soviet training and technical advisors who would accompany purchase of Soviet equipment will have inevitable influence on younger post-independence Indian military officers now rising to position of prominence," wrote Galbraith in a telegram to the State Department.

A September 1962 paper by the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs of the US State Department, titled 'Status of Indian Negotiations for MiGs' quotes Galbraith as reporting that "Nehru has become increasingly cool to the expenditures necessary for a MiG deal and his disposition is to postpone it or scale it down. When asked about the MiG deal by reporters in London on September 9, Nehru said, however, that 'negotiations have gone a good bit further'."

The Soviets, too, had their misgivings. Archival documents of the US State Department talk of indications that the Soviets had their doubts, for both technical and political reasons, about providing India with a manufacturing capability for the MiG-21. "The Soviets apparently have had some question about Indian ability to handle so complicated a program as manufacturing supersonic fighters. This seems to us to be reasonable caution on the part of the Soviets. Additionally, we have received reports that the Soviet Union has been meeting strong Communist Chinese objections, particularly to the proposal for manufacturing MiG's in India," says the State Department paper.

In order to encourage India to turn down the Soviet offer of MiG-21, US President Kennedy even approved a simultaneous US offer to sell India nine C-130 transport aircraft in Rupees currency.

All these efforts came to a naught and India not only went on to induct MiG-21s but also manufactured them on large scale at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited facility in Ozar near Nashik (Maharashtra) and in Koraput (Odisha), where the engines were manufactured.

The writer is Assistant Editor, The Indian Express

Fifth  
COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH

Twitter @tavleen\_singh



# Potted plants don't grow tall

IT WAS with deepening gloom that I watched the shenanigans outside Parliament last week. I cannot understand why our Opposition leaders have not yet realised that they should be inside the House and not prancing around like spoilt children outside it. They were elected to sit inside the Lok Sabha, so every time they bring Parliament to a halt, they let down the people who voted for them. Protests of the kind we saw over the 'death of democracy' are now routine. All that changes is the issue over which our Opposition leaders behave so badly inside the Lok Sabha that it is adjourned repeatedly. This gives the Leader of the Opposition the chance to complain again that he is not allowed 'to speak inside the House'. He would be if he made his case less childishly inside Parliament instead of in its courtyard.

This time as I watched the protest, I observed, not for the first time, that nearly every Indian Opposition leader is a political prince or princess from a political family. All three members of the mighty Gandhi dynasty joined the protest. As I brooded over the damage that political dynasties from Kashmir to Kanyakumari have done to Indian democracy and to our political culture, I remembered something that Prashant Kishor said at an Express Adda. He called leaders who came from political families 'potted plants'.

When Prashant Kishor came to mind, I also remembered that he has spent the past couple of years or more wandering through the villages of Bihar, explaining to voters what their democratic rights are. He now leads a political party called Jan Suraj and because I believe that India desperately needs political leaders like Prashant Kishor, I posted about this on X. I said that if I were voting in Bihar, I would vote for his party and, with a little exaggeration, said he was the most inspiring and important Indian leader I had met and that we need a hundred more like him.

What I did not expect is to touch a chord in the public square of social media. My tweet was viewed by more than 1,00,000 people, liked by nearly 2,000 and retweeted 500 times. There were also more than 500 comments and other than the usual 'go to Pakistan' jibes and complaints that I had no right to be a political columnist, I noticed that some of those who attacked me did it out of the fear that Kishor could be another Arvind Kejriwal. They said that they knew India needed a new kind of political leader, but were apprehensive of being let down once more.

This interested me. Personally, I always saw Kejriwal as a fraud and never supported his antics or his politics. I happened to be in Varanasi when he gave up his job as Delhi's Chief Minister to come and challenge Narendra Modi for the top job. I saw it as dangerous narcissism rather than concern for the people. He sat totally ignored under a banyan tree on Assi Ghat and that is where I spotted him for the first time since the drama in Ramliha Maidan, all those years ago, when he stole Anna Hazare's movement against corruption and became its hero. He was, in my view, always megalomaniacal to a scary degree. Men like him do not put in the long years and hard work needed to become a real leader.

It is only real leaders with a genuine interest in understanding the problems ordinary Indians face who do this. Prashant Kishor has shown not just that he can put in the hard work, but also that he has a genuine interest in helping India become a better country. On his rural travels in one of our poorest states, he would have seen the horrific conditions in which ordinary people live. He would have seen the broken-down schools like the one that collapsed in Jhalawar, burying small children in its debris. There are schools like that all over rural India.

There are health centres that have been turned into cowsheds and rural hospitals with filthy wards and stray dogs wandering through them. He would have seen the hovels in which poorer people are forced to live. He would have seen that despite all this, they continue to hope that one day a leader will come who will bring real change into their lives.

Change can come only when we start electing better leaders. It came for a while in Narendra Modi's first months as prime minister. There was the Swachh Bharat campaign that transformed rural sanitation and the building of rural roads, but then these efforts got dwarfed by the Hindutva cultural revolution. The building of temples became more important than the building of the tools that help people living in extreme poverty escape from it.

Had our Opposition seized this opportunity to start recruiting better people into their ranks, they would today have been in a much better position to win elections. Instead of complaining ad nauseum about the Election Commission, they need to try and understand why they seem never to get their message through to voters. The problem with dynastic political parties is that they keep real leaders out as far as possible so that the heir never sees a threat to his authority. This is why 'potted plants' are truly the biggest threat to democracy.

On the  
LOOSE

LEHER KALA

leherkala@gmail.com



THE BOMBAY High Court acquitted all 12 accused in the 7/11 Mumbai train blasts case from 2006, when bombs ripped through the Western Suburban Railway, killing 189 people and injuring 800 others. A special bench of Justices Anil S Kilor and Shyam C Chandak observed that the prosecution "utterly failed" to prove their case. Their convictions were quashed and set aside. More embarrassingly for the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad, the court was scathing about the lapses in the investigation, noting, "Creating a false appearance of having solved a case by presenting that the accused have been brought to justice gives a mis-

# The end of an error

leading sense of resolution."

To put a time frame in perspective, one of the falsely accused in the Mumbai train blasts case was arrested when his daughter was six months old. He's been released when she's in college. Meanwhile, the actual perpetrators of this terrorist act roam free. The families of the victims must endure the frustration of being denied closure, yet again. This was a high-profile case with intense media scrutiny and public pressure. One naively believes the authorities would leave nothing to chance while zeroing in on the culprits. Which is what makes it so much more frightening that despite all that focussed attention, the wrong people were incarcerated. It sends shivers down one's spine to think how justice is arrived at in less important matters in India — and how

many people may be languishing in jails for crimes they didn't commit.

Some situations are too tragic to fully comprehend, but it's clear these men have been through a surreal, never-ending nightmare that's harder to process, because it's the state that's inflicted the damage. Their free-falling ordeal is eerily reminiscent of Franz Kafka's 1925 masterpiece *The Trial*, where a man stands accused of a crime he can't recollect and whose nature is never revealed to him. Unlike Kafka's ill-fated protagonist who's executed in an abandoned quarry, these men have survived, but it's not like life is going to be all peaches and cream going forward. Much like the terrorising bureaucracy in *The Trial* that wields absolute power over the condemned individual, these exonerated men have been dehu-

manised. Being marked in public memory means they'll be tested, over and over again. Labels like "terrorist" are tough to shake off. Resurrecting an identity and career, catching up on the changes in the world in two decades, presents considerable challenges.

Criminal justice failures capture our imaginations because they speak so profoundly to the human condition, to fundamental questions about punishment, ambition and ethics. Throughout history, in mythology and in reality, there have been people who couldn't get a fair trial. Think of Joseph in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New. Believers make sense of a bad hand by dividing the Universe into halves of heaven and hell. Contemplating karmic retribution and ancient Biblical proverbs, that declare a day of Judgment when an all-

knowing God will prevail, is one way of finding solace in a confusingly unjust world. Then there are those who imagine the Universe has a third layer, earth, that contains elements of both, beauty and terror.

Injustice is a recurring theme in philosophical inquiry and art-form. The beautifully executed *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) explores what it takes to keep hope alive when faced with a murder rap. The iconic line, *Get busy living or get busy dying* reflects stoicism; when life is spiralling out of control, all we can do is control our reaction to it. There are no satisfying answers to why so many innocent people are tossed around by twists in destiny. It's a sobering thought that everybody's more vulnerable when a morally bankrupt government is in charge.

The writer is director, Hutkay Films

## 14 THE WORLD

## TOP OF THE WORLD



People protest in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday. Reuters

## MALAYSIA

## Thousands rally against PM, call for resignation

**Kuala Lumpur:** Thousands of people rallied in the capital Saturday to demand the resignation of PM Anwar Ibrahim, as public discontent grows over rising living costs and allegations of failing to deliver promised reforms. Protesters - mostly wearing black t-shirts and bannanas carrying the slogan "Turun Anwar", or "Step Down Anwar" - marched through the heart of Kuala Lumpur. Police estimated at least 18,000 were in attendance. Anwar has faced criticism over measures aimed at boosting government revenue, including an expanded sales and services tax and subsidy adjustments that some fear could in consumer prices. **REUTERS**

## TUNISIA

## 'Open prison': People protest against President

**Tunis:** Hundreds of Tunisian activists protested in the capital on Friday against President Kais Saied, denouncing his rule as an "authoritarian regime" that has turned the country into an "open-air prison". Under the slogan "The Republic is a large prison," protesters marched along Habib Bourguiba Avenue. They demanded the release of jailed opposition leaders, journalists, and activists. The protest marked the fourth anniversary of Saied's power grab. In 2021, he dissolved the elected parliament and started ruling by decree, a move the opposition called a coup. **REUTERS**

## IRAN

## Gunmen kill at least 6, wound 20 in Sistan

**Tehran:** Unknown attackers launched a gun and grenade attack on a court building in southeast Iran Saturday, killing six people, including a child and wounding 20. The report said security forces killed three of the gunmen in the country's restive southern province of Sistan and Baluchestan. State TV said the attack happened in the province's capital city of Zahedan. Security forces immediately took control of the site, 1,130 kilometres or 700 miles southeast of the capital, Tehran. **AP**

## ASEAN CHAIR ANWAR IBRAHIM PUSHES FOR CEASEFIRE

## Trump says Thailand, Cambodia agree to hold immediate truce negotiations

## REUTERS

SISAKET, WASHINGTON, JULY 26

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump said on Saturday that the leaders of Cambodia and Thailand had agreed to meet immediately to quickly work out a ceasefire, as he sought to broker peace after three days of fighting along their border. In a series of social media posts during a visit to Scotland, Trump said he had spoken to Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet and Thailand's acting prime minister, Phumtham Wechayachai, and warned them that he would not make trade deals with either of the Southeast Asian governments if the border conflict continued.

"Both Parties are looking for an immediate Ceasefire and Peace," Trump wrote as he gave a blow-by-blow account of his diplomatic efforts.

Before Trump spoke to the two leaders, clashes on the Thai-Cambodian border persisted into a third day and new flashpoints emerged on Saturday as both sides said they had acted in self-defense in the border dispute and called on the other to cease fighting and start negotiations. More than 30 people have been killed and more than 130,000 people displaced in the worst fighting between the Southeast Asian neighbours in 13 years.

There were clashes early on Saturday, both sides said, in the neighbouring Thai coastal



Cambodians receive drinking water as they take refuge in a school in Oddar Meanchey province on Saturday. AP

province of Trat and Cambodia's Pursat Province, a new front more than 100 km (60 miles) from other conflict points along the long-contested border.

The two countries have faced off since the killing of a Cambodian soldier late in May during a brief skirmish.

As of Saturday, Thailand said seven soldiers and 13 civilians had been killed in the clashes, while in

Cambodia five soldiers and eight civilians had been killed, said Defense Ministry spokesperson Maly Socheata.

Following calls for restraint on both sides from Trump's senior aides, he became directly involved on Saturday, speaking to each leader and saying he relayed messages back and forth. "They have agreed to immediately meet and quickly work out a Ceasefire and,

ultimately, PEACE!," Trump wrote, saying both countries wanted to get back to the "Trading Table." He has sought to reach separate deals with dozens of countries in response to his announcement of wide-ranging tariffs.

In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, the chair of the ASEAN regional bloc, said he would continue to push a ceasefire proposal.

Cambodia has backed Anwar's plan, while Thailand has said it agreed with it in principle.

"There is still some exchange of fire," Anwar said, according to state news agency Bernama. He said he had asked his foreign minister "to liaise with the respective foreign ministries and, if possible, I will continue engaging with them myself - at least to halt the fighting".

## 54 children, 30 adults swim from Morocco to Spanish enclave

## REUTERS

MADRID, JULY 26

AT LEAST 54 children and about 30 adults swam from Morocco to Spain's North African enclave of Ceuta in rough seas and fog, Spanish television reported on Saturday. Video footage on Spanish television channel RTVE showed Civil Guard launches making repeated rescue attempts to bring some of the swimmers to safety, while others swam across to the enclave.

The children, who were mostly Moroccan, were taken to temporary centres in Ceuta, where authorities called for help from the central government in dealing with the latest arrivals.

"Don't leave us alone. This is a matter of state. This has to be resolved," Juan Rivas of the Ceuta regional government told reporters on Saturday. On August 26 last year, hundreds of migrants took advantage of a thick mist to swim to Ceuta from neighbouring Morocco, local police said. In 2021, one boy was seen floating on empty plastic bottles in his attempt to reach Ceuta.

Spain's two enclaves on Morocco's Mediterranean coast, Ceuta and Melilla, share the European Union's only land borders with Africa. The enclaves sporadically experience waves of attempted crossings by migrants trying to reach Europe. Moroccan nationals detained during the crossings are immediately sent back to Morocco unless they are underage or seeking asylum.

## Taiwan's move to oust lawmakers from 'China-friendly' Opposition party fails

## YIMOU LEE

TAIPEI, JULY 26

TAIWAN OPPOSITION lawmakers survived a major recall election on Saturday, thwarting a bid to oust one-fifth of the island's parliamentarians - a move supporters had hoped would send a message to China but that opponents said was an assault on democracy.

All recall votes against 24 lawmakers from the largest opposition party, the Kuomintang (KMT), were rejected, according to live vote counts by Taiwanese media. The election result will come as a blow to President Lai Ching-te's Democratic Progressive Party, which has missed an opportunity to reshape the Taiwan legislature and regain its majority. The government said the island's largest-ever recall vote had faced "unprecedented" election interference by China,



People react as votes are counted in Taipei on Saturday. AP

which claims the democratically governed island as its own - a claim Taiwan rejects.

While Lai won last year's presidential election, the DPP lost its legislative majority. The opposition has flexed its muscles since then to pass laws the government has opposed and impose budget cuts.

KMT Chairman Eric Chu thanked Taiwan's voters and called for Lai to apologise and reflect on his own governance.

"One should not lose the elections and then call for malicious recalls. One should not seek for one-party dominance and destroy democracy," he said in Taipei. **REUTERS**

## EXPLAINED China's 'pressure' on Taiwan

China has intensified military and diplomatic pressure on Taiwan to assert its territorial claims, which President Lai has rejected. Despite Lai's has offered for dialogue, however, Beijing does not seem to be interested. China's Taiwan Affairs Office and state media have echoed opposition talking points to criticise President Lai. Taipei accuses Beijing of interference in its democratic processes, emphasising that decisions about leadership should rest solely with Taiwan and its people.

## Trump golfs in Scotland as Epstein questions persist

## ANDREA SHALAL

EDINBURGH, JULY 26

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump kept a low profile on his Scottish golf course on Saturday, ahead of meetings with top British and European leaders, as questions swirled at home about his ties to disgraced financier and sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Trump arrived in Scotland on Friday, with hundreds of people on hand to watch the arrival in Glasgow of Air Force One, the



US President Donald Trump at Trump Turnberry resort on Saturday. Reuters

presidential aircraft. He told reporters that he will

visit his two golf properties in Scotland - one in Turnberry on the west coast where he is playing on Saturday and the other near Aberdeen. He is also due to meet British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Scottish leader John Swinney and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, whom he called a "highly respected woman".

Frustrated by continued questions about his administration's handling of investigative files related to Epstein's criminal charges and his 2019 death in prison,

Trump told reporters to focus on bigger issues and other people.

"You make it a very big thing over something that's not a big thing," Trump said. "Don't talk about Trump. What you should be talking about is the fact that we have the greatest six months in the history of a presidency."

Trump was spotted on the golf course Saturday morning, but had no public events in his schedule. Protests were expected in Aberdeen and Edinburgh, hundreds of miles away. **REUTERS**



People mourn the death of Palestinians in Israeli strikes near an aid distribution site in Gaza on Saturday. Reuters

## Israeli gunshots, strikes kill at least 25 in Gaza, some while seeking aid

## WAFAA SHURAF

GAZA STRIP, JULY 26

Israeli airstrikes and gunshots overnight killed at least 25 people, according to Palestinian health officials and the ambulance service on Saturday, as ceasefire talks appear to have stalled and Gaza faces famine.

The majority of victims were killed by gunfire as they waited for aid trucks close to the Zikim crossing with Israel, said staff at Shifa hospital, where the bodies were brought. Israel's army didn't respond to a request for comments about the latest shootings.

Those killed in strikes include four people in an apartment building in Gaza City, among others, hospital staff and the ambulance service said.

The strikes come as ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas have hit a standstill after the US and Israel recalled their negotiating teams on Thursday, throwing the future of the talks into further uncertainty.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Friday his government was considering "alternative options" to ceasefire talks with Hamas. His comments came as a Hamas official said negotiations were expected to resume next week and portrayed the recall of the Israeli and American delegations as a pressure tactic.

Egypt and Qatar, which are mediating the talks alongside the United States, said the pause was only temporary and that talks would resume, though they did not say when.

For desperate Palestinians, a ceasefire can't come soon enough. The United Nations and experts say that Palestinians in Gaza are at risk of famine, with reports of increasing numbers of people dying from causes related to malnutrition. While Israel's army says it's allowing aid into the enclave with no limit on the number of trucks that can enter, the UN says it is hampered by Israeli military restrictions on its movements and incidents of criminal looting. **AP**

## CAPTURED TWO VILLAGES, SAYS MOSCOW

## Ukraine: Long-range drones hit electronic warfare plant in Russia

## REUTERS

KYIV, JULY 26

UKRAINIAN DRONES hit a radio and electronic warfare equipment plant in Russia's Stavropol region in an overnight attack on Saturday, an official from the SBU security service told Reuters.

The official said two facilities at the Signal plant in the city of Stavropol, about 540 km (335 miles) from the Ukrainian border, were damaged in the attacks. He shared several short videos showing an explosion and smoke.

He said the plant was one of Russia's leading producers of electronic warfare equipment, including radar, radio navigation equipment, and remote control radio equipment.

Meanwhile, Russia's Defence Ministry said on Saturday its forces had captured two villages in eastern Ukraine: Zelenyi Hai in the Donetsk region and Malivka in the Dnipropetrovsk region.

## Pope, Russian Church official discuss war

**Vatican City:** Pope Leo discussed the war in Ukraine Saturday with Metropolitan Anthony, a senior cleric in the Russian Orthodox Church, in a possible effort to ease ties between the churches strained by Russia's invasion.

Leo saw Anthony, chairman of the department of external church relations, and five other high-profile clerics during an audience in the morning, the Vatican said. "During the conversation, numerous issues were raised concerning the state of Orthodox-Catholic dialogue, as well as the ongoing conflicts in the world, including in Ukraine and the Middle East," the Russian Orthodox Church said in a statement.

The head of Russia's Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, has been an enthusiastic backer of the invasion of Ukraine. **REUTERS**

## HE CHARGED ONTO THE SCENE WITH IRREVERENT SATIRE, UNFLINCHING POLITICAL CRITIQUE AND JAZZ-INFLECTED SCORES

## Ziad Rahbani, Lebanese composer, playwright and son of icon Fayrouz, dies at 69

## SALLY ABOU ALJOUD

BEIRUT, JULY 26

ZIAD RAHBANI, a visionary Lebanese composer, playwright, pianist and political provocateur, died on Saturday, at the age of 69, according to the state-run National News Agency. The cause of death was not clear.

Born in 1956 in Antelias, near Beirut, Ziad was the eldest son of legendary Lebanese singer Fayrouz and late composer Assi Rahbani, one half of the famed Rahbani Brothers. From a young age, he showed signs of prodigious talent, composing his first musical work at just 17 years old.

Raised among artistic royalty, his world was steeped in music, theater, and political consciousness - a combination that would define his life's work.

His mother, considered to be the most famous and esteemed performer in the Arab world, performed some of his compositions at her sellout concerts, blending Lebanese folklore with Western syncopation and phrasing.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun mourned Rahbani's death as a national loss, describing him as "not just an artist, but a complete intellectual and cultural phenomenon." In a statement, Aoun praised Rahbani as "a living conscience, a rebellious voice

against injustice, and an honest mirror reflecting the suffering and marginalized."

"Ziad was a natural extension of the Rahbani family, which gave Lebanon much beauty and dignity," the president added.

Rahbani charged onto the scene with irreverent satire, unflinching political critique and jazz-inflected scores that mirrored the chaos and contradictions of a Lebanon at war with itself.

"I admire the music of composers like Charlie Parker, Stan Getz and Dizzy Gillespie," he once said. "But my music is not Western, it's Lebanese, with a different way of expression."

Rahbani's music reflected the



A leftist Greek Orthodox, Rahbani also wrote radio shows that mocked the sectarian divisions of his country. Reuters

hybrid heritage of Lebanon, which until the civil war erupted in 1975 was a cultural melting pot where East met West.

But it was also deeply rooted in the traumatic events of the sectarian strife, the bloody street battles between rival militias and three years of violent Israeli occupation after the 1982 invasion.

His breakout play, Nazl el-Sourour (Happiness Hotel), premiered in 1974 when he was only 17 and portrayed a society disfigured by class inequality and repression.

The tragicomic narrative follows a group of workers who hijack a restaurant to demand their

rights, only to be dismissed by the political elite. With this bold debut, Rahbani revealed his enduring theme: that Lebanese society was fractured not only by war but by entrenched power.

A leftist Greek Orthodox, Rahbani also wrote plays and satirical radio shows centered on his violent environment that mock the sectarian divisions of his country.

Prime Minister Nawaf Salam also mourned Rahbani's loss, describing him as "an exceptional and creative artist—a free voice who remained true to the values of justice and dignity."

More than just a playwright, Rahbani was a composer of stag-

gering range. He infused traditional Arabic melodies with jazz, funk and classical influences, creating a hybrid sound that became instantly recognizable. His live performances were legendary, whether playing piano in smoky clubs in Hamra, one of Beirut's major commercial districts that harbors a multifaceted identity, or orchestrating large-scale productions.

Rahbani came under fire from Arab traditionalists for his pioneering efforts to bridge the gap between Arab and Western culture with music.

Rahbani is survived by his mother, Fayrouz, now 90, his sister Reema and brother Hali. **AP**

# 15 ECONOMY

## US WANTS INDIA TO DROP CURBS ON GENETICALLY MODIFIED AGRI ITEMS

# ‘India unlikely to agree to genetically modified agri items’ import in US deal’

**RAVI DUTTA MISHRA**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

DURING THE ongoing trade negotiations, India is unlikely to agree to US demands to accept genetically modified (GM) agri-cultural products such as corn and soya, a source closely monitoring the talks has indicated.

“Some things are matters of principle. We can’t import GM,” the source said in response to a query over the government’s position on GM imports from the US.

This assumes significance since agriculture remains one of the contentious issues between the two countries, and the United States Trade Representative (USTR) has previously flagged restrictions on its GM products by India as discriminatory.

“The Food Safety and Standards Act of 2006 includes specific provisions for regulating food products derived from genetically engineered (GE) sources; however, as of December 31, 2024, the FSSAI was still in the process of establishing its regulations. India’s biotechnology approval processes are slow, opaque, and subject to political influences, and do not appear to take into account science-based approval processes for GE products in exporting countries,” the USTR report had said.

While India is seeking greater market access for its textiles, leather and footwear, the US is

### BRIEFLY

**Kotak Bank profit down 47.5% to ₹3,281 crore**

*Mumbai:* Kotak Mahindra Bank reported a drop in first-quarter profit on Saturday, as it set aside more funds for potential bad loans and saw a contraction in lending margins. Its standalone net profit fell 47.5 per cent to Rs 3,281 crore for the Q1 FY25, down from year-earlier Rs 6,250 crore, which included a Rs 2,730 crore gain on a stake sale of its insurance unit to Zurich Insurance. **REUTERS**

**FADA seeks RBI intervention against pvt banks**

*Mumbai:* In a letter to Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) also called for a review of private banks’ repo-rate pass-through lags in the auto-loan portfolio and issue corrective directives to ensure uniform 100 per cent transmission to auto borrowers. **PTI**

**IndusInd Bank oversight panel’s tenure extended by a month**

*New Delhi:* THE RBI has extended the tenure of the oversight committee of IndusInd Bank by one month till August 28 as the lender finds its new MD and CEO after the resignation of Sumant Kathpalia. The panel was formed after Kathpalia resigned on April 29 taking moral responsibility of accounting lapses in the derivatives portfolio, having financial implication of Rs 1,960 crore to the bank. The tenure of the committee was till July 28, 2025.

“We now wish to inform that the RBI vide its letter dated July 25, 2025, has granted its approval for extension of tenure of the Committee of Executives for a further period of one month, which will effect from July 29, 2025 upto August 28, 2025 or until the new MD&CEO is appointed and assumes charge, whichever is earlier,” the bank said in a regulatory filing on Friday.

IndusInd Bank in a separate filing said its Chief HR Officer Zubin Mody has resigned to pursue new opportunities. **PTI**

### RESISTANCE TO GM CROPS

■ **There is significant resistance towards genetically modified crops in India. Only one GM crop — Bt cotton — is approved for cultivation. No GM food crop is commercially grown, although experimental trials continue**

pushing for access to India’s agricultural and dairy markets — a major hurdle, as Indian farmers often operate on small land parcels with limited technological support. In contrast, the US has demanded that India should drop its GM regulation.

There is significant resistance to genetically modified (GM) crops in India. Only one GM crop — Bt cotton — is approved for cultivation. No GM food crop is commercially grown, although experimental trials continue. However, imports of GM soybean oil and canola oil are permitted.

A 2013 report by the European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility (ENSSEr) emphasised that many studies deeming GM foods safe were industry-funded, and that long-term, independent studies were lacking.

New Delhi-based think tank GTRI said: “Environmental studies have shown that widespread

use of Bt crops can lead to pest resistance, such as in the pink bollworm, and pose risks to non-target species such as monarch butterflies, as suggested in a 1999 Nature study. Additionally, the overuse of glyphosate with herbicide-tolerant GM crops has led to ‘superweeds’ and increased herbicide use.”

The GTRI said that GM and non-GM crops may intermingle at various stages of the supply chain — during transport, storage or processing. “Once GM material enters, there is a high risk it could leak into local farming systems or processed food chains, posing risks to food safety, environmental integrity, and India’s export reputation — especially in GM-sensitive markets such as the EU,” the think tank warned.

It said the import of GM products, such as animal feed, could negatively affect India’s agricultural exports to the EU, which enforces strict GM-labelling rules and faces strong consumer opposition to GM-linked products.

Although GM feed is permitted, many European buyers prefer fully GM-free supply chains. India’s fragmented agri-logistics and lack of segregation infrastructure increase the likelihood of cross-contamination and trace GM presence in export consignments. This could result in shipment rejections, higher testing costs, and erosion of India’s GM-free image, particularly in sectors such as rice, tea, honey, spices and organic foods, the GTRI said.

## ‘India stuck to TRIPS and domestic law in UK deal’

**RAVIDUTTA MISHRA**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

INDIA HAS not gone beyond the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement or domestic law in the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)-related deal with the UK, a senior government official said on Saturday. This comes after trade experts raised concerns stating that India had moved away from its conventional position on IPR in the UK trade deal.

The ‘Working Group on Access to Medicines and Treatment’ and trade experts pointed out that the UK deal has provisions tilting in favour of patent holders since they bring the issuance of compulsory licences — a critical tool to ensure access to affordable life-saving medicines — under greater scrutiny and constraints.

“In the IPR chapter, India has not breached the TRIPS agreement and is in compliance with domestic law. Only best practices that do not infringe on domestic laws have been adopted. Sharing of information and several such elements are part of the deal,” the government official said.

The Working Group on Access to Medicines and Treatment is a network of patients, activists and professionals working towards ac-

cess to affordable medicines in India. It said the UK-India FTA provisions on patents tilt the balance in favour of the patent owner and undermine access to medicines.

“There is a progressive movement towards accepting the demands of FTA partners, which is systematically debasing the public interest safeguards available in the Indian Patents Act. Article 13.6, stating the understandings regarding TRIPS and public health measures, clearly places voluntary mechanisms such as voluntary licensing as the preferred and optimal route to promote access to medicines,” the working group said.

Biswajit Dhar, a trade policy expert with the Council for Social Development, said that the provisions in the UK deal favouring voluntary licences leave access to medicines in the hands of market forces and undermine the role of the government in facilitating access.

“Further, it also gives a clear signal to potential compulsory licence applicants that they are not welcome. Often, voluntary licences contain onerous conditions on the licensee and fail to bring sharp price reductions compared to compulsory licences,” Dhar said.

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**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

INDIA AND China are beginning to move towards more access and interactions that might help the economy, even as a sense of caution would have to be built in, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Saturday. She also underlined that maintaining growth is India’s top priority along with the need to be a dynamic player in global institutions and redefining its role in the global South, and having a friendly and attractive FDI policy to be able to get more and more investments.

When asked about the thaw in Indo-China relations at the launch of the book A World in Flux: India’s Economic Priorities with the recent relaxation of visa norms, Sitharaman said not just India but China has also shown interest in these interactions and one will have to “wait and see” how far it will go.

Citing the earlier restrictions of Press Note 3 that had put curbs on investments from China, which also affected some of the projects including those in the renewable energy sector, Sitharaman said there was lull during the tariff war between the US and China. But, now it has been felt by both India and China for the “need to have more access and a lot more interactions that could possibly open some windows”.

“And that’s not just from our

## UK’s duty concession on textiles is only half the battle won for India

**RAVI DUTTA MISHRA**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

ONE OF the key highlights for Indian industry under the India-UK trade deal signed on Thursday is the benefit extended to India’s labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, footwear, and gems and jewellery, which will now see tariff elimination compared to pre-deal rates ranging from 4 to 12 per cent.

However, tariff elimination under a trade deal does not always translate into export gains — particularly in advanced markets where competitors such as Vietnam, Bangladesh, and China already have secured supply chains and a well-established presence. Even with a tariff of 11.5 per cent on its products, China commands over 25 per cent of the UK’s total imports of ready-made garments (RMG).

The UK imports over \$5 billion worth of RMG annually from China alone, driven by its competitive advantage.

In contrast, India’s share in UK RMG imports currently stands at 6 per cent, despite a prevailing duty of 9 per cent in that segment. India exports RMG

**CRUDE WATCH**  
**OIL PRICES DROP OVER TRADE WAR**  
*New York:* Oil prices eased on Friday and settled at a three-week low. Brent crude futures fell 74 cents, or 1.1%, to settle at \$68.44, while US WTI crude fell 87 cents, or 1.3%, to settle at \$65.16. For the week, Brent was down about 1% with WTI down about 3%. **REUTERS**

## FM: As India, China mark a beginning, sense of caution would have to be built in



**Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks during a book launch in New Delhi on Saturday.**

side, even the Chinese have been approaching through the MEA. So, you had External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar go. There is something, some kind of a beginning, as to how much it will take us far; how far it will go is something we will have to wait and see. But it might help the economy; however much, a sense of caution would have to be built in,” she said.

Last week, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar travelled to China where he had underlined that “differences should not become disputes” nor should “competition ever become conflict” and that while India and China have made good progress in the past nine months towards the normalisation of bilateral relations, they should work to address de-escalation on the border.

India had earlier put restrictions on investments from China through Press Note 3 in April

2020 to curb potential opportunistic takeovers of Indian companies during the Covid-19 pandemic by making a government approval mandatory for all investments from countries sharing a land border with India, including China. It continued to be in force in the wake of national security concerns due to border tensions after the Galwan clash.

Enlisting India’s priorities, Sitharaman said growth is the topmost priority, and therefore, it will have an overlap with: do you create jobs, do you have that value addition,” she said. The second objective for India would be to be relevant on the global stage, she said. “Not just to be there in the leadership position but to be able to define how this move is going to take India forward along with the rest of the countries,” she said.

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### EXPLAINED Structural issues within India’s textile industry

EXPERTS HAVE pointed out structural issues within the Indian textile industry, such an inverted duty structure — where inputs or raw materials are taxed at a higher rate than finished products. This makes domestic products more expensive than imported ones

worth only \$1.2 billion to the UK and expects to increase outbound shipments by 30–40 per cent once the deal takes effect. But much would depend on competitiveness and not tariff concession alone. Several competitors in the UK market already enjoy zero-duty access and have entrenched supply chains. Bangladesh, for instance, holds a 20 per cent share of UK RMG imports and benefits from zero-duty access to the premium market due to its Least Developed Country (LDC) status.

### TARIFF CUTS ON WHISKY

## ‘Scotch unlikely to turn affordable by much for Indian consumers’

**AGGAM WALIA**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

SCOTCH MAY get cheaper, but don’t expect much relief at the liquor store. Tariffs on UK imports have been halved under the India-UK trade deal, but higher state-level taxes mean consumer prices may only dip 8–10 per cent, industry experts said. On the supply side, the reduction in customs duty by half to 75 per cent may boost margins for both British distillers and Indian producers who blend imported scotch with locally made whisky, they added.

“Customs duty typically accounts for around 20 per cent of the MRP across the country, while the bulk of taxes are imposed by the states. A reduction in duty by half could bring down consumer prices only by 8–10 per cent,” an industry representative said on condition of anonymity.

Under the trade deal, India will immediately reduce tariffs on scotch and blended whisky im-

cent duty with aggressive pricing,” Iyer said.

British scotch brands such as Chivas Regal, Ballantine’s, Glenlivet, Glenfiddich, and Johnnie Walker could become slightly more affordable. Whisky was the UK’s fifth-largest export product to India in FY25, valued at roughly \$260 million.

“Import duties contribute only a fraction of the final price, with state excise, logistics, and distributor margins forming a large share of consumer cost. From a market standpoint, the FTA is more likely to influence product availability and premiumisation than spark a sudden demand surge. UK whisky makers may use this as an opportunity to expand brand presence,” said Naveen Malpani, partner and consumer industry leader, Grant Thornton Bharat. Industry expert Vinod Giri said a brand like Black Label in Delhi, priced at around Rs 3,500, may only get Rs 200–300 cheaper if the entire duty cut is passed on.

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## CETA could make Aston Martin, Mini cars up to 40% cheaper in India

**SOUMYARENDRA BARIK**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

BRITISH-MADE luxury cars from the stables of Aston Martin and Mini could get cheaper for Indians roughly between 25 per cent and 40 per cent after the new tariff structure of the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is implemented.

Under the pact, tariffs on imports of internal combustion engine (ICE) cars will be slashed to 30–50 per cent in the first year of implementation, with the benefit limited to a quota of 20,000 cars. The tariffs will be cut gradually, and after 15 years, they will become 10 per cent, with a set quota of 15,000 units. For out-of-quota imports of ICE cars, the duties are cut to 60–95 per cent in the first year, and further to 45–50 per cent from the 10th year onwards.

In 2016, the rough CIF (cost, insurance and freight) value of the Mini Cooper S, the standard version of the popular hatchback,



**After 15 years, Indian tariffs on luxury car imports will be cut to 10 per cent, with the quota capped at 15 units.**

*Express File*

was \$17,682 when it was imported into India in October that year, according to data from a trade intelligence platform. In 2016, the car retailed for around \$23,000 in the US, suggesting a markup over its rough CIF of a little over \$5,000. In 2025, the car retails for around \$30,000 (Rs 26 lakh in 2025) there.

In India, the base version of the car starts from around Rs 45 lakh, since it incurs a duty of about 70 per cent, or Rs 13.5 lakh. Based on

these figures, the rough CIF of the Mini Cooper imported into India currently could be around Rs 21 lakh (\$24,000).

So, when the CETA tariff rates kick in, the duty on the Mini Cooper could go down from the current 70 per cent to between 30–50 per cent. At 30 per cent, the car could cost Rs 27.3 lakh, down from the current Rs 45 lakh, a saving of nearly 40 per cent. At 50 per cent, the car could cost Rs 31.5 lakh. These are the initial rates, and

prices could fall further in subsequent years.

Similarly, in 2016, an Aston Martin Vanquish was imported in India at a CIF value of \$214,607, as per data available with the trade platform, and in that year, the car retailed for around \$290,000. Adjusting for currency changes and some inflation, the car’s current CIF value could be around \$320,000 (Rs 2.8 crore).

Currently, the car retails in India for Rs 8.85 crore, and it is understood to attract at least 100 per cent in customs duty, worth around Rs 4.5 crore. A duty cut to 50 per cent could lower the car’s sticker price to Rs 6.7 crore, down 24 per cent from current rates.

It needs to be noted that these rough calculations do not account for fluctuations in demand or production costs, company markup, currency differentials and inflation. Aston Martin and BMW (the parent company of Mini) did not respond to an immediate request for comment.

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# From zero for 2... to two heroes

Captain Shubman Gill’s tenacity, KL Rahul’s technique to the fore as duo stitches unbeaten partnership of 174 to revive India’s hopes of saving the 4th Test



EXPRESS IN ENGLAND

SANDEEP DWIVEDI  
MANCHESTER, JULY 26

A FEW days back, Indian captain Shubman Gill was asked about the one thing about the new job that surprised him. He would smile and say that he doesn’t get tired much as he mostly fields around the pitch but he does get mentally drained at the end of the day.

So, after leading his deflated side for 157.1 overs, handling a bowling unit not sticking to plans and battling thoughts of a hard-fought series slipping, Shubman would have been mentally knackered. And just as he would have put his leg up in the dressing room, he had to rush back on to the field. The score was 0/2, Chris Woakes was on a hat-trick, opener Yashasvi Jaiswal and No.3 Sai Sudharsan were back in the hut.

After the worst couple of days of his captaincy, Gill was facing the toughest as skipper. It helped he had with him the calmest mind who was playing the tightest cricket on the tour, KL Rahul. In a partnership of epic proportions, Shubman and Rahul compiled an unbeaten 174, also India’s total at stumps to revive a Test that looked lost and a series that seemed over.

Trailing by 311 runs and 0/2, the Test seemed irredeemable. Most teams would have given up, most captains would have thrown in the towel but not this one. After playing for two full sessions, facing 317 balls, Shubman (78) and Rahul (87) have given hope when all seemed lost. This is shaping into a partnership that can be compared to the Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman partnership of 2001.

There are just two possible results — ‘the more likely’ England win and after the solid Rahul-Shubman show, the ‘not quite impossible’ India draw. Rains are expected on the final day of the Test but so will be an overcast sky. Rahul with his methodical play and Test match technique could be expected to play controlled cricket but Shubman’s innings came as a refreshing surprise for its sheer tenacity — a rare virtue in Indian cricket.

### Fighting an individual battle

After spending every ounce of his energy trying to figure out ways to get the English batsmen out for the team, Shubman now with a bat in hand had to fight an individual battle. In the last three innings — twice at Lord’s and in the first innings here — he has gotten out trying to dead-bat or leave the balls coming into him.

In the first innings, Stokes had bowled the same line and length, Shubman had shouldered arms to a ball that DRS showed was hitting his stumps.

This has been an old Shubman problem and England has been repeatedly exploiting it. Woakes and Jofra Archer both would test the Indian captain with good-length balls on the off-stump with a few surprise yorkers thrown in for variety. Shubman would be tentative initially — not sure to take the stride forward to meet the ball or leave it. This must have been the most harrowing time for the Indian dressing room. A ball a millimeter close or the bat a shade closer to the ball would result in an edge flying behind the stumps. That was how close India was from losing a series.

From both ends, England would attack Shubman with a barrage of nipbackers. Woakes with the talent of moving the ball in the air and Archer with the ability to make the ball come in sharply, seemed close to wickets and were difficult to deal with. An early end to the game, an innings defeat to India on Day 4 seemed like the most predictable outcome.

In Archer’s second over, there were a couple of big appeals. First, a late swinger would hit Gill on his boot, once again not sure about the stride forward. The skipper would survive

## SCORECARD

ENGLAND vs INDIA  
OLD TRAFFORD  
Toss: England, chose to bowl

<b>INDIA (1st innings)</b>	<b>358</b>
<b>ENGLAND (1st innings, o/n)</b>	<b>544/7</b>
<b>B Stokes (c) c Sudharsan b Jadeja</b>	<b>141</b> (198b, 11x4, 3x6)
<b>J Smith † c (sub) Jurel b Bumrah</b>	<b>9</b> (19b, 1x4)
<b>L Dawson b Bumrah</b>	<b>26</b> (65b, 3x4)
<b>C Woakes b Siraj</b>	<b>4</b> (17b)
<b>B Carse c Siraj b Jadeja</b>	<b>47</b> (54b, 3x4, 2x6)
<b>J Archer not out</b>	<b>2</b> (3b)
<b>■ Extras</b> (b8, lb15, nb14, w1)	<b>38</b>
<b>■ Total</b> (157.1 overs)	<b>669</b>
<b>■ FoW:</b> 1-166 (Zak Crawley, 31.6 ov), 2-197 (Ben Duckett, 38.1 ov), 3-341 (Ollie Pope, 76.1 ov), 4-349 (Harry Brook, 80.1 ov), 4-491* (Ben Stokes, retired not out), 5-499 (Joe Root, 119.2 ov), 6-515 (Jamie Smith, 124.1 ov), 7-528 (Chris Woakes, 129.1 ov), 8-563 (Liam Dawson, 139.3 ov), 9-658 (Ben Stokes, 155.3 ov), 10-669 (Brydon Carse, 157.1 ov)	
<b>■ Bowling:</b> Jasprit Bumrah 33-5-112-2, Anshul Kamboj 18-1-89-1, Mohammed Siraj 30-4-140-1, Shardul Thakur 11-0-55-0, Ravindra Jadeja 37.1-0-143-4, Washington Sundar 28-4-107-2	
<b>INDIA 2nd innings</b>	<b>174/2</b>
<b>Y Jaiswal c Root b Woakes</b>	<b>0</b> (4b)
<b>KL Rahul batting</b>	<b>87</b> (210b, 8x4)
<b>S Sudharsan c Brook b Woakes</b>	<b>0</b> (1b)
<b>Shubman Gill (c) batting</b>	<b>78</b> (167b, 10x4)
<b>■ Extras</b> (b4, nb 4, w1)	<b>9</b>
<b>■ Total</b> (63 overs)	<b>174/2</b>
<b>■ FoW:</b> 1-0 (Yashasvi Jaiswal, 0.4 ov), 2-0 (Sai Sudharsan, 0.5 ov)	
<b>■ Bowling:</b> Chris Woakes 15-3-48-2, Jofra Archer 11-2-40-0, Brydon Carse 10-2-29-0, Liam Dawson 22-8-36-0.	

### NUMBER PLATE

**174** KL Rahul and Shubman Gill marked the first Test instance of a 150+ partnership for the third wicket after the team lost the first two wickets on zero.

as even technology was inconclusive. In the same over there was another appeal, once again Shubman was beaten on the front foot, since the ball was moving in too sharply they would avoid taking the DRS.

It was in this crunch situation, while handling a personal and team crisis, that Shubman found a way to reset his batting technique, got hold of some spanner to tighten a few screws and grease some joints. Almost miraculously, he looked like a different batsman. There was the smooth transfer of weight and there was surety in his stride. This was a man refusing to give in, and a batsman who, when troubled, did not panic but delved deep in the recesses of the mind to find a way to survive.

He also started playing much straighter. There were a couple of straight drives - one off Woakes and the other off Carse - that went racing to the sight screen from both sides of the stumps.

On the second one, the graceful stroke-maker held his pose. This was a signal that he had dealt with that tough period of play. Luck too smiled on the brave captain. In a minor glitch in concentration, he would try to over-reach for a Carse ball in the channel. He would edge to Liam Dawson at point, the ball would hit his hand, but he couldn’t catch it.

While Shubman was dealing with his demons, Rahul was a picture of composure. He was playing close to the body, meeting the ball late and moving away from the short balls. After the outside the off-stump bowling didn’t give results, Stokes moved his troops on the other side of the field. For most of the final session, England bowled short balls on the body and placed four fielders square and behind the wicket. Rahul negated the ploy solidly. He wouldn’t go for the pull but would bring the ball down.

Now it was Stokes’ turn to get frustrated. Before the Ashes, Rahul and Shubman gave a masterclass to the team that always plays for results, on the art and skill to play out a riveting draw.



KL Rahul (L) and captain Shubman Gill steadied the ship after India were reduced to 0 for 2 in the first over of their second innings in Manchester. *PTI*

## Captain Stokes, the blue-collar miracle worker

SANDEEP DWIVEDI  
MANCHESTER, JULY 26

ENGLAND CAPTAIN Ben Stokes is said to have gotten his biggest leadership lesson from a Brad Pitt war movie. Fury is about a US Army officer taking on the Germans in World War II. In an iconic scene from the movie, Pitt, playing tank commander Don “Wardaddy” Collier, tells his men to retreat as he plans to guard the post alone. This was his way of telling them that the mission was too dangerous. After a moment of hesitation, every soldier lines up behind Pitt.

“I would never ask somebody to do something that I wasn’t prepared to do. Have you seen Fury? The bit for me that stands out is when he tells them all to leave and he’s just going to stand there and fight on his own,” Stokes had once told *The Times* cricket correspondent Michael Atherton.

This India-England series has been Stokes’s Fury. For an England captain, leading from the front means doing the dirtiest of jobs. Today morning, England needed to be cautiously aggressive. They wanted quick runs but they couldn’t afford to throw wickets. Overnight the home team was 544/7, leading by 176 runs. England wanted a lead of about 300 to bat out India from the game and put them under scoreboard pressure.

So who would take the lead? Who else but Stokes. The two Indian new-ball bowlers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj were much better today, the pitch too was showing life. But Stokes planned his assault well, it was easy to decide who he would take out. Siraj it would be. On his second ball of the day, Stokes would step out and drive through covers for a four.

The next Bumrah over he would get to play a couple of balls and move to the other end, where he would wait for Siraj’s second over. Once again on the second delivery, he got an over-pitched ball. Stokes would lean into it, go on his knees and blast it through covers. He held his pose as Old Trafford stood



Ben Stokes scored 141 in 198 balls as England took a 311-run lead. *PTI*

up and applauded. The Stokes show had commenced, the plan to score quickly, pile runs and put India into bat was on track. Here was a captain who would first draw the blueprint and also get into overalls to put in place the brick and mortar.

### Hands-on captain

In the first session Stokes would hit 5 fours and 3 sixes to compile a quick hundred. The hands-on captain had once again set the tone and others had followed. Liam Dawson (26, 4x3) and Brydon Carse 47 (4x3, 6x2) followed the path that their captain had shown and India close to lunch were trailing by 311 runs. In the first session, England had scored 115 runs in 22 overs. Once again the captain had run the hard yards.

It has been the same with the ball too. In

this series, he has bowled over 125 overs, surely not the most in his team. But he bowled the longest spells in the toughest conditions. At Lord’s on the final day, it was anybody’s game.

India was closing in on the total, England couldn’t afford to have bowled loose balls. It was a game Jofra Archer was returning to international cricket after a long break. Stokes was to take the role of a strike-bowler.

Once again England needed someone to strike the perfect balance — a bowler who can attack but not give away runs and also take wickets. It was in the second innings that Stokes bowled the most number of overs — 24. There were a couple of marathon spells in the heat of London. After one 9-over spell he bowled unchanged for 10 overs. He didn’t let off the pressure on India. In the first spell he

**The only player who can match Stokes’s charisma in this series is Rishabh Pant. The Indian wicket-keeper has shown in the series he too can change games by doing the dirtiest job in the most beautiful manner.**

got KL Rahul and there came another important strike at the right time.

When Ravindra Jadeja and Jasprit Bumrah seemed all set to pull off a miracle. There were many worried English faces around the ground. That’s when Stokes became the tank commander from Fury, took it upon himself to close the game. The English captain would dig deep and bang a ball short. Bumrah would try to pull and get out.

At Lord’s, Stokes bowled 24 overs in the second, after his 20 in the first. Old Trafford too hasn’t eased his load.

On the first day, he bowled 14 overs and 10 the next day. England needed to restrict India and Stokes’s 5 wickets went a long way in reducing them 583. A fiver and 100 in one Test, Stokes has been the hands-on captain in this crucial game.

For his Lord’s effort, Stokes would win praise from the rival camp. Siraj would say: “If you can learn from someone there is no shame, Ben Stokes bowled two spells of 10 overs each and hats off to him”. Even today after the England captain was leaving the field after his hundred, Siraj would run across and shake his hands.

The only player who can match Stokes’s charisma in this series is Rishabh Pant. The Indian wicket-keeper has shown in the series he too can change games by doing the dirtiest job in the most beautiful manner. Now that Pant is out, Stokes the Showman has the stage all to himself.

And the rest of the England cast is just repeating his moves.

## Asia Cup in UAE: India-Pakistan in same group, to clash on September 14

DEVENDRA PANDEY  
MUMBAI, JULY 26

THE BOARD of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will host the Asia Cup, to be played in T20 format, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from September 9 to 28. The marquee match between India and Pakistan — both placed in Group A — will be played on September 14. If the two sides advance to the Super 4s and win the rest of their matches, their next meeting will be in the final.

This will be the first match between India and Pakistan after the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, in which 26 civilians were killed. Subsequently, Operation Sindoor was conducted by the Indian armed forces against terror emanating from across the Pakistan border.

The two sides were slated to meet in the Women’s Asia Cup for emerging players last month. However, the BCCI withdrew from

the tournament in the aftermath of the terror attacks and the consequent escalation in hostilities.

The Indian cricket board even threatened the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) to shift their annual meeting from Dhaka to another country. It is learnt that they warned other countries not to attend the meeting in the Bangladeshi capital. However, with the BCCI officials and Sri Lanka Cricket chiefs attending the meeting through video conferencing earlier this week, the schedule for the September event was finalised.

Recently, a senior sports ministry official said the government will not stop India from playing against Pakistan in multi-nation tournaments.

Confirming the dates and the host nation for the Asia Cup, ACC president Mohsin Naqvi, also the Pakistan Cricket Board president, posted on X: “I am delighted to confirm the dates for the ACC Men’s Asia Cup 2025 in the UAE. The prestigious tournament



Suryakumar Yadav is set to captain India in the Asia Cup. *File*

**This will be the first match between India and Pakistan after the terrorist attack in Pahalgam, in which 26 civilians were killed.**

will take place from September 9th to 28th. We look forward to a spectacular display of cricket! The detailed schedule will be out soon. #Cricketwins”

With only seven months left until the next T20 World Cup iteration to be played in India and Sri Lanka, the continental tournament will return to the T20 format. The previous edition of the Asia Cup was played in the ODI format on the road to the 2023 Cricket World Cup, where India demolished hosts Sri Lanka to lift the title.

Naqvi said in a statement: “Hosting the

ACC Men’s T20 Asia Cup 2025 in the UAE allows fans from across Asia to come together in a setting that mirrors our region’s incredible diversity. When crowds gather to witness the tournament’s unforgettable clashes, it will be a great reminder of cricket’s power to build bridges.”

While the BCCI are the designated host, the tournament will be played in a neutral setting in the United Arab Emirates with eight teams in contention. Besides India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh the competition will comprise Hong Kong, UAE and Oman.

The last edition of the Asia Cup in 2023, too, was impacted by the India-Pakistan situation. With Pakistan hosting the tournament, India refused to travel across the border. The BCCI ensured that India played their matches in Sri Lanka. For the PCB, the event proved to be a damp squib as Pakistan failed to make it to the final and India won the title match against Sri Lanka in Colombo.

**Pakistan teams told not to travel to India**

*Mumbai:* The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has ordered that the country’s sports federations should not ‘commit to participate in any sporting event in India’. “In view of the current security situation, no national federation shall make any commitment or agreement regarding participation in sports events in India without prior permission from PSB,” the circular said, as per *Dawn*. The notification comes days after the Pakistan Hockey Federation informed the International Hockey Federation (FIH) that it will be ‘difficult’ for them to send a team to India for the Asia Cup next month because of ‘security concerns.’ **ENS**

## PGTI announces league; increases prize money



PGTI CEO Amandeep Johl (L) and president Kapil Dev announced the second half schedule and prize money for tournaments. *Praveen Khanna*

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

THE PROFESSIONAL Golf Tour of India (PGTI) CEO Amandeep Johl has said that talks are now ongoing for the forming of a golf league for professional golfers in the country. This development comes after the Indian Golf Premier League (IGPL), which is not affiliated with the PGTI, was announced earlier this year.

The PGTI held a press conference on Saturday to announce the prize money for the second half of the golf season in India, and onboarding new sponsors like Indian Oil and Amul to PGTI events. The premier golf body of India announced that there would be a minimum of 15 tournaments in the second half of the season from August to December with a total prize money of Rs 17 crores. This takes the total season's prize money to Rs 33 crores and does not include the Indian Open and the DP World India Championships. It was also announced that the prize money for the current season had risen by Rs 8 crores from last season.

The crowning event for the PGTI will be the DP World India Championships, where newly-minted Masters winner Rory McIlroy is set to headline the field at the Delhi Golf Club. With a prize purse of \$4 million, that event will be the richest ever golf event to be staged in India.

Johl also announced that India would host three NextGen events with prize money of Rs 20 lakh in Patna, Lucknow and Bhubaneswar.

The talks for a new league are ongoing as well, and PGTI CEO Johl said that the league would take place this year itself.

"We have got very good offers and in the next few weeks we will sign a deal. It will be the PGTI League and it will only be for professional players. The league has to be about pro golfers and can't have amateurs in it," Johl added.

### Franchise-based league

Johl also spoke about the format he envisaged for the league, saying it would be a franchise based model.

"In my opinion, it would be head-to-head games between players from different franchises. Can you imagine Gaganjit Bhullar playing Jeev Milkha Singh one-on-one? That's golf and that's what we're trying to do with the league," said Johl.

Also present at the press conference was PGTI president Kapil Dev. The former India captain said that his organisation had no issues with IGPL and praised the organisation for bringing more cash into the sport. He then said that his responsibility wasn't to take care of twenty top golfers but rather 250 golfers from the country.

"I think loyalty is very important. Like the cricket board has established themselves, we want to establish ourselves. This organisation looks after all professionals, not just a group of people," said the 1983-World Cup winning captain at the press conference.

## FIDE WOMEN'S WORLD CUP FINAL

# Queens await gambit

Opening game between Humpy and Divya could have swung either way, but ends in a 41-move draw

**MAYANK**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

IN WHAT was billed as the clash of generations between a 19-year-old Divya Deshmukh and a 38-year-old veteran Koneru Humpy in the all-Indian final of the FIDE Women's World Cup 2025 could best be described by Andrea Jeremiah's single, "Neither Yours Nor Mine." The game that could have swung either way, but eventually ended in a 41-move draw, and Divya will rue her missed chances with white pieces more than a relieved Humpy, who dodged a bullet against her young rival in the first leg of their Classical match in the Georgian coastal city of Batumi on Saturday.

Divya began with a central pawn push in the D-file (1... d4), an opening move she hadn't played the entire event, hoping to surprise Humpy. In response, Humpy advanced her D-file pawn to d5 and captured Divya's pawn after the teenager played c4 on her second move. When Divya replied to Humpy's second move (2... dxc4) with another central pawn push (3... c4), it became clear she wasn't playing for a tame draw.

Her third move was White's most ambitious move yet, aiming to gain a lot of space in the centre while attacking black's pawn at c4 with her bishop with a tempo.

Indian GM Abhijeet Kunte explained the reasoning behind players opting for this opening. "The opening is Queen's Gambit Accepted, which is quite popular and played when Black wants to play safe. White has some interesting aggressive options. The most important thing in these kinds of openings is that the players are tired," said Kunte during his commentary for ChessBase India.

"They've played continuously for almost 25 days, and normally by this point, they've exhausted all their fresh ideas. So, they have to rely on middle-game strategies with basic concepts to maintain tempo and momentum. Going into long theoretical variations at this stage of the tournament is always tough," he added.

Divya then developed both her knights, while Humpy pinned White's king with her dark-squared bishop (4... Bb4+) and brought out one of her knights. The teenager offered a pawn sacrifice to Humpy, but the veteran misplaced her light-squared bishop (7... Bb7?), handing Divya a slight edge on the



Koneru Humpy (L) and Divya Deshmukh ended the first game of Women's World Cup final in a stalemate. *Anna Shtourman/FIDE*

board.

Pravin Thipsay, the third Indian ever to earn the GM title, explained where Humpy went wrong in the opening. "Divya seemed very well-prepared in the opening. She not only played the Queen's Gambit but also offered another pawn. On the seventh move, Humpy should have probably taken the pawn as per theory," Thipsay told The Indian Express.

"Theoretical variations could have led to a roughly equal position if Black had taken the pawn on the seventh move. But Humpy decided against it and developed her bishop instead, leading to a complex position. It was clear both players were now out of their opening preparation, and Divya was slightly better," he explained.

### Divya's critical error

Venturing into uncharted territory, both players began making positional errors. Humpy's decision to retreat her knight (10... Nd6) instead of developing her other knight gave Divya a near-winning advantage by the

10th move. However, Divya failed to capitalise on Humpy's mistake, and her attempt to sacrifice her White knight instantly equalised the position, nullifying all her hard-earned advantage.

Just as the game seemed headed for a quiet draw, Humpy made a decisive mistake on the 13th move, shifting her king toward the kingside closer to her H-file rook. This once again tilted the position in Divya's favour. Yet, for the third time, Divya let the advantage slip, opting to exchange light-squared bishops along the B-file, a move that neutralised her edge. The correct idea was to activate White's queen, bringing the strongest piece into play.

Thipsay believes Divya's decision to exchange bishops was a critical error, as playing queen to e2 could have forced a quick loss for Humpy. "The most important moment came when Divya traded bishops and gave away all her advantage. Had she advanced her queen to e2, I believe a mating attack would have followed, likely leading to a quick defeat for Humpy," he said.

"It looked like a great escape after a risky battle as this game once again proves that Divya is quite well prepared, while Humpy tried to make over-the-board solutions, which perhaps may not be the best idea. Today, however, it worked, as Divya failed to find the best move on two key occasions."

In a roughly equal position, which was still vulnerable to one-move blunders in a double rook and queen endgame, Humpy attempted to force a draw via threefold repetition. But Divya, to everyone's surprise, declined the draw offer with less than a minute on her clock, still looking to play for a win. However, it was Humpy's superior time management that prevailed in the end as she soon secured the draw through the same threefold repetition.

With White pieces on Sunday, Humpy will now look to impose her presence in this clash. But Divya, in her current form, looks quite ready to rise to any challenge.

Meanwhile, the third-place match between Chinese players Lei Tingjie and Tan Zhongyi also ended in a draw.

## BRIEFLY

### Meena betters his own NR in pole vault

**Rhine-Ruhr:** **Dev Kumar Meena** bettered his own pole vault national record with an effort of 5.40m to qualify for the final round at World University Games. Meena finished fifth in the Group A qualification round and sixth overall as he bettered his earlier national record of 5.35m set in April in Kochi during the Federation Cup by 0.05m. He faltered in his first attempt when the bar was raised to 5.40m but successfully cleared the national record height in his second attempt. This was the third time Meena had broken the national record this year. Earlier, he won gold at the National Games with the then national record height of 5.32m. **ENS**



### Nagal loses in semis of Tampere Open

**Tampere:** Indian tennis player Sumit Nagal missed on his first Challenger-level final of the season after going down fighting against Sasha Guemard Wayenburg in the semifinals of the Tampere Open, on Saturday. Ranked 306, Nagal lost 5-7 2-6 to his French rival, placed 57 places below him, in the clay court event. Nagal matched his best show of the 2025 season as he had finished a semifinalist in an event in Italy early this month. **PTI**

### Sathiyam-Akash win title at WTT Lagos

**Lagos:** India's Sathiyam Gnanasekaran and Akash Pal won the men's doubles title beating French pair of Leo De Nodrest and Jules Rolland in straight games in just under 22 minutes at the WTT Contender event here on Saturday. The Indian pair brushed aside the challenge from the French in quick time winning 11-9, 11-4, 11-9. The Indian pair dominated the summit clash from start to finish winning 19 points on their own service and another 14 on the opposition serve. In Women's singles Sreeja Akula went down 1-4 to second seed Honoka Hashimoto in a 48-minute battle. **PTI**

# Tanvi and Vennala win bronze medals with a silver lining



Tanvi Sharma (L) and Vennala Kalagotla created history at Asian Junior C'ships. *BAI/File Photo*

tamed in the 21-15, 21-18 loss, but Vennala made a match of it saving three match points and showing solid prospects with her surprisingly combative game this week.

Partnering Annmol Kharb in doubles when she won the Krishna Khaitan event, Vennala

is a daughter of a Railways ticket collector, also a ball badminton player.

The team sport, quite popular in the south of India and mighty fun to play, has some seriously good athletes in southern Railways teams, and Vennala along with her brother, were packed off to shuttle badminton that has consolidated as a culture in Hyderabad's sports clubs. She started at 8, and moved to Pullala Gopichand Academy subsequently.

"I was bored sitting at home, so we were packed off to play badminton 800 metres from my Railway colony home. My father wants us to win at the Olympics. I play doubles too but focus is on singles," she said. "It's my first medal in internationals but I could have played better," she says.

The Chinese turn up at their best at the Asian Juniors, and Vennala said she realised she ought to have pushed a gear in the semis. "After the match I realised I should have played faster and more aggressive."

Determined to keep the shuttle in play, she had told herself not to try any adventurous strokes.

She candidly says she's not big on academics. "I think studies are a big burden, but I love playing other sports - swimming, TT, and painting."

For Tanvi, who trains at the National Centre in Guwahati, it was an amazing run till the semis, where far too many unforced errors brought about a 21-13, 21-14 loss to another Chinese Yin Yi Qing. A 6-1 lead in the second set was not enough to hold off the opponent, a former World Juniors silver medalist with good smashes and net deceptions. "It's great to win a medal after 13 years at Asian. I played well but made quite a few unforced errors."

### Sporty background

The two Indians are similar not just in winning bronzes, but their sporty background too. While Tanvi's mother is a volleyball player, Vennala's father aced ball badminton. "It's a different sport, team sport, but has some similar strokes. It helps to have an athlete parent, because they understand the pressure and don't scold."

You become sporty and stay confident even if you lose unexpectedly," Vennala said, while Tanvi added, "We get motivated to give our best watching them."

While Tanvi reckons Vennala's defense and aggressive smashes are particularly piercing, the taller shuttler says, "I love Tanvi's forehand cross drops and half smashes. But she gets disappointed easily if she loses a few points in a row. My advice to her will be to keep chin up," she says.

Facing the Chinese can be a daunting experience, but the Indians have their own takeaways from the Asian semis. "It's my first semis so I was overwhelmed. But it wasn't as tough as I expected," Tanvi said.

"We just fear their name, but they are OK only. Yes physically I thought I was weaker, so I will focus on it." For Vennala, the opponent was temperamentally sturdy. "I think they are just strong by mind. They win on mental strength," she said.

Both Tanvi and Vennala were looking forward to celebrating bronze with one cheat meal. "Ice cream!" they chorused.

## CHINA OPEN SUPER 1000

# Satwik-Chirag haunted by familiar foes again, lose in semifinal

**VINAYAKK MOHANARANGAN**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 26

IN THEIR rivalry that stretches back to TATA Open India International Challenge in 2017, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty briefly found a window where it appeared they had found the solutions against Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik. After going 0-8 in their first meetings, Satwik-Chirag won three in a row in a stretch between Indonesia Open 2023 and India Open 2024.

But now, with their 13-21 17-21 defeat in 42 minutes on Saturday at Changzhou Sports Center Gymnasium in the semifinal of China Open Super 1000, Satwik-Chirag have lost thrice in a row against the world No 2 from Malaysia. It appears once more that the pair that tormented them for so long, are back to being their nemeses, especially considering the heartbreak that Chia and Soh gave at the Paris Olympics last year.

While the China Open reversal comes at a juncture where the Indians are still trying to rebuild their game, the caveat being that they are not at their 100% yet after all the off-court niggles they have had to deal with, the manner of the defeat should be a matter of concern.

At the Olympics last August and in the Singapore Open semifinal earlier this year, SatChi took the opening game and went on

to lose in three – and the contest was dead even for the most part, the margins fine. But in Changzhou, Chia-Soh outplayed the Indians for large parts, except a brief period in Game 2 where Satwik-Chirag drew level from 12-16 to 16-16.

### Missed Chances

"We had our chances, especially in the second game," Chirag would tell BWF later, but he too was aware they didn't do enough. "But (overall we) were not playing the right game. We were playing strokes which we shouldn't have, hitting more on Aaron and I think that's what took the game away from us. When we started playing smarter at 12-16, we came back at 16-16. A good tournament for us, but sad that we had to go out this way."

Chirag added that they were too late to realise the mistakes they were doing and in a discipline as fast and furious as men's doubles, where rallies rarely develop out of the first 3-4 shots after service-return, such lethargy can prove mighty costly.

"We should have played a little more tactically. We had planned it, but we didn't execute it as well. I think it will take some time. We are still not at 100% as yet. We still need to get these matches; we can't be as sloppy."

The reunion with Malaysian coach Tan Kim Her – the man who responsible for con-



Chirag (L) and Satwik lost their fourth semifinal of the season. *BWF/Badminton photo*

vincing Satwik and Chirag during their early uncertain days – hasn't quite brought silverware yet. But the Malaysian men's doubles pairs have been boosted by the arrival of new national coach Herry IP, the legendary

Indonesian nicknamed Fire Dragon. The impact, especially on Chia-Soh, has been immediate and immense, as he has overseen the former world champions winning three titles already this year, including the notori-

ously difficult Badminton Asia Championships.

Chia-Soh are already a pedigreed duo but Herry has brought about a relentlessness to their game. Their flat attacking game was always their biggest strength but in the past they have shown a tendency to ditch their Plan A and resort to defensive lifts if they were under pressure – Herry seems to have drilled that out of them, and they rarely gave Satwik-Chirag the chances to go on their attacks.

And when the Indians did find the height or time to launch their smashes, Soh and especially Chia were sensational on defence, extending rallies they had no business extending, and forcing the Indians into unforced errors, of which there were many especially in the opening game when Satwik and Chirag mishit quite a few shots under drifty conditions.

It isn't a cause of alarm, not yet. But at some point, Satwik-Chirag would have to find more consistent solutions to the flat game that the Malaysian pairs – not just Chia-Soh – are becoming experts at.

Last week in Japan, Satwik hinted that he has been working on a spin serve in training, bringing in that variation to their game would be a good start. There is no doubting the brilliance of their Plan A, but a few variations to disrupt their opponents could well be the next step.

### Injury ends An's Super Slam dream

**Changzhou:** An Se Young began China Open with a dream of achieving something incredible: winning all Super 1000s of the year to complete a Calendar Slam. But on Saturday, bothered by a knee injury, she was forced to retire hurt while 19-21 6-11 down against Han Yue. The reigning Olympic and World Champion from Korea, who had won titles at Malaysia, All England and Indonesia Opens, has been near unstoppable this year. "I'm very disappointed (at missing the Super Slam) but it can't be helped that I got this injury. Although I really wished to accomplish this record, my body failed me," she told BWF.

A consequence of An not competing for the China Open title on Sunday is that, incredibly, four out of the five finals are all-Chinese affairs. The only final to not feature China is men's doubles, where Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik, who beat Satwik-Chirag, will take on scratch Indonesian pairing of Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Shohibul Fikri. **ENS**



POINT OF VIEW, PAGE 2

In the Age of Diagnoses

Shelja Sen on imagining a culture where children do not need diagnoses to be seen, felt and understood

SCREEN, PAGE 3

Men on a Mission

Stolen makers and lead actors on its OTT release, the indie cinema ecosystem and balancing craft with social commentary



Rinku Ghosh

THE ARORA family in a plush condominium of Noida believes an apple is simply not enough to keep the doctor away. Ever since COVID-19 instilled the idea of immunity, they have built their safety dome to disperse every bug coming their way, with a wellness store in the premises addressing all their fears and concerns. Naveen Arora, 52, has been on shilajit supplement for reverse-ageing and energy. His mother Ashalata, 75, still swears by ashwagandha capsules post her Covid near-death scare, hoping her lungs can breathe better. Wife Perna has been on Vitamin D supplements for bones and magnesium oil massage for insomnia. Teen daughter Aradhana takes biotin gummies for her thinning hair and collagen powder for shapely nails. And they all pop multivitamins.

The catch? None of them has ever consulted a doctor on whether they need these health boosters at all, relying instead on pharmacists, peer groups and social media-driven advisories. None of the benefits these supplements claim is supported by clinical trials. Most aren't even regulated. Worse, the Aroras still fall sick every season as before. Last week, Naveen was shocked to discover elevated liver enzymes despite not drinking alcohol or having fatty liver. "That was the side effect of shilajit," he says. Perna ended up with more muscle cramps than ever. "I kept taking Vitamin D pills daily, thinking my pain was symptomatic of a deficiency. I didn't get tested or know I was supposed to stop in between," she says. "It's not that you won't need vitamins ever. But you need to get tested first and go to a doctor who is best placed to guide you on their usage," says Dr Rommel Tickoo, Director, Internal Medicine, Max Healthcare, Delhi.

Preventive healthcare is being misinterpreted by Indians across age groups. It is being seen as a magic pill that can eliminate the need for doctors and gives them agency over their bodies. That's the promise that beckons everyone as they walk into a pharmacy that has aisles glistening with Omega 3 globe jars, collagen creams and capsules, fat-burner and protein powders, the sugar-lowering lauki and jamun juice, magnesium gummies and vitamins, the many colours and letters of which you didn't know. Like you have uncorked the boring B complex syrup bottle to release hidden powers. In attractive packages and with reassuring claims, health supplements are redrawing the contours of new age consumerism, preying on your fear and anxiety of disease and fluffing up an illusion of security. On the pretext of developing health awareness, the supplement industry is building a culture of dependence instead of encouraging you to make actual changes in your lifestyle and diet. It bleeds you insidiously while letting you think that you are saving up on the doctor's fee and medical bills. That's tempting. And that's why the global supplement industry is projected to be a \$200 billion juggernaut by 2025. The Indian health supplements market is projected to reach \$16.42 billion by 2032, according to Market Research Future. The dietary supplement market is projected to reach \$10,198.57 million by 2026, according to estimates by the Food Processing Industry in India.

"The push for promoting and marketing supplements comes from the industry which seeks a shortcut from science to commerce, ignoring the fact that individual nutrients packed in a pill or pouch cannot replicate the goodness of multiple nutrients present in a food item. These balance, modify and modulate each other's actions. We need agriculture and food policies which provide wholesome foods rather than a hardsell of illusory quick fixes," says public health expert and cardiologist Dr K Srinath Reddy, professor at the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI).

Supplements vs Health

Dr Reddy finds that dietary supplements, being marketed as nutraceuticals, are irrational or unnecessary with some even being harmful to health. "A diverse, balanced diet will provide most of the nutrients we need while a healthy gut microbiome, which is nurtured by dietary fibre, manufactures some essential vitamins. A beneficial interaction between phytonutrients, present in natural fruit and vegetables, is usually absent in supplements," he says. He even cites clinical trials of antioxidant supplements which showed no benefit for heart disease prevention (Vitamin E, Vitamin C) or even harm (beta carotene) while cohort studies with natural foods showed benefits. "Protein supplements overload the kidneys if injudiciously consumed by body builders," he says.

Dr Tickoo has seen too many cases of supplement overdose. He recounts how a 25-year-old patient was admitted with kidney failure after a Vitamin D overdose. "Calcium levels spiked dangerously in his blood, which

constricted the blood vessels of his kidneys. Excess calcium led to irregular heartbeats or arrhythmia. He needed dialysis, steroids and days at the ICU." Another case involved a 68-year-old woman self-dosing on Vitamin D for joint pain, unaware she needed a blood test to assess levels. "Sunlight suffices for most. Supplementation is advised only under certain health conditions or for the elderly with malabsorption issues, that too for a certain period. A serum level of more than 100 ng/ml (nanograms per millilitre) is toxic. A daily vitamin D intake of more than 100 micrograms (4,000 IU) is dangerous," says Dr Tickoo.

Fertility specialist Dr Mannan Gupta of Elantis Healthcare, Delhi, recently had a 34-year-old man, who had self-medicated himself with shilajit as he had been trying to conceive with his partner for over two years. "For nearly a year, he consumed unregulated doses. Not only did that fail to resolve his underlying condition, it affected his liver. What he needed was a minor surgery, lifestyle changes, hormonal support and antioxidants. Over the next six months, his semen parameters showed significant improvement. Within a year of guided treatment, the couple conceived naturally," he says.

Protein supplements continue to be misused the most. Dr Deepak Kumar Chithrali, nephrologist at Manipal Hospital, Bengaluru, hospitalised a 30-year-old man who had consumed 250 grams of protein daily to build muscle on the advice of his trainer. "A healthy adult needs only 55-60 grams unless they are athletes. He had body ache, so he took OTC

# The Supplements Soup

Health supplements are seen as magic pills that can eliminate the need for doctors, giving people the illusion of agency over their bodies. But they are not without their side effects

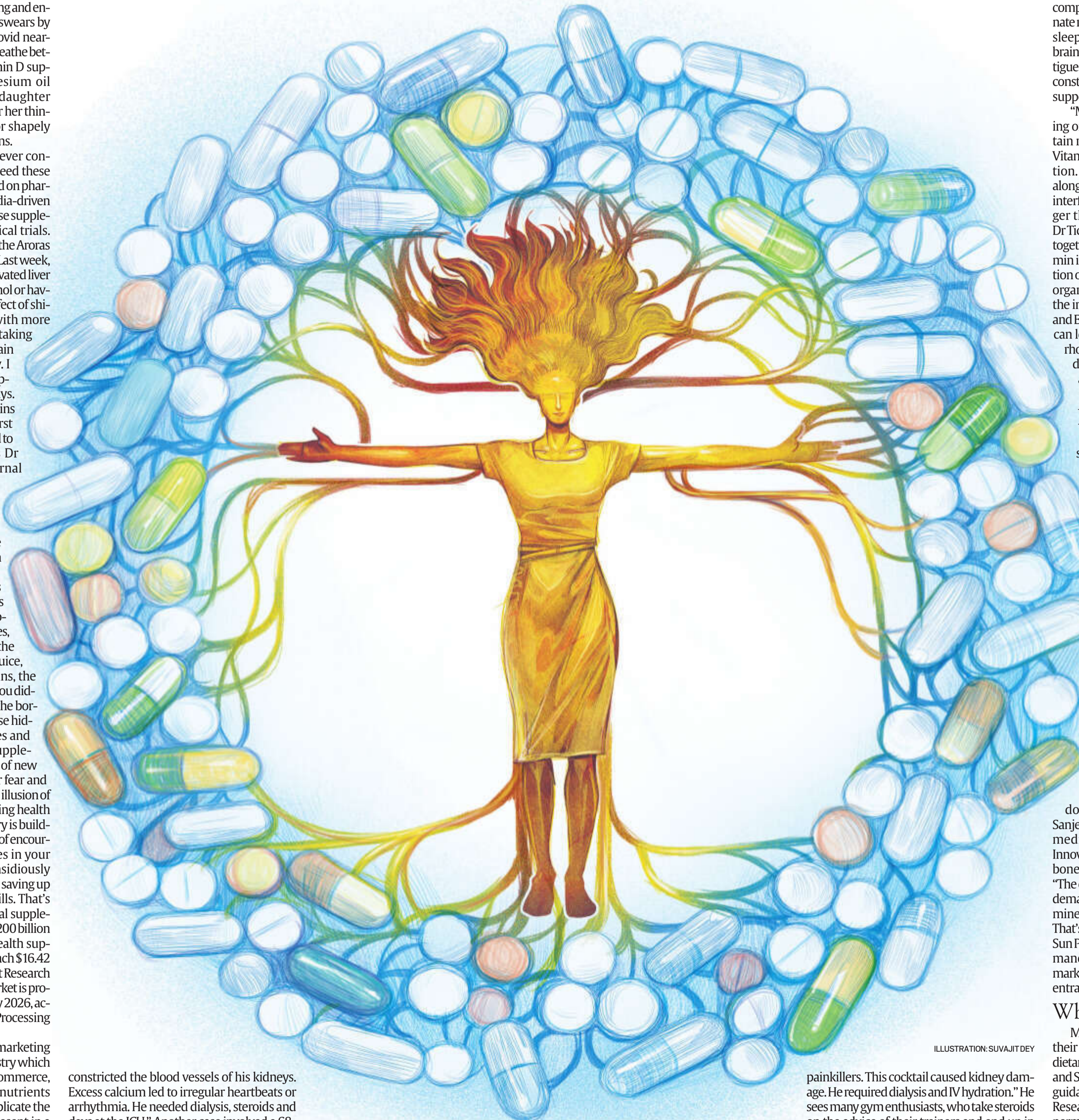


ILLUSTRATION: SUVAJIT DEY

## HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT SUPPLEMENT

- 1 Check if you are allergic to any ingredient on the label
- 2 Don't buy products without labels on their composition
- 3 Seek clinical advice on how long you should take a pill, its side effects and its interaction with other drugs you might be on. For example, do not have garlic pills with blood thinners. St John's wort cannot be taken with heart medication and antidepressants. Vitamin C supplements may

interact with medications that contain estrogen and antacids. They may also raise the risk of kidney problems if taken with nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)

- 4 Don't fall for outrageous claims
- 5 Remember too much of everything, even excess water, has a side effect. It can lower sodium and overwhelm kidneys

BY DR SANJEEV SHARMA

painkillers. This cocktail caused kidney damage. He required dialysis and IV hydration." He sees many gym enthusiasts, who take steroids on the advice of their trainers and end up in the emergency. "Get this: you can get your required protein in two portions of either animal and plant proteins. That portion has to be a palmful or a quarter of your plate," he says. Turmeric capsules — concentrated with 95 per cent curcumin compared to three per cent in natural turmeric — have also triggered liver problems.

### The Magnesium Frenzy

If stores in Delhi are a microcosm of popular choice, then the top-selling supplements are immunity boosters, vitamins, protein powders, creatine (for muscle building), ashwagandha, shilajit and biotin. But magnesium is the new king as supplements fly off the shelves rapidly. "Yet magnesium is not needed at all because you can get it from a balanced diet. Only those with diabetes, Irritable Bowel Disease (IBS), heart arrhythmia, osteoarthritis, absorption issues and the elderly may need it. When taken in very large amounts (greater than 350 mg daily), magnesium is unsafe, triggering irregular heartbeats, low blood pressure, confusion and slowed breathing. Most important, extra magnesium interferes with the absorption of certain drugs like antibiotics and those recommended for diabetes," warns Dr Tickoo.

People often end up having a cocktail of supplements without realising that they could be working at cross purposes with each other.

"Calcium blocks the absorption of iron, zinc blocks copper. So taking high doses of one nutrient can actually cause a deficiency in another if you don't ask a doctor," says Dr Tickoo.

Such is the hype around magnesium for sleep that most people, as Dr Rakesh Gupta, internal medicine specialist at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, Delhi, found out, take the wrong compound. "Magnesium oxide is one of the most commonly available forms. Unfortunately, it's poorly absorbed and acts like a laxative. So people land up in the OPD with diarrhoea," he says. He even lists the compounds and their uses. Magnesium glycinate relaxes the nervous system and improves sleep quality. Magnesium threonate eases brain fog, magnesium malate is for chronic fatigue, citrate enables digestion and helps with constipation. Meanwhile, magnesium taurate supports normal blood pressure.

"Many people make the mistake of focusing only on magnesium, forgetting that certain nutrients help it work better. You need Vitamin B6 and Vitamin D3 for better absorption. Taking zinc or calcium supplements along with magnesium at the same time can interfere with its absorption. It's best to stagger them by a few hours," adds Dr Gupta. Dr Tickoo crosses out biotin and detox teas altogether as he does vitamin C and multi-vitamin infusions. "IV drips are the worst aberration of supplement use as high levels damage organs, trigger infections and blood clots at the injection site," he warns. Extra vitamin C and E, particularly through supplementation, can lead to gastrointestinal issues like diarrhoea and nausea. While both are antioxidants, taking very high doses do not offer additional benefits and could interfere with the body's natural antioxidants.

### Demand Spiral

Chennai-based Krishna Ganpathy, 38, says she relied on peer chatter to try out magnesium. "Everyone around me swore by it, especially in office and walking groups. I even checked advice online, including AI tools. But my doctor later clarified most studies were small, unverified and inconclusive," she says. Dr Tickoo blames misinformation on social media and gym culture. "Online testimonials may have been the result of paid partnerships. Inexperienced trainers recommend muscle-building creatine without blood work or fitness tests. It leads to bloating," he says.

The surge in supplement use is directly linked to a post-COVID health consciousness and rising lifestyle diseases like diabetes, high cholesterol, fatty liver and cancer. "Supplements feel like a quick fix, a shield. Online platforms make them easily accessible and you get them delivered at your doorstep. That ease matters," says Dr Sanjeev Sharma, clinical pharmacologist and medical advisor at Apollo Research and Innovations. The elderly fuel the demand for bone, heart and cognitive health products. "The emphasis on plant-based diets is driving demand for plant-derived proteins, vitamins, minerals and herbal products," he explains. That's why even organised players like Apollo, Sun Pharma, Zyklus and Dr Reddy's now command 30-40 per cent of the nutraceutical market, with smaller brands and international entrants following suit.

### What About Regulation?

Major brands claim scientific backing for their products. But regulation is thin. In India, dietary supplements fall under the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), with guidance from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). "There are recommended permissible limits of ingredients to be used. The manufacturing units must have a GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices) certificate and adhere to licensing and labelling norms. The FSSAI even monitors standards and ad campaigns of the products, ensuring they do not make dramatic claims like a cure. Even the smallest of claims should be backed by big data sets. You can't say we saw results in five or 10 per cent of subjects," says Dr Sharma.

Yet, reports of contamination with heavy metals and poor ingredient control — especially in herbal products — persist. That's why Dr Sharma suggests a risk categorisation for supplements at the policy level. "High-risk items should be prescription-only. This will curb misuse," he says. India may be mimicking the supplement boom in the West but that happened because of expensive healthcare and limited accessibility to doctors at the primary level. "In India, doctors are more available, even at the primary care level. That's why we must base choices on medical advice," reasons Dr Sharma.

Supplements can never lessen the disease burden. Clinical researchers are working around the world on thousands of molecules and compounds that can have therapeutic uses. Only a few make it to clinical trials and fewer to an acceptable, viable medicine. Supplements are even lower on the pecking order. "Is it worth waiting for such a miracle?," asks Dr Tickoo.



DOWN IN JUNGLELAND

RANJIT LAL

Author, environmentalist and bird watcher



EYE FOR AN EYE

Some butterflies have snake-like eyespots on their wings, which they unfurl suddenly in the face of their startled predators

RANJIT LAL

Hide and Seek

From the praying mantis and big cats to cuttlefish, animals shape-shift to ambush or escape predators

IT WAS warm and sweltering that morning at the Yamuna Biodiversity Park, Delhi, and even the birds and animals seemed to have sought shelter in the shade. Then, near the famous 'bamboo bridge' a large female nilgai suddenly steps out onto the path from the high dry grass, about 30 feet away. She is a dusky grey-brown, perfectly matching her surroundings and startled moves back into the bush as silently as a ghost. No thudding of hooves, no crashing of foliage and when I peered into the section, she had vanished into, there was nothing.

It made me think about how animals, large and small, nearly always are a perfect match for their surroundings. Even sharks, which ought to fear none, are counter-shaded, light below and dark above, so that they merge with the depths when seen from above and with the sky when looked at from below. Being apex predators, they don't wear these shades to hide — they wear them to ambush their prey. The same holds true for all the predators — big cats,

what menacingly) back and forth, like a leaf in a breeze to scam her victims. Butterflies and moths resemble fallen leaves and some will even lean over on the ground as if just blown down from the trees above. Some have owl- or snake-like eyespots on their wings, which they unfurl suddenly in the face of their startled predators, giving them time enough to escape, while others have false 'faces' on their rear ends, giving them a 50-50 chance of survival in case of a bite! It may make them fly a bit lopsided afterwards, but heck, they're still alive.

The same thing often happens with birds: There you are scanning a tree or bush in which you know the bird lurks, you see nothing and take a step forward, only to flush not one but a whole flock of them who have been lying doggo.

While many male birds are flamboyantly clad, their ladies are dun coloured to enable them hunker down unseen on their eggs. But even a richly tapestried peacock can vanish uncannily into the foliage once it knows it has been spotted. Even elephants, which really need not

hide from anything (except us) can move as silently as smoke through their forest habitats.

Inhabitants of the frozen Polar regions change their appearance to match the season. The Arctic fox, Arctic hare and ptarmigan are pure white

in winter and speckled brown in summer after the snow melts. Much closer home, I've noticed caterpillars (of say the lime butterfly) are green if hatched during the monsoon and twig-brown when hatched post-monsoon.

It is mind-boggling to think how Mother Nature has engineered these disguises, bit by bit over millions and millions of years of evolution. Her attention to detail is remarkable, every shade, every nuance of behaviour is replicated perfectly. (She would make a counter-feiter par excellence).

Some creatures go to the other extreme: they will dress themselves to the nines in screaming scarlets, electric blues, fiery oranges, yellows, purples and blacks as 'in your face designer' as it can get. Central and South America's poison dart frogs are a prime example: they are all shouting out, 'touch us and you're dead!' And they are not fibbing because their skins secrete lethal venom that they've hoarded from their diet — poisonous leaves consumed by poisonous insects and then by them. It's tag and you're dead', not hide and seek for them.

IMAGINE

SHELJASEN

Shelja Sen is a narrative and family therapist, writer, co-founder of Children First. In this column she curates the know-how of the children and youth she has the honour of working with. Email her at [shelja.sen@childrenfirstindia.com](mailto:shelja.sen@childrenfirstindia.com)



I AM WRITING about something that has been on my mind for a long time. There are questions that have churned me, kept me awake at night and knocked around in my head. What is wrong with our culture that there is so much yearning for psychiatric diagnoses? How did we reach this stage? Who does it harm and how? Can we be innocent bystanders in this, or do we need to question this idea or trend, a potentially dangerous one, that has become the zeitgeist of how we live, relate and understand ourselves and each other?

Let me step back a little and give a little context. Mental health has a dark history and I will cite a few examples. Many celebrated psychiatrists played a significant role in carrying out the atrocities of eugenics in Nazi Germany. The pioneer of frontal lobotomy (a discredited and damaging neurosurgical treatment that spanned over 40 years) was awarded the Nobel Prize. More than 30 years ago, when I began my journey as a clinical psychologist, homosexuality was considered a sexual deviance and conversion therapy was standard practice. I am sure variations of these dark practices still persist. I got into trouble for questioning then, and despite the ripples it has created, I persist in questioning to date. Because, as the French philosopher Michel Foucault commented, "People know what they do; frequently, they know why they do what they do. But what they don't know is what what they do does." I am sure, unwittingly, I have participated and gained in building of this "mental health industrial complex" (an idea I borrow from child and adolescent psychiatrist, Sami Timimi).

I heard an astute young man recently comment, "Nowadays everyone has some 'thing'... It is as if we are seeking labels as a way to fit in a world that is so broken." What happens when we or our children do not fit into the normative measures of worthiness, success or productivity? We find solace in diagnoses, as then we can explain why we are not measuring up to some unreasonable standards. We cannot even point a finger as we are all part of the policing system — mental health professionals, social media, academia and so on. We are surveilling each other and ourselves. The high yearning for self-diagnosis is a clear sign that the "industry" is thriving.

"I am borderline personality disorder. I also have bipolar, PTSD, generalised anxiety disorder and, maybe, Autism," Shania counts them on her fingers while sharing this with me. Something in the way she shares it with me makes me wonder if this is something she has had to do multiple times. After all she has been to so many psychiatrists and therapists. Each one adding a new diagnosis to the list. "They have all given up on me. There is no hope for me." After understanding some of her struggles, I was curious to know, "What would it be like if there were no diagnosis?" Head bent down, deep in thought, she sighed and said, "Without them, I would have no excuse for being such a failure in life."

Shania had been sexually abused as a child. She lived in silence about it for years,



ILLUSTRATION: KOMAL

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Imagine if we lived in a culture where children did not need a diagnosis to be seen and they could opt out of the rat race without internalising it as their failures

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and finally, when she did share with her parents, they tried their best to get her help. She was in Grade 12 and struggling to manage her academics and navigate the complexities of high school life. Her teachers had declared that she would not pass her boards, and no college would accept her. Recently, she had taken to cutting herself and raging against her parents. Shania's distress is real. She is not failing the system; the system is failing Shania.

Every time I ask a young person, "How does getting a diagnosis help?", their answer ranges from "It is such a relief that it is not my fault," or "I finally have a label for what I am going through," or "I feel seen and understood." Imagine if we lived in a culture where children and young people did not need diagnoses to be seen, understood or believed in. Where they could access help or get accommodation without first getting a diagnosis. Where they could opt out of the rat race without internalising it as their failure. As Suzanne Sullivan puts it in her book, *Age of Diagnoses*, "Wellness culture has made us expect a lot from our bodies and our minds... Perhaps what they need from a diagnosis is a permission to do less in a world that only values a particular type of success."

How can Shania believe that she has the ability to influence her own life, make decisions with confidence when she sees herself as an assortment of all these diagnoses? In therapy, we gently unpacked Shania's belief that "something is inherently wrong with me." And how diagnoses rarely change but humans do. We could zoom out and look at the gender politics behind the diagnosis of Borderline Personality Disorder, and that maybe the rages and self-harm were re-

sponses to the abuse and adversity she had experienced and not due to 'mental illness'. We worked together as a team, along with her family, to support her through her board exams. As she claimed agency of her own life, she decided to take a gap year and work in an animal rescue centre. I marvel at the robustness of the human spirit that shines through every time she talks about her work with sparkling passion.

I would like to clarify that it is fine if you are living with a diagnosis that works for you. My only hope is that you will not take it as the ultimate truth. Maybe you could poke holes in it, let it sit beside you as you carry on with your life and not let it define you or make predictions about your future. Keeping history in mind, today's so-called science can be dismissed as quackery tomorrow.

Resistance is building, change is happening and there is a movement that is growing across the world against pathologising, dehumanising "doings." Narrative Practice, Power Threat Meaning Framework, Soteria Model, Open Dialogue and in India — Mariwala Health Initiative and other organisations — are questioning the dominant and expert-led "mental health industry". We have to question the system that makes us believe we are sick. I often think of Jiddu Krishnamurti's quote, "It is no measure of health to be well-adjusted to a profoundly sick society."

Acknowledgement to narrative practitioners across the world whose ideas have informed my position. "For more information on this topic [www.adisorder4everyone.com](http://www.adisorder4everyone.com)

Composite stories and pseudonym are used to maintain confidentiality

Not Just Grapes but History

Sonal Holland, India's first Master of Wine, shows how wine and life are both allegories. We are all products of our terroir, of the climate and culture that shape us

AT THIRTY-THREE, Sonal Holland stood at the edge of a comfortable life — successful, stable, predictable. As Director of National Sales for a Fortune 500, NASDAQ-listed company in India, she was at the top of her game. But inside, she felt hollow. Stagnant. Frustrated by the lack of excitement or meaning in her work. Looking Westward, she asked: What are they doing that we're not? That's when she saw it — wine. A vibrant culture and profession thriving in the West, virtually untapped in India. There were no wine professionals of global repute here yet, but change was coming. India was growing, evolving and someone would need to lead the way. So she invested in herself, chasing an education that could equip her for the future — and how. She uncorked a new chapter, poured herself into a métier she barely understood but already loved, and stepped toward a horizon as strange and beckoning as a vineyard glimpsed through morning mist. Wine wasn't just a drink. It was a calling — a whisper in the oak barrels of her soul, a passion fermented in silence, finally ready to breathe.

What makes her story even more astonishing is where it begins. Sonal was a middle-class Maharashtrian girl from Bombay Central, who walked the streets of Byculla to school, dreaming simple, safe dreams. The kind of girl



Suvir Saran is a chef, author, educator and world traveller

expected to work hard, earn decently, stay in her lane. But she refused to stay boxed in. From that modest childhood in Mumbai's cramped heart, she now hobnobs with the tastemak-

ers of the planet, swirling glasses in salons and vineyards most people only see in glossy magazines. That journey — ordinary girl to global authority — is why her story matters. Because it isn't just hers. It's a story of all of us can live.

This memoir reminds us that the distance between Bombay Central and Bordeaux, between Byculla and Burgundy, is not as far as it seems — if you are willing to walk it.

In wine she found a teacher — patient, cruel, revealing. She learned to watch the blush of vineyards in spring, the green vines crisscrossing hills. She learned to inhale the perfume of a cellar, damp and ancient, a library of memory in each bottle. She learned to sip, to spit, to taste not just wine but the hands that grew it, the sun that kissed it, the storms that humbled it. Each glass became a biography, a region distilled into ruby or gold. And she marvelled at how, in wine houses across the world, among strangers speaking in accents she'd never heard, she still felt at home — because wine needs no translation.

Yet it wasn't easy. She mothered a young daughter while chasing her dream, spending birthdays, Diwalis, even her own milestones alone — often with nothing but a warm champagne in a plastic cup aboard some forgotten train. A blasphemy, perhaps, but also a testament to her grit. She chose the promise of a



SUVIR SARAN

BEYOND TRANSLATIONS

In wine houses across the world, among strangers speaking in accents, Sonal felt at home

future over the comfort of immediate gratifications, making peace with the loneliness and absence because she knew what mastery demanded. Her daughter, too, understood in her own way — and they found small ways to make up for what was missed.

On rides to remote vineyards, through dusty roads and winding passes, she thought of how life's journeys are just like these: bumpy, breathtaking, better for the unexpected turns. Each sip carried not just grapes but histories — rooted in region, personality, nationality — yet fleeting, ephemeral. Like gossamer. For wine, in its finest expression,

belongs to no one tongue, no one tribe. It is a spirit without borders, a symphony without a conductor.

At dusk in Napa, under stars in Rioja, on sun-dappled afternoons in Burgundy, she disappeared into the rhythm of the land, the people, the wines. Every bottle, every vineyard, every vintage revealed itself as singular as every human being. Just as no two wines are quite alike, no two people, no two callings ever quite overlap.

She kept coming back, each time discovering wine could be bigger, bolder, more daring than before. She began to see herself in its evo-

lution — from grape to glass, from shy student to Master of Wine. That title — awarded by the Institute of Masters of Wine in the UK — is the highest honour in the field, earned by fewer than 425 people worldwide. India has only one. Sonal. She carved her name into that list through sheer will and love for her craft.

One quiet morning, her daughter walked up to her, with the simple, unselfconscious wisdom only children possess. Her father had suggested she congratulate her mother. And so she said it plainly: "Mom, you're one in a billion." The words struck Sonal like a cork popping loose. A phrase as intimate as it was immense. A toast, a benediction, a mirror held up to her struggle and triumph. And in that instant the title of her memoir was born.

*One in a Billion.* Because the story isn't just hers. It's for the wine aficionado tracing the scent of oak through a labyrinth of glasses. For the wanderer who longs to take a surreal journey through life's intent and its wild, inexplicable reality. For anyone standing at the edge of their own crisis, staring down who they are, what they could become, what new chapter they still have the courage to write. Her memoir is for them. For all of us. Because Sonal's story is also a story of what it means to believe you are not one of many, but one in a billion.

And she writes it all in prose as layered as a fine Bordeaux, as voluptuous as a Barolo, as daring as a New World Cabernet. She shows how wine and life are both allegories. Every human being is a bottle waiting to be opened. We are all products of our terroir, of the climate and culture that shaped us — yet more than our soil, more than our weather. We are what we choose to become. Sonal's journey proves you can choose to be one in a billion.

# 'Playing safe has stagnated the film business'



*Stolen* makers and lead actors on its OTT release and the indie cinema ecosystem

Alaka Sahani

**A**FTER PREMIERING at the Venice Film Festival, *Stolen* travelled to nearly 40 festivals before releasing on OTT. Its producer Gaurav Dhingra, director Karan Tejpal and lead actors Abhishek Banerjee and Shubham Vardhan talk about its making, balancing craft with social commentary and the contemporary ecosystem for indie cinema.

**The trigger for making *Stolen* is the 2018 Karbi Anglong (Assam) incident where two men were lynched as 'child kidnapping' rumours circulated on social media. Why did you think of developing this as a feature film?**

**Karan Tejpal:** It came as a shock to me that you can be so unjustly accused of something you haven't done. I was surprised that nearly 5,000 people can gather within minutes and lynch you. They were assumed to be child kidnappers on the basis of how they looked. One of them had long dreadlocks and they were driving a big car. When I dug deeper, I came across how technology was used. Such incidents are called 'WhatsApp lynchings' since a message can be transmitted to thousands of people through WhatsApp. This case came under the limelight due to the brutal videos which were doing the rounds. From 2015 till the pandemic, there were about 300 such cases in different parts of India.

It started as the unpeeling of this phenomenon and wanting to understand why and how (such incidents are taking place). Being a writer and filmmaker, in a couple of years, the idea of giving shape to a story came up. It crystallised into becoming a film when I met Gaurav (Dhingra). Making a film and telling it a certain way are a cathartic experience. I experienced such fear when I heard about the incidents and the injustice. No one is held responsible. I heard about this incident in 2018 and started writing in 2020. I shot the film in 2023.

**Abhishek, how did you come on board?**

**Abhishek Banerjee:** My mind was blown when Karan and Gaurav shared their idea. In the first meeting itself I decided to do the film. Their pitch was simple: we are trying to make



## MEN ON A MISSION

(Top) A still from *Stolen*; (Clockwise from above left) Karan Tejpal, Abhishek Banerjee, Shubham Vardhan, Gaurav Dhingra

this a road film. The initial idea was to make a single-take movie and create that kind of chaos through the journey. Apart from the story, I was interested in the way they were thinking. I thought let's get the emotions and script right and go ahead.

**Karan:** We thought of Abhishek very early on because there are not many actors who are doing realistic performances the way he does. He has a hold over his craft. He can control his pitch even when others are hamming their way through in *Stree* (2018). Shubham's performance is very much from his gut while Abhishek's is from the mind.

**Gaurav Dhingra:** The production crew had many first-timers. They were handpicked and came together because they believed in the film.

**Abhishek and Shubham, you are playing brothers in *Stolen* — you are both from Delhi's Kirori Mal College and you have known each other for a long time.**

**Shubham Vardhan:** We were obviously

comfortable since we knew each other. At the same time, it was a little difficult since you can't hide your tricks. In Mumbai, we want to do good and offbeat work but those kinds of projects don't always come our way. It is rare to get the opportunity to work with like-minded people as well as to work on a project that gives importance to craft and story.

**Abhishek:** We could laugh at each other and tell each other when something was going wrong. That's not easy. If you are working with co-actors with whom you don't have chemistry and you cross the line, they might feel bad. It is not about ego but all actors are insecure.

**Shubham:** We have had a common language for nearly 15 years. So, we can communicate with each other, with ease.

**The film carries a social commentary but is also nuanced. How do you achieve that balance?**

**Karan:** More than social commentary, my idea was to present how I saw the world. We

never thought about preaching or pamphleteering. We were telling the story of characters and real people; what could happen if they had an experience like this. If you have a certain perspective of the world, it should automatically reflect in your work.

**Gaurav:** We wanted the film to be accessible and engaging for everyone. In the age of the Internet, what is engaging is commercial.

**Even though *Stolen* was screened at about 40 festivals, why did you not release it in theatres?**

**Gaurav:** Our focus was that we are making a global film. After its Venice Film Festival premiere in 2023, various distributors wanted to buy the film. It was not sold in India. Had it been released in France or Germany first, in no time it would have been pirated. We wanted all theatrical releases to come together in four months and then go to OTT. Or, we wanted a global deal that would release the film in one go. The Amazon Prime Video deal came in. The four executive producers — Anurag Kashyap, Vikramaditya Motwane, Nikkhil Advani and Kiran Rao — joined us.

**Abhishek:** When you are trying to do something disruptive, logic is an important weapon. We did not want that kind of pressure related to the money that you need to raise for marketing in case of a theatrical release and then wonder for how many days the theatres would run it.

**How would you describe the current ecosystem for independent cinema?**

**Gaurav:** The ecosystem is not working for independent filmmakers. Part of the reason is that distribution has crumbled and needs to be innovated. The ticket pricing is high. In the southern part of the country, there is a cap on the ticket prices and marketing budget of a movie. There is a greater need of the exhibition system to have partnership of a different kind with movie makers.

**Abhishek:** Over the years, I have noticed everyone wants to be safe business-wise. Hence, the manufacturing goes up but creativity goes down. That's the case everywhere.

**Shubham:** The tendency to be safe has stagnated the business. Everything appears to be a copy of each other.



## SAME BUT DIFFERENT

Neeraj Ghaywan (left) in conversation with Payal Kapadia at a special screening in Mumbai, organised by Versova Homage Screenings

# Staying Grounded

Director Neeraj Ghaywan in conversation with director Payal Kapadia on *Masaan* turning 10 and giving the story a hopeful end

Alaka Sahani

**W**HEN NEERAJ Ghaywan-directed *Masaan*, it created a buzz by winning two awards — FIPRESCI award and the Promising Future prize in the Un Certain Regard section — at the Cannes Film Festival, 2015. Director Payal Kapadia, then a student of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), Pune, recalls her initial reaction to the film's success, marked by what she termed "film school arrogance" and scepticism. "Is *Masaan* really that good? We wondered. However, after watching it, I was moved by the way the film talked about caste and gender. *Masaan* is a moment in Indian cinema," she said.

Kapadia, the writer-director of Cannes-winner *All We Imagine As Light* (2024), was in conversation with Ghaywan after a special screening organised, on Thursday evening as *Masaan* turns 10.

Talking about *Masaan*'s significance in Indian cinema, she said, "It is not often that you see characters in Hindi cinema that (give the impression) we might have met them at some point or capture feelings that we must have experienced at some point in our lives. That's why *Masaan* is both universal and specific to a particular place. There are so many themes in the film. As cinema students we were inspired by how this film had used a unique cinematic language — long takes and off-screen sound — in the mainstream space."

A compelling exploration of themes of love, loss, caste, guilt and ambition, *Masaan* parallelly follows the stories of its lead characters — Devi (essayed by Richa Chadha) and Deepak (Vicky Kaushal). Ghaywan's initial idea was to explore the story of a man who works at a ghat and can't muster enough courage to speak to a woman he is drawn to. "Later on, I developed a couple of other tracks. The concept of two people, who were slowly navigating towards each other, completely oblivious of their journeys ending together, was always there," says Ghaywan.

The special screening of *Masaan* was organised by Versova Homage Screenings (VHS), a community viewing platform created by two brothers, writer-director Rohan K Mehta and actor Prayrak Mehta. They started VHS in April 2024 with the screening of Avinash Arun-directed *Killa* (2014); this is their 25th screening.



## STILL HAS A RING TO IT

A still from *Masaan*

For Kapadia, one of the powerful scenes of *Masaan* is the ending, when Devi and Deepak meet at a ghat in Allahabad (now Prayagraj) and go on a boat tour of Sangam, which is the confluence of rivers: the Ganga, the Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati.

"The ending is powerful. It is about two people who don't know each other and have impacted each other. It goes so well with the metaphor of Sangam of the rivers," she said. In response, Ghaywan said he always wants to end a story with hope, "That was also the last shot that we took as the sun was about to set."

*Masaan*, which boasts of an impressive ensemble cast, features Shweta Tripathi, Sanjay Mishra and Pankaj Tripathi. When Kapadia mentioned how "its characters are complex", Ghaywan said, "I don't like uni-dimensional characters who are honest and sincere. As humans, we are flawed."

Ghaywan's second feature *Homebound* premiered at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival's "Un Certain Regard" section and will be screened at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in September.

Even though a decade has passed since its release, *Masaan* still stands out for its magnificent use of music and Hindi poetry. "For *Masaan*, I wanted a different kind of music. The inspiration was *Udaan*, which used rock music in a coming-of-age film so beautifully," he said.

The songs of *Masaan* were composed by Indian Ocean and the lyrics were written by Varun Grover, who also wrote its screenplay. The script deftly weaves references to Urdu and Hindi poets such as Akbar Allahabadi, Basheer Badr, Mirza Ghalib, Dushyant Kumar and Nida Fazli.

# Why are we still listening to Himesh Reshammiya?

Himesh Reshammiya's resurgence is real. The mania, however, lies in a curious combination of nostalgia, FOMO in times of Insta reels, a thriving live-music industry and that age-old need to grasp at a familiar cultural memory

Suanshu Khurana

COMPOSER-TURNED-singer-turned-actor-turned-meme, Himesh Reshammiya, in that order, is back. This time as a rockstar. Going by the excitement around his recent Cap Mania tour (the organisers had to add a second show in Delhi) and community singalongs during his recently sold-out stadium shows in Mumbai and Delhi, literally inspired by the cap he began wearing due to hair loss, one thing is clear: there is a market for everything if you put the right spin to it. Add a giant cap hydraulically lifted up, a bright red stage, lots of confetti, laser lights, pyrotechnics and a click on the rewind button to the 2000s — Reshammiya's peak years and when a lot of the music was overproduced, catchy and therefore, accessible — it's a recipe for frenzy.

Millennials and their parents are converging in droves. Not because the songs with some of the most absurd lyrics (*Tera pyaar hookah bar* (Khiladi 786), *Tandoori nights* (Karzzzz), *Ice-cream khaungi* (The Xpose) and some of the more respectable ones, like *Aashiq banaaya aapne*, *Tere naam* and *Teri yaad saath hai* (Namaste London)), have travelled well and greyed. They are coming because they themselves have. And, perhaps, had no idea that

they longed for these reminders of heart-breaks, of college mimicry sessions, the first introduction to Deepika Padukone in *Naam hai tera*, in their current lives, which come with an expendable income, meeting this need for raw, unadulterated entertainment.

The nasal twang, the cap and the floor-touching trench coats in the humid weather of Mumbai and Delhi of the 'Jai mata di, let's rock' spouting guy we once mocked, are all acceptable now and part of a shared experience with friends and family. It is unrefined, and this, in today's terms, not pretentious territory. What if it is sloppy? People in Delhi are leaving judgement at home and gyrating to *Hookah bar* like it is 2005. And it's a cultural phenomenon worth noticing.

Reshammiya has likely hired some smart branding and PR teams to make this so-bad-it's-stuck music marketable at a time when there is no dearth of good music, albeit not from Bollywood. Looks like these corporate honchos have nailed the cap to the head: they have figured that in the nostalgia-fed space that is run by Insta reels, Reshammiya fits in nice and easy. His self-deprecating humour: "Naak se gaun kya (Should I sing in my nasal voice)," he asked in Mumbai, was a one-of-a-kind feat. In an industry where people guard their public persona with such care,



## THE THEATRE OF MUSIC

Himesh Reshammiya at his recent Cap Mania concert

Reshammiya's self-parody is making him relevant to Gen Z.

How did this happen? In one year, how did we start with Diljit Dosanjh, go to Bryan Adams, to ColdPlay and Guns N Roses, and then to waving phone flashlights at Himesh? Barring some of his fun compositions sung by other singers, most of this music isn't innovative. What Reshammiya has been calling "50 hits in a row" in his recent interviews — and, yes, quite a few were commercially successful — were just earworms that once quarried into our brains and became guilty pleasures.

There is certainly enough help from the idea of FOMO — a thriving live-music industry in a spiral mode — where newness is the currency. Add to it the need to find an echo to something familiar, even if it is lousy. That it is somewhat cringe is half the fun. And that Reshammiya is earnest in presenting it all in the same old style, is bringing people in. Pair this with a brilliant band and live dancers and fire stunts and you have a winner.

The evolution of Reshammiya is an interesting story. Born and raised in a Gujarati family, he is the son of composer Vipin Reshammiya, who gave his son the early exposure to music by taking him for recording sessions at the age of 14. Reshammiya began his career with TV show title tracks and de-

buted with the Salman Khan-starrer *Pyaar Kiya Toh Darna Kya* (1998). In those years, he was constantly composing, building a stockpile of tunes and presenting them to producers. Which is also why he could do so much music at a given time. This was very different from other composers who created tunes according to the situation and brief for a particular film. Reshammiya's music was, at least for the initial few years, all about taking the pick. He composed for films like *Dil Maange More* (2004); *Tere Naam* (2003); *Aashiq Banaya Aapne* (2005); *Humraaz* (2002); *Aitraaz* (2004); *Hello Brother* (1999), followed by his superhit album *Aapka Suroor* (2006). It was at best mediocre. It worked.

But as for the Himesh hysteria of the present and a title like 'Lord Himesh' floating around, let's be clear: This isn't any music revolution or a lesson in what is or isn't profound, as if Reshammiya missed out on his due then. Yes, his return, against good taste and all the odds, is working. But not because the music is crafty. It's because there is something sadly sweet about looping back to what we once knew, even if it was a cringe fest. Now that it is back like a spectacle, the theatre of the absurd has come with its own ways. And the audience is eager to indulge. Those singing in tune are wondering if they will be next.

# Is Work Pressure Consuming You?

The suicide of a bank manager sparks concerns over workplace stress and mental health. Experts find coping strategies

Anuradha Mascarenhas

A 32-year-old software engineer moved to Pune from Nagpur after he secured a plum job with a topline IT company at the Rajiv Gandhi Infotech Park in the plush suburbs of Hinjawadi. His wife and two-year-old son had stayed back at the family home in Nagpur as he sought to settle down in a new city and a new job. He worked tirelessly from 8 am to 6 pm, with no more than two breaks, took his work home and worked till 2 am. In between, he cramped his meal times, drive-arounds, chores, sleep and telephone calls to his family. So when he was passed over for promotion, the young man had a meltdown.

"I lived and breathed my job. I always took the initiative and became pretty much a self-starter, fearing the intense competition around me. I saw talented applicants dropping their CVs with the HR every day. I had performance anxiety and pushed myself. I carried the laptop around even on weekends, in case the bosses asked for some data or review. So when I missed the promotion, I felt like I had failed everybody — my bosses, my family and most importantly myself. It sucked everything out of me, deadened me. I just wanted to vanish somewhere," he says. That was the time when somebody referred him to a psychologist who deals with corporate burnouts. "Most patients are stuck to their screens for eight to 10 hours. Many find it difficult to disconnect, often feeling pressured to respond to messages and emails at all hours," says another psychologist Kinjal Goyal, who has had executives among her patients. This job insecurity erodes their self-worth and pushes them towards suicide ideation and self-harm.

The suicide by Bank of Baroda's chief manager in Baramati town of Pune district is symptomatic of this intense workplace pressure driving people over the edge. Increasing workplace pressure has significantly contributed to burnout and mental health challenges, with

an almost 10 to 20 per cent rise in stress-related counselling going up in Pune, says Dr Nishikant Thorat, associate professor, psychiatry at the BJ Government Medical College.

## KNOW YOUR WORKPLACE TRIGGERS

Dr Thorat says overwork is extremely isolating as it cuts you off from your surroundings and robs time from friends and families. Running from deadline to deadline, the body and mind is always taut and on alert mode. You are self-absorbed. So when a breakdown happens, you spin out of control. "Interpersonal relationships at the workplace have a big impact on a person's mental health status. A vindictive team leader may dump work on a person they have singled out. A boss may compel the employee to do something against the latter's wish and ethics. Workplace bullying, harassment, shaming, undercutting and unhealthy competition can all lead to trauma. Abuse strips down any positive feelings you may have had one time," he says.

The workplace culture is not the only stressor. The physical environment — too much noise, lack of space, fresh air and relaxation — is an added layer of discomfort. "Many youngsters say that they do not enjoy or like their job but are keeping it for the sake of money. This robotic compliance gets to them at times and drives them to despair. Escapist addictions like alcohol and substance abuse do the rest," says Dr Thorat. Most cases of self-harm come from an inner vulnerability, the kind that stops a person from sharing their problems with anybody else. Bottling them in becomes their coping mechanism. "Then you implode and feel broken," he adds.

## HOW TO LOOK FOR SELF-HARM TENDENCIES AT THE WORKPLACE

According to Dr Praful Kapse, professor and head, department of psychiatric social work, Maharashtra Institute of Mental Health, "There is significant association between suicide and presence of mental illness like depression, alcohol use disorders, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia and so on. Warning signs



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## GROUND REPORT



### NEED TO KNOW

Counselling cells are not only meant for corporate offices and major conglomerates. They are needed at government institutions as well

include social isolation, risk-taking, direct statements or expression of a wish to die, unbearable pain, prolonged sadness and mood swings." Doctors argue for psycho-social assessments within firms and offices. Implementing stress management programmes, promoting work-life balance and conducting life-skills workshops are essential steps that organisations must take to support employee well-being, they say. "Suicide is the most preventable leading cause of death. However we tend to ignore signs of distress and do not seek timely help. It is also important to talk about it and encourage people to seek assistance," says Dr Kapse.

He emphasises the need for preventive strategies and counselling cells. "Not only at corporate offices and major conglomerates but also at small and medium enterprises, including government organisations."

## HOW TO BUILD A SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Dr Kapse has been suggesting ways of cre-

ating a healthy work environment where employees can share their problems with ease without feeling judged. "Build empathy in corporate training programmes so that a senior colleague can foster a positive environment for a junior employee, guiding them instead of scarring them. A good word from the senior leadership may encourage the junior employee, make them feel seen and heard. The HR should be a trustable and neutral person before whom a person can vent their feelings. Team-building should not be imposed in lecture sessions but manifest in casual outings like watching a film, playing pickleball or attending a music gig," he says.

Goyal says activities, even well-intentioned ones like yoga or meditation, should not be done for their sake or for a green tick. This approach can sometimes exacerbate the problem rather than solve it. "The essence of overcoming burnout lies in allowing individuals genuine time to rest, unwind and disconnect from their responsibilities. It involves creating space for undisputed personal time,



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## WORK CHECKLIST

- Organise your time better. Prioritise your tasks at work and if you can delegate to others, don't be afraid to do so
- Learn to say no if you can't take on extra work or responsibility — make sure you're able to explain why
- Take regular breaks. Try to get outside and take a walk. Both exercise and being outdoors are good for your mental health
- Try to work regular hours and make sure you take any holidays you're entitled to. Having some time off can refresh you and actually increase your productivity
- Try to develop good relationships with your colleagues. This can help create a support network at work
- Don't neglect your family or relationships outside of work
- Try not to use alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with stress

where one can truly relax without the pressure of productivity," she adds.

Building resilience is a crucial component in managing work-related stress and it is most effective when nurtured from an early age. Rather than waiting until adulthood to develop coping mechanisms, fostering emotional strength and flexibility in children can better prepare them for future challenges, according to Goyal. "It is essential to cultivate a culture that values digital detox, encouraging individuals and organisations alike to respect boundaries and prioritise mental well-being. In doing so, we can create a healthier, more balanced approach to work and life," says Goyal. Suicide prevention requires a collective effort involving individuals, communities and institutions. Larger level mental health awareness is required to enhance understanding about emotional issues and the importance of seeking help. "In the end, it is about fostering open conversations that help people overcome challenges and find hope. Only people can help each other best," says Dr Kapse.

# Have we been doing Museums all wrong?

A quiet revolution is reshaping the way we engage with art, history, and memory, and it might just change how you travel next.

## A brief history

If you look at many of the museums around the world from the last century, they follow a fairly universal template: hushed rooms, artefacts behind glass, artworks mounted on white walls, and placards that explain their significance in neat, serifed fonts.

Designed as quiet spaces to preserve history and art, many museums can feel distant, especially for those not trained in art or history. A typical visit involves walking into a large hall, picking up an audio guide, reading placards, taking photos, and moving on.

It is educational, certainly, but it rarely feels personal. And for younger travellers or those with shorter attention spans, traditional museums could feel like a checklist, not a discovery. But times are changing.

We are seeing the walls come alive with projection mapping. Soundscapes fill rooms. Interactive displays invite you to vote, build, or sketch. The very idea of what constitutes an 'exhibit' has expanded. Now, your movement through the space might shape the artwork itself. The experience has shifted from passive to active.

## The Rise of Immersive Experiences

Walk into a museum today, and you might find yourself stepping into a completely different world. One where you are not just looking at art, but are surrounded by it, walking through it, sometimes even becoming part of it.

Take TeamLab Borderless in Tokyo, for example. There are no maps, no set paths, just a dreamscape of interactive digital art that moves with you. Walk into one room and flowers bloom under your feet; enter another and waves crash around you in brilliant 3D projections. It's art that doesn't just sit on a wall. It reacts, evolves, and plays back.

Even historic institutions are adapting. The Van Gogh immersive exhibitions, which have travelled across cities worldwide, invite you to walk through projections of his art. Giant sunflowers swirling across the floor, Starry Night sweeping across entire walls.

It's less about just appreciating the brushstrokes and more about feeling the emotion behind them. And I don't



mean to say that these experiences are replacing traditional museums. Rather, they complement them. They meet people where they are: curious, sensory-driven, often short on time, but eager to connect.

Immersive museums are especially impactful for younger audiences and families. Children who might find an oil painting uninteresting are suddenly mesmerised by glowing rooms, soundtracks, and motion-triggered effects. For adults, too, these spaces spark imagination and often lead to a deeper appreciation of the art or story being told.

And perhaps that's what makes this shift so exciting. It's not about making museums more entertaining, it's about making them more alive.

## Play and Participation

Not every museum needs projection mapping or high-tech installations to feel fresh and engaging. Sometimes, all it takes is a simple invitation to play.

Across the world, there's a growing focus on interactive design. Spaces where touching, building, experimenting, and even making noise isn't just allowed, it's encouraged. Children's museums have long embraced this ethos, but now, this playful spirit is finding its way into science centres, history museums, and even art galleries.

Take the Exploratorium in San Francisco, for instance. It's a museum built entirely on the premise of curiosity. Want to freeze your shadow? Go ahead. Build a bridge out of blocks? Sure. Understand the human heartbeat by dancing in front of a light sensor? Absolutely. Learning here is a full-body experience.

In Europe, Micropia in Amsterdam is a museum dedicated entirely to microbes. Doesn't sound exciting? Wait till you scan your skin and see the invisible organisms living on your body projected on a screen. It's science, surprise, and a little bit of squeamish fun rolled into one.

The underlying idea here is simple: we learn better when we participate. Whether it's through movement, emotion, or tactile play, museums that let us do something, create stronger, more lasting connections.

And while kids thrive in these environments, adults benefit just as much. Because the truth is, we never really outgrow the joy of pressing buttons, asking questions, or seeing how things work.

But not all innovation is futuristic. Some of the most impactful changes are unfolding quietly within the world's oldest institutions.

## Traditional Museums Are Evolving Too

While immersive installations and playful spaces have reshaped the

museum experience, some of the most iconic and traditional institutions are evolving in their own quiet but powerful ways. Take the Louvre in Paris. Known for its centuries-old masterpieces and formal galleries, it now offers an immersive Mona Lisa virtual reality experience.

Don a headset, and you are transported into the world behind the painting: learning about the sitter, the technique, and da Vinci himself in a way that's both informative and intimate. It's a far cry from the typical ten-second photo moment in a crowded room.

The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, home to works by Rembrandt and Vermeer, has introduced interactive apps and in-gallery drawing stations that invite visitors to observe more deeply, sketch their impressions, and engage with the art actively.

This shift isn't just happening across Europe and America. Indian museums too are embracing change. The Indian Music Experience Museum in Bengaluru blends technology, soundscapes, and hands-on stations to bring India's musical heritage alive.

In Amritsar, the Partition Museum uses oral histories, personal artefacts, and immersive storytelling to help visitors emotionally connect with one of the most complex chapters of India's past.

## Emotion & Empathy

And beyond interaction and play, some museums aim for something deeper: to move us. They are the ones that stay with us long after we have walked out the door.

Take the Jewish Museum in Berlin, designed by architect Daniel Libeskind. Its zigzagging layout, stark voids, and angled walls don't just house history, they embody it. Walking through its empty Holocaust Tower or the Memory Void filled with metal faces underfoot, you don't just learn about loss, you really do feel it. It's architecture and curation working together to create an emotional response.

In Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Museum, the charred remains of clothing, melted watches, and haunting photographs confront you with humanity's capacity for both destruction and resilience. The experience is quiet, respectful, and

## ADVERTORIAL

devastatingly powerful.

In Cape Town's District Six Museum, the stories of a forcibly removed community are told not through statistics, but through handwritten memories, street signs, and kitchen tiles from demolished homes. It's personal, messy, and deeply human.

These kinds of museums ask for more than just our attention. They ask for our empathy. They challenge us to sit with discomfort, reflect on our own histories, and perhaps see the world a little differently.

And it's not all solemn. Sometimes emotion comes through joy, wonder, or nostalgia. The Museum of Broken Relationships in Zagreb is a beautiful example. Filled with objects from past relationships, each accompanied by a story, it's touching, funny, and surprisingly universal.

## My Travel Tips

One of the most common things travellers experience is what we call museum fatigue. That feeling of being overwhelmed, when you have moved through too many galleries, seen too many objects, and tried to take in too much, too quickly. Your feet hurt, your attention fades, and by the end, everything blurs into one big historical haze.

That's when I always recommend slowing down. Instead of trying to cover an entire museum in one go, just focus on one section. Choose the one that truly interests you, and let yourself absorb it fully. You will leave more fulfilled, not less.

And here's a small but essential tip, don't visit a museum on an empty stomach or when you are exhausted. A tired mind doesn't wander well. Many museums today have excellent cafés, perfect for a quiet pause, a warm drink, and a bit of reflection between exhibits.

So the next time you visit a museum, don't rush. Don't chase the highlight. Instead, linger. Touch, feel, imagine. Because, as I have learned from both podcasting and travel, the best discoveries happen when you slow down and truly look.

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