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Tara Murali passes away in Chennai NEWS » PAGE 5





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**President's invitations** get east Indian touch NEWS » PAGE 5

REGIONAL OVERTURES Russia's Taliban gauntlet

Rationale behind the choice to legitimise the regime in Kabul

**EDITORIAL** » PAGE 8



Washington-Jadeja duo thwarts England SPORT » PAGE 16



#### Those behind the J&K attack yet to be found: Cong.

**NEW DELHI** With the Lok Sabha scheduled to start a 16-hour debate on Monday on the Pahalgam attack, Congress on Sunday said the terrorists involved in the attack had not vet been apprehended. » PAGE 5

#### TCS planning to lay off 12,000 staffers this year

**NEW DELHI** 

India's largest IT services firm, Tata Consultancy Services, is set to lay off about 12,261 employees this year, with the majority of those impacted belonging to middle and senior grades. As of June 30, TCS's workforce stood at 6,13,069. » PAGE 4

#### **Textile sector is** emerging as the strength of India

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that the textile industry now has more than 3,000 active start-ups. And, as the country progresses towards becoming a developed nation, the textile sector is emerging as a strength for India. » PAGE 6

# havoc in Odisha;

BHUBANESWAR

More than 11,000 people in six districts of Odisha have been affected by the floods, an official said on Sunday. Over 1,000 people have been rescued from the affected areas and provided shelter at cyclone centres. » PAGE

# Eight people die in stampede at mountain shrine in Haridwar

30 injured in the incident; rumour about a snapped electric line led to panic among devotees gathered along a stairway with many carrying children; rescue efforts continued for hours; Haridwar District Magistrate orders magisterial inquiry

<u>Ishita Mishra</u> NEW DELHI

killed and 30 ... jured in a stampede

Devi temple ight people were at the Mansa Devi temple in Haridwar of Uttarakhand on Sunday morning. Officials said the stampede occurred around 9 a.m. after a rumour of a snapped electric line spread panic among the massive crowd that had gathered along the stairway route of the temple, located 1,770 feet above sea level on the Sivalik Hills, the southernmost mountain chain of the Himalayas.

People from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Uttarakhand, aged between 12 and 60, were among those who killed.

A video from the spot showed a massive crowd stranded between barricades at a point on the stairway, with many carrying children and gasping for breath, with no space



Tragic steps: Police and SDRF personnel at the site of the stampede in Haridwar on Sunday, PTI

to move at all. The devotees were seen frantically asking for help as the crowd swelled from all directions. While some managed to climb the wall along the stairway, many ran over others while make way for themselves.

Slippers, puja items, and clothes were seen strewn on the temple premises after the administration cleared the way.

Rescue and relief Pramendra Singh Dobal, Senior Superintendent of Police, said that teams from the police and the State Disaster Response

Force (SDRF) were rushed

to the spot immediately, and the rescue efforts continued for hours.

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, who expressed grief, announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh each to the kin of the deceased and ₹50,000 each to the injured. He met those admitted to a hospi-

tal and assured them of all possible help from the government. "The news of a stampede at Haridwar's Mansa Devi temple is extremely saddening. SDRF, local police and other rescue teams are on-site and engaged in relief and rescue operations," he wrote on X.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed condolences. "Condolences to those who lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon," he said.

Haridwar District Magistrate Mayur Dixit ordered a magisterial inquiry. The investigation team will be headed by a Sub-Divisional Magistrate who has been asked to submit a detailed report on the stampede in 15 days.

Ravindra Puri, president of the Mansa Devi temple trust, announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh each to the families of the deceased and ₹1 lakh each to the injured.

## Thailand, Cambodia agree to truce negotiations

**Associated Press** 

Thailand and Cambodia on Sunday signalled their readiness to negotiate an end to a deadly border dispute following mediation efforts by the U.S. President Donald Trump.

The fighting has killed at least 33 people.

Mr. Trump posted on Truth Social on Saturday that he spoke to the leaders of Thailand and Cambodia.

**FULL REPORT** » PAGE 14

## process to rule on citizenship: INDIA They [EC] are making all kinds of self-congratu-

SIR has become a



Election Commission... it is not a matter of political obstinacy or institutional arrogance. Please reconsider it... everyone is urging you A.M. SINGHVI Congress leader



The Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) on Sunday urged the Election Commission (EC) to refrain from "institutional arrogance", and stop the special intensive revision (SIR) of the electoral roll in Bihar, saying it has effectively become a process of esta-

NEW DELHI

blishing citizenship. Speaking at a joint press conference, along with Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation general secretary Di-Bhattacharya, pankar Rashtriya Janata Dal MP Manoj Jha, and Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Nilotpal Basu, Congress Rajya Sabha member A.M. Singhvi said it was not an issue of "political obstinacy" or "institutional arrogance". "I humbly urge the Election Commission... Please reconsider it," Mr. Singhvi said.

Stating that the SIR had become a process of esta-blishing citizenship, he asked if the EC was authorised to do so. The Congress leader cited a 1995 Supreme Court judgment to say that detailed legal provisions should be followed to take away anyone's citizenship.

About 10 elections had been held after 2003 and till then, all the ID cards had been valid throughout. "In that case, what was the

urgency in initiating the process in June-July, link it to an election," he said, adding that the exercise could have been undertaken after yet another election (Bihar). The attempt to squeeze the entire process within two-three months was resulting in several errors, Mr. Singhvi said.

latory and misleading

claims... basically

corroborating our

apprehension

**BHATTACHARYA** 

CPI (ML) Liberation leader

**DIPANKAR** 

Mr. Bhattacharya said the EC's "self-congratulatory" statements were confirming the INDIA bloc party's apprehensions. After the process started, the number of possible deletions from the voters' list kept increasing, he said. The Opposition parties had flagged concerns over about two crore alleged deletions.

very misleading and false claim that it has shared this with the political parties. We have received block-level data about pending enumeration forms, which were not submitted... had the details been shared with us, we could have cross-checked them before the draft was prepared...," Mr. Bhattacharva said, stating that no door-to-door visits had been made during the EC's exercise.

Describing it as the biggest exercise of "disenfranchisement since Independence", Mr. Jha said the EC had not consulted political parties on the SIR.

**'91.96% SUBMITTED FORMS'** » PAGE 4

gan aid airdrops in what it

said was an effort to ease

the humanitarian condi-

Aid groups said last

week there was mass hun-

ger among Gaza's 2.2 mil-

lion people and interna-

tional alarm over the

humanitarian situation in

Gaza has increased, driv-

ing French President Em-

manuel Macron's decision

to recognise a Palestinian

Israel says it has let

enough food into Gaza dur-

ing the war and blames Ha-

state in September.

tions in the enclave.

## Flooding wreaks

## **11,000** impacted

## A clear path



Vantage point: A glass bridge built over the Napne waterfall which was recently inaugurated by Maharashtra Minister Nitesh Rane at Vaibhavwadi in Sindhudurg District of Maharashtra. EMMANUAL YOGINI

# Maharashtra govt. halts Ladki Bahin | Israel to pause strikes for 10 hours aid payments for 26.34 lakh people

**Snehal Mutha** MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government said on Sunday that it had temporarily suspended monthly payments under the Ladki Bahin Scheme to 26.34 lakh beneficiaries whose eligibility for the payment will have to be verified.

"The benefits for 26.34 lakh applicants were temporarily suspended starting June 2025 while 2.25 crore eligible beneficiaries received the payments," State Women and Child Development Minister Aditi Tatkare said on X, adding that the suspended beneficiaries' eligibility would be



verified by the respective District Collectors.

She said even men had applied for the scheme, which is intended to provide financial support of ₹1,500 a month to women from low-income groups. "Payments will resume for

those found eligible after the verification while action will be taken against fraudulent beneficiaries who misled the government and availed themselves of benefits through improper means," Ms. Tatkare said.

### Launched in 2024

Many ineligible applicants were getting benefits of multiple schemes, while some families had more than two beneficiaries, she said, adding that the action was based on data shared by the Information Tech-

nology Department. Bahin The Ladki scheme was launched in August 2024 ahead of the Maharashtra election held in November. The scheme was considered one of the reasons for the BJP-led Mahayuti alliance's victory in the election. However, after the election, the government had started scrutiny of the beneficiaries and ineligible beneficiaries were suspended regularly.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday had warned of stern action against men who took advantage of the scheme. "Money will be recovered. Action will be taken for non-cooperation," he said, responding to reports of 14,000 men being beneficiaries of the scheme.

## each day; allow new Gaza aid routes Reuters

JERUSALEM/GAZA

Israel said on Sunday it would halt military operations each day for 10 hours in parts of Gaza and allow new aid corridors in the shattered enclave, where images of hungry Palestinians have alarmed the world.

Military activity will stop from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. until further notice in Al-Mawasi, a designated humanitarian area which stretches along the coast, in central Deir al-Balah and in Gaza City, to the north.

The military said designated secure routes for convoys delivering food



Walk of hope: Palestinians carry sacks of flour delivered after trucks carrying aid entered northern Gaza on Sunday. AFP

and medicine will also be in place between 6 a.m. and 11 p.m. starting from

Sunday. Dozens of Gazans have died of malnutrition in recent weeks, according to southern Gaza. the Gaza Health Ministry in Hours earlier, Israel be-

cent said it was sending on Sunday more than 100 trucks carrying over 1,200 metric tons of food aid to

the Hamas-run enclave.

The Egyptian Red Cres-

mas for the suffering of Gaza's people. **CHILD STARVES TO DEATH** 

» PAGE 15

## **States**

#### INBRIDE 1



# Fringe elements trying to derail progress in J&K: Rijiju

Asserting that the people of Jammu and Kashmir are extremely positive and want progress, Union Minister Kiren Rijiju on Sunday said some fringe elements from outside the country are trying to derail peace and development in the Union Territory. He said a strong India is incomplete without a strong Jammu and Kashmir and assured the local youths that "we will make you proud by giving you full space to echo your voice". The Minister, who was addressing the alumni meet at Kashmir University, stressed that politicians must forget differences in the interest of the country.

# Odisha schoolteacher held for 'molesting' girl students

A teacher of a government-run high school in Odisha's Kendrapara district was arrested on Sunday for allegedly molesting five girl students on campus, the police said, adding that the incident took place recently. The headmaster of the school lodged an FIR in this connection on Saturday and the accused teacher was arrested on Sunday, a police officer said. The accused, who has been booked under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, was sent to judicial custody after a court in Kendrapara rejected his bail application, the officer said.

## Bhubaneswar corporator held for rape, suspended from BJD

Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation's BJD corporator Amaresh Jena was arrested from Odisha's Balasore district on Sunday in connection with a rape case registered against him and remanded to 14-day judicial custody, police said. The BJD suspended him from the party soon after. Jena was booked under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, including charges of rape, committing miscarriage without a woman's permission, obscene act and criminal intimidation, and the POCSO Act. PTI

# Three killed in blast in tanker at asphalt plant near Vadodara

Three persons were killed when a tanker exploded while being heated to empty asphalt from the vehicle at a plant near Vadodara in Gujarat on Sunday evening, police said. The incident occurred at Mokshi village in Savli taluka of Vadodara district, an official from Bhadarwa police station said. A tanker was being heated to transfer stuck asphalt from the vehicle into barrels when it blew up, killing three persons standing nearby, the official said. Among the deceased were the driver and cleaner of the vehicle, as well as a labourer, he said. "The bodies of the victims were shifted to a hospital in Vadodara for post-mortem, he said.

# Over 8,400 pilgrims offer prayers at Amarnath shrine

Over 8,400 pilgrims on Sunday paid obeisance to Lord Shiva at the holy cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir Himalayas, taking the total number of *yatris* to 3.77 lakh, the official said. They said the yatris included 6,198 men, 1,483 women, 90 children, 66 sadhus, three *sadhvis*, and 565 security forces personnel. So far, 3,77,080 *yatris* have visited the cave shrine since the yatra started on July 3, the official said.

# Legacy of Chola dynasty provides road map for modern India: PM Modi

Prime Minister announces statues for Rajaraja Chola and Rajendra Chola I; like Cholas, India too accords high priority to national security, gave firm response during Operation Sindoor, he says

The Hindu Bureau

GANGAIKONDA CHOLAPURAM

aying glowing tributes to the military might and administrative acumen of Chola dynasty emperors Rajendra Chola I and his father Rajaraja Chola, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the heights reached by the emperors were a source of inspiration, providing an ancient road map for India to become a developed nation.

"The economic and strategic advancements during the Chola era remain a source of inspiration to modern India. To become a developed nation, we must prioritise unity, strengthen our navy and defence forces, and look for new opportunities, while safeguarding our core values," Mr. Modi said at the valediction of the Aadi Thiruvathirai festival marking the birth anniversary of Rajendra Chola I at Gangaikonda Cholapuram in Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Modi also released a commemorative coin in honour of Rajendra Chola I. The king had built Gangaikonda Cholapuram, the ancient capital of the Imperial Cholas, along with the Brihadisvara Temple and the Cholagangam, a massive lake, after his victorious expedition to the Gangetic plains about 1,000 years ago.



Steeped in history: Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Brihadisvara Temple in Gangaikonda Cholapuram in Ariyalur on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Prime Minister said the Centre would install grand statues of the two emperors in Tamil Nadu to serve as pillars of the country's historical consciousness. "The legacy of Rajaraja Chola and Rajendra Chola is synonymous with India's identity and pride. The history and heritage of the Chola Empire proclaim the true potential of India," he said.

Cholas' democracy

Rajaraja Chola built a powerful navy; his son Rajendra Chola I strengthened it. The Cholas strengthened local administration and established extensive trade and cultural links. The Chola rulers extended their diplomatic and trade relations to Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Southeast Asia, he said. India, too, accorded the highest priority to national security, Mr. Modi said, adding that during Operation Sindoor, the world witnessed the firm and decisive response of the country to any threat to its sovereignty.

Mr. Modi said the dynasty was not only known for its military strength but also for being the mother of democracy by introducing the kudavolai system of electing local representatives. The global discourse at present revolved around water management and ecology preservation, but our ancestors understood the importance of these issues long ago, he said, citing the water management systems created by the Cholas.

"The Chola rulers had woven a thread of cultural unity. Our government is carrying forward their ideals," he said, referring to the conduct of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam and the Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam to reinforce the centuries-old bonds of unity. Over the past decade, the nation had worked in mission mode to preserve its cultural legacy. About 600 ancient statues and artefacts, which were stolen and sold abroad, had been brought back to India since 2014. Of them, 36 belonged to Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi, Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan, State Ministers Thangam Thennarasu and S.S. Sivasankar, and Chidambaram Lok Sabha Member Thol. Thirumavalavan were present.

# Stalin presses for release of funds as PM arrives in T.N.

The Hindu Bureau CHENNAI

Funds under the Samagra Shiksha scheme, ensuring the safety of Tamil Nadu's fishermen, implementation of railway projects, and allotment of land for the defence industrial corridor were among the demands that the Tamil Nadu government raised in a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a social media post, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said the memorandum had been handed over to the Prime Minister, who was on an official visit to Tiruchi and Ariyalur districts on Sunday. "I hope that the PM will respect the sentiments of the people and the State's development and will provide appropriate solutions," he said. Mr. Stalin, who had been hospitalised in Chennai since last week, finalised the demands on Saturday.

In the memorandum, Mr. Stalin requested the immediate release of ₹2,151.59 crore under the Samagra Shiksha for 2024-25 and the first tranche for 2025-26. "The CM has requested the release of funds without the Centre insisting on the State signing the MoU on PM SHRI," the State government said in a press release.

He has demanded the implementation of railway projects, including Tindivanam-Gingee-Tiruvannamalai, Erode-Palani, Madurai-Thoothukudi via Aruppukottai, Athipattu-Puthur, and Chennai-Cuddalore through Mamallapuram. He has also demanded that the track-doubling between Thiruvananthapuram and Kanniyakumari



Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalir

and the laying of a new line from Tirupattur to Hosur through Krishnagiri be expedited.

He also demanded detailed project reports for Coimbatore-Palladam-Karur, Coimbatore-Gobichettipalayam-Bhavani-Salem, and Madurai-Melur-Thuvarankurichi-Viralimalai-Inamkulathur lines, and for a mofussil rail service around Madurai.

#### **Additional EMUs**

Mr. Stalin sought more Electric Multiple Units (EMUs) to handle the peakhour rush in Chennai, and a fourth line between Tambaram and Chengalpattu.

The Chief Minister requested Mr. Modi for approval and funds for the Coimbatore and Madurai Metro Rail projects.

According to the detailed project reports, the 34.8-km Coimbatore Metro Rail project requires ₹10,740.49 crore and the 32-km Madurai Metro Rail project needs ₹11,368.35 crore. Citing the 2017 policy for Metro Rail projects, he sought grants for the projects to be implemented with 50:50 contribution from the Union and Tamil Nadu governments.

Mr. Stalin called for steps to release the fishermen in Sri Lankan custody and their boats.

# Flood warning issued to 11 districts in T.N. as inflow to Mettur reservoir increases

The Hindu Bureau

Inflow to the Stanley Reservoir in Salem in Tamil Nadu increased to 1,00,400 cusecs on Sunday evening. A flood warning was issued to 11 districts for the second consecutive day.

Following rain in the catchment areas, the Mettur dam reached its capacity of 120 feet on Friday for the fourth time this year. Due to heavy rain for the last two days, inflow to the dam started to increase, and on Saturday, it touched 45,000 cusecs. Following this, the Water Resources Department (WRD) issued a flood warning on Saturday evening.

The TNSDMA has begun sending geo-targeted SMS alerts to people along the river

On Sunday noon, inflow to the dam increased to 75,400 cusecs, and at 6 p.m., the inflow touched 1,00,400 cusecs. The dam's water level and storage level stood at 120 feet and 93.47 tmcft, respectively. The amount of water discharged from the dam was increased from 45,000 cusecs to 1,00,000 cusecs.

In its warning, the WRD said as the water level was at 120 feet, the inflow to the dam would be released

as surplus in the Cauvery. People living along the banks of the river and in low-lying areas nearby should move to higher places and all precautionary measures should be taken for the safety of their lives and property, the WRD added in the release.

The Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Authority (TNSDMA) has begun sending geo-targeted SMS alerts to mobile phones of people residing near vulnerable locations along the river.

Teams from the Tamil Nadu and National Disaster Response Forces have arrived in Tiruchi and are on standby for emergency response.

# Trinamool organises rallies across West Bengal against detention of migrant workers

Shiv Sahay Singh

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday condemned the "targeting" of migrant workers in BJP-ruled States, claiming that members of a migrant family were beaten up by the police in Delhi.

"Atrocious!! Terrible!! See how the Delhi police brutally beat up a kid and his mother, members of a migrant family from Malda's Chanchal. See how even a child is not spared from the cruelty of violence in the regime of linguistic terror unleashed by BJP in the country against Bengalis!" the Chief Minister said on social media.



Trinamool workers hold placards of Bengali alphabets during a protest in Kolkata. PTI

On Sunday, protest marches were organised across the State in line with plans announced by the Trinamool Congress. Ms. Banerjee had on July 21, at a Martyrs' Day rally, announced the start of a "language movement" against

the targeting of migrants in the BJP-ruled States. The Chief Minister had called for protests every weekend until next year's Assembly poll.

From the streets of Kolkata to districts across the State, hundreds of people participated in the protests which the Trinamool has described as a "language movement". Some also held posters highlighting the Bengali alphabet, implying that BJP-ruled States are targeting migrants for speaking in Bengali.

Migrants from West Bengal have been detained in different States like Odisha, Haryana and Delhi on suspicion of being Bangladeshi nationals.

# Jammu 'shoot-out': suspended policeman's rifle seized by SIT

Peerzada Ashiq

Facing an uproar over the killing of a 21-year-old civilian in police firing, the J&K Police's Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Sunday seized the service rifle of one of the two suspended policemen.

The victim, Mohammad Parvez, 21, a resident of Javed Nagar, Nikki Tawi, suffered bullet injuries and died at Surey Chak area in Jammu's Satwari amid conflicting reports on July 24. The police said the policemen were chasing drug peddlers in the area and the victim died in a "shootout".

Ealra angauntan

'Fake encounter'
The family of the victim accused the police of "fake encounter". The SIT visited the site on Sunday and questioned local residents and their statements were recorded. The area was al-

recorded. The area was also searched for clues.

Head Constable Baljin-

der Singh and Constable Pawan Singh, who were placed under suspension pending inquiry, were also taken to the site. The police said one service rifle was also seized as part of the investigation.

The two-wheeler, carrying the victim and his relative, was also taken into custody. The police also tried to piece together the sequence of events to establish the circumstances under which the youth got killed, officers said.

## Chirag's remarks on crimes in Bihar show his weakness: Tejashwi

 $\frac{\textbf{Press Trust of India}}{\textbf{PATNA}}$ 

A day after Union Minister Chirag Paswan slammed the Nitish Kumar government over the law and order situation in Bihar, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday claimed that the Hajipur MP's comment showed his "weakness" as a ruling NDA partner, and alleged that he has "no real concerns" for the State.

Mr. Yadav was reacting to the remarks of Mr. Paswan, the chief of Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), which drew a sharp reaction from Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U), exposing cracks in the NDA.

Mr. Paswan had on Saturday said, "I regret having to support a government which is unable to prevent crimes. The situation of Bihar has, indeed, become scary."

# Mahadayi row: now, Bommai condemns Goa CM's statement

The Hindu Bureau HUBBALLI

BJP MP and former Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday said efforts are being made to obtain the required clearance for the Mahadayi project from the National Board for Wildlife after meeting Bhupender Yadav, the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

He was addressing members of Malaprabha-Mahadayi Kalasa Banduri Raita gund of Dharwad district after visiting their protest site and receiving a memorandum from them on Sunday.

Horata Okkuta in Naval-

Statement condemned Mr. Bommai termed the statement of the Goa Chief Minister on the Union Minister's assurance of not allowing Mahadayi project as incorrect and that he condemns it strongly. All efforts required will be made to protect the interests of Kar-

nataka, he added.

Mr. Bommai said that when he was the Water Resources Minister, ₹300 crore was allocated for the project and the canal project work was initiated.

The work that is remain-

ing now is only to link the Kalasa canal to the Banduri stream, for which the Siddaramaiah government has to take steps, he said. Mr. Bommai said it was during the BJP tenure that the detailed project report was approved and even environmental clearance was given.

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## Naidu invites foreign firms to invest in ports, renewables

The Hindu Bureau VIJAYAWADA

In a major step toward deepening international partnerships and boosting foreign investments. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu met Indian High Commissioner to Singapore Shilpak Ambule on Sunday, the first day of his official visit.

The discussions centered on transformative opportunities across sectors such as defence, electronics, aerospace, green energy, and quantum technologies.

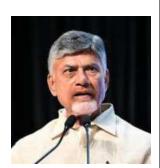
During the high-level meeting, Mr. Shilpak Ambule referred to the "CBN Brand" in Singapore's diplomatic and industrial circles, underscoring the respect and recognition it commanded.

He noted the alignment between Andhra Pradesh's development goals and Singapore's strategic strengths, expressing optimism about the potential robust bilateral cooperation.

Mr. Naidu emphasised that Andhra Pradesh was rapidly emerging as a premier investment destination, backed by forwardlooking policies and sector-specific incentives. He highlighted that the State was implementing a range of investor-friendly reforms aimed at attracting companies from Singapore and beyond, particularly in the areas of ports, renewable energy, and industrial corridors.

Referring to past collaboration on the Amaravati

Tin full flow



N. Chandrababu Naidu

capital city project, Mr. Naidu acknowledged the setback experienced during 2019-2024, but reiterated his commitment to reviving and strengthening the ties.

#### Re-establish trust

"This visit is an opportunity to clear misunderstandings, re-establish trust, and forge a renewed vision for development," Mr. Naidu

The Chief Minister outlined Andhra Pradesh's ambitious goal to generate 160 gigawatts of green energy. He revealed that green hydrogen projects had already commenced in Visakhapatnam in collaboration with the NTPC, and another was under way in Kakinada. He shared plans for India's first Quantum Valley in Amaravati under the India Quantum Mission, reinforcing the State's commitment to futuristic innovation.

Highlighting the strategic importance of regions such as Rayalaseema, he invited Singaporean firms to invest in high-potential sectors such as defence manufacturing, aerospace, electronics, and automobiles

# Liquor 'scam': SIT searches properties in Hyderabad

Police teams visit offices, industrial units, and other properties in and around the city; the SIT, which is investigating the alleged multi-crore scam, has so far arrested 12 accused in the case

Rajulapudi Srinivas VIIAYAWADA

special investigation team (SIT) has searched the properties in Hyderabad of the accused who have been arrested in the alleged liquor scam. The SIT, which is investigating the alleged multi-crore scam in Andhra Pradesh, has so far arrested 12 accused in the case.

Multiple police teams searched the offices, industrial units and other properties of the accused in and around Hyderabad on Saturday night. The investigating officers seized documents and other technical evidence related to the

"Searches were under way on the properties of Kessireddy Rajashekar



On trial: Kessireddy Rajashekhar Reddy, one of the 12 accused in the scam, being produced in court in Vijayawada in June. K.V.S.GIRI

Reddy, Buneti Chanikya and Balaji Govindappa, who are in judicial custody," a senior police officer told The Hindu on Sunday

on condition of anonymity. It was alleged that the accused framed a new liqu-

or policy during the YSR Congress Party regime, encouraged manual sales, collected commissions from the distillery companies, routed the ill-gotten money into shell companies. and allegedly caused about ₹3,500 crore loss to the government.

The Crime Investigation Department (CID), which filed the preliminary chargesheet in the ACB Special Court, said around 48 people were involved in the

The police said the accused purchased villas, luxury cars, land, and jewellery and transferred the money to shell companies and benami accounts.

"The role of some other officers of A.P. State Beverages Corporation Limited [APBCL], Excise, Revenue and other department officers is being probed," the police said. A senior police official on condition of anonymity said they were questioning public representatives and bureaucrats in the case.



Rain fury: The Baitarani river flowing above the danger mark at Akhuapada in Bhadrak district of Odisha on Sunday. ANI

## Swollen rivers wreak havoc in Odisha; over 11,000 affected

Press Trust of India BHUBANESWAR/BHADRAK

More than 11,000 people in six districts of Odisha have been affected by the floods, an official said on Sunday.

Over 1,000 people have been rescued from the affected areas in Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Sundargarh, and Keonjhar districts to safer places, he said.

Addressing a press conference, Special Relief Commissioner D.K. Singh said the flood was caused by the overflowing waters of the Subarnarekha, Baitarani and Jalka rivers following heavy rainfall.

"The rescued people have been provided shelter at different cyclone centres and other buildings. The government is providing dry food items and cooked food to them," he said.

Teams from the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force, the National Disaster Response Force, and the fire service department have been deployed in the affected districts.

A total of 106 rescue boats have also been deployed.

Mr. Singh said the water levels of all major rivers, except the Subarnarekha, are declining.

"Night patrolling has been tightened in the flood-affected areas. Arrangements have been made to provide safe drinking water to people. Sufficient anti-venom has been kept in stock," he said.

The water level of the Subarnarekha at Rajghat was 11.17 metre and against the danger level of 10.36 metre, an evening flood bulletin said.

Farmlands submerged Several villages in Bhandaripokhari and Dhamnagar blocks in Bhadrak district remain waterlogged, with farmlands, roads houses submerged.

A landslide was reported from Sundargarh district, blocking the Koida-Chunaghati stretch of the National Highway-520. The debris was cleared from the road immediately, officials said.

# LDF, UDF condemn arrest of 2 Kerala nuns over forced conversion charges

**The Hindu Bureau** THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The arrest of two Keralite

nuns on charges of human trafficking and kidnapping for forced religious conversion at the Durg railway station in Chhattisgarh on Friday has drawn sharp criticism from Church leaders, the ruling Left Democratic Front and the Opposition in Kerala. Fr. Robin Rodrigues, a

spokesperson of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI), told presspersons in Raipur on Sunday that the nuns were travelling with three other women, from Durg to Agra when persons, suspected to be Bajrang Dal workers, accosted them angrily.

He said they accused the

nuns, Sister Vandana Francis and Sister Preeta Mary, of taking women to Agra to convert them to Christianity. CBCI Women's Council secretary Asha Paul said the women were travelling with the sisters on their

own volition.

All India Congress Committee general secretary (organisation) and MP K.C. Venugopal said the arrest

up" charges was the latest incident in the long series of persecution of minorities in BJP-ruled States in North India

of the nuns on "trumped-

LDF leader Jose K. Mani, MP, posted on social media that he hds sought the urgent intervention of Prime Minister to stop mob attacks against Christians in BJP-ruled States.

# Farmer on night watch killed in attack <sup>+</sup> by wild elephants in Chittoor district

The Hindu Bureau

A farmer, Ramakrishna Raju, 55, was killed on the spot when a 16-strong herd of wild elephants attacked him in a field at Kothuru village of Somala mandal in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh late on Saturday night.

The incident triggered panic in several villages in the vicinity, as the herd was reportedly camping at a waterbody nearby.

As per information, the herd emerged from the nearby thickets, strayed into the field, and attacked the unsuspecting victim who was on night watch. The sudden charge left the farmer helpless.



Tragic demise: Ramakrishna Raju, the farmer who was trampled to death by elephants.

The villagers informed the forest officials that the herd had been resorting to crop raids after dusk for the past three days.

Deputy Chief Minister K. Pawan Kalyan condoled family members. He announced that ex gratia would be given, and directed the forest officials to initiate corrective measures to prevent wild elephants from venturing into human habitations.

Meanwhile, the incident led to angry protests on Sunday, with the villagers staging a blockade on the Tirupati-Punganur Road along with the body of the farmer, blaming the Forest Department for its "gross negligence".

No tangible action

Raising slogans such as "Where are the Kumki elephants", the villagers urged Chief Minister N.

surveys which were con-

ducted similarly from offices and had kept out wo-

The centuries-old prac-

tice of dedication of wo-

men to temples as Devada-

sis has been banned in the

State since 1982 when the

Karnataka Devadasis (Pro-

hibition of Dedication) Act

was enacted. Subsequent-

ly, the government con-

ducted surveys in 1993-94

and 2007-08, when 22,873

and 46,660 Devadasis, res-

pectively, were identified. However, Yamunurap-

pa, coordinator of Vimuk-

men aged below 45.

the farmer's death and ex- Chandrababu Naidu and intervene and do justice to the bereaved family. They demanded that a scientific action plan be worked out to put an end to the vexed man-animal conflict in the western mandals of the district.

The villagers alleged that despite their repeated alerts about the movement of the wild elephants, there was no tangible action from the Forest Department.

Senior forest officials rushed to Kothuru and pacified the agitators by assuring them compensation and corrective measures. The farmer's body was later shifted to the area hospital for autopsy.

## Congress, BJP engage in a war of words in Telangana over shortage of urea for farming

Flood alert: Water gushes out of the Tungabhadra dam in Hosapete in Karnataka as authorities begin controlled release following a sharp

rise in the inflow on Sunday. People residing in low-lying areas and near riverbanks have been asked to exercise caution. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

R. Ravikanth Reddy HYDERABAD

Urea politics in Telangana touched a peak on Sunday with the ruling Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) engaging in a war of words to pin the blame on each other, as a challenge for an open debate was thrown by both political parties.

BJP State president N. Ramchander Rao went on the offensive, rejecting the government's claims of shortage of urea and challenging Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao for a debate on the supply and availability in



Centre has not supplied allocated urea on time.

the State. Speaking in Mahabubnagar, he accused the Congress of misleading farmers, alleging that the ruling party in the State was spreading misinforma-

tion to tarnish the Union government's image.

Minister hit back with specific figures, stating that the Centre had not supplied the allocated quantity of urea on time. The Miclaimed nister shortfalls in Central supply have created bottlenecks at the distribution level, desthe pite

Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers J.P. Nadda on Saturday, Mr. Rao said there was a 36% deficit in supply to Telangana. The deficit supply was seen in all the months, he said.

# Activists demand Devadasi survey in Karnataka without condition of age limit

The Hindu Bureau BENGALURU

As preparations are under way for the third survey of Devadasis in Karnataka, members of the community have urged the State government to conduct the door-to-door survey without fixing any age limit to identify the Devadasis.

The Bengaluru-based National Law School of India University (NLSIU), which is spearheading efforts to bring new legislation for Devadasis, has also petitioned Chief Minister Siddaramaiah against any age limit.

While the fresh survey – a long-pending demand of the community - had been announced in the 2024-



Makkala Vedike at a press meet in Bengaluru. SUDHAKARA JAIN

2025 Budget, the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission recently directed the government to complete the survey and come out with recommendations before this Octob-

It is learnt that the survey is being planned to be

conducted through the offices of taluk-level child development officers, where Devadasis are expected to go and provide their de-

While circulars so far have been silent on the age, community members

tha Devadasi Mahila Mathu Makkala Vedike, claimed that a similar number of Devadasis have remained outside the list owing to several issues.

## Jail escape: prison officer suspended over remark

The Hindu Bureau THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Amid mounting criticism over systemic failures in the prison system following the sensational escape of rape and murder convict Govindachamy from the Kannur Central Prison, the Kerala government on Sunday suspended a prison official for publicly commenting on the case.

Deputy Inspector General of Prisons (South Zone) Dinesh B. ordered the suspension of Abdul Sattar A., Deputy Prison Officer of Kottarakara Special Sub-Jail, pending inquiry, over the remarks he made on a news channel.

However, Agriculture

State's preparedness. In a letter addressed to

have been pointing to past

## News

## New co-op policy violates Constitution, says SKM

The Hindu Bureau

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha alleged on Sunday that the National Cooperation Policy, unveiled by Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Friday, violates the Constitution, centralises power, and snatches rights of State governments.

It said the policy lacks the perspective to protect the rights of farmers and workers on livelihood, minimum support price, minimum wage and sharing of surplus. It urged the political parties and State governments to fight against the attack on cooperative federalism

"The Union Cooperative Ministry is applicable only to the Union Territories and the Multi-State Cooperative Societies. In the true spirit, the Multi-State Cooperative Societies also violate the Constitutional provisions regarding cooperative societies. Such efforts are aimed at seizure of people's resources by the ruling class parties, especially the BJP-RSS. The trend of centralisation of power needs to be vehemently resisted," it said.

# 'CAPF troops with severe injuries to get full benefits'

<u>Personnel who undergo amputation shall remain in service</u>; the Centre will ensure the best tech and medical facilities for 'limb replacement surgery' for the injured, Union Home Secretary says

<u>Vijaita Singh</u> NEW DELHI

entral Armed Police Forces (CAPF) personnel who get severely injured during operations and have to undergo amputation will be allowed to continue in service till their retirement with all benefits, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan said on Sunday.

Mr. Mohan said the government will ensure the best medical facilities and technology available in the world for "limb replacement surgery" for the CAPF officials and jawans, and it will be ensured that loss of limbs is corrected as far as possible.

"Government will also ensure a minimum financial package for such personnel and they will be accommodated in the organisation," Mr. Mohan said, while addressing the 87th Raising Day of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Delhi.

The CAPF personnel have to adhere to certain



Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan and CRPF D-G G.P. Singh (left) at the CRPF Raising Day in Delhi on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ded that a large number of

CRPF personnel, including

women, have been de-

ployed for law and order

duty in Manipur after an

ethnic conflict erupted in

the State in May 2023. He

said that during his recent

visit to the State, he not-

iced that the personnel

have to move from one lo-

cation to another and face

various hardships due to

lack of adequate facilities.

has been asked to submit a

"CRPF Director-General

physical standards for timely promotion and

On the forefront

At least five CRPF personnel were grievously injured during a 21-day anti-Maoist operations on the Chhattisgarh-Telangana border that concluded on May 11. Named 'Operation Black Forest', the combing operations were carried out in the Kareguta Hills (KGH).

The Home Secretary ad-

report on the facilities required for the jawans, particularly women. Home Ministry will en-

Home Ministry will ensure best facilities," Mr. Mohan said.

**Left-wing extremism** 

He added that efforts are also under way to improve the living conditions at the camps in left-wing extremism (LWE) affected areas.

"CRPF is playing a key role in ending LWE menace before March 2026," he said, adding that 149 forward operating bases have been operationalised in the LWE areas, forcing the Maoists to retreat.

The official said that leftwing extremism is on the verge of its end in Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal.

He said Home Minister Amit Shah mentioned at the National Security Strategies Conference on Sunday that India's rising stature would lead to security challenges and the CAPFs would play an important role in thwarting those challenges.

# Centre rejects Cong. claims about organic cotton scam in M.P.

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan NEW DELHI

The Centre on Sunday termed the allegations by the Congress that normal cotton was being sold as organic cotton in Madhya Pradesh as being "unfounded, unsubstantiated and misleading", saying that the Agriculture & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority takes concrete steps whenever wilful violations of organic cotton standards are found.

Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on Saturday called for a court-monitored CBI probe into an alleged ₹2.1 lakh crore scam in the sale of normal cotton as organic cotton in Madhya Pradesh.

"It may be mentioned that in a press briefing by an Opposition leader yesterday, unfounded, unsubstantiated and misleading aspersions are being cast against the Organic Certification programme, the National Programme of Organic Production," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement

"Generalised allegations

against a robust regulatory system of the country for a particular crop/region/ group of operators only serve to undermine the credibility of legitimate regulatory institutions and the broader organic movement in India," it added.

"It is clarified that APE-DA or the Department of Commerce does not extend any subsidy to farmers taking up organic cultivation under the NPOP," the statement said.

While the government did admit that, despite its checks and balances, "there have been reported incidences of malpractices and misuse of grower group certification", APE-DA has taken strict and concrete action against violators.

It said that new procedures have been devised for additional checks for certification of organic cotton production.

"Wherever credible evidence of non-compliances/ wilful violation of organic standards has been brought to light, APEDA has undertaken extensive investigation and taken concrete measures," the government clarified.

## ED searches conclude at firms linked to Anil Ambani

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Reliance Group firms Reliance Infrastructure (RInfra) and Reliance Power (RPower) on Sunday said the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had concluded searches on their premises and that the companies would continue to cooperate with the agency.

Both the Anil Ambaniled group's companies said they, including their officials, would continue to fully cooperate with the

RInfra said: "Action by

ED has no impact on the business operations, financial performance, shareholders, employees, or any other stakeholders of the company. The same appears to pertain to allegations concerning transactions of Reliance Communications Limited (RCOM) or Reliance Home Finance Limited (RHFL) which are over 10 years

The ED began searching multiple premises linked to the group on Thursday over alleged money laundering and financial irregularities.

old."

## 'External Affairs Ministry nearly lost the plot during Indus Waters Treaty talks'

Suhasini Haidar NEW DELHI

The External Affairs Ministry nearly "lost the plot" over the Indus Waters Treaty talks with Pakistan in 2016, as senior Ministry officials entered into a tussle with the World Bank, before the issue was retrieved. The claim has been made by former Fi-Chandra Garg, India-appointed Executive Director at the World Bank (2014-2017), in his latest book, which recounts for the first time the tensions between the Narendra Modi government and World Bank President Jim Kim over the Kishenganga hydropower

The point of contention was whether the World Bank, which has a limited role in guiding any disputes or differences between India and Pakistan, would decide to appoint the "court of arbitration"



Subhash Chandra Garg

Pakistan had asked for, or a "neutral expert", as India wanted.
In his new book, *No, Mi*-

nister: Navigating Power, Politics and Bureaucracy with a Steely Resolve, Mr. Garg says he was sidelined during the initial stages of the Indus Water Treaty negotiations in 2016. He also claims that he was told to only attend meetings to be led by India's Deputy Chief of Mission Taranjit Sandhu.

"[However], by the middle of November, the MEA team was getting nervous. It was not able to nudge the World Bank team in the direction it wanted, i.e., to appoint a neutral expert and began to sense that the Bank was tilting towards Pakistan," Mr. Garg wrote. The book claims that Mr. Jaishankar asked Mr. Garg to take charge of matters.

According to Mr. Garg, it was his own intervention, in a one-on-one meeting with Mr. Kim, that eventually helped ensure a neutral expert, Ian Solomon, was appointed, after the World Bank accepted Pakistan's demand for a court of arbitration at The

Hague.

The World Bank had first ruled that having a neutral expert and court together could lead to "contradictory outcomes".

The External Affairs Ministry did not respond to a request for comments on Mr. Garg's claims.

(With inputs from Jacob Koshy and T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan)

## Private varsity didn't file FIR on suicide of student, SC informed

<u>Press Trust of India</u> NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has been informed that the Sharda University in Greater Noida, where a girl student allegedly died by suicide, did not filed a police complain in the incident but her parents did and that security guards recovered her body from the

university's hostel.

The information was given in a status report filed by senior advocate Aparna Bhatt, who has been appointed amicus curiae in the matter by the apex court to assist it.

A Bench headed by Justice J. B. Pardiwala is likely to hear the case on Monday.

In her 30-page report, Ms. Bhatt said that the FIR was registered after the deceased parents' complaint, and two persons allegedly named in the suicide note have been arrested.

The university officials admitted that the warden

Two individuals allegedly named in the suicide note have been arrested

did not call anyone - neither university authorities nor the police or a hospital for an ambulance. The warden eventually called the parents to tell them their daughter was in a serious condition, but did not mention suicide, the report stated.

A 20-year-old dental student of the university was found dead in her hostel room on July 19. A police officer said in a note recovered, she had alleged "mental duress" she had been put through by two of her teachers.

The report the probe is under way and will be completed soon. (Those in distress may con-

tact Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health suicide prevention helpline 011-40769002.)

# exposed sensitive data of voluntary organ donors

CERT fixes website flaw that

S. Vijay Kumar CHENNAI

A critical vulnerability in the Organ Retrieval Banking Organisation (ORBO) website of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, that exposed sensitive data of voluntary organ donors across India along with their identity, health profile and contact details was detected and resolved, thanks to an independent security researcher who flagged the flaw.

ORBO is the nodal facility for cadaver organ and tissue donation-related activities of the AIIMS.

In mid-May, the researcher, Aniket Tomar, came across the vulnerability and alerted the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT).

In an email about the critical data exposure, he said the vulnerability disclosed personally identifiable and medical informa-



The data leak provided access to all organ and tissue donors registered with the AIIMS.

tion of registered organ and tissue donors without any authentication mechanism for accessing it.

The data leak provided unrestricted access to the complete list of organ and tissue donors registered with the AIIMS.

The information included full name, residential address, date of birth, blood group, mobile number and emergency contact details of the donor putting hundreds of individuals at significant risks of

identity theft, phishing attacks, and social engineering exploitation.

"Such a data breach from a reputed medical institution not only undermines public trust in digital health systems but also violates data protection principles under the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023," Mr. Tomar said in his alert to

"I was able to view several lakh donor entries...
The data was not limited to Delhi, the entries appeared to include donors from various regions across India, indicating a nationwide scope," Mr. Tomar told *The Hindu*.

On June 18, 2025, the CERT wrote to Mr. Tomar appreciating him for detecting the critical vulnerability.

The vulnerability was successfully mitigated and the exposed data were no longer publicly accessible, the researcher said.

# 91.69% voters submitted forms for revision of electoral rolls in Bihar: EC

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Sunday said 91.69% of electors on the 2025 voter list in Bihar had submitted enumeration forms as part of the ongoing special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and these voters will be included on the draft list to be published on August 1.

Of the 7.89 crore registered electors as on June 24, over 7.24 crore had submitted enumeration forms indicating overwhelming participation, the poll body said in a statement.

This, in effect, means the names of 65 lakh voters registered in the July 2025 list would not make it to the draft list which is scheduled to be published on August 1. Of these voters,



protest against Bihar SIR in Kolkata on Sunday. PTI

22 lakh were deceased, 36 lakh had permanently shifted or were not found, and 7 lakh were enrolled at multiple places, the poll body said.

In the 10-point statement, the EC listed the various aims of the SIR, such as inclusion of every eligible voter, participation of all political parties, inclu-

sion of young and urban voters, and scrutiny of draft rolls and redressal of all grievances during the claims and objections period.

The exact status of these

electors will be known after scrutiny of forms by the Electoral Registration Officers (ERO) or Assistant Electoral Registration Officers by August 1. However, genuine electors can still be added back in the electoral rolls during the Claims and Objection period from August 1 to September 1. The names of the electors found enrolled at multiple places will be retained only at one place, the EC said.

The poll body said young electors who have attained 18 years of age on July 1, 2025, or would be attaining 18 years on or before October 1, 2025 are be-

ing encouraged to file their application in Form 6, along with the prescribed Declaration Form. The commission said it

would conduct special campaigns across Bihar from August 1 to September 1 to enrol such young electors, so that all eligible electors can be enrolled and no one is left out.

It said that SMSs ex-

plaining the SIR process were sent to 5.7 crore registered mobile numbers of all those electors who had registered their mobile numbers. During the enumeration period, the Chief Electoral Officer, District Election Officers and EROs conducted numerous campaigns for spreading awareness among electors about the SIR and also conducted several meetings with political parties to explain the process.

# TCS to lay off over 12,000 employees this year; mid, senior-level staff to be hit

<u>Press Trust of India</u> NEW DELHI

India's largest IT services firm, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), is set to lay off about 2%, or 12,261 employees, of its global workforce this year, with the majority of those impacted belonging to middle and senior grades.

As of June 30, TCS's workforce stood at 6,13,069. It increased its workforce by 5,000 employees in the April-June quarter.

## AI deployment "TCS is on a journey to be-

come a future-ready organisation. This includes strategic initiatives on multiple fronts, including investing in new-tech areas, entering



of TCS stood at 6,13,069.

new markets, deploying AI at scale for our clients and ourselves, deepening our partnerships, creating next-gen infrastructure, and realigning our workforce model," the company said in a statement.

"As part of the journey,

we will also be releasing associates from the organisation whose deployment may not be feasible. This will impact about 2% of our

global workforce, primarily in the middle and senior grades, over the course of the year," it said.

TCS will provide appro-

rcs will provide appropriate benefits, outplacement, counselling, and support to the impacted employees, it added.

The move comes at a time when India's top IT services companies have delivered single-digit revenue growth in Q1FY26, capping off a somewhat-sobering June quarter as macroeconomic instability and geopolitical tensions weighed on global tech demand and delayed client decision-making.

For TCS, the revenue rose 1.3% year-on-year to ₹63,437 crore, bottomline improved 5.9% to ₹12,760 crore in Q1FY26.

## Inter-State synthetic drug syndicate busted, 3 held

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), along with the police in Rajasthan and Maharashtra, has busted an inter-State drug syndicate allegedly involved in the clandestine manufacture of synthetic drugs.

On July 22, several precursor chemicals, including chloroform, ammonium chloride, propylene chloride, toluene and bromine used to manufacture Mephedrone were recovered from a laboratory located in a secluded village in Rajasthan's Barmer district, the NCB said.

Interrogation of two members held in the raid led to the arrest of one more person by the Raigad police in Maharashtra.

# LS debate today; Cong. says those behind J&K attack yet to be held

Better late than never, says Jairam Ramesh on Parliament debate on the Pahalgam attack and Operation Sindoor; from May 10, Trump has claimed 26 times that he stopped Operation Sindoor by threatening to cut off trade, Cong. leader says

**The Hindu Bureau** NEW DELHI

ith the Lok Sabha scheduled to start a 16-hour debate on the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor on Monday, the Congress on Sunday said the terrorists involved in the attack had not yet been apprehended.

The party also pointed out U.S. President Donald Trump had claimed 26 times that he had ended the India-Pakistan hostilities by "threatening to stop trade with them".

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is likely to speak on Tuesday during the debate. "The INC had been demanding a special two-



day session of Parliament immediately after Operation Sindoor was abruptly halted. That demand was ignored. Nevertheless, better late than never," Congress's communications chief Jairam Ramesh said.

"The Pahalgam terror attacks took place on April 22, 2025. The terrorists directly responsible have still not been brought to justice. Reportedly they were involved in earlier terror attacks in Poonch (Dec 2023) and Gangagir and Gulmarg (Oct 2024)," he added.

"Since May 10th, President [Donald] Trump has claimed 26 times that he stopped Operation Sindoor by threatening to cut off trade with India, and claimed that five fighter

jets may have been shot down. He has hosted the Pakistan Army Chief for lunch which has never been done before. The U.S. Central Command Chief, Gen. Michael Kurilla, had called Pakistan a phenomenal partner in counterterrorism operations. And just day before yesterday the U.S. Secretary lauded Pakistan in his meeting with its Deputy PM," Mr.

Referring to points that are likely to be raised by Opposition members in the debate, he recalled that on May 30, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan had made significant revelations in Singapore on tactical mistakes in the first two days of Op-

Ramesh said.

eration Sindoor, and on June 29, the Indian defence attache in Indonesia, Group Captain Shiv Kumar, had said that political decisions had hampered military operations.

"On July 4, 2025, the Deputy Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Rahul R Singh, revealed that India had actually contended and bat-China during Operation Sindoor, both in terms of hardware and software. This was a completely new scenario," Mr. Ramesh further said.

He said that "the outlandish claims made by sections of the media during Operation Sindoor led to a mockery of whatever serious narrative was sought to be built up".

# Heritage conservationist Tara Murali, 75, passes away

The Hindu Bureau CHENNAI

Tara Murali, 75, architect and wife of N. Murali, Director of The Hindu Group of Publications and president of The Music Academy, passed away at their home in Chennai late in the evening of Saturday. She had been ailing for some time.

She is survived by her husband, their son Krishna Murali, their daughter Kanta Murali, three grand-children, and her elder broth-Ramesh Pattabhier, raman.

Murali Tara schooled at Sacred Heart Matriculation Higher Secondary School at Churchpark in Chennai, did her pre-university course at Stella Maris College, and took her Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch.) degree at the School of Architecture



Tara Murali

and Planning, University of Madras. She had an active architectural practice over four decades and pursued public causes related to town planning, and environmental and consumer protection. Among the causes she has taken up were the conservation of Palani Hills, protection of heritage buildings including the Director General of Police's office, and Queen Mary's College.

Thoroughly secular and modern in outlook, she had varied interests: mus-

**She was known for** pursuing public causes, promoting civic rights, heritage conservation, and <u>environmentalism</u>

ic, literature, environment, heritage and consumer action. She served for several years as a Trustee of the Citizen Consumer and Civic Action Group (CAG), was a member of the Broadcast Complaints Council and INTACH governing council, and was active in book groups. She was President of the Tamil Nadu Table Tennis Association and also of the Table Tennis Players Welfare Association. She translated Ma. Po. Sivagnanam's Tamil book on Veerapandiya Katta-

The cremation will be at the Besant Nagar crematorium on Monday.

bomman into English.

## Eastern palette to find expression in President's invitation for 'At Home'

Nistula Hebbar NEW DELHI

dent Droupadi Murmu's name for her customary evening reception, or "At Home", on the 79th Independence Day will showcase the skills of craftsperfrom sons Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal - a nod to eastern India, following a similar gesture toward southern India during this Republic celebrations.

The invitation sent in Presi-

The invitations have been curated by the National Institute of Design (NID) and produced with contributions from artisans across the four States. Most of the artisans, many of them women, worked alongside the NID team. Of them, nine Madhubani artists from Bihar and 15 bamboo artisans from Jharkhand worked out of NID Bengaluru

Ashok Kumar Biswas, Padma Shri awardee in 2024 and the artist entrusted with producing nearly 750 pieces of Tikuli artwork from Bihar to accompany the invitation, says the brief from NID – which coordinated the initiative with the Rashtrapati Bhavan – was precise.

"They wanted a lightweight example of Tikuli painting, which is usually



Unique work: A Sikki grass artisan from Bihar working on the box designed as a part of the invitation kit. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

based on scenes of rural life in Bihar or cultural and religious motifs, festivals, etc. They asked for three types of samples: on the traditional Tikuli base of MDA [dark brown in colour] with enamel paint, on handmade paper, and on small pieces of cardboard and plywood. I prepared a fourth sample, on paper, made to look like the dark brown Tikuli base, and sent it off. They approved the fourth sample and asked for 750 pieces to be sent in 15 days, which we completed at the Tikuli training centre that I run," he said.

"It is a matter of great pride for me to be asked to do this by the President of India's office, for an occasion like Independence Day. It's a good initiative that places India's folk art at the centre of the Republic," he added.

The invitation will be encased in a Sikki grass

box made by artisans from Raiyam village in Madhubani district, with 30 artists involved in the work. Woven delicately from Sikki grass, the box will contain a bamboo frame holding the invitation itself, with painted borders by artists from Dumka in Jhark-

In addition to the box and frame, the invitation set includes small artefacts such as a bookmark featuring Madhubani painting, and a tussar stole with Madhubani painting and traditional block printing of symbols such as Matsya (fish), Kamal (lotus), and Basant (spring). Also included are Tala Patachitra paintings by artisans from Raghurajpur in Puri, postcard-sized Patachitra paintings by artists from Pingla in West Midnapore, Paitkar paintings from East Singhbhum in Jharkhand, and postcard-sized Tikuli artworks from Patna.

# No clarity yet on grant of citizenship under CAA as many lack documents

Vijaita Singh Aroon Deep NEW DELHI

More than a year after the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 took effect, the Home Ministry has refused to share data on the total number of those who benefited from the Act.

A BJP MP from West Bengal told The Hindu that fewer than 100 people in his constituency had received citizenship under the CAA, though the number of intended beneficiaries, mostly belonging to the Matua sect, was around 1 lakh. There are around 2.8 crore people from the Matua and Namasudra communities who stand to benefit from the CAA in the State.

The CAA Ru notified on March 11, 2024 to give citizenship to undocumented members of Hindu, Sikh, Parsi, Jain, Buddhist and Christian communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh under the Act that was passed in 2019.

Ranaghat MP Jagannath Sarkar told The Hindu that the requirement to submit any one document, which will help trace an applicant's roots to Bangladesh, should be dropped and the cut-off date for applying under CAA should be amended too. The existing cut-off date is December 31, 2014.

"Most people do not have any of the documents



Union Home Minister Amit Shah hands over citizenship certificate under the CAA to a beneficiary in Ahmedabad on Sunday. PTI

sought by the Home Ministry to fulfil citizenship criteria. These people came to India to escape persecution, with barely any belongings. How will they provide documents?" Mr. Sarkar said.

Following reports from Jest Rengal Schedule 1A of the CAA Rules was tweaked on July 8 2024, and the list of nine documents to prove that the applicant is a national of Afghanistan or Bangladesh or Pakistan was expanded to include any document issued by the State or the Centre or quasi-judicial authority in India identifying or representing the applicant or their parents or grandparents or greatgrandparents as a national of these three countries.

**Processing applications** Anticipating non-cooperation in Opposition-ruled States, the CAA Rules entrusted Central government officials posted in

States, including officials of the Directorate of Census. Postal Department, Railways, National Informatics Centre and Intelligence Bureau, to process applications. On April 2, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said in the Rajya Sabha that "thousands were granted citizenship", while responding to Trinamool Congress member Sushmita Dev's remarks that merely 350 people had got it. The Minister did not specify the number. The Act was mostly expected to benefit people in West Bengal and Assam as those who had arrived from Pakistan had entered legally and possessed one of the documents required

In West Bengal, most intended beneficiaries already have voter cards and other identity documents. One of the criteria to avail citizenship under the CAA is that the applicant has to declare that he or she is a

to acquire citizenship.

foreigner. The Pakistani applicants from the six non-Muslim communities would have been eligible under the Citizenship Act, 1955 also after living in India continuously for 11 years. The Ministry has re-

fused to share information on how many people had either applied or had been granted citizenship. The Hindu filed a Right to Information Act application in June 2024. In September 2024, the Ministry refused to provide the information.

An appeal was also filed with the Central Information Commission (CIC), which hears appeals from applicants who have issues with RTI responses from public authorities of the Union government. The CIC's Chief Commission Heeralal Samariya heard The Hindu's case on July 9. The RTI was limited to applications received on the indiancitizenshiponline.nic.in portal, which is run by the Home Ministry as the entire process is online.

The Ministry's representative, Ram Dayal Meena, did not specifically dispute any of The Hindu's arguments during the hearing, and when asked by the CIC if he wanted to speak, declined to make any oral submissions. A written response reiterated the Home Ministry's earlier refusals, which simply stated that the information was "not being maintained as desired by you".

## T.N. CM Stalin discharged from hospital in Chennai

The Hindu Bureau **CHENNAI** 

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin was discharged from Apollo Hospitals in Chennai on Sunday evening, after undergoing a therapeutic procedure on July

In a social media post, Mr. Stalin said he had returned home safely. He thanked political party leaders, elected representatives, judges, government officials, actors, and the people of Tamil Nadu, who wished for his good health. He also thanked the doctors and nurses who were involved in his treatment. "I will continue to discharge my duties for your welfare!" he added.

A press release from the hospital said Mr. Stalin underwent the therapeutic procedure done by an expert team led by interventional cardiologist G. Sengottuvelu, and declared fit for discharge.

He has been advised to resume his normal routine after three days. Mr. Stalin was admitted

to Apollo Hospitals on Greams Road on July 21 after he experienced giddiness during his routine morning walk. He underwent a series of investigations, including angiogram diagnostics.

The procedure was performed based on the opinion of a committee of medical experts.

## Raj Thackeray visits Uddhav on birthday amid talks of a tie-up

**The Hindu Bureau** MUMBAI

With speculation on of a potential alliance between the parties led by them, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray visited Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav at his residence on Sunday on the former Chief Minister's 65th birthday.

The cousins spent at least 20 minutes together.

Mr. Uddhav called it an "overwhelming moment", while Sena (UBT) leader Bhaskar Jadhav said, "It is the happiest and hopeful moment from the Marathi manoos perspective."

The meeting is seen as

significant as it comes at a time when the Thackeray cousins are reportedly in talks to reunite for the local elections in Maharashtra.

Mr. Jadhav reiterated that the meeting was a full stop to all the doubts about whether the cousins would come together. "Besides, alliance talks need to be confidential and held with utmost seriousness," he added.

This is the second time within a month that the Thackeray cousins had shared a political stage. They held a "victory" rally in Worli on July 5, after raising their voice on the issue of Marathi identity and "imposition" of Hindi.

Underscoring that her go-

The Hindu Bureau

vernment has allocated ₹700 crore in the Delhi budget for the redevelopment of slum clusters, State Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday urged slum dwellers not to panic as they will be rehabilitated if evicted for development projects.

"When a crisis came upon you, I came to meet you because the Delhi government is not in favour of removing slums without any reason," Ms. Gupta told slum dwellers while visiting a cluster near a railway crossing in her Assembly constituency, Shalimar Bagh in north Delhi.

The Chief Minister said the Railways has issued a notice for the slum's demo-



Samaypur Badli on Sunday. PTI

lition as it is on railway

"The Railways is expanding the Azadpur railway station," she said and assured the slum dwellers that her government would approach the Railway Ministry for rehabilitation. "You will get justice."

vey of the slum was conducted in 2020, but the then Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government neither decided "to halt it nor approached the Railways". "But we have begun working on a plan for you, so that you do not face any

She claimed that a sur-

hardship," she said.

Don't panic, will rehabilitate if evicted: Delhi CM to slum dwellers

Ms. Gupta urged the slum dwellers to be cautious of the Opposition parties, as they "aim to scare"

The Opposition parties – the AAP, Congress, and Left parties – have been accusing the BJP government in Delhi of backtracking on its poll promise of 'Jahan Jhuggi Wahan Makaan (A home where the slum stands)', and carrying out demolition drives in slum clusters in various parts of the city "without proper rehabilitation".

Last week, the Delhi High Court ordered a stay on the demolition drive in Indira Colony, north-west Delhi, till July 31, the next date of hearing.

"During the term in office of the Opposition parties, slum dwellers were

just seen as a vote bank and the availability of alcohol in these areas was encouraged. Now that our government is working on development schemes for slum dwellers, these leaders are trying to incite unrest and mislead them," Ms. Gupta alleged.

In response, the AAP requested the Chief Minister to publish the list of slums that have been demolished and the names of people who have been allotted flats.

"They [Ministers] are trying to fool the people by giving flats to just a few of them and making others homeless," the party said.

'Insensitivity to poor' Meanwhile, Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Sunday alleged that hundreds of slum dwellers are being rendered homeless in demolition drives by the Delhi government. He said this exposes the BJP's "insensitivity" to the poor and the "arrogance of power".

In a rebuttal, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said, "Rahul Gandhi should tell what the Congress did in 60 years to give a better life to the urban poor."

"Imagine, how would you feel if the roof over the head of your parents, children or siblings is suddenly taken away – if your entire family is rendered homeless in a single moment? Hundreds of poor families living in the jhuggis of Delhi are going through this pain today," Mr. Gandhi said in his post in Hindi on social media platform X.



### Cong. slams govt. over vacant SC, ST posts in universities

The Congress on Sunday slammed the Centre over vacant reserved posts for SCs, STs, and OBCs in central universities and alleged that the "not found suitable" clause was being "weaponised" against these categories to deny fair employment opportunities. Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh cited a written reply by Minister of State for Education, Sukanta Majumdar, to attack the government. In a post on X, Mr. Ramesh said the Modi government has revealed the staggering level of vacancies among SC, ST, and OBC reserved faculty positions in central universities. PTI

### Khadse's son-in-law among seven held in Pune drug raid

The arrest of Pranjal Khewalkar, the son-in-law of NCP-SP leader Eknath Khadse, and six others at a party in Pune over alleged possession of narcotic substances has stirred up a political storm in Maharashtra. The Opposition criticised the arrest, calling it a "message" to those speaking against the government, while Mr. Khadse termed it "a politically motivated conspiracy". The police said cocaine-like drugs, 70 gm of marijuana, 10 mobile phones, two four-wheelers, a hookah, and liquor were seized.

# Textile sector is emerging as strength of the country: Modi

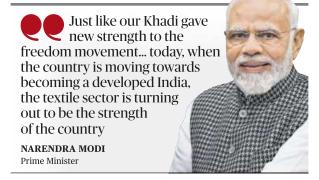
In Mann Ki Baat address, PM says start-ups are lending global stature to India's handloom identity; he also underscores the rising interest in science among children post-Chandrayaan-3 launch

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

rime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that the textile industry, which was an expression of India's cultural diversity, now had more than 3,000 active start-ups, and the driving force behind its rapid growth were women from villages, designers from cities, elderly weavers, and young entrepreneurs.

During the Mann Ki Baat address, Mr. Modi said start-ups had given global stature to India's handloom identity. Commenting on the 10th anniversary of National Handloom Day, which is celebrated on August 7 every year to commemorate the launch of the Swadeshi movement in 1905, he said, "Just like Khadi gave new strength to the freedom movement ..., today as the country progresses towards becoming a developed nation, the textile sector is turning out to be the country's strength."

"In these 10 years, lakhs



of people associated with di said the entire country this sector have scripted was filled with pride. He many success stories," he said the Inspire-Manak Absaid, citing the example of hiyan scheme – in which Kavita Dhawale from Paithfive children are selected from each school - had an village in Maharashtra, who, with government promoted innovation support, is now earning among youngsters. After three times more by selling Chandrayaan-3's launch, self-made Paithani saris. the number of children About 650 tribal women joining the campaign had from Mayurbhanj (Odisha) doubled. The number of start-ups in the space sechave revived the Santhali sari. The family of Naveen tor grew from 50 to 200 in Kumar from Nalanda (Bijust five years. The Prime Minister har), who has been assopraised Devesh Pankaj, ciated with the sector for generations, has incorpo-

Sandeep Kuchi, Debdutt Privadarshi, and Uiiwal Kesari for winning medals in the International Chemistry Olympiad.

Mr. Modi also spoke

about 12 Maratha forts which have been recognised by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites.

Paying homage to Khudiram Bose, the 18-year-old freedom fighter who was hanged on August 11, 1908, in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, Mr. Modi said, "Inside the jail, British officers were preparing to hang a young man. There was no fear on the face of that youth; rather it was full of pride ..."

On wildlife conservation, the Prime Minister said that for the first time, a grassland bird census had been conducted in Kaziranga National Park (Assam) and 40 species were identified using sound recording devices and AI.

On the cleanliness drive, he said this year, more than 4,500 cities and towns had joined and over 15 crore people participated all over the country. " ... Amid the showers of Sawan, the country is once again going to be adorned by the fervour of festivals.... many best wishes to all of you for these holy festivals," he added.

## NMC bars use of live surgery broadcasts for promotional gain

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

Live broadcasts should not be used for promoting the operating surgeon, hospital, or product brand, and surgeons should not have a financial or commercial interest in the equipment or devices used during surgery or procedures, the National Medical Commission (NMC) has said in detailed guidelines issued this week to regulate the conduct and broadcast of live surgeries.

Issuing specific instructions for patient selection, the commission said that patients with high-risk procedures, incomplete investigations, or unusual anatomy should not be included in live broadcasts. Also, financial incentives for participation should not be permitted. The process of informed consent should be conducted by the operating surgeon or team and the patient has the right to withdraw consent at any

It added that live broadcasts can be provided for new procedures, while recordings should be preferred for established pro-



The guidelines say patients with high-risk procedures should not be included in live broadcasts.

cedures or high-risk cases.

"Patients can be enrolled in insurance coverage to safeguard against any unforeseen incidents. However, patients should be informed about the availability and limitations of this insurance. Any surgery/procedure-related complications should be managed free of cost," it said. It added that during surgery or procedures, the operating doctor can broadcast but should not interact with the audience to maintain focus on the patient's safety. "Relevant step-wise live commentary by an operating surgeon can be permitted without any two-way communication with the audience in special situations," the directive stated.

# 'We have to acknowledge that Mughal period saw violence'

rated a modern approach

to transform the business.

tain Shubhanshu Shukla's

return from space, Mr. Mo-

Referring to Group Cap-

The head of the Curricular Area Group for social science textbooks, which works with NCERT, says previous attempts at writing textbooks have whitewashed such aspects unnecessarily; he says Britain has not recognised sufficiently the tremendous amount of suffering it inflicted not only on India but also on most of its colonies; textbook development team experienced zero political pressure, he says

INTERVIEW

### **Michel Danino**

**Maitri Porecha** 

Danino, guest professor (archaeological sciences) at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, and head of the Curricular Area Group for social science textbooks, which works in collaboration with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), speaks about the process of designing new social science textbooks for middle school and the controversies surrounding the portrayal of the Mughals and the colonial era in the new Class 8 textbook.

A debate has arisen about the portrayal of Mughals in the new

Edited excerpts:

Across

1 Sailor and a copper at second counter (6)

11 Criminal and US General are similar (5)

4 Avoids Mark in a book shop at the entrance (8)

**10** Accuracy of abstract is oddly suspicious for starters (9)

12 Attempts to reset implement, engineer succeeds as per sources

**Class 8 NCERT textbook** with their rule being called 'a blend of both brutality and tolerance'. Elaborate on an attempt to reframe portrayal of Delhi **Sultanate and Mughals** in the new textbook.

We did speak of brutality and tolerance, though we did not highlight these two words. They were caught by the media. It is a fact that this is a period which sees a lot of violence, and we have been pretty mild about it. If you look at Muslim texts like Baburnama or Akbarnama, there is no doubt that these conquests were very violent. In the initial stages, this violence was not limited to India. The Turkic, Mughal, and Afghan powers warred against each other, in the Indian subcontinent as well as in Central Asia, sometimes in Persia and beyond. This has to be acknowledged as a fact of history. We feel that preceding attempts (at writing textbooks) often have been whitewashing some of these aspects unnecessarily. We have tried to show the complexity of their personality (the Mughals).

What was the thought behind putting the note on 'History's Darker Periods' at the beginning of the history section. Also, there was an example of the Second World War and Nazi atrocities. Please explain.

It is more of a preparatory note for the student who suddenly would be exposed to unpleasant events of the past. This phase is in the so-called medieval period and the colonial era where there are famines, millions of deaths. The Second World War is the most striking example you can take where there were untold atrocities. And yet we find that a few years after the Second World War,



with most of the European powers, including those that Nazi Germany had mistreated. It is possible because the facts were faced and accepted, because there was no attempt to deny them. We are not trying to parallel this with anything in the Indian past, but it's only by looking honestly at history that you can find the key to healing, you know, the suffering. Because there is a government in place, in the U.K. too. And it is not unknown that there had been trillions of dollars of

so been very well documented, from British rule to Britain. I feel that Britain has not recognised sufficiently the tremendous amount of suffering that it inflicted not only on India but also on most of its colonies. I will not discuss the question of reparation, which is a separate question, but at least an honest admission of guilt, of the abuse, atrocities and economic plunder that took place during the colonial period, is something that we have not seen to a desired extent.

The new Class 8 social science textbook, unlike older versions, has no mention of Tipu Sultan or Haider Ali. On the other hand, there is an entire chapter dedicated to the rise of Marathas and Shivaji's exploits. What was the thought behind introducing a new chapter on Marathas?

Mysore Wars you have to give the student enough context for that event to become meaningful. You can't just drop names like Tipu Sultan and Haider Ali. However, there are four more years after Class 8 where the working groups can take certain themes (which were missed out), and the gaps will be somewhat filled in the later years, hopefully.

It is very well known among historians that the division between Hindu, Muslim, and then the British period is absolutely not

valid. We wanted to show that this was not a straightforward story and there was a lot of resistance. We could only very briefly mention the case of the Ahoms in Assam and the Sikh Empire.

We selected the Marathas for bigger treatment because it is a fact that they were the ones who ultimately managed to build, though briefly, an empire which spread over a very large portion of India, since their influence extended to Delhi and even beyond to what is today's

Pakistan. They stymied multiple attempts by Mughals to conquer South India. Aurangzeb spent more than 25 years stuck in the Deccan. He was able to return to Delhi mostly because he was blocked by the Maratha campaigns.

I am just explaining the statement which we made in the textbook that was deliberately a little bit provocative – maybe the British conquered India more from the Marathas than from the Mughals.

There are rumours that there could be interference of the right wing in directing the trajectory of the new textbooks. Does the development of new textbooks mean that there is a reshaping of political ideology?

So the media loves these stories, and finding a political axe to grind is always very tempting. Our textbook development team has experienced zero political pressure from the government or from any right wing channel or personality whatsoever. We have been left free to work the way we thought we should work under the National Education Policy, 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework mandate.

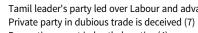
Full interview is available at newsth.live/micheldanino

## TH CROSSWORD+ 14548

13 Tamil leader's party led over Labour and advanced (9)

To solve this puzzle online,

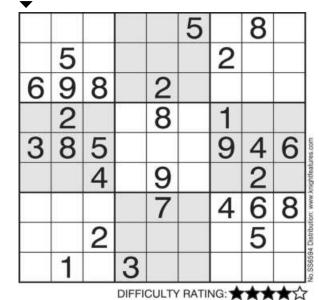
get across to our crossword site. @ https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn



- **16** Domestic servant in brothel parties (4) 19 No rules for birds and animals (4)
- 21 Note; learner in contest is a wonder (7)
- 24 Disclosed by former media editor (9)
- 25 Tips, tips to cheat ladies, use emotions slyly (5) 26 Staff are Europeans (5)
- 27 Your tea is inside, behind sedans, oddly not on furniture (4,5)
- 28 Sit awkwardly in gown, say causes anxiety (8) 29 Gorilla spotted in Puerto Rico, Sun records (6)

- 1 Passion of a prince's small (8)
- 2 New camera is displaying a landmass (8)
- Constituents of world organisation has appeal (5)
- 5 Unbecoming of Ben; digging a hole in the centre of ground (7) Tourist in 13 leaves daughter for lover at last (9)
- Cold spike causes licorice to lose its core and wither (6) 8 Rates of grains? Add a penny (6)
- Matched with female with appeal, to enjoy delightfully primarily
- Teacher (female) replaces a chip in the front in computer, say
- Perfect car, a cute model (8)
- 18 Evaluates same combination, will be over for certain (8)
- Doctor sets my son's routines (7)
- Majority of French inside are humble (6)
- Assisted to pay attention to record stored inside (6) Retreat to borders, heartless lieutenants causes accidents (6)
- 25 Bean companies active (5)

## SUDOKU



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku 9 6 3 2 7 4 8 1 5

## Efficacy of Adi Puram

Andal, or Goda, manifested in the Tamil month of Adi, under the Pooram star, in Srivilliputtur, in the tulasi garden of Vishnu Chittar, also known as Periyazhwar, who was devoutly serving the resident deity, Vatapatrasayi. Andal composed the Tiruppavai (30 verses) and Nacchiyar Tirumozhi (143 verses). Andal's Tiruppavai has the essence of all the Vedas, said Tirukkudanthai Dr. Venkatesh.

It highlights the importance of surrendering to Bhagavan, singing His divine names, and being subservient to the devotees of the Lord. Just as Krishna's discourse is called Gitopanishad, Andal's Tiruppavai is revered as Godopanishad (the Upanishad of Goda). The great preceptor Ramanuja always used to chant Tiruppavai and hence came to be renowned as Tiruppavai Jeeyar. The verses of Tiruppavai played a vital role in helping Ramanuja explain the tenets of Visishtadvaitam to disciples.

Growing up, Andal expressed her devotion to Lord Vatapatrasayi by adoring herself with the garland meant for the deity, before it was offered to Him. When Periyazhwar found out, he admonished Andal and did not offer any garland to the deity on that day. However, that very night, Perumal appeared in Periyazhwar's dream and demanded to know why He was not offered the garland. When Periazhwar explained that it was desecrated because his daughter wore it, Vadapatrasayi said, "It is consecration, not desecration," and sought the Andal-worn garland as a daily offering. When Andal insisted on marrying Rangamannar, the archa murti at Srirangam asked Periazhwar to bring her to His sanctum, wherein She attained eternal service at His lotus feet.



# New microscope reveals molecular jostling faster than ever before

Conventional microscopes are invasive and have limited fields of view. Other microscopes still can't distinguish individual molecules, which are around tens of angstroms in size. A team from Caltech has now found a way to indirectly detect molecules by observing their interactions with light and tapping into Brownian motion

**Unnati Ashar** 

ore than a century ago, a 26-year-old Albert Einstein explained Brownian motion in one of four papers he published in his *annus mirabilis*, the miraculous year, called because these papers shot him to fame. Brownian motion is the random jittering of small particles in a fluid, caused because they're constantly colliding with molecules around them.

Now, scientists at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) have developed a breakthrough imaging technique that enables real-time filming of these molecular motions. Their findings were published in *Nature Communications*.

#### 'Surreal experience'

Conventional microscopes are invasive and have limited fields of view. Other microscopes still can't distinguish individual molecules, which are around tens of angstroms in size (1 angstrom = 0.0000000001 m). To compare, one human hair is about a million angstrom thick. The Caltech team has now found a way to indirectly detect molecules by observing their interactions with light. Their technique also taps into the Brownian motion of particles.

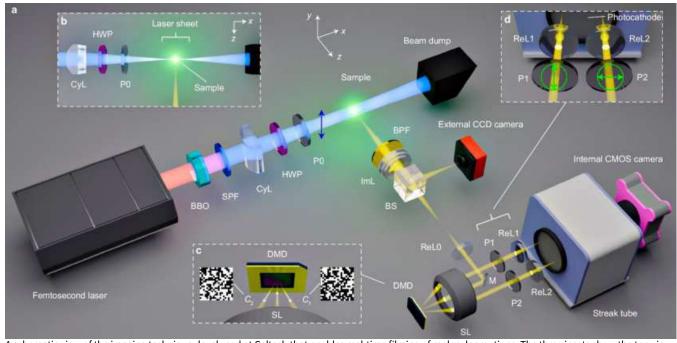
Using the device they have reported that they can see down to tens of angstroms. "It was a surreal experience to visualise molecular sizes in real-time at the angstrom scale," Yogeshwar Nath Mishra, who co-led the study when at Caltech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and who is now an assistant professor at IIT-Jodhpur, said.

"Even more remarkable was the realisation that no existing technique can achieve this level of detail."

#### Need for speed

The more massive a particle, the slower its Brownian motion. "[It] is like watching how much a spinning object twists after being nudged by light. Small molecules spin fast and scramble the light more. Big molecules spin slowly and keep it aligned," Lihong Wang, director of the Caltech Optical Imaging Laboratory and who supervised the study, said. So by measuring how fast a molecule changes the properties of light, they could determine its size.

The Egyptian-American chemist Ahmed Zewail from Caltech was the first to measure particle motion at super-short time scales. This work allowed his team to observe chemical reactions as they happened for the first time. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1999.



A schematic view of the imaging technique developed at Caltech that enables real-time filming of molecular motions. The three insets show the top view of the laser sheet (b), the DMD as it operates (c), and the system in front of the stream camera's photocathode (d). NAT COMMUN 16, 5019 (2025)

"While traditional techniques often rely on time-consuming point-by-point scanning, our approach captures the scene in a single shot," Wang said. "We also achieved imaging speeds of hundreds of billions of frames per second, making it possible to observe molecular interactions in unprecedented slow motion." The device is thus the world's fastest single-shot microscope.

"Finally, unlike [traditional methods] which require extensive sample preparation and often damage the specimen, our method is non-intrusive, enabling direct, *in-situ* measurements," Wang added.

"Some of the most exciting features of this microscope include its wide-field imaging capability, offering an image area of a few square centimetres, an order of magnitude larger than conventional microscopes," per Mishra. "To the best of our knowledge, our work is the first ever to achieve the feat of single-shot 2D molecular sizing."

### Playing jigsaw

They tested their microscope using a molecule called fluorescein-dextran. Fluorescein is a food colouring dye. Fluorescein-dextran is used to monitor blood flow, drug delivery, and tissue and cell labelling. These fluorescent molecules come in the form of powders. The scientists blended them with water and used clean pipettes to pour drops of these samples into cuvettes (clear, short, rectangular tubes for holding liquid samples). Then they turned to ultrashort pulses from a laser. These lasers aren't unlike those used in LASIK and cataract surgeries. The laser sheet slices through



The key is the use of the streak camera to detect dynamics in nanoseconds. This is within the actual lifetimes of the molecules and wouldn't be possible with slow detectors or photodetectors

**BASUDEV ROY** ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT IIT MADRAS

the sample in the cuvette. As it does, the sample emits light that falls on an array of small square mirrors making up a digital micromirror device (DMD).

The DMD's job is to shape the light beam. Researchers use software code to tilt each individual mirror in this light-crafter depending on the corresponding pixel in the input image.

"Imagine you're trying to solve a jigsaw puzzle, but instead of having all the pieces, you only have a few of them – and surprisingly, you can still figure out what the full picture looks like," Wang said.

This idea underpins the team's technique, which can reconstruct the full picture from very few measurements provided the structure is repetitive.

The DMD converts the transient scene into a random jigsaw pattern from which researchers can extract information about the full picture.

The light finally passes through a streak tube that converts the photons in light to electrons

A phosphor screen collects these electrons as they sweep across it and creates a pattern of streaks. The streak pattern reveals the pulse duration from which scientists can infer the sizes of the molecules.

#### **Ensemble of molecules**

"It is an interesting piece of work. The key in this work is the use of the streak camera to detect dynamics in nanoseconds. This is within the actual lifetimes of the molecules and wouldn't be possible with slow detectors or photodetectors," Basudev Roy, an associate professor at IIT Madras who works on super-resolution microscopy and wasn't involved in the recent study, said.

The size of molecules measured using their technique concurred with previous estimates.

"It still sees an ensemble of molecules inside a detection region – it still doesn't see a single molecule yet. But the dynamics indicate chemical compositions and also chemical reactions," Roy said.

"Surprisingly, we found out that the technique also works in gas phases. ... Initially, we assumed it would be challenging to apply [it] in turbulent environments, such as within a flame," said study co-lead Peng Wang of Caltech.

The team observed black carbon nanoparticles in flames through the microscope. "Our data in the gas phase turned out to work excellently and the molecule size matches ... experimental observation well," Peng said.

This new imaging technique could help better visualise processes and transform biomedical research, disease detection, drug design, and nanomaterial fabrication, among others.

(Unnati Ashar is a freelance science journalist. unnati\_a@ymail.com)

#### THE GIST

The more massive a particle, the slower its Brownian motion. Small molecules spin fast and scramble the light more. Big molecules spin slowly and keep it aligned. So by measuring how fast a molecule changes the properties of light, researchers could determine its size

The new approach captures the scene in a single shot. Researchers achieved speeds of hundreds of billions of frames per second, making it possible to observe molecular interactions in slow motion. The device is thus the world's fastest single-shot microscope

This new imaging technique could help better visualise processes and transform biomedical research, disease detection, drug design, and panomaterial fabrication

## BIG SHOT



### 1

WHAT IS IT?

## Deep-brain stimulation: nudging neurons

### Vasudevan Mukunth

Deep-brain stimulation (DBS) is a medical technique where doctors implant electrodes deep inside specific areas of the brain to treat certain disorders. These electrodes are connected by wires to a small device, similar to a heart's pacemaker, which is usually placed under the skin in the upper chest. The device sends controlled, mild electrical impulses to targeted brain regions, helping adjust abnormal brain activity or chemical imbalances.

DBS is most commonly used for movement disorders, especially in people with Parkinson's disease, essential tremor, and dystonia, whose symptoms no longer respond well to medication. It has also been approved for some psychiatric conditions like obsessive-compulsive disorder, and is being studied for severe depression and epilepsy.

Technically, DBS works by modifying how groups of neurons talk to each other. Many of these disorders involve faulty electrical signals in the brain. Delivering electrical pulses through DBS can interrupt these erratic signals, helping reduce symptoms such as tremors or muscle stiffness. The amount and pattern of stimulation can be precisely adjusted by doctors or, to some extent, by patients themselves using external programmers.

One advantage of DBS is that, unlike brain surgery that destroys tissue, its



The vagus nerve can be stimulated to manage epilepsy. MANU5 (CC BY-SA)

effects are reversible: if you turn off the device, the stimulation stops. While the exact ways DBS works are still not fully understood, it is believed to help normalise disrupted brain circuits at both the cellular and network levels. More than 1.6 lakh people worldwide have received DBS.





## Not the way

Criminalising adolescent sex will undermine the aim of the POCSO Act

he key objective of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 is the protection of children, but over the past few years, courts around the country and rights activists have called for some exemptions. Noticing a trend that adolescents, above 15 years but under 18, in voluntary relationships and having consensual sex were often being persecuted, the courts sought a review. In that backdrop, senior advocate Indira Jaising's written submission to the Supreme Court that consensual sex between teenagers aged 16-18 years must not be criminalised is a welcome move. She was appointed amicus curiae and her submissions are part of a petition filed by advocate Nipun Saxena. Her brief challenged the designation of 18 years as the age of consent. She said the only solution lies in declaring that sex between consenting adolescents between the age of 16, an almost universal age of sexual maturity, and 18, is not a form of 'abuse'. Ms. Jaising called for this exception to be read into the POCSO Act and Section 63 (sexual offences), of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). "Such an exception would preserve the protective intent of the statute while preventing its misuse against adolescent relationships that are not exploitative in nature," she said.

In a 2023 report, the Law Commission had said that it was against changing the age of consent. It advised "guided judicial discretion" instead, while sentencing in cases that involve children between 16 and 18 years in a voluntary, consensual relationship. Under the POCSO Act and under several provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the BNS, whoever commits a penetrative sexual assault on a child – who is anyone below 18 years – can face stringent punishment under Section 6 of the POCSO Act, Section 9 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, and provisions of the IPC and BNS. A 16-year-old is considered a "child" under Section 2(d) of the POCSO Act and hence her consent does not matter. But caveats have to be put in place so that the broad intent of the law is adhered to, as the Madras High Court suggested in 2021, in Vijayalakshmi vs State *Rep.* The High Court said the age difference in consensual relationships should not be more than five years to ensure that a girl of an impressionable age is not taken advantage of by an older person. Educating adolescents about the law on sexual offences and its consequences is a must too. Criminalising normal adolescent behaviour is not the way to protect against non-consensual, exploitative sexual offences.

## **State for the stateless**

The West must follow France in recognising Palestinian statehood

rance's decision to recognise Palestinian statehood, in September, reflects President Emmanuel Macron's deep frustration Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the ongoing war on Gaza, as well as his willingness to adopt a more pro-active and constructive approach towards finding a durable solution. Of the 193 members of the UN, 147, including India, China and Russia, have already recognised the Palestinian state. But powerful western nations, with close ties to Israel, have always stopped short of granting official recognition even if professing support for a two-state solution. But this position began to shift after the Gaza war in October 2023, with more European countries taking formal steps towards its recognition. Last year, Spain, Ireland, Norway and Slovenia recognised Palestine's independence. If Mr. Macron follows through, France will be the first G-7 member nation to do so. Such a move may not have an immediate, direct impact on the peace process. That more western European countries are now ready to take irreversible measures in favour of Palestinian statehood, ignoring strong opposition from Tel Aviv and Washington, marks a clear change in sentiment towards one of the modern world's most contentious conflicts.

Mr. Macron's announcement comes at a critical juncture for the Palestinians. The war has devastated the enclave with confirmed deaths reaching 60,000 in 21 months - roughly 2.5% of its total population. In the West Bank, settler violence has displaced tens of thousands of Palestinians. Israeli Ministers have openly threatened to ethnically cleanse Gaza and annex the West Bank. Images of starving and malnourished children, which came out of Gaza last week, have jolted global conscience. Even Israel's closest allies, including Britain, Canada and France, issued a rare joint statement, urging Mr. Netanyahu to "immediately end the humanitarian catastrophe". Under mounting pressure, Israel has announced 'tactical pauses' in its attacks. But this is far from sufficient. What Gaza urgently needs is a complete end to the bombings and shelling, and the full opening of its borders to humanitarian aid. Given that pressure is the only language Israel appears to understand, and with the Donald Trump presidency showing no willingness to apply it, Europe must do more. Efforts to end the war, which in terms of mass killings, devastation and displacement is comparable to the 1948-49 Nakba, must be accompanied by initiatives to ensure that such a catastrophe is never repeated. There should be concrete measures from the international community to pursue a durable political solution, which is the two-state solution. The first step in that direction is the recognition of Palestinian independence and statehood. France has promised to join, though belatedly, most member-countries of the UN in the statehood push. Other nations in the West must follow.

# Clearing the air on 'citizenship' in Bihar poll roll revision

t is fundamental that unless a person is a citizen of India he cannot be an elector. Consequently, he cannot become a legislator also. Therefore, it is very surprising that some seasoned politicians have raised objections to the Election Commission of India (ECI)'s Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar (where Assembly elections are expected shortly) that citizenship should not be verified. It only demonstrates that they have absolutely no knowledge of the Constitution and the working of the system. Article 324 of the Constitution provides that the "superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of Electoral roll and the conduct of all elections ... shall vest" in the Election Commission. The preparation of electoral rolls is a continuous process, and is revised from time to time irrespective of there being elections or no elections (Lakshmi Charan Sen and Ors Etc vs A.K.M. Hassan Uzzaman and Ors. Etc., AIR 1985 SC 1233).

#### Clarity on being a citizen

Article 326 of the Constitution of India provides that "the Elections to the House of People and the Legislature of every State shall be on the basis of adult suffrage, that is to say, every person who is a citizen of India and who is not less than 18 years of age in such State, as may be fixed in that behalf, by or under any law made by the appropriate legislature and is not otherwise disqualified under this Constitution or any Law made by the appropriate Legislature" on certain grounds. Therefore, it is clear that unless a person is a citizen of India, he is not entitled to be registered as a voter in any election.

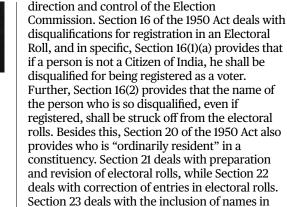
Pursuant to the enabling provisions, Parliament enacted The Representation of The People Act, 1950, which deals with the preparation of electoral rolls and delimitation. The Preamble to the 1950 Act reads as follows: "An Act to provide the allocation of seats in, and the delimitation of constituencies for the purpose of election to, the House of the People and the Legislatures of States, the qualifications of voters at such elections, the preparation of electoral rolls, the manner of filling seats in the Council of States to be filled by representatives of Union territories, and matters connected therewith.'

Part-IIA of the 1950 Act deals with the Officers of the Commission which includes Electoral Registration Officers and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers. Part-IIB deals with Electoral Rolls for Parliamentary Constituencies and Part-III deals with Electoral Rolls for Assembly constituencies.

Section 15 of the 1950 Act deals with preparation of Electoral Rolls for every Constituency under the superintendence,



is a senior advocate and, formerly, Additional Solicitor General



authority referred to in the Section. The only period during which no amendment, transposition or deletion is permitted, is referred to under Section 23(3) of the 1950 Act, which provides that no amendment, transposition, deletion or inclusion, shall be made after the last date for making the nominations for an election in that constituency.

electoral rolls, and Section 24 provides that if

exclusion, they can prefer an appeal to the

anybody is aggrieved by an order of inclusion or

Therefore, it is fundamental that unless a person is a citizen of India, their name cannot be included in the electoral roll. And if it is erroneously included, it can be deleted under the provisions, as stated above.

Under the duties of the Election Commission In fact, it is the duty of the ECI to verify whether the name of any non-citizen has been included in an electoral roll, if a complaint or doubt in this regard has been raised. In fact, to put it otherwise, the ECI or its officers, have no jurisdiction to include a non-citizen's name in the electoral roll; if it is so, it is null and void. Therefore, if an application is made for inclusion or a complaint is received that a non-citizen's name is included in the electoral roll, it is the duty of the ECI to conduct an inquiry as necessary to ensure that non-citizens' names are rejected and deleted from the list. If the ECI fails to do so, it would be failing in its constitutional duty and the purpose for which the power has been granted under Articles 324 and 326 would be defeated.

In the same line, if you probe further, to be a Member of the Legislative Assembly or a Member of Parliament, one has to be a voter in a constituency; if he is not a citizen of India, he cannot be a member of Parliament or a State Legislature. In fact, Article 102 of the Constitution provides for disqualification of membership of either House of Parliament, while Article 191 provides the same for a State Legislature. It is very clear under Article 102(1)(d) that a person

in Afghanistan reached an impasse and the U.S.

established unofficial contacts with the Taliban

through its closer engagement with Pakistan in

the early 2010s. This enabled Russia to protect its

security interests in Afghanistan (with a focus on

collaborating against the Islamic State Khorasan

Province (IS-K) and combating drug trafficking.

Additionally, in a balance act between the

stepped up its diplomatic efforts to position itself as a venue for resolving the Afghan crisis. Despite

Russia, the Taliban representatives were invited

intra-Afghan conferences, as Russia attempted to

increase its own regional influence and edge the

2021, even as many other countries evacuated

the Russian Embassy in Kabul remained in

diplomatic personnel amid the lingering turmoil,

With the Taliban's takeover of Kabul in August

Afghan government and the Taliban, Russia

being blacklisted by the UN and outlawed in

to participate in the Moscow Format and

U.S. out from Afghanistan.

began to consider withdrawal, Moscow

ensuring the safety of Russian citizens),

"shall be disqualified for being chosen as and for being a member of either House of Parliament, if he is not a citizen of India, or has voluntarily acquired the citizenship of a foreign State or if he is under acknowledgment of allegiance or adherence to a foreign State". Article 191, which applies to the State Legislature, also provides the same. If someone contends that a non-citizen would be a voter, they are also contending that a non-citizen can be a member of Legislature, which is nothing but absurd.

Therefore, if questioned, one has to prove to the satisfaction of the authority, that he is a citizen of India, and that he satisfies the provisions of The Citizenship Act, 1955. Though Section 7A of the 1955 Act provides for the registration of overseas citizens in India, Section 7B(2) of the said Act clearly provides that an Overseas citizen of India Cardholder shall not be entitled to the rights conferred on the citizens of India with regard to the registration of a voter.

Therefore, the constitutional and statutory scheme clearly provides that unless a person is a citizen of India, his name cannot be included in the electoral roll. And even if he is included, the authority of the ECI can order deletion of their name under Section 16(2) of the 1950 Act.

It is relevant to note the decision of the Supreme Court of India (reported in Dr. Yogesh Bhardwaj vs State Of U.P. And Ors, 1990 3 SCC 355), which dealt with admission in a medical college. In the said judgment, it has been observed in paragraph 20 that it is only lawful residence that can be taken into account, and if a man stays in a country in breach of immigration laws, his presence there does not constitute ordinary residence.

#### The Aadhaar card and citizenship

One more issue which has to be dealt with is whether any person who has an Aadhaar card can be a citizen of India. A reading of the provisions of The Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016, in particular, Section 9, clearly provides that the "Aadhaar Number or the Authentication thereof, shall not, by itself, confer any right of, or be proof of, citizenship or domicile in respect of the Aadhaar number holder". Section 3 of the Act, which deals with enrolment, only provides that "every resident shall be entitled to obtain an Aadhaar number by submitting his demographic and biometric information by undergoing the process of enrolment". Therefore, mere possession of an Aadhaar card is not proof of citizenship, and despite the constitutional requirements, if the names of foreigners are retained in the electoral roll, the rolls to that extent would be void ab

# Understanding Russia's Taliban gauntlet

n July 3, 2025, the Russian Foreign Ministry announced the recognition of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) government, representing the culmination of Russia's recent overtures toward the Taliban. This followed the decision to upgrade diplomatic ties and officially accredit the Taliban's new ambassador, Gul Hassan, to Moscow. Now that the IEA flag is flying over the Afghan Embassy in Moscow, questions remain about the rationale behind Russia's choice to legitimise the Taliban

### A change, two decades later

Moscow's eagerness to cultivate diplomatic relations with the Taliban government stands in stark contrast to Russia's approach to the IEA's first iteration from 1996 to 2001. At that time, the Taliban were seen as hostile towards Russia. Moscow did not acknowledge their government and was forced to wind down its diplomatic presence in Afghanistan in 1997. Further, Russia provided military assistance to the Northern Alliance and helped its Central Asian allies stabilise the situation along the Afghan border against the terrorist threat.

Complicating matters further, the Taliban, in 2000, recognised the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria as an independent state and urged the Muslim world to declare a holy war on Russia to force it to stop its counter-terrorist operation in Chechnya. With an estimated 2,500 Chechen militants undergoing training in Taliban-controlled territories, Moscow considered launching "preventive strikes" on terrorist camps in Afghanistan.

In this context, it was unsurprising that Russia joined forces with the United States to adopt the United Nations' sanctions against the Taliban and provided logistical support to the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom, which was launched after 9/11. In 2003, the Taliban were included in the Russian list of terrorist

organisations. As the international counter-terrorism mission



The political

being raised on

reveal a lack of

knowledge of

Constitution,

legislation and

the working of

the electoral

system

objections

the issue of

citizenship

Harsh V. Pant is Vice President,

Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi



Aleksei Zakharov

is Fellow, Eurasia, Observer Research Foundation

Questions still

remain about

the rationale

Moscow's choice

to legitimise the

Taliban regime

behind

operation - Moscow remained confident that the Taliban are capable of putting things in good order. Despite Russia's good rapport with the Taliban's dispensation, the persistent instability in Afghanistan has severely compromised its security interests, with terrorist attacks against the Russian Embassy in Kabul in September 2022 and the Crocus City Hall in Moscow in March 2024, purportedly carried out by the IS-K. There has been no meaningful progress in the economic projects either, though the Russian authorities continue to harbour hopes that Afghanistan will emerge as a conduit for Russian exports to South

### The basis

and Southeast Asia.

Russia's official recognition of the IEA government reflects Moscow's conviction that the Taliban are "an objective reality" and the only political force capable of controlling power in Afghanistan. This is further reinforced by the perception of the Taliban as Russia's "allies in

countering terrorism", which seemingly laid the foundation for their de-listing in April 2025. It should be noted though that the Russian Supreme Court only suspended the ban on the Taliban activities, and the grouping is still on the Russian unified federal list of terrorist organisations. This suggests that the Russian security apparatus is not fully convinced by the Taliban's track record in combating terrorism, leaving scope to reverse the decision if the alliance with the Taliban proves to be a false

The IEA's recognition is a symbolic gesture that does not bring Russia any immediate benefits and does not guarantee any upgrade to Moscow's position in Afghanistan or the wider region. While some Russian officials are insisting on supporting the Taliban, including "arming them", it remains to be seen how far Moscow is willing to go and whether the joint fight against the IS-K will yield tangible results.

As Russia has set a precedent by recognising the IEA, some Central Asian states and even China may well follow suit, especially given that the Taliban's expectations of their partners will certainly increase. Moscow's free pass to the Taliban regarding the inclusivity of their government, as well as women's and minority rights, may become a new template for other regional players who will prioritise pragmatism over value-based approach.

### Ties with India

India will unlikely be seriously affected by the Russian move. New Delhi has fostered its own incremental improvement in diplomatic ties with the Taliban, having recently found common ground with them on the issue of terrorism in Kashmir. It is likely that New Delhi will keep up diplomatic communications, trade and humanitarian cooperation with the IEA, without deviating from its stance on the legitimacy issue. Engagement without formal recognition still seems to be the likely trajectory of India's Afghanistan policy.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The world and Gaza

It is unfortunate that the world does not seem to be moved by the fact that people of Gaza are facing acute starvation as a result of a genocidal war. Words such as 'humanity', 'conscience', 'empathy' and 'altruism' ring hollow in the context of collective global inaction. Aid airdrops without lifting the ground

blockade of aid deliveries are only an eyewash and do not reverse the deepening crisis. The lack of disquiet is a reflection of the times we live in.

G. David Milton, Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

**Donald Trump's record** Donald Trump's yearning for the Nobel Peace Prize is no secret. Yet, his record

speaks more of ambition than achievement. In Ukraine, he hints at ending the war "in 24 hours", but neither Kyiv nor Moscow trusts his intentions. In Gaza, his stance is even less persuasive — offering little beyond hollow statements, while giving Israel a carte blanche.

His 'credit' for an

#### conviction, repeated more **Sharp contrast** The narrative in the article, out of habit than belief. Frustrated, Mr. Trump turns to Africa and Southeast Asia

"On a tight leash in Mumbai" (Magazine -'Openpage', July 27), evoked no surprise, as the stray dog menace exists across India. Last year I had been to Tennessee, in the U.S. to visit my son. There are no street dogs there but only pet dogs. When they are taken out for a walk there is

a proper leash. The owner has to pick up waste with a scoop, which is then transferred to a cover and placed in a waste bin that is marked for such waste. A lot is to be learnt from foreign countries

### D. Sethuraman,

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

India-Pakistan détente lacks

R. Narayanan, Navi Mumbai

to tout his role in conflict

de-escalation, but even

these claims lack depth.

And no less is his singular

pursuit to be reckoned as a

pioneer in dismantling the

global economic order.

# The need for doctor-led innovation

he world of medicine is evolving at an unprecedented pace, fuelled by advancements in artificial intelligence, digital health, and personalised medicine. However, despite the transformative changes, medical professionals often find themselves on the periphery of innovation. Engineers and entrepreneurs increasingly shape the future of healthcare, while doctors are largely confined to their roles as service providers, rather than creators of new medical solutions. This paradigm needs to change if we are to foster the next generation of medical breakthroughs and solve the pressing challenges of our time.

#### Why doctors must innovate

Medical professionals, with their deep understanding of patient care, clinical workflows, and treatment protocols, are ideally positioned to drive innovation. Healthcare systems worldwide are under increasing pressure to meet the demands of rising patient populations, chronic diseases, and limited resources. By leveraging their insights, doctors can create solutions that address these systemic issues. Doctor-led innovation would ensure that new technologies are not only groundbreaking but also clinically applicable.

However, medical professionals face several obstacles in becoming entrepreneurs. The demanding nature of medical practice, combined with patient care and administrative responsibilities, leaves little time for innovation. Medicine is also inherently risk-averse, to ensure the safest possible care. This cautious mindset contrasts sharply with the risk-taking required in innovation. The discomfort with uncertainty and failure can deter doctors from pursuing entrepreneurship.

Moreover, a lack of exposure to financial management and product development further hinders doctors' transition into



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Consultant in Infectious Diseases. Apollo Hospital, Chennai and Lead Strategist, QuorumVeda **Consulting Services** 



Y.K.Gupta

National Scientific Co-ordinator, Pharmacovigilance Programme of India

Engineers and entrepreneurs increasingly shape the future of healthcare, while doctors are largely confined to their roles as service providers, rather than creators of new medical solutions. This paradigm needs to change

entrepreneurship. Medical education is primarily clinical, leaving professionals unprepared for the complexities of creating healthcare solutions. Many doctors also perceive innovation as the domain of engineers. Despite these challenges, successful examples of doctors who have become deep-tech entrepreneurs show that combining both areas is possible.

While starting a clinic or hospital is a form of entrepreneurship, the primarily focus is on conventional service delivery rather than disruptive innovation. While clinics and hospitals enhance healthcare access, they do not fundamentally transform medical practice. True innovation involves developing new treatment methods, medical devices, or digital health solutions that redefine patient care.

This means medical colleges must introduce courses in entrepreneurship, bio-design, and digital health. The curriculum should encourage entrepreneurial thinking alongside clinical practice. Interdisciplinary collaborations between medical and engineering students would enable doctors to understand product development while allowing engineers to gain clinical insights. Innovation hubs and incubators should support problem-solving in healthcare.

Internships in biotech incubators should be integrated into medical education, exposing doctors to startup environments and the commercialisation of healthcare innovations. Hospitals should establish innovation hubs to help doctors test new ideas. Mentorship programmes must connect medical professionals with engineers and funding sources to help them navigate regulatory pathways. Government incentives and streamlined regulatory processes should support med-tech startups to ensure financial and bureaucratic barriers do not stifle innovation.

In India, MedTech entrepreneurs benefit from a wide array of supportive systems aimed at fostering innovation and growth. Government initiatives such as the Biotechnology **Industry Research Assistance** Council, Startup India, and Atal Innovation Mission offer funding, grants, and infrastructure support, while incubators such as the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Platforms, Venture Center, and the Bangalore Bioinnovation Centre, provide mentorship, research and development facilities, and financial assistance. The Make in India initiative supports MedTech entrepreneurs by promoting local manufacturing, reducing reliance on imports, and offering incentives such as tax benefits and easier regulatory approvals for domestic production of medical devices. Academic collaborations with institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institute of Science drive innovation through research partnerships. The India Health Fund, supported by Tata Trusts, finances innovations in healthcare, particularly in infectious diseases.

#### The path forward

Innovation in healthcare is no longer optional; it is essential. Doctors must take charge, not just as caregivers but as entrepreneurs and problem-solvers. To facilitate this shift, medical professionals should enrol in short-term courses on product development. Hospitals and medical associations should foster an environment that is innovation-friendly by establishing dedicated funds and organising events where doctors can present ideas to investors. De-stigmatising failure in medical entrepreneurship is crucial. Just as failed experiments contribute to scientific progress, unsuccessful startups provide lessons for future success. The medical community must embrace calculated risk-taking and take ownership of healthcare's future. The white coat should not only represent clinical expertise but also leadership in healthcare innovation.

## Decoding the Jan Suraaj Party hype

The picture seems both encouraging and sobering for Prashant Kishor's party

STATE OF PLAY

<u>Sanjay Kumar</u> Chandrachur Singh

ast year, Prashant Kishor transitioned from his consultant role into the dynamic arena of electoral politics. With Bihar going to the polls in October, it will be intriguing to observe how a strategist, believed to have masterminded some important political successes, will perform when he contests an election himself.

Mr. Kishor, leader of the Jan Suraaj Party (JSP), points out four factors which makes the BIP a formidable electoral force: its Hindutva ideology that serves as an emotional anchor, Narendra Modi's grand narrative of India becoming a global superpower, the creation of millions of direct beneficiaries through welfare schemes, and the sheer finanand organisational strength of the party. Mr. Kishor has asserted that to defeat BJP, one would need to defeat it at least on three of the four accounts. So, how well placed is the JSP to challenge the BJF on these factors?

First, ideologically, the BJP's Hindutva claim isn't just a political position; it has become an emotional ecosystem that gives people identity, purpose, and a sense of belonging to something larger than themselves. The JSP's approach has been to focus on Bihar's regional identity and development aspirations while staying studiously secular. It is intellectually honest, sure, but could it be politically naïve given that religious identity in contemporary politics has become increasingly central to how people see themselves politically?

Second, Mr. Kishor's 'Bihar



Badlav (Bihar Change)' campaign is receiving traction. The messaging is positive: Bihar doesn't need to wait for Delhi's permission to prosper; the State has its own strengths and possibilities. What it needs is leadership that believes in those possibilities. This seems to be resonating with some voters. This narrative is distinct from the BIP's nationalism and the traditional Opposition's criticism. Whether it is enough remains to be seen.

Third, pricking a hole in the BJP's beneficiary schemes may be tedious. When a farmer gets his PM Kisan installments, or when a woman gets her Ujjwala gas connection, or when a family gets healthcare through Ayushman Bharat, they are not just receiving benefits; they are entering into a relationship with the government that makes them stakeholders in its success. Can the JSP's promise be enough to attract the voters to vote for it?

Fourth, the ability of the JSP to match the BJP's and RJD's organisational structure needs to be looked at. The JSP has been able to create some ground level connects via its leaders' padyatra, but this will be put to test particularly closer to elections. The BJP-led NDA has financial resources, RSS volunteers, sophisticated data analytics, and technological infrastructure that can micro-target individual voters. The RJD has decades of organisational depth and established networks across every village in Bihar and JSP has Mr. Kishor's strategic mind. Will that be enough to challenge NDA and Mahagathbandhan?

Another important challenge for the JSP is about how the party will be able to challenge dynastic heirs such as Tejashwi Yadav and Chirag Paswan. What makes Mr. Yaday particularly formidable is his younger age, party's organisational strength, and experience. His welfare promises are specific and credible because he has the organisational capacity to deliver them. His focus on employment and migration directly addresses voters' primary concerns. And his consistent opposition to Nitish Kumar's alliance-hopping has given him a reputation for stability that the JSP, as a new entrant, cannot claim. The BJP may find it difficult to put up a young face given its present leadership in Bihar, but JD(U) might prop up a young face such as Nitish Kumar's son Nishant Kumar or Manish Verma, a former IAS officer.

At this moment, the picture seems encouraging as the JSP is generating discussion and media attention, but also sobering, since Mr. Kishor may turn out to be an influential voice rather than a decisive force. In a fragmented electoral landscape, the JSP might eventually end up being a kingmaker if neither major alliance achieves a clear majority. This could provide it with disproportionate influence relative to its electoral performance and create opportunities for future growth.

Sanjay Kumar is a Professor at the Centre for Studies of Developing Societies and Chandrachur Singh is a Professor of Political Science at Hindu College, University of Delhi. Views

# Bihar's migrants lack SIR documents

A recent survey shows that about 70% of migrant respondents from Bihar had no awareness of which documents were required to prove citizenship

### **DATA POINT**

<u>Anindita Adhikari</u> Rajendran Narayanan

n June 24, 2025, the Election Commission of India (ECI) announced a monthlong Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Bihar. The stated purpose of the exercise, according to the Chief Election Commissioner, was to "ensure that no eligible citizen is left out while no ineligible person is included in the electoral roll". Further, anyone whose name was not in the 2003 electoral roll was required to submit at least one of 11 specified documents "as probative evidence of eligibility, including presumption of citizenship". This implied that Biharis below the age of 40 years would have to fill forms and produce documents to "prove" their citizenship to be eligible to vote. Aadhaar, ration cards, voter identity cards (issued by the ECI) – which are most commonly available - are not among the 11 documents. Ten petitions are challenging the SIR order in the Supreme Court on grounds that the SIR order will disenfranchise lakhs of people. A key constituent that is at risk of such disenfranchisement are migrants. Estimates suggest that there are more than 74 lakh out-of-State migrants from Bihar.

#### The study

To assess awareness of the SIR process, availability of the 11 specified documents, and other challenges that migrants from Bihar are confronting in proving their eligibility to vote, the Stranded Workers Action Network (SWAN) conducted a rapid phone survey. A report titled 'For a few documents more' based on the survey was released recently. SWAN is a volunteer-driven platform that provided relief to over 36,000 migrants during the CO-VID-19 lockdown and released three reports documenting the multi-dimensional distress that they had been put through.

The recent survey was conducted a week ago by 29 student volunteers. Calls were attempted to 1,411 workers of which the survey was completed for 338 workers. This is not a statistically representative survey but it sheds strong light on the documentation deficits faced by migrants and their risks of being disenfranchised.

About 95% of the surveyed workers were males who average age was 34 years. The majority were employed as factory or construction workers, and the median earnings were ₹14,500 per month. There was a near-perfect match between the share of Other Backward Classes in our sample (28.4%) and the share in the 2022 Bihar caste census. Scheduled Caste workers are 3% points under-represented in our sample, and those in the 'general' category are over-represented in our sample by 8% points. There is near-perfect parity in religious distribution in our sample and the 2011 Census.

### Lack of awareness

Out of 219 respondents to the question on what documents were needed under SIR, 68% did not have accurate information. The affidavit filed by the ECI on July 21 mentions that the body has taken adequate steps in making online options available for migrants to submit enumeration forms. However, as Chart 1 shows, 75% of migrants had never heard of the portal, and only two out of 248 had submitted the form online.

As per the SIR order, each booth-level officer must go door to door and visit at least three times in case the house was found to be locked. In our survey, only 53% said that some official had visited their house, while 23% said that no official had visited, and 24% did not know. Among those who said some official had visited their house, in 45% of the cases, the enumeration form along with either

Aadhaar or voter ID was taken. On the 'eligible' documents, our survey provides a drastically different picture compared to the ECI's claims in its affidavit. Page 39 of the ECI affidavit says that "13.89 crore residence certificates have been issued from 2011 to 2025." This is more than Bihar's estimated population of 13.7 crore. In our sample, just 32 out of 338 respondents have a residence certificate. The affidavit further states that more than 8.72 crore caste certificates have been issued in Bihar. **Charts 2 and 3** from our survey, disaggregated for those who are in Bihar right now and those away from Bihar, show that about 35% in our sample do not have any of the 11 SIR documents, while more than 8 out of 10 have voter ID and more than 96% have Aadhaar. To reiterate, the ECI makes the case against using Aadhaar and voter ID, even though these are most widely available.

### **Questioning the exercise**

Unsurprisingly, then, a large fraction of the workers we spoke to questioned the necessity of the SIR and expressed a strong preference for the older process of using Aadhaar or existing voter IDs. One angry migrant worker said, "Agar kisi ke paas document nahin hai, toh kahan jaayega? Gardan kaat ke leke aayen kya (Where will somebody go if they don't have documents? Should they cut their heads and bring it?).

Minorities felt increased vulnerability at having to repeatedly prove their citizenship. One such worker compared these eligibility tests to "refreshing one's phone".

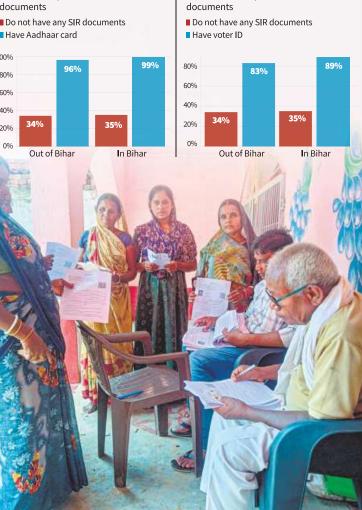
Notwithstanding the impracticality of such a hasty exercise, our interactions with migrant workers leads us to believe that the ongoing SIR exercise will disenfranchise lakhs of people. The survey suggests that the SIR exercise must be immediately revoked.

Anindita Adhikari is a Faculty, National Law School University of India, Bangalore. Rajendran Narayanan is a Faculty, Azim Premji University, Bangalore. This work is part of the SWAN. Views are personal

# **Concerning complexities**

The data for the charts were sourced from a survey conducted by the Stranded Workers Action Network

Chart 1: The awareness and usage of the online portal for SIR Not heard of online portal Heard of online portal but submitted document offline Heard of online portal but not seen or submitted document 11% Submitted document online Percentage of Respondents outside Bihar (%) Chart 2: The prevalence of Aadhaar Chart 3: The prevalence of voter ID versus lack of prevalence of SIR versus lack of prevalence of SIR documents ■ Do not have any SIR documents ■ Do not have any SIR documents Have Aadhaar card Have voter ID 80%



### FROM THE ARCHIVES



FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 28, 1975

## Chinese theory on height of Everest

Tokyo, July 27: The exact height of the world's highest peak Mount Everest is 8,848.13 metres or 34 metres lower than the hitherto accepted figure of 3,882 metres. This has been determined by a team of Chinese surveyors and cartographers who accompanied the Chinese mountaineering expedition which reportedly ascended the peak last May, according to the official Hsinhua News Agency which gave some details of how the new height of Everest was determined, in a Peking despatch on Thursday.

The report said the Chinese surveyors and cartographers working in the face of extremely difficult conditions had succeeded in extending the national geodestic survey control network to the east main and west Rongbuk glaciers on the north slope of the mountain. They had carried out triangular traverse astronomical and gravity surveys at attitudes of 5,000 to 7,000 metres above sea level and counter checked the precise levelling of the area between Tingri and the Rongbuk monastery thus providing a reliable control basis for determining the height of

After a surveying pole had been erected on the summit and the thickness of the accumulated snow there measured, the surveyors and cartographers had proceeded to conduct simultaneous observation and survey from ten triangulation points located 7 to 21 km from the summit at altitudes of 5,600 to 6,300 metres. This operation had resulted in a complete set of data for mapping out the geographical location and the height of the

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 28, 1925

## Hand-spinning in Cochin schools

Trichur, July 26: Mr. E. Ikkanda Wariar, B.A., B.L., M.L.C., will move the following resolution in the ensuing occasions of the Cochin Legislative Council: That this Council recommends to the Government that in order that hand-spinning be revived as a supplementary industry among the people of the State, the Department of Education may be directed to take necessary steps to introduce hand-spinning as a compulsory handicraft in all the schools of the State.

# Text&Context

THEMOHINDU

#### **NEWS IN NUMBERS**

Mobile towers to be installed in certain areas of Chhattisgarh

a plan to install 4,000 new mobile towers in Naxalite-affected areas of Chhattisgarh, the Minister of State for Telecom and Rural

Development Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar

said on Sunday. PTI

## Number of polio cases in Pakistan this year despite global efforts

Three more cases of polio were detected in Pakistan, raising the countrywide tally to 17. Pakistan is one of the last two countries in the world, alongside Afghanistan, where polio remains endemic. Despite efforts to eradicate the virus, challenges such as security issues have slowed progress. PTI

## Losses suffered by Himachal Pradesh since monsoon started

the onset of State on June 20 till date, Himachal Pradesh has suffered losses of over ₹1,500 crore, officials said on Sunday. So far, 88 people have died and 35 have gone missing in rain-related incidents. PTI

## Number of persons evacuated in Turkev due to wildfires

broke out in a between the Gursu and Kestel districts of Bursa, home to much of Turkey's auto industry. Some 1,765 people in Bursa's Kestel district were evacuated, Agriculture and Forestry Minister Yumakli said. PTI

## Number of employees to be laid off by TCS this year

Consultancy Services (TCS), is set to lay off about 2% of its global workforce this year, with the majority of those impacted belonging to middle and senior grades. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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# How is India preparing against GLOF events?

How many Glacial Lake Outburst Flood events has Nepal witnessed in recent times? What are the two most prominent types of glacial lakes found in the Indian Himalayan Region? How is the National Disaster Management Authority mitigating risks associated with GLOF events?

**EXPLAINER** 

Safi Ahsan Rizvi

The story so far:

n July 8, Nepal experienced a catastrophic Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) event which caused a flash flood along the Lende river, flowing from Tibet to Nepal, and washed away a China-built friendship bridge. The bridge had serviced the 10-year old inland container port at Rasuwagadhi in Rasuwa (north of Kathmandu). The catastrophe is also reported to have made four Nepalese hydro-power plants along the Bhote Koshi river unusable, obliterating 8% of the country's power supply. With rising temperatures and subsequent glacial melt, the increased risk of GLOFs is threatening life and property in the higher Himalavas.

#### Do trans-boundary watersheds diminish possibilities of early warning?

While Chinese authorities have as yet refrained from confirming the cause, most Nepalese scientists and officials confirmed a GLOF event in Tibet, where a supra-glacial lake had burst, diminishing its surface area to 43 hectares from 63 hectares a day before. Nepalese officials were quoted lamenting in local media that neither did the Chinese authorities provide an early warning, nor was there an established system of doing so, despite a recent increase in supra-glacial lakes on the Tibetan side.

Hours later, on the same day, another GLOF event occurred at a moraine-dammed lake in the northern part of the Mustang district in Nepal (north-west of Kathmandu). Two months before, two glacial lakes in the Humla district (far-north corner of Nepal) had witnessed significant GLOF events, while in 2024, a GLOF in the Solukhumbu district had destroyed the Thame village in Nepal, the base camp for Mount Everest climbers. The need for trans-boundary collaborations in setting up early warning protocols seems paramount, given that Nepal has lost many lives and much infrastructure in successive GLOF events.

Similar events have impacted Nepal regularly, including the GLOF in Cirenma Co, a glacial lake, in Tibet in 1981, which released 20 mcm of water raising the Bhote Koshi river by 30 metres. Several decades later the same lake was reported to have rejuvenated and was rated high-risk. Other significant events include the Digi Tsho GLOF event in 1985, and the Tama Pokhari GLOF event in 1998. In response, Nepal has conducted risk mitigation works on the Imja Tsho and Tsho Rolpa lakes by drawing down water levels through artificial channels, a challenging task at heights above 5,000 m, and has further plans to target half a dozen more at-risk glacial lakes.

### What is the nature of GLOF risk for

As per India's National Remote Sensing Centre, the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) is home to 11 river basins and 28,000 glacial lakes. There are two prominent types of glacial lakes found in the IHR. The first are supraglacial lakes, formed in depressions on glaciers from meltwater, highly prone to melting in the summer months. The second are moraine-dammed lakes, formed by meltwater at the toe/snout of a glacier, dammed by loose debris or ice-cores, making them prone to sudden failure.



Definite risk: The south-end of the Shako Cho lake (5,200 m) in north Sikkim. The south-end shows the weak debris that forms its moraine-dam. NDMA

Almost two-thirds of GLOF events are triggered by ice avalanches or landslides, and the remaining due to excessive meltwater pressure on weak moraine dams and earthquakes.

With 2023 and 2024 being the hottest years on Earth, extreme temperatures in smaller geographies have been higher, thereby causing more glacial melt in certain pockets, making some glacial lakes highly risky.

In addition to rising heat, is the problem of scale. 7,500 glacial lakes are situated in India, with most above 4,500 metres in height, hence approachable for surveys only during a short window in the summer season. There are almost no weather and water monitoring stations in these regions due to inaccessibility, lack of sustainability and cost, leaving this growing risk largely unmapped.

The only credible means is measuring growth in surface area via remote sensing over periods of time, a measure which is post-facto and provides little by way of risk assessment or early warning of any

Additionally, vulnerability of the immediate geography is critical to determining the exact nature of risk. This includes damage to homesteads, livelihoods, biodiversity, bridges and hydro-power projects along rivers that relay GLOFs downstream. The South Lhonak GLOF in 2023 in Sikkim wiped out the \$2 billion and 1250 MW generating Chungthang dam and also intensified the flash flood causing massive silting downstream. Since then, the Central Water Commission has found that the Teesta riverbed has risen several metres, significantly reducing its carrying capacity and increasing the chances of its banks overflowing.

Besides the Sikkim GLOF, one of the most damaging events in recent times was the Chorabari GLOF in 2013, which turned into a cascading disaster accompanied by cloudbursts and landslides, known as the Kedarnath catastrophe - causing hundreds of

casualties and billions in infrastructure

### How can India reduce GLOF risk?

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has markedly accelerated its efforts to manage these increasing risks. With respect to mitigation, it has initiated a proactive shift from mere post-disaster response to risk reduction through its Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction (CoDRR). This national coordination effort brought together related central scientific agencies, academic and research institutions, and States/UTs to study, monitor, warn, and mitigate GLOF risk in India. As a result, the central government finalised its first national programme of \$20 million, prioritising 56 at-risk glacial lakes. The list has now been expanded to 195, categorised into four risk levels. Following the expected award of the 16th Finance Commission for the period FY2027 to FY2031, there are plans to scale up this programme, significantly.

Objectives of this programme are five-fold – hazard assessment of each at-risk lake; installing Automated Weather and Water Stations (AWWS); establishing Early Warning Systems (EWS) downstream; mitigating risk by drawing down water levels or building flow through retention structures; and community engagement, an essential element of risk reduction. Under the programme, States where glacial lakes are resident were encouraged to take the lead in sending scientific expeditions to 40 of the highest at-risk lakes in the summer of

One of the critical parameters in the exercise was to encourage Indian technology, systems and scientific expertise, one of which is the science of SAR interferometry – the art of analysing micro-changes in slope stability (upto a centimetre) using remote sensing satellite imagery as high as 10-metre resolution. The near-absence of usage of this scientific method to predict GLOFs and

landslides is an identified gap that needs to be plugged through this programme. Another significant gap is the absence of well-resourced Indian foundations and innovative technology providers in the business of risk reduction in the Himalayan cryosphere.

## What is status of mitigation efforts?

Several multi-institutional expeditions returned with success stories, across J&K, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh with a couple of light-hearted tales for their archives. One such expedition lost its way in bad weather, and another had to leave behind an expedition member in the village as security so that the rest of the expedition did not pollute the sacred lake by entering its holy waters. These episodes were evidence of the critical need for community engagement, to integrate the local community in expeditions and the need to convince residents of the credibility and sincerity of the exercise.

The successful expeditions conducted bathymetry to assess the volume of water in the lakes; used Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT) to understand the existence of ice-cores under moraine-dams, a key reason for dam breaks; and performed UAV and slope surveys of surrounding land/ice forms. Monitoring stations were installed at two lakes in Sikkim, which relay weather and water data every 10 minutes, with a daily dose of pictures of both ends of the lake and its shoreline. In subsequent summers, States will be installing more such systems, thereby overcoming an oft-repeated data-gap in the IHR cryosphere. In the absence of automated early warning mechanisms, Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) deployments in high reaches have been oriented towards the role of manual early warning. After the monsoon this year, States/UTs are gearing up for another round of expeditions.

Safi Ahsan Rizvi is an IPS officer and

adviser to the NDMA.

#### THE GIST

As per India's National Remote Sensing Centre, the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) is home to 11 river basins and 28,000 glacial lakes.

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One of the critical parameters in the exercise was to encourage Indian technology, systems and scientific expertise, one of which is the science of SAR interferometry.

#### **CACHE**



# Was there a security breach at the crypto exchange CoinDCX?

CoinDCX is a Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) registered Indian cryptocurrency exchange founded in 2018. On July 19, CoinDCX reported financial exposure of about \$44 million but stressed that the incident was contained by isolating the affected account

Sahana Venugopal

#### The story so far:

n July 19, the crypto exchange CoinDCX updated users that one of its internal accounts had been "compromised." The company's executives reassured panicked investors and traders that their assets were safe and that access to their crypto would not be cut off. Despite assurances, many CoinDCX customers moved to withdraw their assets, perceiving the event could turn into something like the WazirX hack last year.

#### What happened to CoinDCX?

CoinDCX is a Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) registered Indian cryptocurrency exchange founded in 2018 by Neeraj Khandelwal and Sumit Gupta, now counting over 1.6 crore registered users. On July 19, the exchange shared that one of its "internal operational accounts, used solely for liquidity provisioning on a partner exchange, was compromised due to a sophisticated server breach." Mr. Khandelwal clarified this involved unauthorised access to an operational hot (virtually connected) wallet on a partner exchange.

CoinDCX reported financial exposure of about \$44 million but stressed that the incident was contained by isolating the affected account, which was segregated from the company's customer wallets. The exchange further added that the exposure was limited to that amount alone and that it would be fully absorbed by CoinDCX through its own reserves.

"The incident has been formally reported to CERT-In, and we are actively working with leading blockchain forensics firms and ecosystem partners to trace the attacker and recover assets," said CoinDCX in its Incident Report, and provided information about the

cross-chain movement of the stolen

The company also announced a recovery bounty programme.

#### How were CoinDCX users impacted by the hack?

CoinDCX repeatedly stressed that customers' funds were secure and unaffected by the hack, as they were placed in segregated, cold wallets that are challenging for attackers to breach. The company also stated that trading, rupee deposits, and rupee withdrawals remained fully functional throughout the period. However, some customers complained that their withdrawal requests took time to be processed, sparking fears that their funds had been frozen. CoinDCX's founding partner Mridul Gupta said that "operational challenges caused by high withdrawal volumes during non-banking hours" had led to some delays but denied allegations of a freeze. The company later confirmed that all withdrawal requests had been successfully processed.

While crypto withdrawals are not possible for everyone using CoinDCX, this is a pre-existing situation that is part of the company's risk policy and was not caused by the hack itself.

Furthermore, the exchange faced accusations of a 17-hour-long delay when it came to updating customers about the hack. CoinDCX defended its actions and said it needed to have all the information before issuing a statement to customers but said investigating agencies were immediately informed and onboarded.

"Our first priority is always to act, not just to speak. Before making a public statement, we had to ensure the threat was fully contained, our platform was secure, and all customer funds were safe. Communicating with incomplete or unverified information would have been

irresponsible and could have caused unnecessary panic," said co-founder Sumit Gupta.

Other CoinDCX users raised complaints about temporary price drops for certain assets, as well as some tokens being under maintenance, which the company also addressed.

#### How are the CoinDCX and WazirX hacks different?

Just a little over a year ago, on July 18, 2024, WazirX was targeted by North Korean cyber-thieves. That day, a multi-signature wallet that the WazirX exchange was managing with the company Liminal was exploited, leading to the loss of assets worth over \$230 million. This was far greater than the losses reported by CoinDCX; WazirX customers' assets were directly affected by this breach.

After much delay and confusion, WazirX blocked users' access to their crypto for an indefinite period of time and acknowledged significant losses. By contrast, CoinDCX has stressed that it is business as usual for the exchange, noting on X that its annual revenue exceeds ₹1.100 crore.

WazirX customers demanded that the company use its own profits or funds to cover losses, but the company said this was not possible, citing an ownership dispute with the international crypto exchange Binance. WazirX further decided to carry out its legal restructuring exercise in Singapore. WazirX users have not been able to access their locked up crypto for over a year and are set to vote for a second time on the amended Scheme of Arrangement. This comes after the first proposed restructuring plan was rejected by the Singapore High Court.

Both WazirX and CoinDCX were criticised for delays in informing their customers about their respective hacks.

#### What is the lesson for crypto investors in India?

Investors in India should remember that crypto trading is a largely unregulated activity in the country; even users of centralised, FIU-registered exchanges can expect little to no support from the Indian authorities in case of a crisis such as a security breach.

Satnam Narang, Senior Staff Research Engineer at Tenable, explained that if users want full control of their coins, they should consider self-custody options like an offline, hardware cold wallet they directly control. Even here, due diligence is required in order to buy only trusted hardware wallets from legitimate sellers, according to him.

"As more and more exchanges have been set up across the world, we have seen reports of attacks targeting smart contract flaws or other ways to steal funds from these exchanges including but not limited to social engineering, theft of credentials or private keys or targeting third-party company that works with the targeted organisation," said Mr. Narang, noting that the CoinDCX hack was one of the largest cryptocurrency breaches since the attack against WazirX last year.

He highlighted that when crypto prices go up, there is also a rise in attacks against both exchanges and customers. Mr. Narang said that traders storing coins on crypto exchanges should use multi-factor authentication and strong passwords, or store their coins securely offline, if possible.

"There is an old adage in the cryptocurrency space that says: "not your keys, not your crypto/coins". As long as users store their cryptocurrency on an exchange, those coins don't necessarily belong to them because the exchange could ban their account or an exchange hack could lead to the loss of coins," explained Mr. Narang.



#### **KNOW YOUR ENGLISH**

## I flirted with the idea of moving away

He hurled the bag at his friend for not doing chores around the house while he was away

S. Upendran

#### Is it okay to say 'flirt with an idea'? (J. Preethi, Kanpur)

When you flirt with another person, you are making it clear that you are attracted to the individual – at least, temporarily. In other words, you are not being very serious about the matter.

It is also possible to flirt with an idea. When you do this, you are merely toying with an idea. For example, you could flirt with the idea of buying an expensive car. When you do this, you consider buying one, but do not really put your heart and soul into it. You do not surf the Net about the types of cars available, the price, etc. You are not very serious about it; so much so, the very idea of buying a new car disappears after a short time.

When my uncle was young, he flirted with the idea of starting a school.

My daughter flirted with the idea of moving to Bengaluru. After driving in the city, she decided against it.

Which is correct? Sense of belonging or sense of belongingness? (A. Ishaq) Both expressions are acceptable, and both have, more or less, the same meaning. Native speakers of English, however, employ 'sense of belonging' much more frequently than 'sense of belongingness'. When we settle in a new place – perhaps, within our own country or somewhere abroad – what is it that we all wish for? We would like the members of the community to welcome us and accept us with open arms. This feeling of inclusion that we have, makes us feel that we are part of the community. The relationships we build over time ma

happy, and give us a sense of belonging. Playing cricket with my friends, gives me a strong sense of belongingness.

#### What is the difference between 'throw' and 'hurl'? (S. Mayank)

In both cases, you have something in your hand, swing your arm back, and release the object into the air. The difference between 'throw' and 'hurl' (rhymes with 'curl' and 'pearl') is the manner in which you release the object. 'Throw', which is the general term, can be used to suggest that the object is being released gently or with force. For example, when we throw a ball to a child, we do so gently, for we do not want the child to get hurt. When we are playing cricket, and the batsman sets off for a quick single, we throw the ball with some heat on it – in other words, we throw it with tremendous force. The act of throwing doesn't always imply emotion. This is not the case with 'hurl'; you usually hurl something at someone because you are angry with the individual; and because you are angry, you throw whatever it is in your hand with a great deal of force. The intent in this case is to hurt the individual.

upendrankye@gmail.com

### THE DAILY QUIZ

dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Please send in your answers to

## A quiz on the 112th edition of the Tour De France cycle race that concluded on Sunday

## V.V. Ramanan

### **QUESTION 1**

By winning on Sunday, Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar has joined five other riders with four or more titles. Who was the last rider to win four titles?

### **QUESTION 2**

This year's stage winners came from nine different nationalities. Riders from which non-European country claimed Stage wins prior to the last Stage on July 27?

### **QUESTION 3**

What unfortunate distinction is common to Stage winners Philipsen (Stage 1), Mathieu van der

Poel (Stage 2), and Remco Evenepoel (Stage 5)?

#### **QUESTION 4** Apart from getting the

yellow jersey, which other jersey did Pogacar win for topping the mountains classification?

### **QUESTION 5**

In a rare change after the start of the event, Stage 19 was cut from 130km to 95km, with two planned categorised climbs dropped, because of what specific reason?

### **QUESTION 6**

What was common to Stages 4, 7, 12, and 13 before the ceremonial finish with Stage 21 on Sunday?



Name this champion who consigned Pogacar to the runner-up spots in 2022 and 2023. AP

### Questions and Answers to the

July 25 edition of the daily quiz: 1. On July 25, 2007, this woman was sworn-in to the top post in the country. Ans: Pratibha Patil 2. The reason why World Embryologist Day is celebrated every year on July 25. Ans: To

first test tube baby 3. This woman astronaut became the first woman to perform this activity in space. Ans: Svetlana

mark the birth of the world's

### Yevgenyevna Savitskaya and 4. Air France flight 4590 crashed in

2000 here. Ans: Paris 5. The painting which is not one of Thomas Eakins'. Ans: Blue Dancers Visual: Identify this iconic movie and its director. Ans: Sleepless in

Seattle; Nora Ephron Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan Piyali Tuli | Tamal Biswas | Tito

Shiladitya G. Pavithra

# Word of the day

## Logy:

stunned or confused and slow to react (as from blows or drunkenness or exhaustion)

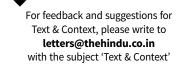
**Synonyms:** dazed, foggy, groggy, stuporous

**Usage:** After only a few hours of sleep, she

woke up logy.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/logypro International Phonetic

Alphabet: /ˈloʊgi/



## MONBYWSE

### **ASKUS**

#### Vaishali R. Venkat

I am a retired bank officer aged 70. I have a health insurance policy with a coverage of ₹4 lakh under a special scheme of IBA (Indian Bankers Association). The maximum coverage for family is ₹4 lakh under the scheme. Top-up to a maximum of ₹5 lakh is available. I want to have a coverage of minimum ₹20 lakh for me and my wife. Kindly advise.

M. GOPINATHAN

The policy, which you have currently, might be a group health insurance policy designed for retired bank staff. The policy might not be customisable or might be subject to negotiations between IBA and unions. Against this backdrop, it is advisable to take a separate individual health policy, in addition to your bank policy, with a basic coverage (Sum Insured) of ₹5 lakh. If you cannot afford this additional individual base policy, you can go with your bank policy itself. But, having a individual health policy has more benefits.

For a coverage of up to ₹20 lakh, you can buy a super-top up health insurance policy, with a deductible of ₹5 lakh, if you purchase an individual base policy for this amount. If you prefer to use only the bank policy, then your deductible amount for the super top-up policy must be ₹4 lakh only.

There are two top-up policies available in the market viz. top-up and super top-up.

Both are completely different. For a complete understanding about the difference between the two policies, you can refer to the Moneywise article titled 'Top-up vs. super top-up' dated March 17, 2025. The premium cost for the super-top up health insurance policy is costly when compared with the top-up policy. Still, for your age, it is advisable to buy the super top-up policy to avail maximum benefits. Most health insurance companies offer both the policies, but you need to be careful to check whether you are really buying the super top-up policy. You can also buy an individual health insurance base policy with the Sum Insured of ₹20 lakh but that is highly expensive, and we would not suggest it.

I am 73 years old. I want to sell my 4-cent land purchased in 2007. What will be my tax liability under the Income Tax Act.

In the Union Budget 2024-2025, presented on July 23, 2024, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said long-term capital gains on all financial- and nonfinancial assets will attract a tax rate of 12.5%. However, in her Budget speech, she did not explicitly mention that the reduced 12.5% (from the earlier 20%) tax rate on LTCGs is without the indexation benefit.

Later, on August 7, 2024, the Finance Bill 2024 was passed in the Lok Sabha with an amendment that gave a relaxation to the new capital gains tax on real estate. The amendment was introduced after widespread criticism from various corners, including Opposition parties and tax professionals. As per the amendment, individuals or Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) who purchased houses or other immovable property before July 23, 2024, have two options regarding the treatment of long-term capital gains and they can choose any one option that is suitable for them. First option is they can choose to pay straight 12.5% tax on the capital gains without claiming the indexation benefit. Or the second option is that they can choose to pay 20% tax on capital gains, after claiming the indexation benefit.

Further, according to the Income Tax Act and as per the Union Budget 2024-25, if you have owned an immovable property (land) for more than two years (24 months), then it is considered a long-term asset. In your case, you have purchased the land in 2007 and therefore, if you earn capital gains by selling the land, it will be considered Long Term Capital Gain (LTCG). Since you have purchased before the July 23, 2024 window, you can choose any one of the tax rates - 12.5% on capital gains without indexation or 20% on capital gains with indexation benefit. The choice is yours.

(The writer is an NISM & CRISIL-certified wealth manager)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment

in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed



ILLUSTRATION: SAINATH

# India's emerging shield against the climate crisis

As extreme events become more frequent and harder to predict, conventional insurance models need a fundamentally different approach; parametric insurance offers an alternative

#### CLIMATE OF SAFETY

#### **Tarun Mathur**

n the span of a few days, Himachal Pradesh was battered by over 20 flash floods, series of landslides, and cloudbursts, events that upended daily life and damaged critical infrastructure in the State. Events like these are now part of an unsettling pattern. The return period for such catastrophic weather events is shortening, making them more frequent, and far less predictable.

India recorded 764 major natural disasters since 1900 with almost half of them occurring after 2000. A clear pattern is emerging: climate volatility and global warming are accelerating and with them, scale and complexity of economic disruption.

Between 2019 and 2023 alone, India suffered over \$56 billion in losses from weather-related disasters. That's nearly a quarter of all climate losses in the Asia-Pacific during the same period and the highest in South Asia by far.

As extreme events become both more frequent and harder to predict, conventional insurance models need a fundamentally different approach

different approach
Parametric insurance
offers an alternative built
for speed and clarity. It
pays out the moment a
predefined threshold is
breached – rainfall crossing a certain mark, seismic
activity above a set magni-

## 66

Parametric cover is finding applications across transportation, manufacturing and even livestock farming where claim delays can lead to financial stress

tude or wind speed crossing destructive limits. Payouts are triggered automatically, based on independently-verified data, and given within hours.

### How it works

At its core, parametric insurance is a simple proposition: it pays out when a pre-agreed index threshold is breached.

These thresholds, such as rainfall below a certain level or temperatures above a critical mark, are based on verified data from sources like the India Meteorological Department, NASA MERRA or other accredited global satellite systems. Everything, from trigger to payout, is defined upfront.

This is finding application across transportation, manufacturing and even livestock farming where claim delays can hugely compound financial stress.

A microfinance institution in Jharkhand, for instance, could structure a parametric policy that automatically covers loan repayments for small farmers if rainfall during the sowing season falls below 300 mm or temperatures cross 40°C.

This would help protect

Union Bank of India

## 66

Globally, countries in Africa, the Pacific Islands, and even U.K. have used parametric products to cover everything from droughts and floods to cyclone winds

income during weather extremes, without requiring damage inspections.

Even in emerging sectors like renewable energy, such insurance has a role to play. A solar power firm operating in Rajasthan can link its policy to solar irradiance data. If sunlight hours drop significantly below expected levels for a given month, payouts will compensate for lost output. When climate-linked disruptions strike, liquidity is needed immediatelyto buy seeds, cover interest costs, and quickly restore working capital. Parametric models remove subjectivity and replace it with automation.

### Where it's working

Parametric insurance is already being deployed across India and beyond. In parts of Rajasthan and U.P, a pilot protected thousands of women small-holder farmers from drought. It used a water balance index and delivered payouts automatically when water availability dropped below a defined threshold. When sowing conditions fail on rainfall deficits or extreme temperatures, the policy triggers loan support - aiding borrowers avoid defaults and maintain livelihoods. Globally, countries in Africa, the Pacific Islands, and even the U.K. have used parametric products to cover everything from droughts and floods to cyclone winds and flood depths. The examples prove such insurance works across contexts.

#### What India needs next

Parametric insurance has demonstrated its ability to deliver fast, transparent relief when climate volatility strikes. The building blocks are already in place–robust climate data, digital delivery platforms, and early success stories across agriculture, energy, and disaster-prone geographies. What's needed now is scale – and a clear framework to finance it.

In 2024, Nagaland became the first Indian state to purchase multi-year parametric cover for land-slides and extreme rainfall, using disaster mitigation funds. Other States now have the green light to act pre-emptively.

India must treat parametric insurance as essential climate infrastructure, much like UPI did for payments. That means expanding data networks, encouraging State-level adoption, and embedding smart cover into public disaster response. In a future shaped by climate uncertainty, it offers something rare viz. speed, trust and financial resilience when it matters most.

(The writer is co-founder & CBO, Policybazaar for Business)

# How about a relatable risk metric?

#### **THINKINVESTOR**

AMCs must disclose risk metric in a way we can relate to information provided. The metric must be standardised for comparison among peer equity funds with track record not new fund offers

#### Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

Processed foods typically mention saturated and transfat per serving. But how will you know whether, say, 20 gram of saturated fat per 100 gram serving is too much? You could face a similar situation with investment products. In this article, we discuss whether asset management companies (AMCs) can disclose risk associated with their mutual funds as a relatable metric.

#### Relatable risk

What if we are informed that burning fat from consuming ice cream would require us to walk, say, five kilometers at a speed of six kilometers per hour? That way, we can relate to the effort needed to keep good health and yet enjoy such food.

Can we apply a similar argument to investment products?

There are several issues to consider. For one, individuals have different life goals and different time horizons for the same goal. For another, the impact of a shortfall in a portfolio at the end of the time horizon may be different for everyone. Therefore, presenting a standardised set of information could be challenging when you are investing to achieve a life goal.

Consider large-cap active funds. The riskometer categorises such funds as high risk. But what does that mean when you are investing to finance your child's college education or making down payment for a house? Note that being conservative and not taking risk could also lead to failure of life goals, unless you significantly increase your savings. It will be easier if AMCs disclose a standardised metric in relation to your goal. Suppose you assume that a fund must give 12% annual return (referred to as minimum acceptable return or MAR) to help you achieve your goal. The riskometer could show the frequency during the last 5, 7, 10 years and since inception when the fund gave a return lower than 12%.

That could give a perspective of how risky the fund is in relation to the goal you want to achieve. Note risk is defined as the possibility of earning returns lower than MAR in any year, as that may lead to goal failure. A fund can assume a standardised return regardless of your goals; for MAR is the expected return on equity as an asset class.

### Conclusion

AMCs should disclose risk metric in a way we can relate to the information provided. The metric must be standardised for comparison among peer funds. The above argument applies to equity funds with track record, not to new fund offers.

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

### **Bank Fixed Deposit Rates**

		Interest Rates (%)			
Bank Name	Highest Slab	1-year Tenure		5-year Tenure	
Small Fin	ance Ba	anks			
AU Small Finance Bank	7.10	6.35	7.10	6.75	
Equitas Small Finance Bank	7.60	7.25	7.25	7.00	
ESAF Small Finance Bank	7.60	4.75	6.00	5.75	
Jana Small Finance Bank	8.20	7.50	7.75	8.20	
slice Small Finance Bank	8.50	6.75	8.25	7.75	
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.40	7.50	8.15	8.40	
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	7.60	7.50	7.20	7.20	
Unity Small Finance Bank	7.75	6.50	7.25	7.25	
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.00	6.25	8.00	7.50	
Private S	ector Ba	anks			
Axis Bank	6.60	6.25	6.60	6.60	
Bandhan Bank	7.40	7.25	7.25	5.85	
City Union Bank	6.75	6.75	6.65	6.25	
CSB Bank	7.40	5.00	5.75	5.75	
DBS Bank	6.55	6.30	6.40	6.25	
DCB Bank	7.40	7.00	7.00	7.00	
Federal Bank	6.70	6.40	6.60	6.25	
HDFC Bank	6.60	6.25	6.45	6.40	
ICICI Bank	6.60	6.25	6.60	6.60	
IDFC FIRST Bank	6.75	6.30	6.75	6.60	

7.00 6.75 6.75 6.65

			Interest Rates (		es (%)
	Bank Name	Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
	Jammu & Kashmir Bank	7.30	6.75	6.75	6.50
	Karur Vysya Bank	6.85	6.60	6.60	6.60
	Karnataka Bank	6.75	6.60	6.25	6.25
	Kotak Mahindra Bank	6.60	6.25	6.40	6.25
	RBL Bank	7.20	7.00	7.20	6.70
	SBM Bank India	7.60	7.05	7.05	7.50
	South Indian Bank	6.70	6.50	6.20	5.70
	Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.05	6.80	6.25	6.25
	YES Bank	7.10	6.75	7.10	6.75
Public Sector Banks					
	Bank of Baroda	6.60	6.50	6.50	6.40
	Bank of India	6.70	6.50	6.25	6.00
	Bank of Maharashtra	6.70	6.20	6.20	6.10
	Canara Bank	6.60	6.50	6.50	6.50
	Central Bank of India	7.00	6.60	6.50	6.50
	Indian Bank	6.90	6.10	6.25	6.00
	Indian Overseas Bank	6.75	6.60	6.30	6.30
	Punjab National Bank	6.70	6.40	6.40	6.50
	Punjab & Sind Bank	6.80	6.10	6.00	6.10
	State Bank of India	6.60	6.25	6.30	6.05

### **Home Loan Interest Rates**

Manage of Landon	Loa	RS.)	
Name of Lender		bove 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
			(In %
Pul	olic Sector Ba	anks	
State Bank of India	7.50-8.70	7.50-8.70	7.50-8.70
Bank of Baroda	7.45-9.25	7.45-9.25	7.45-9.50
Punjab National Bank	7.50-9.35	7.45-9.25	7.45-9.25
Bank of India	7.35-10.10	7.35-10.10	7.35-10.35
Canara Bank	7.50-10.25	7.45-10.25	7.40-10.15
Bank of Maharashtra	7.35-10.15	7.35-10.15	7.35-10.15
Punjab and Sind Bank	7.55-10.75	7.55-10.75	7.55-10.75
Indian Overseas Bank	7.35#	7.35#	7.35#
Indian Bank	7.40-9.40	7.40-9.40	7.40-9.40
Central Bank of India	7.35-9.40	7.35-9.40	7.35-9.40
Priv	ate Sector B	anks	
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.99#	7.99#	7.99#
ICICI Bank	8.00#	8.00#	8.00#
Axis Bank	8.35-11.90	8.35-11.90	8.35-9.35
HSBC Bank	7.70 #	7.70#	7.70 #
South Indian Bank	8.30-10.60	8.30-10.60	8.30-10.60

8.40-10.86 8.40-10.86 8.40-10.86

Karnataka Bank

	Loan Amount (Rs.)					
Name of Lender	Upto 30 lakh Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh		Above 75 lakh			
			(In %)			
Federal Bank	8.75#	8.75#	8.75#			
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	8.15-9.50	8.15-9.50	8.15-9.50			
Bandhan Bank	8.41-15.00	8.41-12.58	8.41-12.58			
RBL Bank	8.20#	8.20#	8.20#			
CSB Bank	9.39-11.08	9.39-11.08	9.39-11.08			
HDFC Bank	7.90#	7.90#	7.90#			
City Union Bank	8.25-9.50	8.50-10.00	8.75-10.50			
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)						
LIC Housing Finance	7.50#	7.50 #	7.50#			
Bajaj Housing Finance	7.49#	7.49#	7.49#			
Tata Capital	7.99#	7.99#	7.99#			
PNB Housing Finance	8.25-11.50	8.25-11.50	8.25-12.35			
GIC Housing Finance	8.80#	8.80#	8.80#			
SMFG India Home Finance	10.00#	10.00#	10.00#			
Sammaan Capital	8.75#	8.75#	8.75#			
Aditya Birla Capital	8.25#	8.25#	8.25#			
ICICI Home Finance	7.50 #	7.50 #	7.50#			
Godrej Housing Finance	8.55#	8.55#	8.55#			
#onwards Rates as o	n July 23	Source:Paisa	bazaar.com			

## Mangaluru airport awaits PoC status



**Booster dose:** The PoC status can help unlock coastal Karnataka's full potential in many sectors. FILE PHOTO

#### AJ Vinayak

Stakeholders in coastal Karnataka want the State government to grant a point-of-call (PoC) status to Mangaluru International Airport – enabling foreign airlines to fly to and from the city – for improved connectivity to the rest of the world. They point out that the PoC status would help unlock the region's full potential in several sectors, including technology, tourism, education and healthcare to name a few.

Rajesh Acharya, a native of Udupi district who currently works in Singapore, rues that Mangaluru airport has been operating below its full potential. He wants the government to push Indian carriers to launch new routes and offer support for two years to assess the viability of these routes. Alternatively, he suggests granting a PoC to authorise foreign airlines to service destinations that Indian low-cost carriers avoid due to commercial reasons.

Mangaluru's connectivity to Southeast Asian destinations, particularly Singapore's Changi airport, needs to be developed urgently, he says. Airlines like Air Asia and Scoot may be convinced to explore the route, he adds, especially given that they have onward connectivity to several destinations in South Asia, the Far East and Australia, and can benefit from the addition of fliers to and from Mangaluru airport.

#### Long-pending demand

Trade and investments worth S\$2 billion are long pending between Singapore and coastal Karnataka due to the lack of direct connectivity, Mr. Acharya says. Capt Brijesh Chowta, Member of Parliament representing Dakshina Kannada district, says that Mangaluru airport, despite its modern infrastructure and rising passenger and cargo traffic, remains underdeveloped due to the paucity of direct international air connectivity.

A PoC status for Mangaluru will open up new routes and offer significant economic benefits, given the region's strategic proximity to international markets. Flights from Southeast and South Asia can use Mangaluru as a transit point for efficient connectivity to West Asia, creating a seamless travel network, he adds.

As a regional hub for international travel and trade, the airport will also boost tourism and industrial growth in Karnataka.

This, in turn, would bring in foreign exchange, facilitate job creation, promote skill development and infrastructure development, and strengthen India's position in global aviation networks, he says. Chowta recently approached the Union Civil Aviation Ministry, seeking a PoC status for

Karnataka Assembly Speaker U.T. Khader, too, has approached the Civil Aviation Minister with a similar request, while pointing out that Mangaluru holds strategic importance due to its geographic proximity and strong connectivity with countries in West Asia and the Far East.

Despite its size and economic significance, Karnataka has only one international airport, in Bengaluru, with PoC status.

Given this lacuna, Mangaluru should be designated as the second PoC in Karnataka, Mr.

Khader says.
(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

# Spicing up the spices market

ZOFF, a young D2C brand set up by two brothers Akash and Ashish Agrawalla from the steel hub of Raipur, is spicing up the category with innovative products and packaging; , the brothers have discovered the sweet spot in the spice segment, that is in 'khada masala' or whole spices

**NEWS ANALYSIS** 

#### Chitra Narayanan

f there is one thing in the kitchen that Indians are very particular about, it's the spices they use. And the choice of spice brand is most often dictated by regional preferences, with each state having its own entrenched local leader.

There are only a handful of national brands and it has taken decades for an Everest or MDH or Catch to become a national brand.

The around ₹87,000 crore spices market has over 1,460 registered spice companies (Traxcn data) and thousands of unorganised players. Most consumers are fiercely loyal to the spice brand they use. The category has seen aggressive activity with 54 acquisitions, 17 IPOs and attracted venture capital and private equity funding of over \$6.4 billion.

And yet here comes a young D2C player from the steel belt of Raipur, set up by two brothers Akash and Ashish Agrawalla, with a burning ambition of becoming a big national spice brand "In five years time, our goal is that at least one of our products should be in every Indian kitchen," declares Akash Agrawalla, co-founder ZOFF. The name ZOFF is an acronym for Zone of Fresh Foods.

Already, the two brothers have discovered the sweet spot in the spice seg-



**Best bet:** The brothers' entry into the spices segment was a well-calculated one. BY ARRANGEMENT

ment. That is in 'khada masala' or whole spices. Most brands, they say, play in the powders and blended spices space, where the margins are higher.

"We saw the big gap in the market in whole spices. We don't want to compete with Everest or MDH in their niche, instead we want to be identified as the best brand for whole spices," declares Mr. Akash.

To strengthen that positioning, ZOFF has launched a series of ribtickling campaigns starring Shilpa Shetty that ends with the tag line "Khadey masala matlab ZOFF".

Aroma of opportunity
Ashish says that once ZOFF
gets its foot in the door of

**ee** 

We don't want to compete with Everest or MDH in their niche, instead we want to be identified as the best brand for whole spices AKASH AGRAWALLA, co-founder ZOFF

an Indian home through whole spices, the bet is the customer will then try out their other products.

And with that eventuality in mind, ZOFF has spread itself wide through the category. Spices are of four types - powders (turmeric, coriander, cumin, chilli being the most essential), blended spices (ga-

ram masala, pav bhaji masala, sabzi masala, et al), whole spices and seasonings (oregano, parsley, etc), explains Mr. Akash. "We are in all four."

Within blends, the brothers say, there is no limit, and this is where regional brands score - you might choose a northern brand for rajma masala, a southern one for sambar masala, and there are region specific ones like vangi bhaat masala, rasam powder, and so on.

A tour through ZOFF's sprawling factory shows the use of modern technology such as cool grinding, processes to retain more oils in the spices, fascinating product extensions and packaging innovation. For

instance, there is a 'haldamrit', a turmeric powder with spices to be mixed with warm milk, an age old traditional remedy.

Disruptive ziplock pouches for the spices have been introduced so that there is no need to transfer to bottles.

But most interesting of all is very small sachets, a useful offering since some blends you use only occasionally.

The brothers have also extended into dry fruits, nuts, seeds, marinades and ready to cook mixes.

Set up in 2018, though the serious journey began only in 2021, ZOFF is already touching a revenue of ₹200 crore and eyeing a turnover of ₹300 crore by next year – the aggressive hundred % growth coming through more products, big distribution ramp up and marketing.

#### Calculated entry

The Agrawalla brothers entry into the spices segment was a well calculated one. Hailing from a well-off family that was in a steel-related business and agri trading, the brothers who did their MBA from Australia were very clear they wanted to do something else. According to Ashish, what tempted them into spices was the margins, the gap they spotted and the fact that there were very few big national brands.

Born online – Flipkart Grocery was their first distribution channel – today over 80% of ZOFF's turnover is from digital platforms. "While we got huge learnings and insights from Flipkart Grocery, it was CRED store that helped us achieve entry into 5 lakh homes," says Mr. Ashish.

The brand is present in all six quick commerce platforms. But now, ZOFF is ramping up its offline play. Partnerships with D-Mart and Reliance Smart Bazaar have been sewn.

Why operate from Raipur, which has no connection with spices?

The brothers insist that Raipur actually works wonderfully to their advantage. The cost of setting up the office and factory (with a lot of space and capacity to expand) was much lower, and being in central India, and a well-connected industrial town, the transportation - both for sourcing and despatch - also much lower and efficient. Their dad, incidentally, does all the sourcing of spices, having experience in agri trading.

The brothers who came into the limelight after a Shark Tank appearance which won them funding are very marketing savvy.

So far the major spends have been on performance marketing, with the brand building journey beginning now.

Since spice was a completely new business, did they have any mentors? "Time has been the biggest mentor," responds Mr. Akash, describing how the COVID years were spent in learning and strategising.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

# India's first PPP airport bets on a future-ready plan

### V. Sajeev Kumar

Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL), the first Indian airport set up under a public-private partnership model, is embarking on a major expansion drive focused on green energy, smart tech and integrated growth.

The plans include a dedicated IT park, a green hydrogen production facility and airport-wide digital upgrades, all of which are expected to usher CIAL into a new era of sustainable and tech-driven growth.

More than 150 projects have been envisaged. According to S. Suhas, Managing Director of CIAL, the exercise goes beyond mere expansion of the airport's infrastructure.

"We are redefining the role of an airport in today's



BPCL to build a green hydrogen plant. THULASI KAKKAT

world. From green hydrogen production to advanced digital systems and the creation of a vibrant commercial ecosystem, each step is part of a larger vision: to integrate sustainability, technology and regional development into the core of airport operations. Our aim is to ensure that CIAL remains futureready, efficient and deeply aligned with the evolving needs of passengers and partners alike," he said.

The ₹200-crore digital infrastructure programme will harness smart technology to create a safer and seamless airport experience, he said. Moreover,

CIAL is now part of an exclusive group of seven Indian airports that offer the Fast Track Immigration – Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP).

CIAL is collaborating with BPCL to build a green hydrogen plant. Slated to be inaugurated by August, it will be the first ever hydrogen production facility at an airport globally. With an installed capacity of 1 MW and production capacity of 220 kg per day, the project is primarily targeted for green mobility solutions within and around the airport.

The initiative complements CIAL's legacy as a solar-powered airport and aligns with global carbon neutrality goals by promoting cleaner alternatives to conventional fuels, Suhas said. To position Kochi as a

leading destination for maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services in South Asia, catering to both domestic and foreign airlines, Cochin International Aviation Services, a subsidiary of CIAL, is constructing its third MRO hangar at an investment of ₹50 crore.

The expansion at Kochi aims to offer a competitive, high-quality alternative for MRO services within India, Suhas said.

This initiative supports the broader goals of the 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' programmes by enhancing domestic capabilities, reducing dependence on overseas service providers and attracting overseas business to Indian soil, he added.

On the infrastructure

front, CIAL is executing a diverse array of projects to strengthen aviation and allied sectors. The projects are designed to enhance capacity, improve efficiency, and generate long-term revenue.

The key works include an import cargo terminal (1 lakh sq. ft.), airport emergency services modernisation with the induction of the latest safety systems, perimeter intrusion detection system (PIDS), India's largest aero lounge – 0484 Aero Lounge, golf resorts, and the ongoing phase one of the international terminal (T3) expansion project. CIAL aims to follow an aerotropolis model by integrating commercial and lifestyle zones around the airport.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

# Why marketers should ditch the car and take a metro or a bus

### <u>Harish Bhat</u>

When I visit Mumbai, I often take the local train from Churchgate station to Borivali. The main objective of this travel is to observe people on the train. In my home-town of Bangalore as well, I have begun travelling by metro quite often. However, this has been mostly born of necessity, because the metro takes me to my destination far quicker than an Uber cab can - particularly given the many choked roads of this otherwise lovely garden city. But having got onto the metro, here too I keep looking at people.

In the past two months, these occasional travels by local train and metro have thrown up several interesting insights. I have jotted down over 25 observations during this period. Here are five of them.

90% of the people are on their mobiles constantly. A vast majority of them are watching reels on Instagram or some similar social media platform; 60% of the people wear wrist watches.

These are primarily metal analog watches. I see far fewer wearables on wrists now, than I used to see two vears ago: many more young and middle-aged men are wearing colourful shirts, compared to earlier years. (And by the way, that includes me); on my last local train ride in Mumbai, virtually no one was smiling, perhaps after a long and tiring day at work. On the metro in Bangalore, on the other hand, I



**Living laboratory:** Public transport, whether a local train, metro or bus, is today one of the best platforms for observing consumers and their real-time, in-situ behaviour. NAGARA GOPAL

inevitably see many more smiles; lots of people in the Mumbai local trains were carrying their lunchboxes with them. In contrast, very few people in Bangalore were carrying their lunch with them.

Each of these "public transport" observations, if pursued further, can potentially lead to very good marketing insights. For instance, marketers may

people are wearing wearables now, and what this tells us about changing attitudes towards digital, health and wellness. Or why middle-aged men are

wish to probe why fewer

suddenly wearing floral shirts, and what this tells us about ageing and urban masculinity.

This leads me to an interesting point. Public transport - whether local train, metro or bus - is today one of the best platforms for observing consumers and their real-time, in-situ behaviour.

Yet, many marketers who choose to travel exclusively by their own vehicles or Uber cabs or auto-rickshaws miss out on this living laboratory that pulses with consumer trends every single day.

If you are a marketer or

a student of the consumer universe, here are a few reasons why you should ditch your private vehicle and consider travelling by public transport at least ocmetros and buses bring together so many segments of our society. Affluent office goers, young students, retail employees, working women, middle-class families - you will find people from virtually every large consumer segment using local transport, particularly in large cities.

casionally. Local trains,

This helps you break away from the ivory towers of your offices or apartment complexes, where you are likely to interact primarily with people from your own demographic segment.

With very little effort, you can observe what all these people are wearing or viewing, and often also overhear snatches of conversation.

If you are a little more

adventurous, you can strike up engaging and relevant conversations with a couple of co-travellers.

While it is important not to generalise or reach firm conclusions from these assorted observations or conversations, what I have realised is that they can spark new thoughts, questions or initial hypotheses which can, in turn, lead to meaningful and actionable ideas. For all these reasons, I would urge marketers to hop on to your city's metro or buses every now and then. This is one of the best and easiest ways of keeping consumers in your sight.

(Harish Bhat is an avid marketer and bestselling author. He was earlier the Brand Custodian at Tata Sons)

YK

#### MOSCOW

Russia restarts Moscow-Pyongyang passenger flights after decades



Russia launched direct passenger flights from Moscow to Pyongyang, North Korea, for the first time since the mid-1990s, starting on Sunday. Operated by Nordwind Airlines, initial flights will run monthly, using a Boeing 777-200ER. Tickets sold out quickly, boosting Russia-North Korea ties. REUTERS

#### DHARAMSALA

<u>China detained activist-singer</u> without charge: Tibetan exile govt.



A young Tibetan singer and activist, Tzukte, popularly known as Asang, was detained by Chinese authorities in early July 2025 after singing a song praising the exiled Dalai Lama, the India-based Central Tibetan Administration said on Saturday. It condemned the arrest as part of Beijing's campaign to suppress Tibetan voices. AFP

#### MANILA

Philippine troops kill 7 guerrillas in latest flare-up of insurgency



Philippine troops killed seven communist guerrillas on Sunday in Uson, Masbate, following an earlier clash that killed another two New People's Army guerillas. They seized rifles and launchers while eight rebels fled and are being pursued. Fewer than 900 NPA insurgents remain, with the rebellion said to be collapsing. AP

#### **PORT SUDAN**

Sudan's RSF names a civilian PM, presidential council in rival govt.



REUTE

A coalition led by Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on Saturday named Mohamed Hassan al-Ta'ayshi, a civilian, Prime Minister and formed a presidential council with RSF leader Dagalo as President, challenging the army-backed government. This deepens Sudan's division amid ongoing war, and stalled peace efforts. AFP

# Trump confirms deal with EU, sets 15% export tariffs

The EU agrees to purchase \$750 billion worth of energy from the U.S. and pledges an additional \$600 billion in investments; both leaders say the deal restores stability to the trading relationship

Agence France-Presse TURNBERRY

S. President Donald Trump and EU chief Ursula von der Leyen on Sunday announced they had reached a deal to end a transatlantic tariffs stand-off and avert a full-blown trade war.

The agreement came as the clock ticked down on an August 1 deadline for the European Union to strike a deal with Washington – or face an across-theboard U.S. levy of 30%.

"We have reached a deal. It's a good deal for everybody," Mr. Trump told reporters following a high-stakes meeting with Ms. von der Leyen at his golf resort in Turnberry, Scotland.

Mr. Trump told reporters the deal involved a baseline levy of 15% on EU exports to the United States, – the same level secured



**Atlantic accord:** Donald Trump shakes hands with Ursula von der Leyen following their meeting in Turnberry on Sunday. AFP

by Japan – including for the bloc's crucial auto sector, which is currently being taxed at 25%.

"We are agreeing that the tariff straight across, for automobiles and everything else, will be a straight across tariff of 15%," Mr. Trump said.

He also said the bloc had agreed to purchase "\$750 billion worth of energy" from the United States, as well as \$600 billion more in additional investments in the country.

Negotiating on behalf of the EU's 27 countries, Ms. von der Leyen's European Commission had been pushing hard to salvage a trading relationship worth an annual \$1.9 trillion in goods and services.

"It's a good deal," the EU chief told reporters, sitting alongside Mr. Trump following their talks. "It will bring stability. It will bring predictability. That's very important for our businesses on both sides of the Atlantic," she said.

While 15% would be much higher than pre-existing U.S. tariffs on European goods, which average around 4.8%, it would mirror the status quo, with companies currently facing an additional flat rate of 10%.

Had the talks failed, EU states had greenlit counter tariffs on \$109 billion of U.S. goods including aircraft and cars to take effect in stages from August 7. Brussels was also drawing up a list of U.S. services to potentially target.

Separately, U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick had said the August 1 deadline was firm and there will be "no extensions, no more grace periods".

## UN to try to use 'pauses' to reach Gaza's starving

Agence France-Presse GENEVA

The United Nations said it would try to reach as many starving people as possible in Gaza after Israel announced it would establish secure land routes in for humanitarian convoys.

The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) said it had enough food in, or on its way to, the region to feed the 2.1 million people in the Gaza Strip for almost three months.

#### 'Move welcomed'

UN emergency relief coordinator Tom Fletcher said on X he welcomed the announcement of "humanitarian pauses".

"In contact with our teams on the ground who will do all we can to reach as many starving people as we can in this window."

WFP said more than 62,000 tonnes of food assistance was needed monthly to cover the entire Gaza population of two million.

# Thailand, Cambodia agree to ceasefire negotiations

Associated Press

Thailand and Cambodia on Sunday signalled their readiness to negotiate an end to a deadly border dispute following mediation efforts by U.S. President Donald Trump. The fighting, now in its fourth day, has killed at least 33 people and displaced over 1,68,000.

Mr. Trump posted on Truth Social on Saturday that he spoke to the leaders of Thailand and Cambodia and suggested he would not move forward with trade agreements with either country if the hostilities continued. He later said both sides agreed to meet to negotiate a ceasefire.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said on Sunday his country agreed to pursue an "immediate and unconditional cease-fire"

He said Mr. Trump told him that Thailand had also agreed to halt attacks following Mr. Trump's conversation with Acting Thai



**Daily bread:** People who fled their homes gather to receive food in Cambodia's Oddar Meanchey province on Sunday. AFP

Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai.

"This is positive news for the soldiers and people of both countries," Mr. Hun Manet said.

He said he tasked his deputy, Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn, to coordinate next steps with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and to engage directly with Thailand's Foreign Minister to implement the ceasefire.

Mr. Phumtham thanked Mr. Trump and said that Thailand agreed in principle to a ceasefire but stressed the need for "sincere intention" from Cambodia, the Thai Foreign Ministry said. Mr. Phumtam called for swift bilateral talks to discuss concrete steps toward a peaceful resolution, it said.

The fighting first flared on Thursday after a land mine explosion along the border wounded five Thai soldiers. Both sides blamed each other for starting the clashes. Both countries recalled their ambassadors and Thailand closed its border crossings with Cambodia.

Despite the diplomatic efforts, fighting continued on Sunday along parts of the contested border.

## SNP wants to bring Palestine statehood Bill, opposes Starmer

Agence France-Presse

A minor Opposition party in the British Parliament on Sunday threatened to bring forward legislation on recognising Palestinian statehood and "force a vote" if Prime Minister Keir Starmer continues to oppose the move.

The Scottish National Party (SNP), which pushes for the independence of Scotland, said it would table a "Palestine Recognition Bill" when Parliament returns after its summer recess if Mr. Starmer did not change his position.

The Prime Minister has committed to recognising

PM has committed to recognising State of Palestine but says it must be part of a peace process

Palestinian statehood but said it must be part of a peace process in the West Asia.

The SNP threat comes after more than 220 British MPs, including dozens from Mr. Starmer's ruling Labour party, demanded on Friday that the U.K. follow France and recognise a Palestinian state.

The SNP holds nine seats in the 650-seat U.K.

### Spoils of war



War machines: People visit an exhibition of military hardware and equipment captured by Russian armed forces in the course of a conflict against Ukraine, during celebrations of Russia's Navy Day in Kronstadt outside Saint Petersburg on Sunday. REUTERS

## 34 killed in attack on east Congo church by IS-backed rebels

Associated Press

The death toll from an attack on a Catholic church in eastern Congo by Islamic State-backed rebels has risen to 34, according to a civil society leader.

"The bodies of the victims are still at the scene of the tragedy, and volunteers are preparing how to bury them in a mass grave that we are preparing in a compound of the Catholic church," said Dieudonne Duranthabo, a civil society coordinator in Komanda, in the Ituri province.

At least five other people were killed in an earlier attack on the nearby village of Machongani, from where a search is ongoing.

Both attacks are believed to have been carried out by members of the Allied Democratic Force (ADF) armed with guns and machetes.

Eastern Congo has suffered deadly attacks in recent years by armed groups, including the ADF and Rwanda-backed rebels. The ADF, which has ties to the Islamic State, operates in the borderland between Uganda and Congo and often targets civilians. The group killed dozens of people in Ituri earlier this month in what a UN spokesperson described as a bloodbath.

# World urgently needs a 'global approach' on AI regulation, insists UN top tech chief

Agence France-Presse

The world urgently needs to find a global approach on regulating artificial intelligence, the United Nations' top tech chief said this week, warning that fragmentation could deepen risks and inequalities.

Doreen Bogdan-Martin, head of the UN's International Telecommunications Union (ITU) agency, said she hoped that AI "can actually benefit humanity". But as concerns mount over the risks posed by the fast-moving technology – including fears of mass job losses, the spread of deepfakes and disinformation, and society's fabric fraying – she insisted that regulation was key.

"There's an urgency to

"There's an urgency to try to get... the right framework in place," she said, stressing the need for "a global approach".

Her comments came after U.S. President Donald Trump this week unveiled an aggressive, low-regulation strategy aimed at en-



Doreen Bogdan-Martin

suring the United States stays ahead of China on AI. Among more than 90 proposals, Mr. Trump's plan calls for sweeping deregulation, with the administration promising to "remove red tape and one-rous regulation" that could hinder private sector AI development.

Asked if she had concerns about an approach that urges less, not more, regulation of AI technologies, Ms. Bogdan-Martin refrained from commenting, saying she was "still trying to digest" the U.S. plan.

At the same time, she highlighted that "85% of countries don't yet have AI policies or strategies".

#### Agence France-Presse FRANKFURT

Berlin police on Sunday said they arrested 57 people during a pro-Palestinian demonstration on the fringes of the city's yearly Pride march a day earlier, adding that 17 police officers sustained injuries.

According to police, about 10,000 demonstrators participated in the rally on Saturday in support of Palestinians, but authorities moved in to disperse the crowd as organisers

The demonstrations reflect heightened concerns as the Israel-Hamas conflict grinds on for the third year

Police sustain injuries, dozens arrested

at Berlin pro-Palestinian demonstration

struggled to restore order.

The arrests were related to public order disturbances, including resisting police and throwing bottles or physical altercation, but also the use of anti-Semitic slogans as well as "symbols of anti-constitutional and terrorist organisations", police said on social media.

The "Internationalist Queer Pride for Liberation" movement, which on its website says there is "no queer liberation without anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, and anti-Zionist struggle", called the rally.

The pro-Palestinian demonstration took place as Berlin's annual Pride parade was being held in another city district, where 64 arrests were also made, for insults, assault

and also the alleged use of symbols deemed linked to "terrorist organisations".

Another demonstration, this one by far-right militants opposed to the Pride march, also took place, with police saying that 20 people there were arrested.

The demonstrations reflect heightened concerns as the Israel-Hamas conflict grinds on, with Israel pursuing a devastating military operation in Gaza following Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack.

YK



Conflict traces: People gather near a destroyed tank after clashes in Sweida, Syria. REUTERS

## Syria's Druze grieve after bloodbath in the city of Sweida

Reuters **SWEIDA** 

Hatem Radwan stared at the bloodstained floor and cushions in the Al-Radwan guest house in Syria's Druze city of Sweida, still wondering how he survived the shooting spree more than a week ago that killed his relatives and friends.

"I'm not sleeping. I wish I would have died; it would have been better for me," the 70-year-old said, saying two of his sons-in-law and his daughter's father-in-law were killed when armed men stormed into the guesthouse on July 16.

Hundreds of people were killed in days of sectarian violence in Syria's Sweida province, where government forces were sent to quell clashes between Druze factions and Bedouin tribes.

Syria's Defence Ministry on July 22 said it would investigate reports of an "unknown group" in military fatigues committing "shocking and gross violations" in Sweida, and hold the perpetrators accountable. The Interior Ministry condemned "the circulating videos showing field executions carried out by unidentified individuals in the city of Sweida," and also pledged to conduct a probe.

Residents, monitoring groups and reporters in the province said the violence intensified after security forces deployed, reporting several cases of execution-style killings.

One of the most gruesome was the Al-Radwan guesthouse. A video posted online and verified by Reuters as being in the Al-Radwan guest house showed more than a dozen bodies, several with gunshot wounds to the chest, slumped over one

# Five-month-old starved to death in Gaza war, weighing less than at birth

At least 127 people had died from malnutrition-related causes, with adult deaths recorded in just the past few weeks, says Health Ministry; cases of child malnutrition has surged in recent weeks, says a doctor whose paediatric department is currently treating 60 cases of acute malnutrition

**Associated Press** KHAN YOUNIS

mother pressed a final kiss to what remained of her fivemonth-old daughter and wept. Esraa Abu Halib's baby now weighed less than when she was born.

On a sunny street in shattered Gaza, the bundle containing Zainab Abu Halib represented the latest death from starvation after 21 months of war and Israeli restrictions on aid.

The baby was brought to the paediatric department of Nasser Hospital on Friday. She was already dead. A worker at the morgue carefully removed her Mouse-printed Mickey shirt, pulling it over her sunken, open eyes. He pulled up the hems of her pants to show her knobby knees. His thumb was wider than her ankle. He could count the bones of her chest.

The girl had weighed over 3 kg when she was born, her mother said. When she died, she weighed less than

A doctor said it was a case of "severe, severe starvation".

#### One of 85 children

She was wrapped in a white sheet for burial and placed on the sandy ground for prayers. The bundle was barely wider



Israel's war on Gaza, in Khan Younis, Gaza Strip, on Saturday. AP

than the imam's stance. He raised his open hands and invoked Allah once more.

Zainab was one of 85 children to die of malnutrition-related causes in Gaza during the war, according to the latest toll released by the territory's Health Ministry on Saturday. It said 127 people had died of malnutrition-related causes overall, with the adult deaths counted in just the past few

"She needed a special baby formula which did not exist in Gaza," Zainab's father, Ahmed Abu Halib, said as he prepared for her funeral prayers in the hospital's courtyard in the southern city of Khan

Dr. Ahmed al-Farah, head of the paediatric department, said the girl had needed a special type of formula that helps with babies allergic to cow's milk.

He said she hadn't suffered from any diseases, but the lack of the formula led to chronic diarrhoea and vomiting. She wasn't able to swallow as her weakened immune system led to a bacterial infection and sepsis, and quickly lost more weight.

The child's family, like many of Gaza's Palestinians, lives in a tent, displaced. Her mother, who also has suffered from malsaid nutrition, breastfed the girl for only six weeks before trying to feed her formula. "With my daughter's death, many will follow," she said. "Their names are on a list that no one looks at. They

are just names and num-

bers. Our children, whom we carried for nine months and then gave birth to, have become just num-

Israel's aid restriction The arrival of children suffering from malnutrition has surged in recent weeks, al-Farah said. His department, with a capacity of eight beds, has been treating about 60 cases of acute malnutrition.

Another malnutrition clinic, affiliated with the hospital, receives an average of 40 cases weekly, he

Doctors and aid workers in Gaza blame Israel's restrictions on the entry of aid and medical supplies. Food security experts warn of famine in the territory of over two million people.

After ending the latest ceasefire in March, Israel cut off the entry of food, medicine, fuel and other supplies completely to Gaza for 21/2 months, saying it aimed to pressure Hamas to release hostages. Under international pressure, Israel eased the blockade in May. Since then, it has allowed in around 4,500 trucks for the U.N. and other aid groups to distribute, including 2,500 tons of baby food and high-calorie special food for children, Israel's Foreign Ministry said last week.

The average of 69 trucks a day, however, is far below the 500 to 600 trucks a day the U.N. says are needed for Gaza. The U.N. says it has been unable to distribute much of the aid because hungry crowds.

Late Saturday, Israel's Foreign Ministry announced said that: "Israel rejects the false accusations of 'starvation' propaganda initiated by Hamas which manipulates pictures of children suffering from terminal diseases. It is shameful."

## India has 'greater responsibility' to support the PKK-Turkiye peace process: pro-Kurdish leader

Kallol Bhattacherjee NEW DELHI

The recent ceasefire announced by the Kurdish decades-old armed struggle against the Turkish state is a victory for the people of Turkiye that will translate into peace for the West Asian region and the world, said a pro-Kurdish leader who played a crucial role in facilitating the deal between PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and the Erdogan government of Turkiye.

In an interview with The Hindu, Tuncer Bakirhan, Co-Chair of the People's **Equality and Democracy** Party (DEM Party), said India has a "greater responsibility" to support the peace agreement, as the 'Kurdish geography' that covers parts of Turkiye,



Iraq, Iran, and Syria has close civilisational ties with present-day India.

"There are no losers in peace. If the people of Turkey win, the people of West Asia and the world will win. It is also important to recall the historical and cultural ties between the Kurds and the Indian people. Both peoples share common roots as part of the Indo-European language family," said Mr. Bakirhan, explaining that the peace deal between PKK

from the historical ties TUNCER BAKIRHAN and Turkiye reflects the new political reality that is replacing the legacy of the 1916 Sykes-Picot treaty that had allowed the U.K. and

separate spheres Mr. Bakirhan said that "commercial and cultural exchanges" throughout history have created a continuity between the "Kur-

France to divide the form-

er Ottoman areas into two

dish geography and India". "Therefore, the support we hope to receive from In-

dia is not merely a diplo-The support we matic approach but also a hope to receive natural solidarity stemfrom India is not merely ming from the deep histora diplomatic approach ties," said Mr. but also a natural solidarity stemming The latest peace process

> ter Devlet Bahçeli, Chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, gave the call for peace, which was supported by the PKK's imprisoned leader Abdullah Öcalan, who on 27 February 2025, called for the dissolution of the PKK and its disarmament.

began in October 2024 af-

The DEM Party plays a delegational role in this peace process between the Turkish state and Mr. Öcalan. Mr. Bakirhan and his team have met the Turkish government representatives to support the peace process.

The latest ceasefire, however, is far from perfect,

as Mr. Bakirhan confirmed sporadic clashes continue in different parts of the Kurdish region, urging that, "The attacks and clashes must end immediately. There should be no operations during such a process, and active combat positions should be aban-

He argued that there is tremendous intellectual capital in Turkey" in support of the peace process, as the violent struggle between the PKK and the Turkish armed forces has cost around \$2 trillion.

"Turkey has turned into an economic and political structure that constantly generates crises. Therefore, regional dynamics are changing, and Turkey's internal dynamics have been showing strong signs that the conflicts cannot continue," said Mr. Bakirhan.

# threaten U.S. food security'

**Agence France-Presse** VENTURA

Lisa Tate, whose family has been farming in Ventura recall a threat to crops like the one emanating from Preisdent Donald Trump's anti-immigrant onslaught.

Ms. Tate fears that the crackdown on illegal workers, far from addressing the problems of this vital agricultural region north of Los Angeles, could "dismantle the whole economy" and put the country's food security at risk. "I began to get really concerned when we saw a group of border control agents come up to the Central Valley and start going onto farms, trying to chase people down, evading the property owner," the 46-yearold farmer said. "That's

The agricultural sector has for years been trying to find solutions for its labour shortages

'Trump immigration raids

not something we are used to happening in agriculture," she added.

The agricultural sector has for years been trying to find solutions for its perennial labour shortages, beyond issuing temporary permits for migrant workers. The number of government certified positions for agricultural temporary workers practically tripled between 2014 and 2024, Department of Labor statistics show, underlining just how much American agriculture depends on foreign workers. On top of that, some 42% of farm workers are not authorised

to work in the United States, according to a 2022 study by the Department of Agriculture. Those numbers line up with the strugoles many farmers through to find labour. They say U.S. citizens are not interested in the physically demanding work.

Not only will it harm farms and ranches but will also send food prices soaring, and even endanger U.S. food security, possibly requiring the country to start importing provisions that may previously have been grown at home, Ms. Tate said. "What we need is a legislation that has the type of programme that we need, and that works for both the workers, that ensures their safety, it ensures a fair playing field when it comes to international trade, as well as as domestic needs," Tate said.

## Fragile ceasefire between DR Congo and M23 raises cautious hopes for peace

Agence France-Presse

A recent ceasefire agreed between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda-backed M23 rebels, set to take effect this week, ranks as a tentative step towards peace in the country's conflict-wracked

Signed on July 19 in Doha, Qatar, the agreement saw the sides commit to a "permanent ceasefire" and "dialogue and negotiation" to facilitate the "voluntary" return of refugees and displaced persons. But analysts cautioned the peace process in the mineral-rich region remains fragile and lacks sufficient international support.

Thousands of people have died in fighting over the key towns of Goma and

Bukavu, with many thousands displaced and facing a serious humanitarian cri-

Eastern DRC, rich in resources and bordering Rwanda, has been riven by conflict for more than 30 The crisis intensified

with the 2021 resurgence of the M23 group and came to a head in January and February as the group seized Goma and Bukavu, setting up parallel administrations in each.

Kinshasa had previously opposed direct dialogue with the M23. Diplomatic attempts to resolve the crisis, including mediation by Angola, failed. However, the surprise intervention of Qatar succeeded in bringing together Presidents Felix Tshisekedi of the DRC and Paul Kagame

of Rwanda in Doha in mid-March.

The pair committed to an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and "that's when things really got moving", said a Rwandan diplomatic source.

"This paved the way for negotiations at the technical level with a bilateral track between the DRC and Rwanda, and on the other side an internal track between the DRC and the M23," the source said.

The U.S. role "Then the United States

entered the fray and more or less took over the bilateral aspect."

Seeking foreign support against M23's rapid advances, Tshisekedi in early March discussed a mining agreement with the United States.



A member of the M23 movement in Goma. Thousands of people had died in fighting over the key towns of Goma and Bukavu. AFP

On June 28, the foreign ministers of the DRC and Rwanda signed a "peace agreement' Washington.

On July 17, the DRC government signed an agreement with  $\bar{\text{U}}.\text{S.}$  group Ko-Metals, which committed to investing in the digitisation of geological data and the development of a lithium mine in southeast DRC. The Congolese Presi-

dent then resolved to hold direct talks with M23, having previously refused to do so, leading to the Doha agreement.

The Doha agreement calls for a roadmap for the

"full restoration of authority" of the DRC government in the east of the country once a peace agreement is signed. But a dispute soon arose, when DRC government spokesman Patrick Muyaya spoke of an "immediate withdrawal" of the M23, which has a political arm, the Congo River Alliance (AFC).

"Nowhere has it been mentioned that the AFC/ M23 must leave liberated areas," its spokesman, Lawrence Kanyuka, said.

### **International support**

This verbal escalation "shows that there is the will on both sides to fight", said Fred Bauma, executive director at the Congolese Ebuteli Institute.

Without outside pressure – particularly from the United States and Qatar, and to a lesser extent the European Union – it will be difficult to end the conflict solely through dialogue, said Mr. Bauma.

Reports by UN experts say Rwanda has sent troops to the DRC to support the M23 and has also provided the group with weapons and technology.

Kigali has always rejected those accusations, saying it is simply engaged in "defensive measures" against a Hutu armed group in eastern DRC, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) – an armed group founded by former Hutu leaders of the 1994 Rwandan genocide of the Tutsi ethnic group.

The agreement has not yet put an end to the violence.

Last Thursday saw at

least 11 people killed in fighting between M23 and pro-Kinshasa groups, according to local sources. Both sides blamed the

Kinshasa and the M23 gave themselves until July 29 to implement the declaration with the deal setting an August 8 deadline for formal negotiations on a comprehensive peace accord, to be signed by August 17.

But analysts see these deadlines as short and it will be tough to meet them in the absence of "sufficiently strong American diplomatic pressure", says Congolese political analyst Christian Moleka. He said it could take "six to eight months, or even a year to see the M23 withdraw" completely from areas which it controls.

THE HINDU

#### RARE FEAT

Gill first to score four Test tons in debut series as skipper



Shubman Gill became the only player to register four hundreds in his first Test series as captain. He also joined Don Bradman and Sunil Gayaskar as the only skippers to score four centuries in a series. Bradman did it at home against India in 1947-48, while Gavaskar lit up the 1978-79 home series against the West Indies.

#### **ON A ROLL**

Gill joins Gavaskar in 700-run club in a series as India captain



Shubman Gill is the second India captain after Sunil Gavaskar to notch up 700-plus runs in a Test series. Gavaskar leads the tally with 732 runs against the West Indies in the six-match series in 1978-79 while Gill has 722. Gill is also third behind Gavaskar (774 and 732) among Indians with most number of runs in a series.

#### **CENTURIES GALORE**

Washington's hundred takes India's tally to 11 in the England series



Washington Sundar's hundred in the fourth Test against England was the 11th by an Indian batter, matching the record for most centuries in a Test series (versus West Indies at home in 1978-79). Shubman Gill has scored four, K.L. Rahul and Rishabh Pant two each while Ravindra Jadeia and Yashasvi Jaiswal have one each.

#### **STANDING HIS GROUND**

Stokes justifies offer to call off play before the start of final hour



As soon as they got to a point where a draw was inevitable. I was not going to risk any of our bowlers. We just wanted to get through the period without risking proper bowling options — England captain Ben Stokes justifying his offer to call off play before the start of the final hour.

# Steely Washington, Jadeja help India snatch a draw

The two add 203 for the unbroken fifth wicket; Root dropping the latter off the first ball proves to be the turning point; record-breaking Gill registers his fourth hundred of the series

#### INDIA IN ENGLAND

**Shayan Acharya** MANCHESTER

t turned out to be a battle between Bazball and India's grit. In the end, demonstrating an indomitable spirit, India escaped England's Bazball domination with a draw, riding on centuries by Shubman Gill, Washington Sundar and Ravindra Jadeja.

With England enjoying a 311-run first-innings lead and openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and B. Sai Sudharsan falling for ducks, not many fancied India's chances. But against an England bowling attack that had very little to offer – barring a fiery opening spell by captain Ben Stokes - the middle-order showed steel.

After Jofra Archer pegged India back with the wicket of Gill (103, 238b, 12x4) at the stroke of lunch, Washington (101 n.o. 206b, 9x4, 1x6) and Jadeja (107 n.o. 185b, 13x4, 1x6) batted with conviction to add 203 runs for the unbroken fifth wicket. India defined its character by saving the Test and keeping the series alive. The teams head into The Oval for the final Test, with the home side leading 2-1.

Buried under a mountain of runs, it was an uphill task, but with Jadeja making the most of a firstball reprieve, and taking control of the proceedings, the England bowlers strug-

In two wicket-less ses-







The saviours: Gill led the Indian fightback, while Washington and Jadeja mixed caution with aggression to take the team to safety. PTI, GETTY IMAGES & AP

sions, India capitalised on England's sloppy fielding as Washington and Jadeja forged the team's 10th century partnership in four Tests – the second-most for the side in a series, after 11 against the West Indies in 1978-79.

Starting the second session, Archer extracted uneven bounce on a few occasions, but both Jadeja and Washington remained unfazed.

After Gill and K.L. Rahul started the Indian fightback, with a 188-run stand for the third wicket, Washington and Jadeja kept the momentum going. England, on the other hand, failed to convert the half-

chances. There was no dearth of drama at Old Trafford, a venue where England had drawn a Test only once in Bazball era in 2023. Midway into the third session, Stokes walked up to Jadeja and Washington hoping to shake hands. But with both inching closer to the threefigure mark, the two decided to bat on. Eventually, the teams settled for a draw after Washington got his maiden ton.

While Washington and Jadeja dominated the last two sessions, the morning belonged to Gill. After their dogged stand helped India overcome a crisis, Gill and Rahul extended their cautious approach, as Liam Dawson started the day from one end and Stokes, despite writhing in pain, bowled from the other.

Overcoming early disappointments, Stokes exploited the uneven nature of the surface and trapped Rahul in front to break the stand. The Indian think tank promoted Washington to No. 5 and it proved to be a masterstroke.

Gill showed resolve despite being hit on the forefinger of the bottom hand by a Stokes delivery that rose sharply. Playing each

ball on its merit, Gill ticked

#### **SCOREBOARD**

INDIA - 1ST INNINGS 358 in 114.1 overs **ENGLAND — 1ST INNINGS** 669 in 157.1 overs

INDIA - 2ND INNINGS Yashasvi Jaiswal c Root b Woakes 0 (4b), K.L. Rahul lbw b Stokes 90 (230b. 8x4), B. Sai Sudharsan c Brook b Woakes 0 (1b), Shubman Gill c Smith b Archer 103 (238b, 12x4), Washington Sundar (not out) 101 (206b, 9x4, 1x6), Ravindra Jadeja (not out) 107 (185b, 13x4, 1x6); Extras (b-14, lb-2, nb-6, w-2): 24; Total (for four wkts. in 143 overs): 425.

**FALL OF WICKETS** 1-0 (Jaiswal, 0.4 overs), 2-0 (Sai Sudharsan, 0.5), 3-188 (Rahul, 70.2), 4-222 (Gill, 87.4),

**ENGLAND BOWLING** Woakes 23-4-67-2, Archer 23-3-78-1, Carse 17-3-44-0, Dawson 47-11-95-0, Root 19-2-68-0, Stokes 11-2-33-1, Brook 3-0-24-0. PoM: Ben Stokes. Match drawn. England leads

five-match series 2-1. Fifth and final Test: July 31 to August 4, The Oval. Match starts at 3.30 p.m. IST.

along and seemed to be in no hurry as he brought up his ninth Test century and fourth of the series. On the way, he became the first player to hit four hundreds in a debut Test series as captain, going past Warwick Armstrong, Don Bradman, Greg Chappell, Virat Kohli and Steven Smith, who scored three each.

Gill looked set to extend his tally before being caught off Archer. And as Root put down a catch at first slip off the very next delivery, Jadeja survived to script India's comeback story with Washington.

The journey in numbers after

Spa-Francorchamps

McLaren

the 44-lap race around Circuit de

Piastri, in 58

COMPILED BY ANIRUDH VELAMUR

## Guys showed a lot of character: Gambhir



**Bravehearts:** Pant and Jadeja produced gutsy performances in the drawn game. GETTY IMAGES

#### Shayan Acharya MANCHESTER

Head coach Gautam Gambhir stated that past records don't matter for the Indian team.

"They are making their own history. A lot of people wrote us off in this Test, but this is the foundation of this team. These are characters who are sitting in this dressing room, wanting to fight for the country," Gambhir said.

"I don't believe that the team is in transition, because it's still an Indian team. And this is the best 18 that is going to represent, and more importantly, it's not a transition, it's just a little bit of inexperience," Gambhir said.

"It's only about experience and inexperience. But the most important thing is that these boys are going to learn a lot from what they did, because being under pressure and then batting for five sessions is never easy, especially on a fifth day pitch," Gambhir said. "We've to give it to the guys for the character they showed".

## **SNAPSHOTS**

#### Pogacar wins fourth **Tour de France title**

PARIS: Slovenian Tadej Pogacar won his fourth Tour de France title after finishing safe in the final stage won by Belgian Wout van Aert on Sunday. Two-time champion Jonas Vingegaard of Denmark took second place overall with German Florian Lipowitz finishing third.

#### **Tilak to lead South** in Duleep Trophy

CHENNAI: Tilak Varma will lead South Zone in the **Duleep Trophy** tournament that starts on August 28 at Bengaluru. The South Zone selectors have picked a 16-member squad along with six standby players.

The squad: Tilak Varma (Capt.), Mohd. Azharuddeen (Vice-Capt.), Tanmay Agarwal, Devdutt Padikkal, Mohit Kale, Salman Nizar, N. Jagadeesan, T. Vijay, R. Sai Kishore, Tanay Thyagarajan, V. Vyshak, M.D. Nidheesh, Ricky Bhui, N.P. Basil, Gurjapneet Singh, Snehal Kauthankar. Standbys: Mohit Redkar, R. Smaran, Ankit Sharma, Eden Apple Tom, Andre Siddarth, Shaikh Rasheed.



Divya and Humpy

head to a tiebreaker

## **CHESS**

#### **Press Trust of India** BATUMI

International Master Divya Deshmukh held the higherranked Grandmaster Koneru Humpy to a draw in the second game on Sunday, taking the FIDE women's World Cup final to a tiebreaker where games of shorter duration will be played to determine the winner.

The tie-breaker, which will be a series of shorterduration games, will be played on Monday to determine the winner.

#### Divya, who did not make utmost use of her promising opening in the first game of the match, was far more composed against a Queen pawn opening and faced little trouble playing with black.

During the post-game interaction with the broadcaster, Divya seemed upset with the mistakes she made in game one, where she said she invariably kept making the wrong choices.

China's Tan Zhongyi clinched the second game against Lei Tingjie to win the match 1.5-0.5, claim the bronze medal and secure a spot in the Candidates tournament.

# Piastri wins Belgian GP

### FORMULA ONE

#### **Agence France-Presse** SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS

Oscar Piastri held off McLaren teammate Lando Norris to win the Belgian Grand Prix on Sunday and stretch his lead over the latter to 16 points.

The results: 1. Piastri (McLaren) 1h:25m:22.601s, 2. Norris (McLaren) +3.415s, 3. Leclerc (Ferrari) 20.185, 4. Verstappen (Red Bull) 21.731, 5. Russell (Mercedes) 34.863, 6. Albon (Williams) 39.926, 7. Hamilton (Ferrari) 40.679, 8, Lawson (Racing Bulls) 52.033, 9. Borteleto (Kick Sauber) 56.434. 10. Gasly (Alpine) 72.714, 11. Bearman (Haas) 73.145, 12. Hulkenberg (Kick Sauber) 73.628, 13. Tsunoda (Red Bull) 75.395, 14. Stroll (Aston Martin) 79.831, 15. Ocon (Alpine) 86.063, 16. Antonelli (Mercedes) 86.721, 17. Alonso (Aston Martin) 87.924, 18. Sainz (Williams) 92.024, 19. Colapinto (Alpine) 95.250;

Standings: Drivers: 1. Piastri 266, 2. Norris 250, 3. Verstappen 185. Constructors: 1. McLaren 516, 2. Ferrari 248, 3. Mercedes

+1 lap: 20. Hadjar (Racing Bulls).





### Australia wins another high-scoring match

Cameron Green hit an unbeaten 55 and Josh Inglis smashed 51 to lift Australia to a three-wicket win over the West Indies in the fourth T20I at Basseterre on Saturday. Glenn Maxwell, in pic, scored 47 runs off 18 balls. The Aussies have a 4-0 lead in the five-match series.

The scores: West Indies 205/9 in 20 overs (Sherfane Rutherford 31, Adam Zampa 3/54) lost to Australia 206/7 in 19.2 overs (Glenn Maxwell 47, Josh Inglis 51, Cameron Green 55 n.o., Jediah Blades 3/29). Toss: Australia: PoM: Maxwell.

### Bhavani Devi bows out of individual sabre event

C.A. Bhavani Devi's campaign in the women's individual sabre at the World fencing championships in Tbilisi (Georgia) ended on Sunday in the round-of-64, when the 31-year-old lost to Japan's Misaki Emura 15-10.

## Singles titles for Shi and Wang at China Open badminton

Shi Yuqi surged to victory in the China Open men's singles final on Sunday, bouncing back from a game down to beat Wang Zhengxing 14-21, 21-14, 21-15. The women's singles title decider, which also featured two Chinese players, saw second-ranked China's Wang Zhiyi defeat No. 4 Han Yue 21-8, 21-13. "The impact, speed and strength of younger players are definitely better than mine," said 29-year-old Shi after beating the 23-year-old Wang. "So I can only say that I tried my best to withstand some of his speed." It was Shi's second such win in the prestigious competition.

## India loses to Italy in the Rod Laver Junior Challenge

The Indian team was beaten 2-4 by Italy in the opening match of the IC Rod Laver Junior Challenge tennis event in Barcelona. Aradhya Kshitij and Samarth Sahita won their matches while Saanvi Mishra and Rishitha Basireddy lost in straight sets. The Indian boys' and girls' combinations, too, suffered a reverse.

## Nehra and Likhith fail to progress at swimming Worlds

India's Aryan Nehra fell short of qualifying for the final while S.P. Likhith failed to make the semifinals at the World aquatics championships in Singapore on Sunday. In 400m freestyle, Nehra finished seventh in his heat and 37th overall in 4:00.39. Likhith clocked 1:01.99 to finish 40th overall in 100m breaststroke event.

# Youngsters Dipanshu and Deepika impress amid a slew of absentees

More than 900 athletes had sent in their entries, but the number of participants who actually turned up was much less

**ATHLETICS** 

**Sports Bureau** 

ipanshu Sharma returned to winning ways at the site of his best performance this year, improving his personal best to win the men's javelin throw on day one of the Indian Open athletics championships in Sangrur on Sunday.

Junior National record holder Deepika improved her own mark and set a new junior record with a 56.41m throw in women's javelin.

The 19-year-old Dipanshu's 76.03m throw bettered his previous best set at the previous iteration of Indian Open at the same venue in April this year by a metre. The result also helped Dipanshu return to the Under-20 top-three in



Dipanshu. RF MEDIA

the world for the year. It was one of the few highlights of the day, as several prominent names failed to



Flinging it far: Deepika improved her own mark and set a new junior record with a 56.41m throw in javelin. FILE PHOTO: M. VEDHAN

Shivam Lokhare, the newest entrant to the 80m club, and Kishore Kumar Iena both did not participate although, interestingly, Jena's former coach Samarjeet Singh Malhi was among the participants.

More than 900 athletes had sent in their entries,

forcing the organisers to make the Indian Open a two-day event, but the number of participants who actually turned up was much less.

The 100m had 14 races with Army's Rohit Gorkha clocking 10.49 seconds to be the surprise fastest while Uttarakhand's Prakhar Sharma won the 400m in 47.24 seconds across 12

The men's 5000m, with 31 initial entries, saw only 11 runners complete and 13, including former champion Abhishek Pal and National Games gold medallist Sawan Barwal, not starting. Anurag Yadav of Gujarat won in 14:33.61.

Among the women, Dhanalakshmi and M.V. Jilna – both former India sprinters and returning from doping suspension were the only two to go under 12 seconds in the 100m

across six races, Dhanalakshmi edging ahead in 11.55 seconds.

Race B saw only three legal finishes, with three disqualifications and Nith-

ya Ramraj not starting.

Himachal Pradesh's Manisha Kumari bettered her personal best by more than a second to win the 400m in 53.81 seconds

The results (winners only): Men: 100m: Rohit Gorkha (Army, 10.49s), 400m: Prakhar Sharma (Utk, 47.24s), 1500m: Rahul (Del, 3:47.47), 5000m: Anurag Yadav (Guj, 14:33.61), **High Jump:** Sarvesh Kushare (Mah, 2.26m) Discus: Kirpal Singh (ONGC,

Women: 100m: Dhanalakshmi (TN, 11.55s), 400m: Manisha Kumari (HP. 53.81s). 1500m: Lili Das (Utk, 4:17.48), **High Jump:** Khvati Mathur (UP, 1,76m), Discus: Seema (JSW, 55.03m), Javelin: Deepika (JSW, 56.41m).

54.65m), Javelin: Dipanshu

Sharma (Reliance, 76.03m).

## Ankita clinches women's 3000m steeplechase silver



Final burst: Ankita's push at the end saw her finish a few milliseconds behind Finland's Ilona Maaria. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**Press Trust of India** ESSEN (GERMANY)

Steeplechaser Ankita Dhyani came up with a blistering run to clinch silver in the gruelling 3000m event with a personal time of 9:31.99 seconds, as Indian athletes ended their campaign in the World University Games on Sunday.

The men's 4x100m relay quartet bagged a bronze while the trio of Munita Prajapati, Mansi Negi, and Sejal Singh finished third in the women's 20km team racewalk.

India ended its cam-

other player to control the

pace," the 17-year old trai-

nee with Pullela Gopi-

chand Academy in Hydera-

tional medal so I am really

happy with the result but I

coaches - Rahul Yadav and

Jayant Rana - would be

mental in pushing me to

work hard in singles even

when everyone else, in-

cluding myself, thought I

was not good enough and

me to focus more now but I

"This medal will push

should stick to doubles.

know I can do better.

happier today.

"This is my first interna-

"More than myself, my

They have been instru-

bad since 2019 admitted.

paign with two gold, five silver and five bronze in the showpiece event.

Ankita shaved nearly seven seconds from her personal best 9:39.00s to finish behind Finland's Ilona Maaria Mononen (9.31.86) Adia Budde of Germany took bronze in 9:33.34s.

Friday, Ankita topped Heat 1 in 9:54.79s to secure her place in the final. A massive 22-second improvement, then propelled Ankita to silver.

The men's 4x100m relay team of Lalu Prasad Bhoi, Animesh Kujur, Manikanta Hoblidhar and Mrutyam



Praveen Chitravel.

Javaram won bronze in 38.89s behind South Korea (38.50s) and South Africa (38.80s).

Earlier on Saturday, Praveen Chithravel secured a silver medal in the men's triple jump. His best effort of 16.66m on his second attempt saw him finish behind Australia's Olympian Connor Murphy (16.77m).

India's medal winners: Silver: Prayeen Chithravel (men's

triple jump), Ankita Dhyani (women's 3000m steeplechase). **Bronze:** Sejal Singh, Munita Prajapati, Mansi Negi (women's 20km racewalk team), men's 4x100m relay.

## Aryan loses in semifinals

**Sports Bureau** 

Aryan Shah lost 5-7, 6-2, 3-6 to Nicolas Varona of Spain in the semifinals of the €91,250 Challenger tennis in Segovia, Spain. The 19year-old Aryan won 22 ATP points and €4,550.

Other results: \$30,000 ITF women, Monastir: Doubles: Final: Tenika Mcgiffin (Aus) & Elza Tomase (Lat) bt Dayeon Back (Kor) & Vaidehi Chaudhari 3-6, 6-3, [10-8].

\$15,000 ITF women, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain: Doubles: Final: Victoria Allen (GBR) & Angelina Wirges (GEr) bt Emma Kamper (Den) & Sravya Shivani 6-1, 2-6, [10-6].

# Arsenal signs

**Agence France-Presse** 

Arsenal on Saturday announced the signing of Swedish international striker Viktor Gyokeres from Sporting Lisbon. He is reported to have signed a five-year deal.



Rich haul: The Indian paddlers won 11 medals — two gold, two silver and seven bronze — in Almaty. X@ULTTABLETENNIS

## Gold for Divyanshi and Priyanuj in WTT Youth Contender

**TABLE TENNIS** 

Sports Bureau

Fresh from her U-15 gold medal at the Asian youth table tennis championships at Tashkent recently, Divyanshi Bhowmick claimed the U-19 girls' title at the WTT Youth Contender in Almaty (Kazakhstan) on Saturday.

She overcame Zlata Terekhova of the Russian

IAF FT holds South United

Federation 11-4, 8-11, 11-7, 11-2 in the final.

In an all-Indian U-17 boys' final, Privanui Bhattacharyya rallied to beat P. B. Abhinandh 8-11, 11-9, 11-3, 11-6. In the U-15 girls' final,

Ananya Muralidharan lost 8-11, 8-11, 8-11 to Lu Yu-En of Taiwan. India wrapped up the

Almaty event with a total of 11 medals - two gold, two silver, and seven bronze.

## Junior women shuttlers hope to build on Asian success

**Uthra Ganesan** 

anvi Sharma continued her recent impressive winning bronze at the Badminton Asia Junior Championships on Saturday, along with Vennala Kalagotla, as India returned with two individual medals for women in the event for the first time.

These were also the first medals for Indian women in the event since P.V. Sindhu in 2012.

The 16-year old Tanvi, who idolises former World No. 1 Tai Tzu Ying, had recently become only the fourth Indian woman to reach a BWF Super 300 final at the US Open.

"There were a lot of unforced errors which was disappointing but I am still happy to get a medal for India after 13 years.

"I have to get stronger and I was not well also through the week so overall it was ok," she said.

nior and junior events isn't



and play freely, the level of players is very different and I know I have to im-

there is more expectation. Add studies and the ba-

"The big target now is the World Junior Championships later this year," she said, adding that competing on home base – she trains at the NCOE, Guwahati, venue for the event – would not matter.

Switching between se-



Tanvi and Vennela. X@BAI\_MEDIA

easy either, she admitted. "Out there I go all out prove to match them.

"In juniors, there is a little more pressure because lance is not easy to man-

won't give up doubles completely," Vennala insisted. Vennala, on the other

## Thulashi and Nithya | Daniel's hat-trick in vain as claim gold



Victorious: Thulasi and Nithya with their big prize. INSTAGRAM/BADMINTONWALES

**Press Trust of India** NEW DELHI

Thulashi Murugesan and Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan clinched gold medals in the British & Irish Para Badminton International, a Level 1 tournament on the BWF circuit, held in

Thulashi rallied to beat compatriot Manisha Ramadass 18-21, 21-17, 21-16 in the women's singles SU5 category, while Nithya overcame Peru's Giuliana Poveda 21-11, 21-23, 21-11 in the SH6 final.

World No. 2 Sukant Kadam, who defeated compatriot Naveen Sivakumar 21-14, 21-19 in the semifinals, went down 6-21, 14-21 to Paralympic champion Lucas Mazur of France in the men's singles SL4 title Other Indian medallists:

Krishna Nagar (bronze, men's singles, SH6); (Prem Kumar Ale & Abu Hubaida (bronze, men's doubles WH1-WH2); Krishna Nagar & Nithya (bronze, mixed doubles SH6); Mandeep Kaur (bronze, women's singles SL3); Mandeep Kaur & Chirag Baretha (bronze, mixed doubles SL3-SU5).

**DURAND CUP** 

<u>Amitabha Das Sharma</u>

Indian Air Force Football Team produced an equaliser in the final minute of added time to hold tournadebutant South United FC 3-3 in a Group-A league match of the 134th Durand Cup at the Kishore Bharati Stadium here on Sunday.

Young striker Makakmayum Daniel completed a fine hat-trick giving South United the lead twice in the match but IAF mounted a great fightback to snatch a point in the end.

The 18-year-old Daniel found the target in the ninth and 23rd minutes before Mohammad Aqib (26th minute) and Akish Cyril (48th) got IAF back in the mix.

Daniel completed his hat-trick in the 84th minute with a spectacular volley but IAF defender Sankit nodded home the



Fight for possession: South United players try to thwart an Indian Air Force move. DEBASISH BHADURI

equaliser to spoil South United's party.

Earlier, debutant Indo Tibetan Border Police Football Team (ITBP FT) edged past a 10-man local side Karbi Anglong Morning Star FC 2-1 in the Group-D league opener at the SAI Stadium, Kokraj-

Lunminlen Haokip gave Morning Star the lead but ITBP FT fought back well and scored twice through Pulung Diamary and Hemraj Bhujel to secure the The results: Group-A: South

Daniel 9, 23, 84) drew with Indian Air Force FT 3 (Md. Aqib 26, Akish Cyril 48, Sankit 90+6). At Kokrajhar: Group-D: ITBP FT

United FC 3 (Makakmayum

2 (Pulung Daimary 45, Hemrai Bhujel 60) bt Karbi Anglong Morning Star FC 1 (Lunminlen Haokip 30)

# Rishabh Pant and the art of conquering pain

After emerging from a life-threatening car accident, the wicketkeeper-batter certainly is more mature; he picks his battles with greater thought than previously, but hasn't gone against his natural grain

R. Kaushik MANCHESTER

or Rishabh Pant, pain had become a way of life for more than 12 months. A constant, if uninvited companion. A grim reminder of what might have been, a reminder too of how lucky he was to have emerged from a life-threatening single-car accident with all his faculties intact.

Pant's horrific road accident of 30 December 2022 is too fresh in memory, too raw for everyone even remotely associated with him, to bear detailed repetition. Suffice to say that to be able to play competitive, professional cricket within 16 months of that terrible episode was tribute to his resilience, to his unmatched determination, to his unyielding desire to make the most of a second chance that only the very lucky

If Pant doesn't quite feel the pressure of a cricket match as much as anyone else, it's not without good reason. To him more than anyone else, Keith Miller's famous comments revolving around pressure in Test cricket will resonate readily. The dashing Australian all-rounder fought in World War II against the Germans, flying night missions over Germany and Occupied France as he targeted Nazi rocket bases.

Flight Lieutenant Miller once told Michael Parkinson, the legendary English television presenter, broadcaster, journalist and author, "Pressure? There's no pressure in Test cricket. Real pressure is when you are flying a Mosquito with a Messerschmitt (a German twin-engine fighter and attack aircraft) up your arse!"

Even before his outlook-altering accident, Pant was a free spirit, an unpredictable mass of the unconventional even by the most unorthodox standards. No one quite knew what to expect when he had the cricket bat in his hands. He could dead-bat with felicity, sure, but it was when he put it to more attacking use that he commanded attention. Compelled it. He would sometimes be dismissed doing the most exasperatingly outrageous, just as he would drop jaws with his sheer audacity, with his ability to think out of the box, and to implement that thought process with total disdain for the usual, for reputation, for pedigree.

### No different

Pant 2.0 is no different. A lot more grateful and thankful for his second coming, so to say, but no less uninhibited or fearless. He certainly is more mature, he picks his battles with greater thought than previously, but he hasn't gone against his natural grain. He hasn't become conservative, careful or circumspect - all on the cricket ground, in front the stumps, lest we should confuse ourselves - because then, he wouldn't be Rishabh Pant, would he?

And therefore, he reacts with complete equanimity to both 'Stupid, stupid, stupid' and 'Superb, superb'. He has an unabashed admirer in Sunil Gavaskar, the deliverer of both iconic lines but also completely in awe of the package that Pant is.

Twice in this Test series, Pant has overcome the pain barrier with a nonchalance that is uniquely Pant. In the third Test at Lord's, he hurt his left index finger badly on day one, trying to stop a wildly swinging (after it passed the stumps) Jasprit Bumrah delivery that pinged him badly before speeding away for four byes. That was on the first day of the game; it must take something really bad for Pant to shed his wicketkeeping gloves and retreat to the dressing room and cede wicketkeeping responsibilities to Dhruv Jurel, but Pant the batter was back the next day with India on 107 for three in reply to England's 387.

Pant didn't just bat, he batted like the Pant the world knows and loves. With chutzpah and authority and positivity and aggression, without a care for the throbbing pain that was exacerbated by every movement of the willow. He charged and smashed, he fell and pulled or swept, he danced like a ballerina, he made even the hard-nosed, implacable MCC members populating the Long Room cluck and wonder at what he was made

For two and a half hours, he toyed with England's best, helping K.L. Rahul add 141 until a brainfade moment designed to put Rahul, on 98, back on strike in the last over before lunch on day three, threw England a lifeline and ended the Pant show on 72. Two days later, on the final morning with India needing 135 more for victory, Pant walked out at No. 6 but it was clear that the injury was troubling



GETTY IMAGES

him even more. He wrung his left hand in discomfort during each of his 12 balls, one of them from Jofra Archer swatted through mid-on as if a pesky fly had got in his eyeline, before Archer had the final say with a peach that knocked his off pole

That should have been it, really, but as it transpired, that was merely the teaser. the trailer before the main act. A trailer that showcased his gumption and spunk, which expressed itself with far greater magnitude at Old Trafford on Thursday.

Pant recovered sufficiently from the finger injury in the week-long break between the third and the fourth Tests to start in Manchester in his designated stumper-batter avatar. Alongside Sai Sudharsan, he built on a decent start on Wednesday's first day of the Test with a stand of 72, archetypal Pant, until suddenly, he decided that it was time to ramp it up. As Chris Woakes bustled in, Pant fancied a reverse sweep. It's a shot has he has pulled off with impunity numerous times, it's also a shot that has precipitated his downfall more than once, but when has that ever stopped him?

### Painful blow

This time, Pant managed an inside-edge that crashed into the outer part of his right foot, just below the little toe. England missed the edge and burnt a review trying to prise him out, even as Pant was hobbling and wincing and biting his lip in sheer agony. He tried gamely to carry on but couldn't even put the slightest weight on the offending appendage.

When the physio peeled off his sock and then his shoe, it was clear why - there was a swelling the size of a ping pong ball, capped by a smattering of blood. Pant's Test match should have ended then and there - at 37, retired hurt.

Driven off the field in a golf buggy, Pant struggled into an ambulance and went to a nearby hospital for a scan which

confirmed the worst. The next morning, day two, when the team bus trundled into Old Trafford, Pant was nowhere to be

seen. Of course, you said. Why would he?

Pant wasn't in his hotel room, moping and brooding and cursing his luck. He wasn't sleeping off the aftereffects. He was back in the hospital for a painkilling injection, after which he went to the dressing room for a few warm-up drills. When Shardul Thakur was sixth batter dismissed, he was stunned to see the stocky figure of his admirable mate making the impossibly arduous walk down the steps towards the middle. Thakur waited respectfully, admiringly, inside the field of play, for Pant to enter the ground. He patted him on the head like an older brother passing on his benevolence, then joined his colleagues on the balcony to watch the little fella smash an Archer slower ball over mid-wicket for six and check-drive a cover-drive off Ben Stokes to the boundary to bring up the most astonishing of half-centuries.

### The warrior

Why, Rishabh, you wanted to ask. What were you trying to prove? To whom? Until realisation dawned that he wasn't trying to be a hero. He wasn't attempting what to others might have seemed outlandish. He wasn't seeking to impress anyone. He was just being Rishabh Pant, because this is exactly the kind of thing Rishabh Pant would do, day after day if need be. To bat with an injured index finger is remarkable; to do so with one leg barely available to him, in a manner of speaking - defies logic, beggars belief, stretches the imagination, doesn't it?

When he was dismissed, bowled off-stump again by Archer, Pant limped off to a thunderous applause. Stokes, himself the ultimate warrior, recognised and warmly congratulated his kindred spirit. More than 20,000 people rose as one, the Indian balcony could hardly hide

its emotions, and Mohammed Siraj reprised the Thakur act of 59 minutes earlier, with another warm pat of the helmet. Pant retreated to the sanctum sanctorum, changed into shorts and practice shirt and started fooling around. Just Pant things, you know.

Cricket history is replete with numerous instances of mind over matter, of going above and beyond the call of duty. Followers of Indian cricket will remember Anil Kumble, apparition-like, bowling at the ARC ground in St John's in 2002, his broken jaw wired and held in place by bandages, and snaring Brian Lara leg before. That was scary, surreal, goosebumpy; Kumble bowled because he could, and because he was waiting out the time to board his flight to Bengaluru where he would soon have surgery to fix the broken jaw. What to do with the time? Well, how about 14 overs in unbearable pain? How about the scalp of one of the greatest batters of all time?

For 23 years, Kumble has ploughed a lone heroic furrow. There were others before and after him - Rahul Dravid getting up after being floored by a bouncer to make an unbeaten 144 in the same series at the Bourda Oval. V.V.S. Laxman orchestrating two remarkable run-chases within a couple of months in 2010, at the P. Sara Oval in Colombo against Sri Lanka and at the PCA Stadium in Mohali against Australia when Pragyan Ojha managed what even ill-treating selectors hadn't - make him angry. Sachin Tendulkar braving crippling

pain in his back to nearly, nearly, take his team to the most famous of victories against Pakistan in Chennai in 1999. But they weren't in the same Kumble league for bravery and/or foolhardiness. Until now. In Pant, the 10 for 74 hero has an equally extraordinarily pig-headed champion. Kumble and Pant, chalk and cheese, an odd couple, tied together by the bond of stretching, nay, smashing, the pain barrier.

Even before his outlook-altering accident, Pant was a free spirit, an unpredictable mass of the unconventional even by the most unorthodox standards

THE GIST

Twice in this Test series, Pant has overcome the pain barrier with a nonchalance that is uniquely Pant

To bat with an injured index finger is remarkable; to do so with one leg barely available to him, in a manner of speaking defies logic, beggars belief

# **GUJARAT**



lka Kodarvi smiles shyly when asked about her wedding plans. Sitting on a rusted iron cot in a newly built house at Mota Pipodara, a quiet village tucked away in Gujarat's Banaskantha district near the Rajasthan border, she hides her face behind her palms. "Maybe in a month or two," she says blushing, glancing towards her partner, Bhojabhai. "If he agrees."

For the 27-year-old mother of a 2-year-old boy and her partner, both from a tribal community, marriage is not the beginning of their story — it's just another chapter in a life shaped by survival and exile. Since 2019, the couple has lived together, raising a son without registering their bond as a marriage. "For us, marriage is just a ritual," Alka says matter-of-factly. "We liked each other and decided to live together."

Both are from the Kodarvi tribe, which had been exiled in 2014 after another tribe, following a tradition called *chadotaru*, had forced them out from their traditional lands. After over a decade of wandering and uncertainty, the Kodarvis returned to their native village earlier this month, following a hard-earned truce between communities and crucial support from the district police.

Among the Kodarvis – and in many tribal groups – ancestral villages are more than just a place to live. They are central to rites of passage like marriage and death. Couples marry only in their native village where houses lie scattered across agricultural fields. People are buried there too. So, when Bhojabhai lost his home in the village, he also lost the ground on which a wedding could take place. Now, he has regained it.

### Chadotaru and its implications

In much of urban India, living together without marriage remains a taboo, and finding rental housing or even a hotel room while travelling as an unmarried couple is almost impossible. But for Alka, Bhojabhai, and many belonging to the Kodarvi and other tribal communities rooted in the remote stretches of the Aravali mountain range, life has always followed different rules – some liberating, others oppressive.

Back in 2014, nearly 300 people from 29 Kodarvi families fled their homes in Mota Pipodara in the dead of night. Taking only what they could carry, they left their houses, livestock, and fields behind after the Dabhi tribe from the same village had declared *chadotaru* against them.

In Gujarat, *chadotaru* is a tribal tradition of informal justice that carries the weight of vengeance, often targeting entire families or communities when one of their members is accused of a grave offence, such as murder, sexual assault or an extramarital affair.

The declaration followed the killing of a Dabhi man, allegedly by someone from the Kodarvi community. "The victim, Naranbhai, was stoned to death, and the villagers said it was Rajubhai Kodarvi who did it following a drunken brawl in the middle of the night on April 6, 2014. He was arrested and *chadotaru* took place for days," the police say.

In Gujarat's tribal belts and in Rajasthan, *chadotaru* still influences the way disputes are resolved. Traditionally, it involved community elders or *panches* (elected members) coming together to mediate and reconcile differences through mutual agreement. But over time, this custom has morphed into a harsh practice: imposing hefty monetary penalties, forcing exiles, and threatening violence.

Once a *chadotaru* is declared, the clan prepares for confrontation – women and children lead the procession while the others follow, armed with swords, sticks, and whatever weapons they can gather. The beating of *dhol-nagara* (traditional drums) signals their advance as they move toward the rival clan's homes to strike.

"When *chadotaru* is declared, the entire community of the accused is often forced to pay the

(Nala) and her team began identifying the displaced families, reaching out to them. They held

several

My ASP

rounds of discussions with the panch AKSHAY RAJ MAKWANA Superintendent of Police, Banaskantha



amount awarded by the *panch*, or flee," Assistant Superintendent of Police (Danta division) Suman Nala explains. "Their homes are vandalised, crops torched, and cattle either looted or left to stray." In cases of murder, blood money is demanded. If unpaid, violence may follow.

### A casual conversation

Alka is Nala's cook. In a casual conversation, Nala remembers asking how often Alka visited her *sasural* (in-laws' home). What followed left Nala stunned. "I've never seen my *sasural*," Alka had told her. She went on to explain that her partner's clan had been ostracised after *chadotaru* was declared against them. It not only forced the community into exile, but also shattered their social and economic fabric.

Since then, the families had been scattered. Many ended up as daily wage labourers in Danta, Palanpur, Surat, and other places in Gujarat, earning barely ₹200-₹300 a day. Meeting each other became rare; survival became routine.

Bhojabhai was married to Niluben over two decades ago in that same village. The couple has four children. "Haan, unke do hain, aur hum khushi se rehte hain (Yes, he has two partners, and we live happily together)," Alka says.

Bigamy or polygamy remains a practice in several tribal communities in India. Multiple spouses are sometimes officially recorded in government documents. Sometimes, those in such relationships include public servants and elected representatives.

Nala brought it up with her superior, Banaskantha Superintendent of Police Akshay Raj Makwana. Just days before Alka's conversation with Nala, a man called Jagabhai Kodarvi and his wife Ambaben had submitted an application to the police seeking assistance in returning to Mota Pipodara. Both these factors came together for police action. "My ASP (Nala) and her team began identifying the displaced families and reaching out to them. They held several rounds of discussions with the *panch*," Makwana says.

#### Rebuilding homes and relationships

Now, amid crumbling ruins, new homes are beginning to rise. Elderly members of the tribe sigh in relief as a long-held dream takes shape. "We never thought we'd return," many say. "All these years, one thought haunted us: where will we be buried when we die? We must be laid to rest in the land of our ancestors," says one of the tribe members.

Before the police brokered peace between the two warring tribes, the Kodarvi clan had made several failed attempts to return to their village. One such effort came four years ago, after the death of Jagabhai's father, whose final wish was to be buried in their ancestral land. Fearing violence, Jagabhai and a few others quietly entered the village and performed the last rites. But once the Dabhi tribe got word of their presence, they charged at them in anger. The Kodarvis fled into the nearby hills to escape the attack and scattered once again.

The man once accused by the Dabhi tribe of killing a member of their clan had been acquitted by a local court in 2017, says Makwana. "He has been living in the same village since. But the rest of his clan remained scattered."

Makwana explains that traditionally, if an exiled clan wishes to return, they are expected to pay a hefty sum of money – usually between ₹30 to ₹40 lakh – determined by the *panch*. A significant portion of this goes to the *panch* and the members of the clan, while the remainder is paid to the victim's family as compensation.

"The *panch* decides the amount after the offence. If the opposing clan cannot afford to pay, the *panch* declares a *chadotaru*, effectively banishing them again. These decisions, while illegal in the eyes of the law, continue to be followed in tribal communities," the SP adds.

In this case, however, no money changed hands on their return. Instead, both tribes agree it was the police who took the lead – clearing 8.5 hectares of land that belonged to the Kodarvis and facilitating their rehabilitation under a government housing scheme, supported by funds

Banaskantha police officer Jayshriben Desai shows a Kodarvi tribal house ransacked in 2015 by the Dabhi tribe in Mota Pipodara village, Banaskantha district in Gujarat. VIJAY SONEJI

from private companies.

The feud finally ended as the Dabhis agreed to the Kodarvis' return. The *panches* of both sides followed the tradition of eating coriander seeds and jaggery, a gesture symbolising the end of enmity and the beginning of peace, says Makwana.

#### **Resettling into home**

To reach the tribal village, an hour's journey from Palanpur, the car heaves and lurches through the narrow, rain-slicked track, its wheels slipping in the mud that now bear the criss-crossed imprints of police jeeps and tractors that have rolled in and out over the past few weeks. It hasn't stopped raining – a light drizzle comes and goes, carried by the breeze, settling gently on the skin and soil. Petrichor is mixed with the scent of crushed leaves and the faint smoke of damp wood burning somewhere in the distance.

As the four-wheeler slows to a crawl, ruins of stone and mud walls covered in weeds, mark where homes once stood before they were torn down in 2014. When the vehicle finally stops, the Kodarvis emerge from under makeshift tarpaulins, from behind tree trunks, from the open field and a newly built house.

Among them is Prakash, 22, son of Jagabhai and a final-year diploma student. He was just 10 when his family fled the village, never imagining they'd return. "It was a moment of joy and excitement, a reunion I had dreamt of since the day we left," he says, recalling the grand ceremony on July 17, when the Minister of State for Home, Harsh Sanghavi, formally welcomed them back. "Every one had tears in their eyes." Over the years, Prakash's family moved across Surat, Mehsana, Vadgam and other towns as his parents worked as daily wagers. The constant movement made schooling difficult but he remained committed and never dropped out, he says.

"We were all dressed up. There were so many relatives I didn't even recognise. They were asking whose son I was and where we had been all these years," says Prakash, his eyes lit with the excitement of return as the rain continues to soak him. "During the exile, we lost touch with most of them. I was thrilled to meet some of my cousins I hadn't seen since we left, and their children who were born after 2014. They were just as happy to see my eight-month-old son and my partner, Kailash, too."

Prakash says he had vowed to marry only in his native village. Now, that moment has finally arrived. "I've always seen my parents longing to return. It consumed them for years. They pleaded with the panchayat, the State administration, even the police. Finally, our prayers were heard and we're back home," he says.

As the drizzle continues, Lukabhai Bumbadia – one of the *panch* members involved in the alleged murder case – arrives. For him, like many tribals, Hindi remains a distant language, one he neither understood well nor spoke. Lukabhai now says it was the joint effort of the *samaj* (community) and *sarkar* (government) that made the return of the Kodarvis possible. "*Chadotaru* should have no place in today's time. This practice must be abolished " he says

SP Makwana says such age-old practices impose severe social and economic restrictions, often tearing communities apart. "These families usually marry within the village and sustain themselves through farming. Forcing them to leave uproots their entire way of life. It impacts them in ways that are hard to imagine," he says.

He adds that efforts are under way to engage with community leaders and raise awareness about the long-term damage caused by *chadotaru*. "If one clan declares *chadotaru* today, tomorrow it could be declared against them. It's a cycle that will never break unless we make a conscious effort to end it," the SP says.

However, the police also say that just a few months ago, another *chadotaru* incident occurred in the district's Amirgadh area. By the time they arrived, everything had already been destroyed.

"It was related to an alleged illicit relationship. Reaching such remote areas is difficult due to the absence of proper roads, and even when we do get there, the tribe gathers in large numbers, making it hard for us to control the situation," a police officer says.

Nala says, "Law, love, and compassion came

together to resolve the issue." deshpande.abhinay@thehindu.co.in





Alka Kodarvi, her partner Bhojabhai, and their child, at their village Mota Pipodara near Palanpur in Banaskantha district in Gujarat; Prakash Kodarvi with his parents at their house that was torn down a decade ago. VIJAY SONEJI

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## KARNATAKA



Illustration: Sebastian Francis

# For Karnataka students, the grass is still greener overseas

is still

**MBBS** 

like

Uzbekistan

and Georgia

the dream of

becoming a

doctor at a

cost of ₹25

lakh to ₹30

lakh.

AMEEN-E-

MUDASSAR,

career counsellor

are selling

Be it geopolitical tensions, new immigration laws, visa troubles or non-availability of jobs, many students who had gone abroad from Karnataka have returned in the last couple of years. While uncertainty loomed over many of their futures, some have managed to bring their studies and careers back on track after either flying to other countries to complete their education or deciding to find jobs in India, writes **Jahnavi T.R.** 

n September 2021, Nikitha Rajesh, a student from Bengaluru, flew to London to pursue her long-standing dream of a foreign education. After completing her Bachelor of Arts degree in Bengaluru and gaining two years of work experience, she secured admission to a master's programme in Digital Marketing and Analytics in a private university in the United Kingdom (UK).

By the time she finished the one-year programme, the immigration laws of the U.K. had changed, leaving her with no sponsors for a work visa. Cut to 2025, she is back in Bengaluru and working in a private company after her job prospects in the U.K. did not work out.

When a war broke out in Ukraine in 2022, around 18,000 people from India were escorted



back to the country by the Union government under 'Operation Ganga'. A majority of them were students who were pursuing a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS).

Among the re-

turnees was Mahaganapathi Kashinath from Karnataka. After attempts to continue his education in India failed, he went to Uzbekistan to finish his medical course.

Recently, in June 2025, under 'Operation Sindhu', the government brought back over 3,500 people from Iran after tensions escalated between the country and Israel. Among these were also a few students from Karnataka who were pursuing

medical education there. Be it geopolitical tensions, new immigration laws, visa troubles or non-availability of jobs, many students who had gone to countries such as the United States of America, Ukraine, Russia, Canada, the U.K. and those in Central Asia from Karnataka have returned in the last couple of years. While uncertainty loomed over many of their futures, some have managed to bring their studies and careers back on track after either flying to other countries to complete their educa-

tion or deciding to find jobs in India. For the students who were in Ukraine, returning home was a necessity as their safety was not guaranteed in the war-torn country any more. But once they were back home, they were not sure if they would be able to continue their education. Most of them ended up transferring to universities in one of the 29 countries under the Academic Mobility Programme initiated by the Ukrainian government after the National Medical Council issued a "no-objection" to it. However, this one-time opportunity was available only for the final-year medical students.

Luckily, Mahaganapathi was in his final year of MBBS. "When my son returned from Ukraine, he attended online classes for six months. All of us,

ment to admit our students to a medical college here. But it was in vain. He had no choice but to The market go to Uzbekistan to finish his course, just like 90% of the students from his class. While we were relieved that he got to finish his education, booming for we were a little disappointed as he had to repeat a semester after going to Uzbekistan, as they did education not validate the semester that was conducted onabroad. line," said his father, Kashinath Bilimaggad from Countries Gadag district in north Karnataka. Mahaganapathi hopes to return to India for his post-grad-

#### his father. **Alternative options**

For the students who returned from Ukraine, countries like Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and the Philippines became alternative options for their education. Educational counsellors reported that most of their clients ended up going to one of these countries to finish their medical degrees, even if they had to seek fresh

uation studies and find work here, according to

parents, tried so much to get the Indian govern-

Many of them had initially gone to Ukraine as one lakh medical seats in India that become available every year are nowhere close to the

Similar stories are narrated by students who have returned from Iran. Syeda Muffarhe Zainab was pursuing her final year MBBS at a university in Tehran when the war broke out. Now, back in her home town in Chickballapur district in south Karnataka, she is hoping to return to Iran.

"I am constantly in touch with the university, and they have said we might be able to go back by August 20. But if God forbid something happens and we cannot make it back there, then I would like to request the government to provide us with some seats here as we are almost finished with our course," she says.

Most students go abroad seeking exposure

that they believe they cannot find in India, especially when they go to countries such as the U.S., the U.K., and Australia. "I went to the U.K. to get a more universal educational experience where I get to learn with people of many nationalities and experts," says Nikitha.

When she initially went there, her plan was to find a job and settle down in the U.K. However, when she was about to finish her degree a new immigration policy – which mandated a £37,000 income to get a sponsored work visa - came into force. With her two years of experience in India and some short-term gigs in the U.K., she did not qualify for a sponsorship from companies there.

"No matter what skills you have, it all comes down to whether you need a visa to work in the U.K. If you need a visa, then the job interview would not move forward from there. While I could buy a work visa for the first two years after I finished my education, after that period, a company would need to sponsor it. I applied for hundreds of jobs, but because of the visa constraint, I had to move back home," she says.

She says that many of her Indian peers who were insistent on staying back in the U.K. changed their job sectors/industries just to get a work visa sponsorship.

### **Repaying educational loans**

For students affected by such immigration policies, returning home is the only option, but jobs here would not pay them as much as in foreign countries. This particularly becomes a problem for students who have taken educational loans.

"I knew almost six months prior that I would not get a visa extension, even though I had already worked for two years in the U.K. after finishing my studies. Hence, I started saving up by cutting down on my expenses as I knew I had to pay my monthly loan instalments once I was back home, even if I did not have a job or got a job that might not pay very well. It has been three months since

I returned, and I have been applying for jobs in Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand, as it is difficult to pay back my loan on an Indian salary," says Akash Venkateshan, who pursued a Master of Science degree in the U.K.

The demand for higher education in the U.S. has slightly reduced now, especially after the Donald Trump administration announced that the social media accounts of college applicants will be checked for background verification.

"This announcement has forced a lot of students to clean up their digital footprint, as some fear has gripped them. It has also taken the U.S. out as an option for students who are outspoken or are activists and do not wish to provide access to their social media accounts," says Ameen-e-Mudassar, international career counsellor.

Some students who originally preferred the U.S. for their education are now considering options such as Germany, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, and Australia, while Canada, which was the other preferred destination, has also lost demand now, owing to its diplomatic clashes

Rahul Subramaniam, co-founder of an educational consultancy, says that students who have already secured admission to top U.S. colleges remain committed to their paths. "For them, the academic and professional opportunities they are accessing far outweigh the usual ups and downs of American politics," he says.

### Why foreign education?

Despite recent events and tensions, the demand for foreign education is on the rise among Bengaluru students, according to educational counsellors as well as data from the government.

While there were 1.3 million students pursuing higher education abroad in 2024, according to the Ministry of External Affairs, the latest numbers are close to 1.8 million. Many of them have changed their destinations, but their dreams remain the same.

"The market is still booming for MBBS education abroad," notes Ameen. "Countries like Uzbekistan and Georgia are selling the dream of becoming a doctor at a cost of ₹25 lakh to ₹30 lakh. Even after so many wars, not much has changed in this regard. This is just a matter of selling an acre of land to make their children doctors, especially for rural students," Ameen says.

He adds that Central Asian countries depend on students from India for their economic boost.

While some of these MBBS students practise medicine in those countries after finishing their course, others struggle to find employment. Counsellors say that some of them end up as agents to bring in more students to the universities and work on a commission basis.

Are students so desperate for education abroad due to the lack of quality education in India? Not entirely, according to experts. "Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, and many private universities offer good quality education in India. But today's youngsters are interested in exploring the world. Their priorities are different as they do not care about generational wealth and would want to build something on their own, and they view education abroad as a gateway to that," Ameen

Counsellors and consultants say that foreign colleges and universities sell their programmes better than those in India.

"They have good tie-ups with agents and push their colleges in ways that Indian universities do not. Top-tier colleges in India also look for knowledge and skills while for many foreign countries, it is about the money Indian students bring," he

Another driving factor is the advent of social media. "If one person from a family moves abroad for education, the number of stories they put up on social media inspires other youngsters to pursue education abroad," he says.



A file photo of evacuated students from Ukraine who arrived at the Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru.