

IN BRIEF



Key Mamata aide resigns from all Trinamool posts

KOLKATA
Mamata Banerjee loyalist Chandrima Bhattacharya on Saturday resigned from all posts of the Trinamool Congress and hinted she has aligned with the camp of rebels led by Ritabrata Banerjee. » **PAGE 9**

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Chinese investment influx good for wider ties, says India's envoy

Ananth Krishnan
BEIJING

Greater investment from China into India will be good both for the economics of the relationship and for broader bilateral ties, Ambassador to China Vikram Doraiswami said on Saturday. The Indian envoy also made a pitch for greater Indian exports to China, especially in areas such as pharmaceuticals, where India is globally competitive.

"Obviously, we would like to be able to export more to China. There is nothing unreasonable about suggesting that," he said, speaking at the World Peace Forum, an annual foreign policy forum in Beijing. India's trade with China has expanded despite the political freeze on relations since 2020. Both sides have begun the process of normalising relations fol-



Vikram Doraiswami

lowing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in October 2024, in the wake of disengagement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

However, trade remains lopsided, with a ballooning deficit. According to Commerce Ministry data, China was India's largest trading partner in 2025-26, with bilateral trade growing to \$151.1 billion, while the deficit stands at \$112.16 billion.

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India navigated West Asia crisis efficiently, says Modi

Fuel rationing, LPG disruptions, and price surges avoided with refineries upping production and public OMCs bearing the losses, says PM; politically motivated rumour-mongering failed, he adds

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

India successfully weathered the challenges triggered by the West Asia conflict through effective assessment and strategic, timely decision-making while efficiently using its domestic resources and strong diplomatic ties, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday.

The country avoided fuel rationing, ensured cooking gas supplies, and shielded consumers and farmers from global price spikes, with state-run oil marketing firms (OMCs) bearing the losses, he said, adding that certain politically motivated entities which had engaged in rumour-mongering during the crisis had failed and



Crucial sector: PM Narendra Modi during the inauguration of the HRRL petrochemical complex in Balotra, Rajasthan, on Saturday. PTI

"may be dwelling in an abyss of disappointment".

'Effective strategies'

"India took potent decisions, made correct evaluations, charted effective strategies, used its domestic resources effectively, and constructively leveraged its diplomatic power

to successfully weather the challenges," Mr. Modi said.

Speaking at the inauguration of the HPCL Rajasthan Refinery Ltd. (HRRL) in Balotra, India's first greenfield integrated refinery-petrochemical complex, Mr. Modi credited domestic refineries for helping the country wade

Modi inaugurates semiconductor facility in Gujarat

AHMEDABAD
Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the CG Semi Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test facility at Sanand in Gujarat on Saturday. Semiconductor clusters are coming up across India and these will create large-scale employment, he said. » **PAGE 10**

through the crisis by increasing their production of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). India is currently the world's fourth-largest refiner and would continue expanding its refining capacity, Mr. Modi said.

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Umar Khalid

Delhi court denies bail to Khalid, Imam citing SC order

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Saturday dismissed the bail applications of Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, accused in the larger conspiracy case related to the 2020 north-east Delhi riots. The court said it was bound by the Supreme Court's January order, which had imposed certain conditions on bail for the two who have been languishing in jail for over five years.

FULL REPORT ON
» **PAGE 8**

Delhi Gymkhana Club staff, members move HC against eviction

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court will hear pleas on July 6 from members and employees of the Delhi Gymkhana Club challenging the Centre's latest move to evict the club from its 27.3-acre premises in Lutyens' Delhi.

The challenge follows a June 29 show-cause notice issued under the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act after the government sought possession of the

land for defence infrastructure and other public purposes. Club member Vijay Khurana has questioned the legality of terminating the club's nearly century-old perpetual lease, calling the government's reasons vague. His petition is supported by more than 500 club members.

The dispute stems from the Centre's May 22 directive asking the club to vacate the premises by June 5.

FULL REPORT ON
» **PAGE 2**

Rain watch



Subway duty: A police official stands guard near a flooded subway to prevent the entry of commuters amid heavy rain in Andheri, Mumbai, on Saturday. The India Meteorological Department has maintained a red alert for Mumbai and Thane till Monday. EMANUAL YOGINI

Bengaluru engineer among 23 designated as terrorists by govt.

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

An engineer hailing from Bengaluru is among six Indians and 17 Pakistanis designated as "terrorists" by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Saturday under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The 23 individuals, who are no longer in India, are accused of roles ranging from recruitment, training, and infiltration to financing, arms supply, drone-based weapons de-

livery, and planning or facilitating terrorist attacks in India. With the latest additions, the total number of individuals designated as terrorists under the UAPA now stands at 80.

Mohammed Shaheed Faisal, 40, was earlier identified by the National Investigation Agency as the handler of the "terror module" that carried out an IED explosion at the Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru on March 1, 2024.

UPDATED TERROR LIST
» **PAGE 8**

Only talks can bring peace, says Manipur CM at funeral for MLA who died in Feb.

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Late Manipur Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Vungzagim Valte, a victim of a mob attack in May 2023, was laid to rest near his residence in Churachandpur district on Saturday, more than four months after he died in a Gurugram hospital.

Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh attended the funeral service, marking the first visit by a Chief Minister to the district since the ethnic conflict broke out on May 3, 2023, even as certain Kuki groups called



Manipur Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh pays tribute to the late BJP MLA, Vungzagim Valte, in Churachandpur on Saturday. PTI

for a boycott of the event demanding a permanent solution to the crisis.

Speaking at the funeral service, Mr. Singh noted his association with Valte

since 2017, when he became the Speaker of the 60-member State Assembly.

Recalling the tense situation in May 2023 and the

assault on Valte, Mr. Singh said that he regretted not having been beside his "friend" when the incident happened.

Later, he told journalists that dialogue was the only way forward to restore peace, which was essential for development in Manipur. "Your smile is the way for peace," he said, responding to the manner in which a reporter sought the road map to peace in the State.

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SECURITY REVIEW
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India's essential medicine list lags behind global benchmark; unrevised in 4 years

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

India's roster of essential medicines has not been updated in nearly four years even as the World Health Organisation (WHO) has revised its own list twice in the same period, says a civil society network of activists and organisations working for affordable healthcare.

The collective - Working Group on Access to Medicines and Treatments - has written to the government demanding an urgent revision of the National List of Essential Medi-

Outdated prescription

The National List of Essential Medicines prioritises drugs that satisfy the critical healthcare needs of India's population



POINTS RAISED BY THE COLLECTIVE
■ The NLEM, last notified in 2022, contains 384 medicines while the WHO list runs to 523 drugs
■ At least 17 active cancer-treating agents, 4 supportive cancer-care medicines, and 9 monoclonal antibodies feature on the WHO list but not on the NLEM

ines (NLEM), so that such drugs are available at affordable prices.

The NLEM is a curated list of medications compiled by the Ministry of

Health and Family Welfare. It prioritises drugs that satisfy the critical healthcare needs of India's population. Medicines on this list - 384 at present - are gen-

erally dispensed free of cost by government hospitals. The government uses the NLEM to instruct the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority to enforce a strict price ceiling on them. The list was last overhauled in 2022.

The WHO Model List of Essential Medicines, meanwhile, was revised in 2023 and again in 2025, and contains 523 medicines - leaving India's list trailing well behind the global benchmark, said the group in its letter on Friday.

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IN BRIEF



Dhami sets 2035 target for developed Uttarakhand

Completing five years as Uttarakhand Chief Minister, Pushkar Singh Dhami on Saturday said his government aims to transform the State into a developed one by 2035 through investment-led growth and improved infrastructure. Launching the 'Seva, Sushasan evam Samarpan' programme in Rishikesh, he said priority would be given to roads, healthcare, education, drinking water, agriculture, tourism, industry, self-employment and border areas. Mr. Dhami also inaugurated and laid foundation stones for 51 projects worth more than ₹219 crore in Dehradun. **PH**

Three of family suffocate to death in bid to rescue bull

Three members of a family died of suffocation while trying to rescue a bull that fell into a well in Madhya Pradesh's Satna, police said on Saturday. The incident occurred around 8.30 p.m. on Friday in Khamseda village. Police said, four villagers descended the 40-foot-deep well but collapsed after inhaling toxic fumes and due to oxygen depletion. Villagers pulled out the victims and rushed them to a community health centre where Rahul Yadav, 36, Virendra Yadav, 40 and Krishnadutt Yadav, 26, were declared dead on arrival while Ramchandra Yadav, 50, was referred to Satna District Hospital where his condition remains critical. **PH**

U.P. poll: Nabin calls for grassroots push

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national president Nitin Nabin on Saturday exuded confidence that the party would secure a decisive mandate in the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly election, urging its leaders and workers to reach every section of society and publicise the achievements of the government.



BJP national president Nitin Nabin at a roadshow in Lucknow on Saturday. **THE HINDU**

Addressing State office-bearers and district presidents during his two-day

Warring dismisses talk of rift in Punjab Congress

State Congress president says he is not in the race for Chief Minister's post, backs high commands decision on leadership; BJP questions whether the party will act against leaders who backed Channi

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Congress president Amrinder Singh Raja Warring on Saturday dismissed suggestions of a rebellion in the party's State unit, asserting that the Congress remained united and that he is not in the race to become the party's chief ministerial face for the 2027 Assembly election.

Describing former Chief Minister and Jalandhar MP Charanjit Singh Channi as "a respected senior leader" and "our brother", Mr. Warring said his sole aim is to ensure the Congress returns to power in Punjab. He added that he would have no objection if the party leadership chose Mr. Channi or any other leader as its chief ministerial face.

"In the next few days, the entire Punjab Congress leadership will be seen to collapse on one platform, fighting the battle for Punjab. The Congress is united. Our rivals can dream on, but nothing is going to happen. Channi, Warring and all others will be seen together," he said.



United we stand: Amrinder Singh Raja Warring said the Congress leadership will stand together ahead of the 2027 election. **FILE PHOTO**

His remarks came a day after several incumbent and former Congress MLAs gathered at Mr. Channi's residence in Rupnagar district, backing the former Chief Minister to be reconsidered for the post of Punjab Congress president.

The gathering followed the Congress high command's decision on July 1 to retain Mr. Warring as State unit chief while appointing Mr. Channi the chairman of the campaign committee for the 2027 Assembly election.

Rejecting speculation of infighting, Mr. Warring said the leaders had merely visited Mr. Channi to

congratulate him on his new responsibility. "They had gone to the residence of our former Chief Minister and campaign committee chairman. Some went to meet him and some to congratulate him. How is this a rebellion? It would have been one had Channi or I said something," the Congress leader said.

"Will the Congress leadership have the courage to act against those who have publicly rebelled against the appointment of the Punjab Congress president? Or does discipline apply only to some, while open defiance is rewarded for others," Mr. Balliwal stated in the post.

Mr. Warring said those present had publicly reiterated their respect for the party leadership.

He, however, warned that disciplinary action would follow if anyone spoke against the high command or crossed the party's limits.

'Act against rebels'

The Punjab unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) challenged the Congress leadership to act against leaders who publicly backed Mr. Channi despite the decision to retain Mr. Warring as State president.

Senior BJP spokesperson Pritpal Singh Baliawal, in a post on X on Saturday, questioned whether the Congress would act against those who had "publicly rebelled" against the high command's decision.

"Will the Congress leadership have the courage to act against those who have publicly rebelled against the appointment of the Punjab Congress president? Or does discipline apply only to some, while open defiance is rewarded for others," Mr. Balliwal stated in the post.

Former T.N. Minister, brother summoned in MLA bribery case

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Greater Chennai police have issued summons to former Minister and DMK MLA V. Senthilbalaji and his brother V. Ashok Kumar in connection with a case involving an alleged attempt to bribe a TVK MLA as part of a conspiracy to topple the ruling government led by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay.

They were directed to appear before the investigating officer of the case on Monday.

Personnel from the Triplicane police station, where the case was registered, served the summons on the duo through their parents at their native village of Rameswarapatti in Karur district.

Lookout circular

The police have also issued a lookout circular against both men to prevent them from leaving the country and enable their detention at immigration checkpoints, if necessary.

A senior police officer said the summons were served through their family members, directing the duo to appear before the investigating officer and join the ongoing



V. Senthilbalaji has been directed to appear before the investigating officer of the case on Monday. **FILE PHOTO**

investigation. N. Ilayaraja, the TVK MLA representing the Uthangarai Assembly constituency in Krishnagiri district, recently received a phone call from one Thirunavukkarasu, who runs Indian Political Democratic Strategies (IPDS). According to the complaint, Thirunavukkarasu contacted the MLA at the behest of certain functionaries of a major political party and requested a personal meeting. However, the complainant informed him that he was occupied with other work and ended the call.

Subsequently, Thirunavukkarasu again contacted the MLA and allegedly said a resolution would soon be moved in the Assembly against the Speaker.

Bihar to set up 100 fast-track courts: CM

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Saturday announced plans to set up 100 Fast Track Courts (FTCs) in the State. Addressing a two-day State-level conference on 'New Criminal Laws' organised in Bodh Gaya, Mr. Choudhary said that action will be taken to establish 100 FTCs for the prompt reso-



Samrat Choudhary addressing a conference in Bodh Gaya on Saturday. **SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

lution and control of cases related to crime.

"Work proceeds effectively when the judiciary and the executive act as partners. Justice becomes truly meaningful only when public trust in the judicial system is strengthened; this requires better coordination among the judiciary, the police and the executive," Mr. Choudhary said.

He called for regular coordination meetings between the government and

the judiciary to enhance the effectiveness of investigation, prosecution and judicial processes.

He asserted that effective implementation of new laws requires maximum use of technology and Artificial Intelligence and that the State government is providing police stations with CCTV systems, digital tools and scientific investigation facilities for the same.

SPOTLIGHT

Saurabh Trivedi

Military experts and strategic think tanks believe that achieving victory in war ultimately requires a physical ground presence. While drones, missiles, air power and cyber warfare can inflict heavy damage on military assets and infrastructure, they cannot occupy territory, enforce surrender or establish political control. History consistently shows that long-term military and political success requires ground forces.

The role of tanks in modern warfare has become a subject of intense debate. Critics argue that the proliferation of drones and precision-guided weapons has reduced their battlefield relevance, while supporters say that tanks remain indispensable as mobile armoured platforms capable of delivering overwhelming firepower, breaching enemy defences and supporting infantry.

A senior Indian Army officer said drones can create panic and inflict damage, but they cannot achieve the ultimate objective of war. "To enforce surrender, a ground invasion of enemy territory is essential. That is what India demonstrated during the 1965 and 1971 wars against Pakistan. Tanks remain critical for such operations," the officer said.

He added that tanks are also evolving to meet

emerging threats through lighter designs, anti-drone protection, electronic warfare jammers and hard-kill active protection systems capable of intercepting missiles and drones.

The Russia-Ukraine war The Russia-Ukraine war has highlighted both the strengths and vulnerabilities of tanks. Numerous battlefield videos have shown tanks being destroyed by inexpensive drones, exposing their susceptibility in an increasingly transparent battlefield dominated by aerial surveillance and precision strikes. Although tanks can no longer spearhead assaults without support, they remain highly effective when employed as part of an integrated combined-arms operation involving infantry, artillery, air defence, electronic warfare and drones.

Recent conflicts have demonstrated that low-cost drones can impose disproportionate costs on technologically superior militaries.

During the U.S.-Iran conflict, reports indicated that U.S. Terminal High Altitude Area Defense radar sites in West Asia were targeted by inexpensive Shahed-type drones.

India witnessed a similar trend during Operation Sindoor, when Pakistan reportedly employed swarms of low-radar cross-section drones to saturate Indian airspace, overwhelm air defence systems and exhaust expensive interceptor missiles. Cheap

Why tanks still matter in modern warfare

Drones, missiles and precision-guided weapons have transformed the modern battlefield, but military experts argue they cannot achieve the ultimate objective of war: controlling territory. They say tanks and ground forces remain indispensable despite the rapid evolution of warfare



In June this year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Larsen & Toubro's Hazira facility in Gujarat, where he reviewed the Zorawar light tank and other indigenous defence systems. **SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

drones costing only a few lakh rupees can force defenders to launch interceptors worth several crores. Warfare is increasingly becoming a battle of mathematics, where defenders can lose economically despite winning tactically.

Zorawar light tank

Recognising the changing character of warfare, India is developing the indigenous Zorawar light tank specifically for operations along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). In June this year, Prime Minister Na-

rendra Modi visited Larsen & Toubro's Hazira manufacturing facility in Gujarat, where he reviewed the Zorawar light tank and other indigenous defence systems.

Jointly developed by the Defence Research and De-

velopment Organisation and L&T Defence, the 25-tonne, air-transportable combat vehicle is designed for rapid deployment in high-altitude regions.

The Indian Army now expects to induct the Zorawar between 2028 and 2029. Now-retired Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi recently stated that issues identified during development and testing are being addressed through routine design refinements. The Army plans to induct 354 Zorawar tanks under a programme estimated to cost around ₹17,500 crore. The Zorawar has been specifically designed for operations along the LAC, where China's People's Liberation Army has already deployed Type-15 light tanks. Indian military planners view the platform as critical to narrowing the operational gap and enabling rapid reinforcement of forward positions in mountainous terrain.

The T-72 Ajeya remains the Army's largest tank fleet, with approximately 2,400-2,500 tanks, many of which are over four decades old. The more capable T-90S Bhishma, numbering more than 1,200, forms the backbone of India's armoured corps.

Unique challenge

India faces a unique strategic challenge: preparing simultaneously for conventional warfare against Pakistan in the plains and armoured operations against China in the high Himalayas. The western theatre is ideal for traditional ar-

moured manoeuvre warfare. The northern theatre presents an entirely different environment, characterised by extreme altitude, narrow valleys, weak bridges and steep gradients.

At high altitudes, tank engines lose significant power because of thin air, fuel consumption increases, movement becomes difficult and recovering disabled vehicles is extremely challenging. Without a credible offensive armoured capability in the mountains, Indian planners feared continued vulnerability to incremental Chinese military pressure.

'Not disappearing'

Lieutenant General (Retd.) Dushyant Singh, director general of the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), said no single template applies to every conflict. "In the India-Pakistan context, territory remains central. Likewise, the Iran-U.S. conflict demonstrates that unless territory is physically occupied, victory remains incomplete. Air strikes and missiles are effective for punitive action and destroying military assets, but controlling land requires boots on the ground. Legacy platforms such as tanks remain relevant despite advances in drones and missiles," he said.

According to him, tanks now require dedicated anti-drone protection and integrated air defence support. Singh emphasised that future warfare will increasingly rely on integrat-

ed multi-domain operations involving the Army, Air Force and Navy, supported by cyber warfare, economic measures and maritime power.

'Role not ended'

Globally, tanks no longer dominate battlefields in the way they did between the Second World War and the end of the Cold War.

India is introducing an entirely new class of tanks because its principal armoured challenge lies not on drone-saturated plains but in the high Himalayas, where altitude, mobility and transportability determine operational success.

The Zorawar is designed to address a uniquely Indian strategic requirement that many Western militaries do not face. The tank is no longer the undisputed king of the battlefield. But it remains something even more enduring: an indispensable component of combined-arms warfare.

In a battlefield increasingly dominated by drones, guided missiles and precision weapons capable of destroying multi-million-dollar armoured vehicles within seconds, tanks continue to provide one capability that no drone can replicate: the ability to physically seize, occupy and hold ground. Ultimately, wars are won not only by destroying the enemy but by controlling territory. And for that, boots on the ground, supported by tanks, remain indispensable.

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Odisha doctors
call off strike
after govt.'s
assurance

The Hindu Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Medical Services Association (OMSA) called off its strike on Saturday after the Mohan Majhi government assured it that steps would be taken to address its demands for improved service conditions and workplace safety.

The strike, which commenced on July 1, had severely disrupted health-care services across the State, with hundreds of patients queuing up for medical care.

"We met Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling and had a very constructive discussion. The government has assured us that it will constitute a committee within three days to deliberate on all our demands," OMSA general secretary Sanjib Kumar Pradhan said.

"The government has also assured us that the remuneration of dental doctors will be increased immediately, while the remaining demands will be addressed in a time-bound manner," he added.

Ex-T.N. Minister gets bail day after arrest in CM remarks case

The ruling TVK is using the Police Department for its 'political games' and dreams that it can somehow bring down the DMK, says the MLA

The Hindu Bureau
THOOTHUKUDI

DMK MLA and former Tamil Nadu Fisheries Minister Anitha Radhakrishnan was granted bail by a court in Tiruchendur late on Friday in the case related to certain remarks he allegedly made against Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay. Mr. Radhakrishnan was arrested after the Madras High Court on Friday dismissed his anticipatory bail in the case registered by the Author police in Thoothukudi district.

Justice G.K. Ilanthiraiyan had dismissed the advance bail plea after reading the transcript of the MLA's speech in question, produced by the prosecution, and expressing displeasure over his remarks.

Following his arrest in Thoothukudi on Friday, Mr. Radhakrishnan was brought to the Thoothukudi district Superintendent of Police (SP) office for further inquiry.



Tiruchendur MLA and former Minister Anitha Radhakrishnan being escorted out of the office of the Thoothukudi SP after questioning on Friday. N. RAJESH

di district Superintendent of Police (SP) office for further inquiry.

ram granted bail to Mr. Radhakrishnan. The court directed him to furnish sureties within three days and ordered him to sign daily at the Author police station for 10 days.

Addressing the media on the Combined Court Building premises in Tiruchendur on Saturday, Mr. Radhakrishnan said, "They are dreaming that they can somehow bring down the DMK, and think they can use the Police Department for their political games."

Around 11.55 p.m., judicial magistrate Chidamba-

As Delhi University's first FYUP batch graduates, concerns over access persist

Gurmehar Kaur
NEW DELHI

Delhi University (DU) was among the first Central universities to implement the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) in the 2022-23 academic year. Conceived under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the optional fourth year was intended to bring research into undergraduate education, align Indian degrees with global standards and provide academically rigorous graduates.

The experience of the first batch of students to enter the fourth year, however, has been far more uneven.

In August 2025, DU Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh said about 55% of eligible undergraduates, roughly 31,000 of 71,000 students, had opted for the fourth year, which grants students an Honours with Research degree. The second batch is set to begin the programme this year.

Research, uncertainty

"I didn't know what to do till my third year, so I needed a buffer," said Aishi Mitra, an English (Honours)



The second batch of students is set to begin the programme this year. FILE PHOTO

graduate from Lady Shri Ram College, who completed the fourth year with a psychology research component. "But I had to figure out everything on my own. Students were confused, and so was the faculty."

For Ms. Mitra, the additional year eventually proved useful. It allowed her to move beyond conventional career options in English and strengthened her application for postgraduate study abroad. Yet she said many of her peers chose not to continue because their families needed them to start earning.

That tension between financial necessity and academic aspiration surfaced repeatedly.

Shrey Mehrotra, an Economics (Honours) student at Khalsa College, said limited access to data made quantitative research difficult and that some faculty members "actively discouraged students".

Jessica Joy, a B.Com (Honours) student at Jesus and Mary College, enrolled in the fourth year with clear goals but eventually withdrew. "Because of the uncertainties and the overall academic load, I decided to leave midway," she said.

Students and teachers alike observed a pattern that those who completed the fourth year were, overwhelmingly, those who could afford to postpone entering the job market.

Infrastructure strain
Many teachers say colleges do not have the infrastructure required to sustain the additional year. With no significant increase in faculty strength, timetables have become more congested, affecting the quality of teaching and learning.

Abha Dev Habib, Associate Professor of Physics at Miranda House and secretary of the Democratic Teachers' Front, was un-

sparing in her assessment. "DU's infrastructure already struggles to accommodate existing students. You are asking students to write examinations, conduct research and produce a thesis, but the first three years do not prepare them for the fourth. What sort of system are you building?"

Prof. Habib pointed to examination halls functioning in extreme heat with a single fan, and to faculty members, many on temporary contracts, being asked to supervise undergraduate research without additional support or compensation.

Her sharpest criticism, however, was directed at what she sees as the programme's social consequences. "DU has historically been a great equaliser," she said, arguing that affordable fees and reservation policies enabled students from diverse social and economic backgrounds to study on relatively equal terms.

However, students who can pursue a fourth year are those who can afford to. And in India, financial privilege and caste are rarely unrelated, she remarked.

Kejriwal tells Sawant to adopt 'Punjab model' of health care

Press Trust of India
PANAJI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday urged Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant to adopt Punjab's ₹10 lakh health insurance scheme, claiming that the BJP-ruled coastal

State's public health care system has "collapsed".

Addressing a press conference here, Mr. Kejriwal said nearly 90% of Goa's population depends on government health care as private treatment is beyond the reach of most families.

The Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana

(DDSSY) in Goa has failed to benefit people, while Goa Medical College and Hospital, the State's only super-specialty government hospital, is overcrowded, and other government hospitals are plagued by staff shortages, inadequate infrastructure and shortage of medicines, he claimed.

U.P. HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD
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OFFICE: PRADHAN

CORRIGENDUM

With reference to the advertisement published in this newspaper on 28.05.2026 titled "Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Master Developer for development of AI City-cum-Business Park at Vrindavan Yojna IT City, Lucknow", bearing Reference No. 798/YR-4/61 dated 27.05.2026.

It is hereby informed to all interested bidders that the last date for submission of bids under the aforesaid RFP has been extended from 6th July 2026 to 24th July 2026 up to 05:00 PM (IST).

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Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost (Rs.)	Starting date for downloading Bid	EMD (Rs.)	Deadline for submission of Bid
1.	NAME OF 31.04.862/-	06-07-2026	41.05.00/-	13-07-2026	
WORK:- C/O New Block for CBT-Examination Hall Rajya Chayan Ayog Hamirpur in the premises of HPSCA Dist. Hamirpur (HP) (SH- Part-I) (Civil Work) (C/O Building portion, WS & S.L.I. RWH, Seelie Tank, and Site development etc.) Part-II (Electrical Work) (SH- SITC of E.I., LAN system, Access Control System, CCTV Surveillance system, Fire Alarm system, Fire Fighting & Sprinkler system, power Backup & Elevator system thereon) 0/273, C/O PCC V-shape drain at RD 0/0 to 0/550.					
2.	Name of 58.09.981/-	06-07-2026	93.500/-	13-07-2026	
WORK:- Construction of link road to Village Bharthian to Dhamashani Km. 0/0 to 0/550, (SH- Formation cutting in Km. 0/0 to 0/550, filling available excavated earth (excluding rock) in trenches in Km. 0/0 to 0/120, C/O Rivall at RD 0/350 to 0/400, P.L. metalling and tarring in Km. 0/0 to 0/550, C/O 10.00 mtr. span RCC slab culvert at RD 0/263 to 0/273, C/O PCC V-shape drain at RD 0/0 to 0/550).					

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.tenders.gov.in.

Executive Engineer, Hamirpur Division, HPWD, Hamirpur, Pin Code 177001
Telephone No. 01972-222510
e-mail: ee-hamirpnd@nic.in
On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh
HIMACHAL PRADESH
HP/163226-27

No Eligible Voter to be excluded and No Ineligible Person to be included
SPECIAL INTENSIVE REVISION-2026 SIR

How to fill Enumeration form?

Enumeration Form
Name and contact No. of BLO (pre-printed)

This information will be pre-printed Affix your latest photograph here

Filling this table is mandatory for all eligible voters

Voters are not required to submit any documents while filling out the Enumeration Form.

Online Enumeration Form can also be filled out at voters.eci.gov.in or on the ECINET App.

CSIR-CENTRAL MECHANICAL ENGINEERING RESEARCH INSTITUTE
(Council of Scientific & Industrial Research)
Mahatma Gandhi Avenue, Durgapur-713209, West Bengal

RECRUITMENT NOTICE (ADVT. NO.01/2026)

DATE OF OPENING OF ONLINE APPLICATIONS: ON 04.07.2026 AT 10:00 AM IST
LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF ONLINE APPLICATIONS: ON 03.08.2026 AT 10:00 PM IST

CSIR-Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute, Durgapur, a premier Institute under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, An Autonomous body under Ministry of S & T, Govt. of India, invites online applications from the citizens of India aged between 18 to 28 years (with relaxation as per GOI rules) for filling up of 27 nos. of Technicians (1) (Trade in Refrigeration & Air-Conditioning) posts at CSIR-CMERI, Durgapur and its extension Centre at Luthiana. For detailed advertisement & submission of the online application etc., the interested eligible candidates may log on to the Institute website: www.csmcri.ac.in - career - vacancies - Advt. No. 01/2026.

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बिहार विद्यालय परीक्षा समिति

JEE/NEET की पटना जिला में कोचिंग हेतु Physics, Chemistry, Maths and Biology विषय के शिक्षकों (Teachers) की आवश्यकता के लिए प्रकाशित विज्ञापनों के संबंध में शुद्धि पत्र

पटना जिला के विभिन्न 10 विद्यालयों में इंजीनियरिंग (JEE) तथा मेडिकल (NEET) प्रतियोगिता परीक्षाओं की तैयारी के लिए शिक्षकों के चयन हेतु प्रकाशित विज्ञापन संख्या- पीओआर 142/2026 एवं पीओआर 143/2026 के क्रम में एएड द्वारा सभी संबंधितों को सूचित किया जाता है कि उक्त विज्ञापन में अंकित प्रावधानों की आवश्यकता पड़ने पर बिहार विद्यालय परीक्षा समिति द्वारा कार्यवाही में संशोधन/संशोधित किया जा सकता है।

2. विज्ञापन संख्या- पीओआर 142/2026 एवं पीओआर 143/2026 के शेष निर्देश वास्तव्य रहें।

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FRONTLINE SPORTSTAR

States

INBRIEF



TRS acronym tussle: EC wants Kavitha to submit alternatives

Election Commission of India (EC) has written to Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS) to change the party's name in view of objections raised by outfits with similar names over the acronym. Founder K. Kavitha has apparently received two such objections, and the TRS has been asked to submit three alternative names in 15 days. If not, their application for registration may be closed. However, sources said Ms. Kavitha has sent a reply as sought, rebutting the objections raised.

Bengaluru Central Jail unveils new apparel brand 'Free Bird'

The Parappanna Agrahara Central Prison in Bengaluru, Karnataka, has launched 'Free Bird', a new brand of premium linen shirts stitched by prison inmates as part of a skill-development initiative. A group of inmates underwent training by HCL, a Delhi-based company, in partnership with the department. The shirts carry the State emblem, Gandaberunda, as the brand's insignia. Under an MoU with the Prison Department, the HCL will also train inmates in bakery production.

IIT Hyderabad student falls to death on college campus

A 20-year-old engineering student at the International Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad, was found dead on the campus on Saturday. The deceased was identified as Abhiram Pallepu, a second-year CGD student. Preliminary probe revealed that he ended his life by jumping from a campus building. He is suspected to have taken the extreme step due to personal reasons. (Those in distress can seek help at Tele Manas 14416.)

Bengaluru creche abuse case: another caregiver held

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bengaluru Police on Saturday arrested Sujatha, a former caregiver at the creche operating on the premises of the IT firm Capgemini in Brookfield, in connection with the alleged physical abuse of children that has sparked widespread outrage.

She is the second person to be arrested in the case after caregiver Vijayalakshmi, 55, was arrested on Friday.

According to the police, Ms. Sujatha, who was dismissed from her job at the day care centre, allegedly orchestrated the recording of videos showing the abuse, by using an accomplice who was still employed at the centre. Investigators said her name does not figure in the original FIR.

Police have booked Ms. Sujatha under provisions of the IT Act and other relevant laws. She has been booked for not reporting the incident earlier and also for circulating child abuse videos, the police said.

Financial dispute

Police said Ms. Sujatha had developed a financial dispute with Ms. Vijayalakshmi within a month of joining the day care centre and was subsequently terminated from service.

Investigators suspect that, allegedly seeking revenge against Ms. Vijayalakshmi, she arranged to obtain video recordings of the alleged abuse inside the centre. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has taken suo motu cognizance of the case.

Adani's Vizhinjam port share transfer suspicious: Pinarayi

LoP says Adani Group told SEBI of proposed share transfer without govt's nod, making it legally untenable; this violates concession deal, raises questions over govt's handling of issue, he adds

The Hindu Bureau
KANNUR

Leader of the Opposition in Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday alleged that the proposed transfer of a 49% stake of the Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Limited (AVPPL), the concessionaire and operating company for the Vizhinjam International Seaport, by the Adani Group to Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) violates the concession agreement and raises serious questions over the government's handling of the issue.

He said the Opposition would challenge the move



MSC acquiring a huge stake could alter the ownership structure of the port and eventually create monopoly, says Pinarayi Vijayan. PTI

both legally and politically.

Addressing a press conference, he said the concession agreement mandates prior approval from the government before any transfer of shares. However, Chief Minister V.D. Sath-

eesan had informed the Assembly that no application seeking such approval had been received.

Mr. Vijayan alleged the Adani Group informed market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of In-

dia (SEBI) about the proposed share transfer without first obtaining the government's approval, rendering the move legally untenable.

Questioning the government's response, Mr. Vijayan said the Chief Minister who also holds the Ports, Law and Finance portfolios was directly responsible for ensuring compliance with the agreement. He said any change in ownership required strict legal scrutiny.

Mr. Vijayan warned that allowing MSC to acquire a substantial stake could alter the ownership structure of the port and eventually create a monopoly.

Port will be accessible to all: Adani group

Dhinesh Kallungal
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ) has written a second letter to the Kerala government, seeking to clarify its position on the proposed deal to sell 49% stake in the Vizhinjam port to the Switzerland-based Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC).

The State government is treading cautiously, as Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Limited (AVPPL), the concessionaire of the port, has not yet provided a copy of the agreement it signed

with MSC. Under the concession deal, the government has granted mortgage rights over the port and its assets to the latter for the concession period.

An empowered committee is already in place to take decisions related to the Vizhinjam International Seaport. The State is also exploring the possibility of constituting a new panel of experts, hand-picked from various sectors, to study the deal and assess its ramifications, a source said.

Assurances by group

In its second letter, the APSEZ sought to assure that,

under no circumstances would MSC enjoy a monopoly at the port. It also stated that the port would continue to function as a common-user facility, accessible to all users without discrimination, citing similar acquisitions at other ports in the country.

The AVPPL also reiterated its commitment to work with the State on the 'Mission Samudra' project, a maritime development initiative announced by the Kerala government to transform the State into a global economic hub.

But questions arise from various quarters on whether

the agreement would give an undue advantage to MSC by allowing it to appoint its subsidiaries to handle seaside and land-side logistics, potentially leading to the dominance of a global shipping line at the port. All these aspects will be examined by the State before granting its final approval, sources said.

A month ago, a brief report on the proposed transaction appeared in a daily published from the north. That was the only information available to the State about the development before the deal came to light, the source said.

Lalu says govt. 'did a grave wrong' over security downgrade

Press Trust of India
PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad on Saturday criticised the National Democratic Alliance government in Bihar over its earlier decision directing former Chief Minister Rabri Devi to vacate the 10, Circular Road bungalow allotted to her and downgrading the couple's security cover, saying the administration had committed a "grave wrong".

The remarks came after the Bihar Home Department restored their security, upgrading it to the Z category nearly a month after it had withdrawn their Z+ cover and replaced it with security provided by the Bihar Special Armed Police.

"The government is on the back foot," Mr. Prasad told reporters. Asked whether the State government had erred in downgrading their security, he replied, "Bahut galti kiya hai (They have done a grave wrong)."

According to a notification issued by the Home Department on Saturday, Mr. Prasad and Ms. Devi have been provided Z-category security along with bulletproof vehicles.

The couple's Z+ security cover had earlier been downgraded following a review by the State government, triggering a political controversy. According to sources, Z+ is among the highest categories of government security cover, comprising a dedicated



The Bihar Home Department downgraded the security cover of RJD chief Lalu Prasad to Z category. FILE PHOTO

team of trained personnel equipped with sophisticated weapons and other security equipment.

On July 2, Ms. Devi and her family, including Mr. Prasad, vacated the government bungalow, which had been their residence for nearly two decades.

Ms. Devi is now the Leader of the Opposition in the State Legislative Council.

Officials of the Building Construction Department carried out a final inspection of the property on Friday before formally taking possession.

They said the inspection was intended to assess the condition of the premises and verify its fixtures and infrastructure.

The bungalow at 10, Circular Road was allotted to Bharatiya Janata Party leader and State Minister Nand Kishor Yadav through an order issued by the Building Construction Department on May 27.

YSRCP built its office on my family's land: Goa Governor

K. Srinivasa Rao
VIZIANAGARAM

Construction of the new YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) office at Dasanapeta in Vizianagaram has stirred a controversy with Goa Governor Pusapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju objecting to it and alleging that the officials have "tampered with the records and showed his family property as government land."

The YSRCP government had allocated the land measuring four acres and 75 cents located in the Ring Road area to the party on May 18, 2022, on lease basis as it was classified as "government property."

According to Mr. Raju, the land had been recorded as "private" in the Town



Pusapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju

Survey Register of the Vizianagaram Municipal Corporation long ago. The authorities had not given notices to the legal heirs of Mr. Raju and showed the property as "government land" in 2021, when Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was the Chief Minister, he alleged.

Mr. Raju had written a letter to the District Collector in 2025, urging him to restore the land in favour

of the Pusapati family since the "YSRCP government had tampered with the records."

Speaking to the media recently in Vizianagaram, Mr. Raju had requested the State government to order an inquiry against the officials who had "changed the records."

Meanwhile, YSRCP district president Majji Srinivasa Rao said the Revenue and Municipal officials had followed due procedure in the allocation of land to the party. He said it was unfair to raise the issue after construction of the new party office in 2022. He said the Pusapati family had not raised any objection during the allocation of the land and construction of the new building.

A ripple effect



In full stroke: Participants in India's first ASMITA South Zone Canoeing and Kayaking League 2025-26 paddle their kayaks during the K-4 1,000-metre Sub-Junior Girls event at the Gambeeramgedda Reservoir in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. K.R. DEEPAK

'Liquor on wheels' lands driver in soup

The Hindu Bureau
THRISUR

An autorickshaw, acting as a mobile liquor outlet, catering to late-night football fans, was seized by the Excise department in Thrissur, Kerala, leading to the arrest of a 34-year-old man, popularly known as the "Abkari Auto" operator.

The accused, Vishnu, was arrested by the Thrissur Excise Special Squad while allegedly selling liquor from his autorickshaw on Friday night. The squad seized six bottles of Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL), ₹1,500 suspected to be sales proceeds, and the autorickshaw.

According to Excise officials,

the accused had been under surveillance for a week as part of Operation Thunder, a night-time enforcement drive. Acting on a tip-off, the team intercepted the vehicle. Investigators said Vishnu, who had previously worked as a private bus conductor and cleaner, allegedly turned to illicit liquor sales after finding it more lucrative.

Excise officials said demand for the mobile liquor service had surged since the start of the FIFA World Cup, with football fans reportedly calling the autorickshaw for doorstep liquor deliveries during late-night matches. The accused was produced before a court and remanded in judicial custody.

AMMA crisis: complaints mount against Shwetha

The Hindu Bureau
KOCCHI

In a hard-hitting press conference, a group of women actors has levelled serious allegations against Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA) president Shwetha Menon and some of her committee members, accusing them of attempted communal polarisation and advancing corporate and political agendas.

Actors Ansiba Hassan, Maala Parvathy, and Usha Hasena addressed the media on Saturday morning, just hours after Ms. Menon secured a stay from the Ernakulam Municipal Court against the functioning of an ad hoc committee that followed her announcement of resignation, along with that of the en-

tire executive committee, at the Annual General Body Meeting (AGM) last month. Actor and legislator Ramesh Pisharody has since resigned as convener of the ad hoc committee, expressing dismay over what he described as the "release" of his telephone conversation with Ms. Menon.

Communal strokes Ms. Parvathy accused Ms. Menon of attempting to create communal divisions among members and of labelling Ms. Hassan "jihadist".



Shwetha Menon

maintained at the helm.

"AMMA does not need corporate funding. While members may hold political beliefs, they cannot impose party agendas within the organisation. Ms. Ansiba was targeted for questioning this. She was even accused of attempting to convert four people merely because she broke her fast on a film set in 2023. What justifies executive

committee member Tiny Tom invoking this incident three years later in a WhatsApp chat in 2026? How can Lakshmi Priya, AMMA's vice-president, get away with alleging that religious fundamentalists are behind Ms. Ansiba?" Ms. Parvathy asked.

She further alleged Ms. Menon threatened to oust her from the industry if she intervened. Ms. Hassan questioned why the Palativom police had not registered an FIR on her complaint against defamatory allegations made by Ms. Priya, despite the intervention of Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala.

Ms. Hassan said she had been targeted ever since opposing the executive committee's decision to accept a donation from a temple trust, arguing that

religious and political outfits should be kept out of AMMA.

'To remain president'

A few hours later, Ms. Menon sought to put up a brave front, claiming that her decision to remain as AMMA president has the backing of superstars Mammootty and Mohanlal.

In a Facebook post under the banner 'Satyameva Jayate', she expressed gratitude to the superstars and AMMA members who stood by her, urging her not to resign and to remain steadfast in her position. She said that an alleged attempt by "a section to hijack" AMMA by exploiting disputes within the organisation had been thwarted thanks to the intervention of the court.

From Page One

'India navigated West Asia crisis efficiently'

"India has consistently increased its refining capacity and has emerged as the world's fourth-largest refiner... However, we will not stop here, and will continue to increase capacity in the coming years," he added.

The Prime Minister insisted that there had not been any major supply disruptions during the crisis, even in remote areas, barring certain minor hurdles. He pointed out that India had not adopted any rationing measures for petrol and diesel, unlike certain other countries.

With regard to cooking gas, Mr. Modi told the gathering that prices of domestic LPG - which could have gone up to ₹2,000 per cylinder - were shielded and restricted to less than ₹950 per cylinder and ₹650 per cylinder for Ujjwala beneficiaries.

India also continued to provide urea for ₹300 per bag, though the fertilizer could have been priced at ₹3,000 per bag if it had followed the global price surge after the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

While customers were thus protected, state-owned oil marketing companies absorbed losses of about ₹75,000 crore in the June-end quarter, the Prime Minister said. "This is equivalent to the cost of building one refinery," he noted.

Mr. Modi accused the previous Congress government of Rajasthan of delaying the completion of the Balotra refinery, claiming that the party had not extended the necessary cooperation.

'Chinese investment influx good for ties'

"Particularly in areas where we believe we have a competitive advantage, like pharmaceuticals. For instance, we're one of the world's big exporters of pharmaceuticals to advanced markets. We hope Chinese partners will work with us to ensure that Indian production firms, producing high quality generic medicines, being the same products that have been exported to the U.S. and elsewhere, can be exported to the Chinese market. We think there is a balance of advantage for both countries, including value for China and of course, value for the relationship," the Indian envoy said at a panel on global economic governance during the forum.

India's exports to China had also increased recently. "That means that the market opportunity is there. We need to find ways of making it easier," he said.

India continues to import large amounts of electrical machinery and finished goods from China, as well as a range of intermediate goods. "How do we find ways in which India and China can be connected, with a widening basket of goods that both sides can provide each other, but also a sense that reasonable mechanisms to protect consumers can be applied in a way that enables India also to export more...?" he said.

"It would be easier to consider that the trade wouldn't be exactly 50-50 balanced, but one side would have more exports, provided that exports consist of goods that we can also add value. If it is pure consumption goods, that becomes a little harder to sell as a reasonable mechanism for the deficit," he added.

Only talks can bring peace, says Manipur CM

"Valte's family is like my family. His friends and close ones are my friends too. I will always extend any support to all of them when or if the need arises," the Chief Minister said.

Among those who offered floral tributes and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed Valte were MLAs Tongbam Robindro, Chinlunthang, and Letzangbam Haokip.

Mr. Singh took a helicopter from Imphal to Churachandpur after six Kuki-Zo organisations, demanding a permanent solution to the conflict, gave a call to boycott his visit. The Chief Minister's Office said he travelled back to Imphal after the ceremony as he had to attend a virtual meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Essential drug list lags behind benchmark

The consequences, the Working Group argues, fall hardest on patients battling cancer and diabetes. Its letter identifies 17 active cancer-treating agents and four supportive cancer-care medicines that feature on the WHO list but not the NLEM. Also missing, it says, are nine monoclonal antibodies - a class of targeted biologic drugs increasingly central to modern cancer treatment - none of which currently appear on India's list.

"We urge immediate initiation of a transparent, time-bound, and conflict of interest-free process to revise the NLEM, ensuring that it reflects the latest evidence, public health priorities, and the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines. Timely action is essential to safeguard the constitutional guarantee of the Right to Life for it ensures equitable access to essential medicines for all citizens," said K.M. Gopakumar, co-convenor, Working Group on Access to Medicines and Treatment, which comprises patient advocates, patient groups, civil society organisations, academics, lawyers and journalists.

Govt. asks Telegram to take proactive anti-piracy action

Move signals fresh escalation in issues between Centre and Telegram; platform has been accused of 'delayed action against piracy reports'; it was asked to remove over 3,100 URLs in March 2026

Aroon Deep
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting "has demanded that Telegram take proactive action in detecting and taking down pirated content on its platform," a senior official said on Saturday. Telegram has been asked to reply to the Union Ministry's notice within 15 days.

The move is a fresh escalation of issues between the government and the Dubai-headquartered messaging app, following a week-long ban ahead of the rescheduled National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET).

Telegram has been accused in multiple court cases of delayed or little action in response to reports of piracy.

The app has emerged as a haven for pirates since it places few limits on file sizes that users can upload on channels for free, enraging entertainment industry executives who have seen it turn into a convenient hub



Telegram was also served a notice on its username feature by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. REUTERS

for pirated books, newspapers, TV series, and films.

The firm spends tens of millions of dollars on its operations in India without earning back, Telegram founder Pavel Durov has said. A Telegram spokesperson did not have an immediate comment on the notice, in response to *The Hindu*.

Even as Telegram in recent years moved to comply with both court orders and private infringement complaints faster, the I&B Ministry has sent the firm its own orders, including

on the removal of more than 3,100 URLs in March this year. Telegram complied with that order.

This may not be enough, and the Ministry is now demanding that the firm do more to automatically detect piracy. A note shared by a senior official describing the notice said that it was aimed at creating a "clear shift from piecemeal takedown to platform accountability", and that the firm "is required to observe due diligence under the IT Act and IT Rules".

Under Section 30(b) of

the IT Rules, 2021, intermediaries, including Telegram, are required to "make reasonable efforts by [themselves], and to cause the users of [their] computer resource to not [share] any information that... infringes any patent, trademark, copyright or other proprietary rights".

Telegram fought its week-long ban, which has been justified by the National Testing Agency (NTA) in the Delhi High Court as a way to prevent misinformation on leaks made possible by an app feature on backdating the timestamp on messages sent on the platform. Justice Tejas Karia ruled that the ban was proportionate and legal.

Shortly after this order, Telegram was also served a notice on its username feature by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, which had asked WhatsApp to pause the rollout of a similar feature. It is unclear if the IT Ministry has specifically directed Telegram to disable the feature.

Involvement in Iran mediation will not benefit India: envoy

Ananth Krishnan
BEIJING

Rejecting comparisons between India's role on the world stage and Pakistan's recent mediation efforts in the Iran crisis, Ambassador to China Vikram Doraiswami said on Saturday that New Delhi's involvement in an already crowded field would not have particularly benefited India.

"The question about mediation that you're talking about, this is for individual countries to decide whether that adds value to their larger national position. We have done our bit of that in the past. I don't see how, at this point of time in what is already a crowded field, that would benefit us in any particular way," he said at the World Peace Forum in Beijing, an annual foreign policy event hosted by Tsinghua University. He was speaking in response to a question from Chinese media, on Pakistan's mediation in the Iran crisis and India's broader global leadership aspirations.

Mr. Doraiswami pointed out that India and China, as two major powers, had both not offered their services to mediate whether in Ukraine or Iran, and added it was unfair to compare India with Pakistan considering, for instance, their different economic sizes or India's broader integration with the world.

"As far as I see it, our position in recent crises, both in West Asia and even in Eastern Europe, has been quite similar to that of China. I don't see China or India actually stepping forward to offer mediatory services in either of these two matters. Quite frankly, I think the comparison with Pakistan, if I might be a little direct, is a little unfair to us. I think the economies of the two countries will tell you a lot. It is up to that country to decide what it chooses to do in the region. I don't see why we should follow a leaf from their book," he said.

"About what more could India do in terms of global leadership, we should look at countries according to what they are actually doing in the larger global system," he added.

CJP protest garners fresh political support

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Cockroach Janta Party (CJP)'s protest at Jantar Mantar entered its 15th day on Saturday, drawing fresh political support from AAP MP Sanjay Singh and CPI (M) MP John Brittas, while climate activist Sonam Wangchuk continued the seventh day of his hunger strike. All India Students' Association (AISA) said one of its fasting student leaders was hospitalised after her condition turned critical.

AISA said JNUSU Joint Secretary Danish Ali was admitted to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital on Saturday evening after her blood sugar



Making a point: CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke speaks during a protest at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Saturday. Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk is also present. ANI

level dropped following seven days of fasting. The organisation said she was admitted to the

hospital for intravenous fluids, while five other AISA activists - Neha, Manish, Hrishikesh, Deepak

and Aameen - continued their indefinite hunger strike along with Mr. Wangchuk and other protesters.

Three more arrested in TET paper leak scam

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
MUMBAI

Three more persons were arrested by the Special Investigation Team probing the Maharashtra Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) question paper leak scam.

A Thane court on Saturday remanded them in police custody till July 9. The special police team arrested them from Agra in Uttar Pradesh. With this, the number of persons behind bars in this case has reached 10.

"All the three accused are employees of Mahin Patran Pvt. Limited, the company that had been awarded the contract by Maharashtra's Education Department to print the question papers. These employees are responsible for bringing the paper out of the company," said Pavan Bansod, an official of the Maharashtra SIT.

The names of the employees are - Nareesh Puranchand Mahore, Sanjaykumar Sureshchandra Chandra and Babulal Narayansingh Kushwaha. According to the investigation so far, the three men were in touch with Binjendar Kumar Gupta, the absconding mastermind.

Centre lists six Indians, 17 Pakistan nationals as terrorists under UAPA

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has added Abdul Rauf, whom the government describes as a key Lashkar-e-Taiba operative working under its chief Hafiz Saeed and involved in planning, coordinating and financing terrorist activities, into the list of designated terrorists. The latest addition of 23 names to the designated list of terrorists under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) was notified by the Ministry on Saturday.

"Of the 23 terrorists announced today, 17 are Pakistani nationals, and 6 are Indian nationals. However, all of them at present operate from Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir," Union Home Minister Amit Shah said.

Five of the six Indians designated as terrorists are from Jammu and Kashmir. They have been identified as Firdous Ahmad Bhat (33) from Kulgam, Haroon Rashid Ganai alias 'Shunoo' (36) from Anantnag, Bilal Ahmad Mir alias 'Ahmad Bhai' (27) from So-

phore, Abid Quvoom Lone (27) from Baramulla and Nazir Ahmed Gujjar alias 'Munazzil' from Doda.

The Bengluru engineer, who has been identified as Mohammed Shaheed Faisal (40), is currently residing in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, and associated with Pakistan-based terrorist outfits Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed, an MHA notification said.

Wanted by the NIA since 2012, Faisal carries a reward of ₹10 lakh and is alleged to have handled three terror modules in Karnataka in the past 14 years.

Faisal recruits youth via social media, arranges weapons training in Pakistan, raises funds for terrorist activities and imparts training in the use of data encryption and fake identities to evade law enforcement agencies. With the intent of carrying out

terrorist activities in the country, he has been involved in the delivery of weapons and ammunition and in conspiracies related to several terrorist incidents," the notification said.

The MHA also designated senior JeM functionary Masood Ilyas Kashmiri, alleging that he recruited youth into the outfit, facilitated infiltration into India and was involved in the April 2022 attack on Sunjam military station in Jammu.

Also listed are Hafiz Khalid Waleed, alleged to be a close associate of Hafiz Saeed and mastermind of several terror attacks; Maulana Saifullah Khalid, described as active in various Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) factions; Mohammad Yaqoob, accused of providing logistics and financial support to terrorists; Qari Yaqub Sheikh, alleged to have participated in anti-India activities while remaining associated with various LeT factions; and Rana Ifthikhar, who allegedly coordinated among jihadist organisations and motivated youth to participate in terrorism.

Delhi court rejects bail pleas of Khalid, Imam citing SC order

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Saturday dismissed the bail applications of activists Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, accused in the larger conspiracy case related to the 2020 northeast Delhi riots, holding that it was bound by the Supreme Court's January order, which had imposed certain conditions on the same.

The Supreme Court had on January 5 this year rejected the bail pleas of the two and had expressly directed that the applicants could renew their bail requests only after the projected witnesses in the case were examined or upon the expiry of one year from January 5, 2026, whichever was earlier.

In a common order for both Mr. Imam and Mr. Khalid, who have been languishing in jail for over five years under UAPA charges, Additional Sessions Judge Sameer Bajpai of Karkardooma Court held that the trial court had "no option" but to follow the Supreme Court's directions.

"Thus, following the said order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, this court cannot entertain the appli-

cations and grant bail to the applicants. In fact the applications are not maintainable and they are hereby dismissed," the court said.

Changed circumstances

The defence argued that there had been a significant change in circumstances since the Supreme Court rejected the bail pleas of their clients. It relied on the top court's subsequent ruling in *Syed Ifthikhar Andrabi v. NIA*, which it said reaffirmed the principle that prolonged incarceration could justify bail. Reliance was also placed upon the interim bail granted to co-accused Tasleem and Khalid Saifi and on the Delhi High Court's recent bail order for Khuram Parvez.

Contending that the protected witnesses were unlikely to be examined anytime soon despite nearly five months having elapsed, the defence sought regular bail or, alternatively, six months' interim bail.

Opposing the applications, the prosecution argued that there had been no substantial change in circumstances justifying reconsideration of bail.

Shah reviews security situation in Manipur

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday reviewed the security situation in Manipur with senior State government officials here, while Chief Minister Y. Kheschand Singh joined virtually from Imphal.

Other than Manipur Government's Security Adviser Kuldeep and State Director-General of Police Mukesh Singh, Director-General of Military Operations Abhijit S. Pendharkar, and other senior officers attended the meet and gave detailed presentations.

While there was no official statement from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), government sources said the meeting discussed the new areas of conflict between the Kuki and Naga communities.

Mr. Shah was apprised of the progress in fencing along the 1,643-km India-Myanmar border. Sources said that around 50 km of the border had been fenced so far.

It also discussed the recovery of looted police weapons and the fresh influx of refugees from Myanmar, following the continuous civil unrest in the country, sources said.

Mamata hits out at rebels, dares them to join the BJP

Breaking her silence, ex-West Bengal CM says they betrayed party after winning on its symbol; she flags attacks on party leaders, removal of eggs from school menu, denial of permission for rally

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress chairperson and former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday hit out at party rebels and said that they had committed betrayal after winning on the party symbol, and dared them to join the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

"The party was like a mother to you and you have betrayed it. You are directly supporting the BJP. You will support the BJP and then claim to be Trinamool [but] that cannot happen, because the ideology of Trinamool is against the BJP," Ms. Banerjee said during a social media live session.

The former Chief Minister broke her weeks-long silence after her party had split with a majority of MLAs and Lok Sabha MPs deciding to shift their loyalties after the defeat in the Assembly polls.

"Those who are dishonest and traitors, those who are sponsored by the BJP, I dare them to join the BJP. With the support of the BJP, you want to break the



Strong remarks: Former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee speaking about various issues on Saturday. ANI

party. What do you think, am I dead?" she asked.

Ms. Banerjee made her remarks two days after rebel MLAs led by Leader of the Opposition Ritabrata Banerjee appeared before the Election Commission. The EC has sought a response from both the factions of the party.

'Symbol is with us'

Ms. Banerjee said that if the EC decides to snatch the party symbol away from her and give it to the rebels, even then it will not make much of a difference as the people will decide who the Trinamool Congress is.

"We believe that the

symbol will remain with us. But if we imagine that Vanish Kumar [Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar] who conducted the elections to finish us, takes away the symbol from us, how does it matter?" she said.

Ms. Banerjee spoke on a host of issues, including school children not receiving eggs under the mid-day meal scheme, denial of permission for the party to hold a rally on July 21 in front of Victoria House, and the arrests of party workers by the ruling BJP in the State.

"It has been noticed that repeated attacks have been carried out against Trinamool Congress leaders and

workers, including on Abhishek Banerjee, Mahua Moitra and several other party leaders and workers," Ms. Banerjee said. She alleged that many party workers have been subjected to custodial harassment, including being forced to sleep on the floor, being shackled, humiliated, and subjected to degrading treatment.

Greets Adhikari

The Trinamool Congress chairperson, while extending her best wishes to Chief Minister Suvedu Adhikari, said that she had campaigned for him several times.

"Let me say this: becoming Chief Minister does not erase history. You were once in Congress, you lost elections several times, and I personally campaigned in your constituency because it was my responsibility — not something I claim credit for. You also served for nearly a decade as a Trinamool Congress MLA and Minister, holding portfolios such as Transport and Irrigation, overseeing several districts," she said.

Yet another setback for Mamata as key aide resigns from all Trinamool posts

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Former West Bengal Finance Minister and Mamata Banerjee loyalist, Chandrima Bhattacharya on Saturday resigned from all posts of the Trinamool Congress and gave hints that she has aligned with the camp of rebels led by Leader of the Opposition Ritabrata Banerjee.

Ms. Bhattacharya, who has remained with the party chairperson over the past few decades, sent a letter to Ms. Banerjee announcing her resignation as head of the party's State unit. In the season of changing political loyalties in West Bengal, the resignation of Ms. Bhattacharya is yet another setback for Ms. Banerjee, who has only a handful of loyalists left.

Ms. Bhattacharya said that after the MLAs of the rebel faction of the party took over the Trinamool Congress party office on Friday, the former Chief Minister had called and accused her of allowing the rebels to take over the party.

"I was deeply hurt when she (Ms. Banerjee) called me to say that I have handed over the party office to



Chandrima Bhattacharya

them (the rebels), although I do not know how I did that. It is evident that my loyalty and trustworthiness were shaken from their roots. This had never happened in the past. Once those fundamental binding forces are gone, there is no reason for me to stay in the party or return to it," Ms. Bhattacharya told presspersons.

Ms. Bhattacharya, a three-time MLA of the State, was defeated by BJP's Sourav Sikdar from Dum Dum Uttar constituency in the recently-concluded Assembly election. She joins a long list of Mamata Banerjee loyalists like former Minister Firhad Hakim and several MPs who have decided to switch loyalties.

While the former State Finance Minister did not

criticise Ms. Banerjee, Ms. Bhattacharya said she was not consulted during important decisions in the previous regime, including the preparation of the State Budget.

Ms. Bhattacharya was the authorised signatory of Trinamool before the Election Commission. The Mamata Banerjee loyalists shared a letter to secretary of EC, written by the party chairperson dated June 15, which stated that the two persons who will communicate with the commission are Abhishek Banerjee and Derek O'Brien.

Meets Ritabrata

After resigning from all posts of Trinamool, Ms. Bhattacharya went to the State Assembly and met Ritabrata Banerjee and other rebel MLAs. While the former Minister did not say that she joined the rebel camp, her actions indicate that she has warmed up to them.

"There is a tendency in a private limited company (referring to Mamata Banerjee-led party) to insult its employees... Whatever is the experience of all us, Chandrima D (Bhattacharya) has a similar experience," Mr. Ritabrata said.

EC can hold bypolls any time within 6 months after vacancy, say experts

NEWS ANALYSIS

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission announced byelections to only three Assembly seats — one each in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat — on Thursday, though there are currently at least 14 vacant seats in State legislatures across the country, apart from six vacant Parliamentary seats — three each in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

The Representation of the People (RPA) Act mandates bypolls within six months of a seat falling vacant, but experts said the EC has the discretionary power to choose at which point during these six months it should conduct the polls. The courts have generally shown deference to the EC's decisions in such matters, they said.

The RPA Act also carves out two exceptions to this six-month rule: where the remainder of the term is less than one year, or



The EC announced byelections to only three Assembly seats.

where the Election Commission, in consultation with the Union government, certifies that it is difficult to hold the byelection within the prescribed period. However, through judicial interpretation, a third exception has been recognised — when there is a pending election petition concerning that vacant seat.

Too fast, too slow

Opposition parties have repeatedly questioned the "hurry" and "delay" in announcing bypolls.

For instance, the EC's announcement of a bypoll in Madhya Pradesh's Datia

Assembly seat on Thursday led to protests from the Congress, which questioned the "hurry" of the poll body. The seat had fallen vacant after the disqualification of the Congress's Rajendra Bharti in April, following his conviction in a fraud case. He has challenged the verdict in the Delhi High Court and sought a stay. His plea is scheduled to be heard on July 8 and bypolls are scheduled for July 30.

According to legal experts, the EC can go ahead with its schedule for bypolls until and unless the court grants a stay. "Till the court gives a stay on holding a byelection, the EC can announce bypolls any time within a six-month time frame, even if a case is pending," senior Supreme Court lawyer Sanjay Hegde told *The Hindu*.

The Congress is also pointing to the delay in holding a byelection for Uttar Pradesh's Milkpur seat, which was vacated following the election of the Samajwadi Party's Awadesh Prasad to the Lok Sabha.

In this case, however, an election petition by the BJP candidate was pending in the Allahabad High Court and the bypoll was scheduled only in February 2025, after the petition in the High Court was eventually withdrawn.

The Supreme Court, in the *Election Commission of India v. Telangana Rashtriya Samithi* case, had held that a seat cannot be treated as available for a bypoll while the validity of its previous election itself is under challenge. The commission must therefore await the outcome of the election petition before proceeding with the byelection, it had said.

"This interpretation is sound because an election petition may ultimately result in the court declaring another candidate to have been duly elected. If a byelection has already been held by then, that declaration would become largely otiose," said Swapnil Tripathi, Lead at Charkha, the Constitutional Law Centre at the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy.

Cong. asks why agencies are silent on 'big thieves' in Ram Temple donation row

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Continuing its attack on the Narendra Modi government over the alleged embezzlement of donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, the Congress on Saturday asked why Central investigative agencies had failed to act against the "big thieves" in the case.

The party also said the Rashtriya Swamsevaks Sangh (RSS) could not absolve itself of responsibility by merely issuing a statement.

Addressing a press conference, Uttar Pradesh Congress Legislature Party leader Aradhana Misra dismissed as "crocodile tears" the statement issued by RSS general secretary Datatreya Hosabale on the alleged theft of offerings at the temple.

Ms. Misra said that while "they (the Congress) were worshippers of Lord Ram, the BJP was a merchant and traded in the name of



Aradhana Misra

Lord Ram". She alleged that the BJP and the RSS were now trying to disavow themselves from the controversy through a "scripted statement" and questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence on the issue.

'Questions RSS'

Ms. Misra said senior office-bearers of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust were associated with the RSS and that the alleged theft of offerings had taken place under their watch. Naming Champat Rai, Anil Mishra and Gopal Rao, she asked

whether these functionaries, who were at the helm of the trust, were linked to the RSS and, if the organisation was genuinely distressed by the incident, why no action had been taken against them.

She also questioned why no FIR had been registered against senior trust officials and why accountability had not been fixed on those responsible for overseeing the temple's administration. While lower-level employees had been arrested, senior functionaries of the trust had been shielded, she alleged.

Ms. Misra asked why agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate, the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Income Tax Department had not acted despite what she described as large-scale financial irregularities linked to the temple. She reiterated the Congress' demand for an investigation into the matter under the supervision of a Supreme Court judge.

Ram Temple Trust meeting to discuss SIT report

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Members of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust will meet at the Mani Ramdas Chavli in Ayodhya on Monday to discuss the preliminary report of the Special Investigation Team (SIT), formed to probe the Ram Temple alleged donation embezzlement case, and the resignations of its trustees in its wake.

The first of the five-point agenda of the meeting, scheduled for 3 p.m., is a discussion on the resignations of the Trust's general secretary, Champat Rai, and trustee Anil Mishra. Both individuals, along with administrator Gopal Rao, have been at the centre of controversy since news of the alleged embezzlement charges at the Ram Temple broke.

Trust members are also likely to deliberate on the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer to oversee the management of the temple.

Parliament's Monsoon Session from July 20: Rijiju

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Monsoon Session of Parliament will be held from July 20 to August 13, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said on Saturday.

In a post on X, he said President Droupadi Murmu had approved the summoning of both the Houses of Parliament for the Monsoon Session 2026. "The Session will commence on July 20 and continue till August 13 for meaningful debate and decisions on issues of national importance," he said.

Bihar BJP MLA gets four-year jail term in 2018 firing death case

Press Trust of India
DELHI

A Delhi court on Saturday sentenced Bihar MLA Raju Kumar Singh, convicted in a 2018 case in which a woman was killed in celebratory firing in Fatehpur Beri, to simple imprisonment for four years and slapped a fine of ₹25 lakh.

Special Judge Vishal Gogne pronounced the substantive portion of the sentence orally. "The convict is sentenced to four years' simple imprisonment under Section 304 part II of the IPC and two months' imprisonment un-

der the Arms Act," he said. Judge Gogne said that Mr. Singh, the BJP MLA from Sahebganj, will also pay a compensation of ₹25 lakh to the family members of the victim.

Earlier on Friday, Mr. Singh urged the court to release him on probation, arguing that he had no intention to cause death and had an otherwise unblemished record as a public representative.

In a 97-page order on June 6, the court said, "The acts of celebratory firing during festivities are a scourge that often cause fatalities in our country."

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Selection of an Agency to Conduct Topographic & LIDAR Survey for Bhubaneswar New City Master Plan Area
Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) intends to select an agency for "Selection of an Agency to conduct Topographic & LIDAR Survey for Bhubaneswar New City Master Plan Area".
Interested agencies may participate in this tender and submit their proposal. The RFP documents will be available from 03.07.2026 to 24.07.2026 and can be downloaded from Odisha e-procurement portal i.e. <http://tenders.odisha.gov.in>. The completed proposal, as per instruction in the RFP document, should be submitted on the portal latest by 24.07.2026 up to 17:00 hrs. Please refer to the RFP document for further details.
BDA reserves the right to cancel this invitation and / or invite fresh Bids in RFP with or without amendments to this invitation, without liability or any obligation for such invitation and without assigning any reason. BDA also reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals without assigning any reason whatsoever.
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Ref No.: F.02 (441)/RMSCL/PROCUREMENT/DRUG/NB-03/2026-27/4494 Date: 24.06.2026
Notice Inviting E-Bids
S. No. Item Name/Description Ref. No. UBN Estimated Value Rs. Last Time & Last date for bid submission
1. Drugs Ref No.: F.02 (441)/RMSCL/Procurement/Drug/NB-03/2026-27/4494 Date: 24.06.2026 MSC2627GLRNC00028 Rs.4185.58 Lakh 08.07.2026 upto 06.00 pm
Director (Procurement)
Ref. No.: F.02 (441)/RMSCL/PROCUREMENT/DRUG/NB-03/2026-27/4494 Date: 24.06.2026
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Notice Inviting E-Bids
S. No. Item Name/Description Ref. No. UBN Estimated Value Rs. Last

INBRIEF



India's P-8I maritime patrol aircraft in Hawaii for RIMPAC

Indian Navy's P-8I maritime patrol aircraft is in Hawaii to participate in the Rim of the Pacific Exercise - the world's largest naval exercise hosted by the U.S. Pacific Fleet. "Indian Navy's participation reaffirms its commitment to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific by enhancing interoperability, Maritime Domain Awareness and cooperation with partner navies," the Indian Embassy in the U.S. said in a post on X. Thirty countries, thirty surface ships, five submarines, 15 national land forces, more than 206 aircraft and 30,000 personnel are participating in RIMPAC from June 24 to July 31. **PH**

Lt. Governor holds discussion on Great Nicobar project

Andaman and Nicobar Islands Lt. Governor Admiral D. K. Joshi (Retd) held a meeting with Chandra Prakash Goyal, chairperson of the high-level committee of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), to review the sustainable development of Great Nicobar Islands, an official said on Saturday. In the meeting, it was discussed that during the construction and operational phases of mega strategic and infrastructure projects, mitigation measures must be implemented to eliminate environmental damage, protection of wildlife and socio-cultural ecosystems in the Great Nicobar Islands. **PH**

IMD issues red alert for heavy rains in parts of West Bengal

A low-pressure system over the Bay of Bengal is likely to turn into a deep depression, bringing extremely heavy rainfall in the southern parts of West Bengal over the weekend, prompting the local administration to initiate round-the-clock monitoring measures. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a red warning for South 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur districts. It also issued an orange alert for Jhargram, Paschim Medinipur and Howrah, asking people to be prepared for severe weather, and warned that the situation could worsen on Sunday. Heavy rain has also been forecast for the remaining districts of South Bengal. **PH**

Venezuela thanks India for aiding earthquake survivors

Venezuela's Foreign Minister Ivan Gil visited the Indian field hospital in Caracas and thanked New Delhi for its earthquake relief work. The field hospital, set up by the Indian Army at the International La Rinconada Racetrack, provides comprehensive care to those affected by the devastating earthquakes that took place in Venezuela last month, which killed more than 1,700 people. Under the mission, two Indian Air Force C-17 Globemaster aircraft transported 66 tonnes of aid, including the Indian Army field hospital, over 35 tonnes of relief supplies, medicines and medical equipment, and two BHISHM Cubes. **PH**

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

India's semiconductor push will create countless jobs: PM

Modi inaugurates semiconductor facility in Gujarat's Sanand; he says such clusters will bring in economic transformation; he urges youth to tap new opportunities in era of Artificial Intelligence

Abhinav Deshpande
AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India is giving birth to semiconductor clusters across the country, and described the current phase as the beginning of large-scale employment and economic transformation.

He said the country is building the entire electronics value chain, from products and components to semiconductors, which will serve as the road map for Viksit Bharat.

He said semiconductor clusters were emerging not only in Sanand (Gujarat) but at multiple locations across India.

Mr. Modi, who inaugurated the CG Semi Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility in Sanand, also said India's youth would power the artificial intelligence, robotics and next-generation technology revolution with made-in-India chips.

He said the plant reflected the government's vision of 'Design in India' and 'Make in India' and noted that he had laid the foundation stone for the project in 2024, chip testing began



Future ready: Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the semiconductor facility in Sanand, Gujarat, on Saturday. VIJAY SONEJI

in August 2025, and commercial production had now commenced.

Appeal to youth

Mr. Modi said the coming era of artificial intelligence would open up new avenues for skills and expertise. "The youth of India should not lose this opportunity. I want to tell the youngsters of the country: 'Your ideas, my support,'" Mr. Modi said.

"It (semiconductor industry) is the next step in the electronics revolution that has taken place in India over the past decade," he added as he was handed the first semiconductor chips made at the company, to be exported to Ja-

pan. First, it was the IT revolution that created opportunities for lakhs of Indians to showcase their talent, he said. Then the smartphone and electronics manufacturing boom opened new avenues for employment and innovation. "Now, the world is entering the era of semiconductors and artificial intelligence revolution that will create opportunities for countless people."

Government's goal

The CG facility is part of the India Semiconductor Mission and will undertake the assembly, packaging and testing of semiconductor chips. Mr. Modi said the project was built in part-

nership with companies from Thailand and Japan, and described it as a model of technology, trust and collaboration that would strengthen India's semiconductor sector.

He also said that the government's goal is to build a complete semiconductor ecosystem in India, from chip design to fabrication and packaging. "I'm informed that this unit has the capacity to manufacture 20 crore chips annually and that the company aims to scale up production to more than 500 crore chips a year, which means 1.5 crore chips per day," he said.

He called the project a "success story" and a "revolution".

He said many women employees from the hinterlands of the country who completed their ITI training were now working at the plant. He said many of them had never visited Delhi or Mumbai and had never held a passport before travelling to Malaysia for training.

"They learnt advanced semiconductor manufacturing techniques there and are now part of India's chip manufacturing sector."

Gujarat police bring home missing teen from Karnataka

Abhinav Deshpande
AHMEDABAD

For a family in Gujarat's Vadodara, the past five months were filled with anxiety after their 14-year-old daughter went missing. Gujarat Police came to their aid, travelling nearly 1,200 kilometres to Karnataka to rescue the girl and reunite her with her family.

The girl went missing from the Chhani area of Vadodara on December 18. The case was initially investigated by the local police and was later transferred to the Vadodara Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU).

According to the police, investigators used technical surveillance and intelligence inputs to trace the accused, Sunilkumar Kesarishri Bariya in Shivamogga in Karnataka.

A five-member team from the Vadodara AHTU travelled to Karnataka and arrested Mr. Bariya from the temple premises with assistance from the local police after two days of observations.

During interrogation, he disclosed the girl's location, following which the police rescued the girl and reunited her with her family. As per the police, Mr.

The minor was rescued during Operation Milap to trace missing children and adults

Bariya assumed a new identity and began working as a priest at a Jain temple in Shivamogga and kept the girl at the temple after introducing her as his wife.

Month-long campaign

The rescue was carried out during the extended phase of Operation Milap, a State-wide campaign to trace missing children and adults.

Additional Director General of Police (Women Cell, CID Crime), Ajay Choudhary, said that Operation Milap was extended by 10 days after the completion of the month-long campaign. He said that Gujarat Police traced 500 missing children and adults including 288 women, 88 girls, 21 boys and 103 men during the extended phase.

Police said that during the first phase of Operation Milap, conducted between May 7 and June 5, they traced 1,478 missing persons, including 857 women and 234 minor girls.

Delhi conclave raises federalism concerns over 'One Nation, One Election' proposal

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A group of eminent citizens, comprising retired bureaucrats, judges, lawyers, professors, writers, civil society groups and leaders of various movements from all over the country, on Saturday rejected the proposed 'One Nation, One Election' initiative, saying it would fracture the federal compact of the country.

At a conclave on 'One Nation-One Election, Federalism and Citizenship' at the Constitution Club of India in New Delhi, participants said the proposal would also curtail the ability of State Assemblies to run their own affairs in the manner in which the Constitution has empowered them.

The speakers expressed concern over what they described as the degradation of the status of the Indian



Key issues: At the conclave on Saturday, the speakers also discussed the SIR, electoral processes, and caste census. ANI

Passport to "a mere travel document", saying it had triggered anxieties over the nature of citizenship. The burden of proving citizenship has been shifted onto citizens, they alleged.

Outcome of SIR

Speaking on the special revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, former Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa questioned the outcome of the exercise,

claiming that nearly 16 crore people have so far been disenfranchised.

"There is no data available in the public domain to show how many people were deleted (from electoral rolls) because they were ineligible. There is data to show that names were deleted because people migrated, but not because they were ineligible. Will this data be made public? The Supreme Court gave

four weeks to the EC to submit the names to the Foreigners Tribunals. How many people have been referred? How did the EC assess the health of electoral rolls in comparison to previous years? Let us understand the lessons learnt or improvements that the EC proposes. An Army colonel called to say his wife's name is missing from the draft list. There are so many people anxious about whether they will continue to vote," Mr. Lavasa said.

It was not just the constitutional right to voting, but the fundamental right was being compromised, according to former Supreme Court judges who addressed the meeting.

The participants also expressed concern over what they called the curtailment of citizens' rights and the lack of transparency and accountability in the electoral process. Demands to make public Form 17C,

CCTV camera footage, presiding officer diaries, and other electoral records have been resisted by the Election Commission (EC), they claimed.

Caste census

Former Union Home Secretary G.K. Pillai demanded wider public consultation on the caste census.

He said the 2027 Population Census would be one of India's most consequential demographic exercises. Beyond counting the population, it would shape delimitation, women's reservation, welfare allocation, and caste politics, he said.

While digitisation may improve efficiency and speed, the success of both the Census and the caste census would depend on transparency, public consultation, clear classification criteria, and careful implementation, Mr. Pillai said.

'Pro-separatist' book triggers protests, 8 suspended

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor administration on Saturday suspended eight officials of the School Education Department and blacklisted two authors and publishers after "pro-separatist" content in a book sparked protests from the BJP and other groups.

An official spokesperson said the book, *Personalities and Legends of J&K*, had content related to separatism, which has the potential to create law and order situations. The spokesperson said it was "negligence, dereliction of duty and lack of proper due diligence" by members of sub-committee and supervisory officers. The book was published under Samagra Shiksha for 18,328 government schools and 394 PM SHRI schools.

Assam releases booklet showcasing Bodoland forests' butterfly diversity

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The Assam Forest Department on Saturday released a special booklet on the butterflies found in the forest landscape of the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR).

Hagrama Mohilary, the Chief Executive Member of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC), released the booklet in Kokrajhar, about 220 kilometres west of Guwahati.

Spread across 3,653 sq. km., the Bodoland forest landscape comprises a mosaic of tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen, moist mixed-deciduous forests, and alluvial grasslands situated at the confluence of the Indo-Malayan and In-



Lime butterfly found in BTR of Northeast India. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

do-Gangetic biogeographic zones. The landscape supports 346 of Assam's 620 recorded butterfly species, including several rare, endemic and threatened taxa, making BTR one of the richest butterfly habitats in Northeast India.

According to Sonali Ghosh, the chief of the Forest Department for BTR, the region is the only ecological corridor in the

Northeast where butterfly species of the Eastern Himalayas, Indo-Malayan region, and the Indo-Gangetic plains occur together.

BTR's Ultapani-Manas landscape supports several rare and remarkable butterflies including the endemic yellow-crested spangle (*Papilio elephenor*) and Swinhoe's flat (*Celaenorhinus zeo*). Other notable Eastern Himalayan species recorded from the landscape include the great woodnymph (*Byasa dasara*), Moore's cupid (*Shizimolia moorei*), Mussoorie bush bob (*Pedesta masuriensis*), and green awlet (*Burara vasutana*).

Among the Ultapani-Manas landscape's Indo-Malayan butterflies is the witch (*Arates lapithis*).

This landscape also boasts the Indian cupid (*Everes lacturnus assamica*) and the white-line bushbrown (*Mycalesis malsara*), rarely found elsewhere in the Northeast.

Experts from the Northeast Butterfly Meet Network say the BTR represents not only an extraordinary centre of butterfly diversity but also a unique cultural landscape where butterflies have inspired traditional folklore and performing arts. The Bagumba, popularly known as the butterfly dance of the Bodo community, is believed to have been inspired by the colourful mud-puddling congregations witnessed across the forests during the monsoon.

Assam district orders deportation of man declared foreigner

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Less than a week after the Gauhati High Court found a declared foreigner's citizenship claim documents invalid, the authorities of northeastern Assam's Biswanath district have ordered the deportation of another. The July 2 order, issued by the District Magistrate, said Kayam Ansari has been asked to leave India under the provisions of the Immigrants (Expulsion from Assam) Act, 1950.

The order was based on a report submitted by the Superintendent of Police (Border), which said that Mr. Ansari, a resident of Kherbari village in the adjoining Sonitpur district,

"stands adjudged a foreigner of Bangladeshi nationality" by a Foreigners' Tribunal (FT) in a 2008 case.

According to the order, no court cases, writ proceedings, or other legal proceedings were pending against Mr. Ansari, lodged at the Matia Transit Camp for declared foreigners in western Assam's Goalpara district since his arrest on May 28, 2025.

Stating that there was no legal impediment to his deportation, the Biswanath district authorities directed Mr. Ansari to leave Assam and proceed to Bangladesh within 24 hours of receiving the order. The order warned of "forceful deportation in accordance with the law" if he failed.

Business

IN BRIEF



India-U.K. FTA: FinMin notifies rules for origin of goods

The Finance Ministry has notified the rules for the determination of origin of goods under the India-U.K. comprehensive economic and trade agreement, which will come into force on July 15, according to a notification. A certificate of origin is a key document required for exports to avail duty benefits under India's trade agreements with partner countries. It is essential to establish the origin of goods to ensure products from third countries do not wrongly avail themselves of the preferential tariff benefits under trade agreements between the two countries. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, in a notification, said entities authorised by the two nations are allowed to issue the certificates in their respective countries. **PH**

'Gross office leasing dips 1% in April-June amid supply curbs'

India's top-eight property markets saw a 1% dip in gross leasing of office spaces during April-June due to constrained supply of prime workspaces, according to Cushman & Wakefield. Net leasing of office spaces too declined 14.5% annually. While the gross number reflects the overall leasing activities in the market, the net leasing is the change in occupied workspaces. Real estate consultant Cushman & Wakefield on Saturday released its office market report for the eight major cities – Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, Ahmedabad, and Kolkata. During the latest April-June period, the net leasing of office spaces declined 14.5% annually to 11.6 million sq ft. **PH**

Laser Power & Infra's ₹742cr. IPO to open on July 9

Laser Power and Infra Ltd. (LPIIL), an integrated maker of power cables, conductors and specialised products for the power transmission and distribution industry, will unveil its ₹742 crore initial public offering (IPO) on July 9. The issue will close on July 13, as per a red herring prospectus. The IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares of ₹542 crore and an offer for sale of shares aggregating up to ₹200 crore by promoter selling shareholders, as per filings. Net proceeds via fresh issue will be used to repay or prepay borrowings amounting to ₹490 crore and for general corporate purposes. **PH**

Automakers, analysts emphasise E20 is safe, thoroughly tested

Saptaparno Ghosh
Lalendu Mishra
DELHI/MUMBAI



Experts say the blended fuel is completely safe for use.

Amid concerns on the impact of the petrol fuel blended with one-fifth ethanol on vehicles, automobile makers and experts sought to reassure vehicle owners stating there was no impact and the blending paradigm had followed thorough testing steps.

The press conference, addressed by experts and automakers, sought to allay persisting concerns on the blended fuel variant.

In fact, the same day responding to a viral social media clip indicating a high-end Toyota vehicle

being allegedly damaged due to the blended fuel, the automaker attributed it to fuel contamination and said it was not related to compatibility with E20.

It said as per its service

Union government increases onion procurement price by 13%

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Consumer Affairs Department has increased the procurement price of onions by 13% to ₹2,125 per quintal for the price stabilisation buffer, in a move aimed at boosting procurement and ensuring better prices for farmers.

The revised rate comes into effect on Saturday, a government release said.

The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) and the National Cooperative Consumers' Federation of India (NCCF) are procuring onions from various States.

Better farmer returns

"The revised price will ensure better returns for onion farmers while supporting buffer procurement efforts," the Government release said.

Pipavav: an Indian yard's unlikely bet on cutting-edge shipbuilding

SDHI's contracts are early signals of what may be possible: India's opening in shipbuilding could lie in positioning early for green shipbuilding, a segment set to gain momentum once decarbonisation rules take hold – leaving Indian yards ready when shipowners look for alternatives to China

M. Kalyanaraman
CHENNAI

For three decades, India's shipbuilding industry has largely been a defence industry driven by the government. Commercial newbuilds – tankers, bulkers, gas carriers and container ships that dominate global orderbooks – have gone mostly to China, Japan and South Korea.

There is much talk of change now: Tamil Nadu's new policy speaks of releasing Ulsan to Thoothukudi, Andhra Pradesh has identified a site for a shipyard of its own, and public-sector yards have been told to chase commercial orders alongside warships. Much of this remains on paper – MoUs and cluster plans still from steel being cut.

The shipyard at Pipavav, Gujarat, is one of the few places where that gap has narrowed.

Built for grand ambitions that collapsed once already, it is now mid-construction on ships no Indian shipbuilder has attempted, and only a handful have taken up anywhere in the world.

The yard's troubles are well documented. As Reliance Naval and Engineering, it went into insolvency proceedings before the National Company Law Tribunal in January 2020 and sat idle for four years. Swan Corp, a 117-year-old, family-run conglomerate that moved from textiles through real estate, oil and gas, and petrochemicals, won the bid and took possession in January 2024.

The group spent about ten months reviving the site, recommissioning machinery, renewing licences and certifications, rebuilding a workforce that had shrunk to around 350 people. Vivek Merchant, direc-



Setting sail: An aerial view of Swan Defence and Heavy Industries Ltd. shipyard. Vivek Merchant (right) SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tor of Swan Defence and Heavy Industries Limited (SDHI), calls it a generational business. Ship repairs came first, deliberately, with the Indian Coast Guard as first client – a defence customer whose presence, Mr. Merchant said, signalled the yard's systems were genuinely back in order. Only in May-June 2025, 16 months after the acquisition, did SDHI go to market for new construction, having chosen not to fund the revival of orderbook cash and wanting everything in place first.

Two contracts, 2 firsts

That patience produced two contracts marking a departure for Indian shipbuilding. The first, worth ₹227 million, is with Rederiet Stenersen AS, a family-owned Norwegian shipping company based in Bergen, for six firm and six optional chemical tankers of 18,000 DWT each, built to Ice Class I-A standards with LNG-ready hybrid propulsion.

The second, worth over ₹273 million, is India's first ammonia dual-fuel order: four bulk carriers of 92,500 DWT for Energy ONE Limited, a green-shipping investment fund.

Stenersen had built 14 ships in China before this order. John Stenersen, who runs the company with his brother and is himself a trained, sea-going marine engineer, visited India four or five times during negotiations, walking the yard in overalls and steel-toe boots. Mr. Merchant noted that Stenersen's ships often sail well beyond the industry's usual 20-to-25-year recycling threshold – a reputation that counts for as much as the contract itself.

The Energy ONE order arrived differently, with talks dating to 2024, before the Stenersen deal closed. Where an operator takes a hands-on interest in the build, a financial investor, Mr. Merchant said, is usually more inclined to make its money and move on.

Yet Energy ONE has appointed its own project managers who engage directly with the classification society, engine makers and designers – a reflection of the stakes riding on the novel ammonia engine, the industry's big bet for a decarbonised future. Mr. Merchant says he welcomes all hands on deck.

Ammonia as a marine fuel is still embryonic worldwide: fewer than 40

dual-fuel ammonia engines have been ordered globally, and only a handful of ammonia-fuelled ships delivered anywhere, all from East Asian yards. The licensors of these engines are WinGD and MAN Energy Solutions, based in Europe. To manage the risk, the yard is using customised designs, validated through an Approval in Principle from classification society DNV, since India's regulatory framework for ammonia propulsion is not yet fully defined.

Global designers

Design work is being handled by international designers experienced with the fuel, not Indian design houses, and the ships will carry an ammonia release mitigation and scrubbing system, double-walled piping, dedicated ventilation, and water curtains.

Pipavav had already built ice-class Panamax bulk carriers for Golden Ocean, the Fredriksen-controlled group, in its earlier avatar. Ice class demands variable steel thickness across the hull, reinforced steering gear and tighter welding tolerances; steel of the required grade is available in



India, but the constraint lies further up the value chain. Behind both contracts sits a tie-up SDHI signed with Samsung Heavy Industries last September – a "360-degree backstop," in Mr. Merchant's words, on design, project management, training and supply chain.

Make in India

A government subsidy scheme requires 40% indigenous content on subsidised orders – difficult, Mr. Merchant says, but not impossible. Steel, fasteners, pumps, valves and fit-out are achievable in India; engines, shafting and propellers will remain imports.

There is a manpower story too. SDHI's headcount, roughly 350 when Swan Corp took over, rose to about 1,200 during the restoration and has settled near 1,000, with talent now approaching the company from across the country, Mr. Merchant said. SDHI has also enrolled around 300 graduate and diploma engineers from local ITIs and polytechnics.

Underneath the technical detail sits a blunter admission: none of this would be commercially viable without State sup-

port. Asked whether government backing was decisive, Mr. Merchant did not equivocate – price competitiveness would not have been possible without it, he said, crediting the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways for levelling the field for Indian yards.

Steel-cutting on the first Stenersen tanker is due between January and March 2027, with first delivery in the last quarter of 2028 and each subsequent ship four months apart. SDHI is building them one at a time, deliberately, to keep capacity free for other orders.

Ammonia-engine ships

The ammonia-engine ships follow a similar sequence from late 2029 – assuming no repeat of the delays that have long marked Indian shipbuilding, which Mr. Merchant attributes, on the defence side, to design philosophies that evolve during construction rather than freezing before the steel is cut.

Green shoots

Chinese yards can undercut prices by 20-30%, backed by two decades of State support. India's countervailing package – a subsidy scheme, credit risk cover, infrastructure status, a Maritime Development Fund, and a policy linking recycling to shipbuilding credit – is recent, still being tested against pricing power China has built over 25 years.

SDHI's contracts are early signals of what may be possible: that India's opening in shipbuilding could lie in positioning early for green shipbuilding, a segment set to gain momentum once decarbonisation rules take hold – leaving Indian yards ready when shipowners look for an alternative to China.

US DoJ urges judge to drop Adani case

Press Trust of India
NEW YORK

The U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) has forcefully defended its decision to abandon the criminal case against Indian billionaire Gautam Adani and seven others, telling a federal judge the prosecution was legally flawed, diplomatically counterproductive and inconsistent with the Trump administration's enforcement priorities.

In a sharply worded 10-page filing, the DOJ said the case "should have been dropped a year ago – or never brought in the first place," arguing the court had only a limited role in reviewing decision to dis-

miss charges with prejudice. The filing came after U.S. District Judge Nicholas Garaufis asked the department to explain why it was seeking to permanently dismiss the indictment, calling its earlier motion "terse, bland and conclusory."

The DOJ, in 2024, under Biden administration indicted Adani, others for being "involved" in a scheme to bribe Indian government officials to the tune of \$250 million and lie to investors to receive billions more in investments from other entities – during the alleged scheme, Adani Green Energy Ltd. raised at least \$175 million from U.S. investors.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking, Sukramangalam Kollam 691585)
Phone: 0476-2651215 to 217, E-Mail: mdg@kmmil.com

TENDER NOTICE
For more details please visit E-Tendering Portal, <https://tenders.kerala.gov.in> or www.kmmil.com

Sl No	Tender Id	Items
1	2026_KMMIL_858666_1	Supply of 1800,00 MT of Sulphuric Acid

Chavara 04/07/2026 Sd/- Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd.

AUCTION SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE TAX RECOVERY OFFICER (CENTRAL, KOCHI)

Immovable properties situated at Ponithura Village (30.63 Cents) & Edappally North Village (6.076 Cents) in Ernakulam district attached by Income Tax Department will be sold in public auction through E-auction on MTC platform at 11:00 A.M. on 31st July 2026. Auction notices and terms and conditions can be viewed in www.mtrestdia.com. Scan QR code for direct access to link. Interested bidders may please register with www.mtrestdia.com by remitting one time registration (non-refundable) charges of Rs. 1000/- + GST. EMD is Rs. 1 lakh.

Contact:-
For Registration: Shri Santhosh Kumar (MSTC) (Mob:884600700)
For Details: Smt. Anitha Devi J, Tax Recovery Officer (Central)
(Mob:8547000116/8075130138)

Kalyan Singh Super Speciality Cancer Institute
(An Autonomous Institute of the Govt. of Uttar Pradesh)

G.G. City, Sultanpur Road, Lucknow-226002
Website: <https://cancerinstitute.edu.in> Email: jdmsssc@gmail.com

Subject: Comments or objections about proprietary basis procurement for F.Y. 2026-27-Reg.

The Institute is in the process of procuring following items through PAC bid on GeM Portal on Proprietary Basis:

1. Automated Detection Management System for Ventilated Patients
2. OT Table for Robotic Surgery
3. EV Workstation
4. Surgical Workstation &
5. Patient Mobilizer

The documents are being uploaded at KSSSCI website <https://cancerinstitute.edu.in> for open information and also to submit objections, comments if any, from relevant manufacturer/firm regarding proprietary nature of the equipment/information within 15 days from the date of publication of this advertisement. The comments should reach KSSSCI purchase Section at OPD Block, KSSSCI, offline or through email on jdmsssc@gmail.com on or before 20.07.2026 up to 04:00 pm failing which it will be presumed that any other manufacturer/firm is having no objections, comments or offer and case will be decided on.

Advt. No. KSSSCI/Tender-07/2026-27 Joint Director (MM)

SCIENCE

Scientists use budget tech to probe long-standing physics mystery

Vasudevan Mukunth

When a team at IIT-Delhi recently compared the members of a family of minerals called rutile oxides, they found a significant difference between metals and insulators that a well-known mathematical model could not explain. Understanding why is a necessary precursor to design next-generation electronics and efficient industrial catalysts.

While rutile oxides have

the same crystal structure, titanium dioxide is an insulator whereas ruthenium dioxide is a good conductor.

The study itself was driven by a long-standing debate over whether ruthenium dioxide possesses a rare, unconventional type of magnetism called altermagnetism. To settle this, the team looked closely at the interplay between the material's electrons and the lattice, i.e. the grid of its atoms.

Like photons carry light, phonons carry vibrations through a material. By studying how heat affects the phonons of the lattice, scientists can work backwards to see what the electrons are doing. If the electrons were interacting strongly with the phonons, it would leave a specific sign in the data.

The team used a technique called Raman scattering. They shone a laser at the materials and measured how the light

changed as it bounced off the vibrating atoms. They simultaneously cooled the samples from room temperature down to -262.15°C. "All measurements were performed using an indigenous developed low-temperature Raman scattering facility at IIT-Delhi, built at roughly one-third the cost of comparable commercial systems," IIT-Delhi assistant professor and study co-author Kaushik Sen said.

As they cool, the lattice

of most materials becomes stiffer and the vibrations speed up. In insulators, this stiffening follows a well-known mathematical rule called the Klemens model. However, the researchers found that the lattice of the metallic rutile oxides stiffened more and the Klemens model couldn't explain why.

"While the Klemens model has been successfully used for decades, we show that it has important limitations when applied to

metals," Dr. Sen said.

The findings were published in *Physical Review B*.

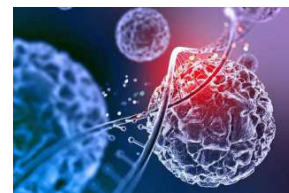
While atoms in an insulator vibrate based only on the chemical bonds' stiffness, atoms in a metal are surrounded by a sea of electrons that pull on them. The team found that as the metals cooled, the electrons reorganised into different energy states, changing the tension between the atoms and thus how the lattice vibrated.

SNAPSHOTS



Planet shows star's death does not have to doom its worlds

Using the Webb telescope, scientists have discovered an atmosphere around WD 1856 b, a Jupiter-sized planet orbiting a white dwarf – the first time an atmosphere has been found on a world orbiting a dead star. The atmosphere has hydrocarbons and clouds of aerosols. The planet was also hotter than expected, possibly due to tidal heating as the planet drifted in. The findings show planets can have a 'life' of their own even after their stars die.



CAR T-cell therapy 'sees' solid tumours thanks to protein

Researchers have developed a promising new CAR T-cell therapy for rare solid tumours, including alveolar soft-part sarcoma (ASPS) and certain kidney cancers. They found a protein, GPNMB, to be consistently expressed on these tumour cells and created a treatment called to target it. One patient with advanced ASPS saw their disease stabilise for three months while several smaller tumors disappeared, and the therapy was well-tolerated. Combining it with immune checkpoint blockers may also surmount treatment resistance.



Dogs in crowded shelters turn physically and mentally ill

A Thai study found how dogs' living conditions affect their physical and mental health. Researchers compared three shelters with different levels of space and enrichment such as toys and human interaction. Dogs in the facility that provided the most space and regular enrichment had the lowest stress hormone levels, normal metabolic profiles, and a healthy balance of gut bacteria. Dogs in the most crowded shelter had metabolic imbalance and less diverse gut bacteria.

On the cusp of big upgrade, CERN collider faces hard question

As the Large Hadron Collider switches off its beams for a four-year overhaul costing \$1.5 billion, the question is no longer what it has found but whether something even bigger is worth building

Jacob Koshy
GENEVA

The heatwave sapping Europe this June did not spare CERN – the European Organisation for Nuclear Research – whose dull grey buildings give little hint of the underground that sets the lab apart from any other hive of colossal engineering on earth. Here, in tunnels beneath the Franco-Swiss border, physicists drive protons – among the particles at the heart of every atom – to a sliver below the speed of light and smash them together, reading the debris for clues to how the universe is built. The machine that does this is called the Large Hadron Collider (LHC).

At the 'A Large Ion Collider Experiment' (ALICE) detector, one of four that make sense of those collisions, scientists sit glued to monitors, watching the multicoloured swarms of particles each collision leaves behind. Somewhere in that mess, they hope, is a sign of new matter, a clue to why matter alone survives or something else that has eluded the physicists probing the first fractions of a second after the Big Bang.

This July, the control centre will go quiet as the LHC's beams are turned off ahead of its third 'Long Shutdown'. In the next four years and at an expense of roughly \$1.5 bil-

The Lord of the Rings

CERN's flagship machine runs to around 2041; a successor must be conceived now or not at all



A view of the LHC tunnel. MAXIMILIAN BRUCE/CERN

- The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is pausing for four years for a \$1.5-billion upgrade that will turn it into its 'High Luminosity' version
- Physicists are hoping the higher collision rate post-upgrade will reveal what dark matter is and other elusive physical signals
- Physicists are searching for new phenomena because the Standard Model can't explain dark matter's existence, and other anomalies
- Recent experiments at the LHC investigated the fundamental imbalance between matter and antimatter within our vast universe
- CERN has also endorsed a new 91-kilometer-long collider to explore the universe's greatest mysteries after the LHC's time
- Despite the high costs and scepticism among some physicists, international collaboration remains vital to push the boundaries of particle physics

lion, the LHC will be upgraded to its 'High-Luminosity' version.

The classic image of the LHC is its 27-km ring a hundred metres underground. Inside, protons are energised step by step to 6.8 teraelectronvolts (TeV) per beam. One TeV is about the energy of a flying mosquito. Trivial as that sounds, the LHC crams that whole mosquito's worth into a speck a trillion times smaller, packing the energy so densely that a single collision briefly recreates the furnace of the newborn universe.

If the upgrade goes to plan, the proton beams will zip around at the same TeV but collide five times more often. This is literally more bang for buck as it translates to greater odds

of sighting exotic particles.

Since its first collisions in 2009, the LHC's high point remains the discovery of the Higgs boson in 2012 – the particle tied to a field that gives elementary particles their mass.

"We were very lucky with the Higgs boson, that within the first few years of operation we found it," Archana Sharma, a CERN physicist and among the first Indians the laboratory employed, told The Hindu. "Now, perhaps dark matter is around the corner, and we need more data, and this is exactly why we are upgrading the LHC."

The LHC has only confirmed what the Standard Model theory has already predicted. Ordinary matter is built from quarks – the elementary grains that

bunch in twos and threes inside the protons and neutrons of every atom – held together by the strong force. The LHC has verified this architecture in fine detail. It has also verified the existence of about 80 new hadrons, the composite particles quarks form. Its heavy-ion collisions have briefly created the quark-gluon plasma, the searing soup of unbound particles that filled the universe in its first microseconds. It has drawn ever-tighter limits on where undiscovered particles cannot be hiding, probed why matter so narrowly outlasted its mirror-twin antimatter, and measured numbers that feed astrophysics.

The upgrades and future plans for an even bigger collider are in the hope

of discovering signs of dark energy, dark matter, and a theory that can accommodate the Standard Model as well as what it can't explain. These signs have stubbornly failed to appear so far.

The LHC runs to about 2041; a successor must be conceived now or not at all. In May 2026, the CERN Council endorsed the Future Circular Collider (FCC) as a 91-km-long tunnel. A build-or-abandon decision is due around 2028. The current cost estimate is nearly \$19 billion. A 100-TeV proton machine might follow later, perhaps in the 2070s.

Not all are convinced. In its first phase, the FCC will smash particles at lower energies than the LHC does today, because it will be built for precision, not raw power. But the physicist Sabine Hossenfelder has long argued that such a machine would mostly pin down quantities already known, just to a few more decimal places.

Whether that ambition survives an age of war and frayed exchequers is the harder question. At CERN, Dr. Sharma noted, "for every penny there is a huge discussion", then consensus. India has worked at CERN since the 1960s; her wish is that its industry join at the design stage rather than miss the boat.

(The author was at CERN as part of a media visit organised by the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs)

Can caged frontier AI models outrun open ones?



John Xavier

Anthropic made its most advanced AI model, Fable, generally available earlier in June, sparking a cautionary tale for American AI companies.

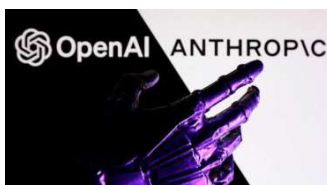
Three days after launch, the company suspended access for its paid users over concerns that hackers had circumvented the model's built-in guardrails. Last Friday, a select group of American companies regained access after receiving U.S. government clearance. Then, on June 30, Anthropic said it would re-open Fable – a trimmed version of its flagship language model, Mythos – to a limited group of users. Pro and Max subscribers will have to wait another week, and even then, they'll get a version with reduced capabilities. Its rival, OpenAI, avoided a similar disruption with GPT-5.6 by restricting access from the

outset, releasing the model only to a government-vetted list of users.

For most of the past two years, Washington's approach to artificial intelligence has been simple: let the labs run. That changed on June 12, when the Commerce Department classified Anthropic's newest models as dual-use cyber tools and ordered every foreign national, including Anthropic's own foreign-born employees in San Francisco, to lose access. With no quick way to verify citizenship, Anthropic effectively shut the models off for everyone.

The administration has said the restrictions followed the discovery of a guardrail bypass identified by Amazon security researchers. But that explanation landed alongside reports that a China-linked operation had been quietly extracting capabilities from Anthropic's systems.

That wasn't the company's only headache. Anthropic also told the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee



Between Mythos and Fable, America's frontier AI strategy seems caught between openness and control. REUTERS

that accounts linked to Alibaba's Qwen generated nearly 29 million exchanges through roughly 25,000 fake accounts over six weeks, in what it described as the largest known attempt to distort its models into a cheaper rival.

At the same time, the Pentagon had separately blacklisted Anthropic as a supply-chain risk after the company declined to make its tools available for mass surveillance and autonomous weapons. The result was a strange contradiction: a company judged too risky for parts of its own government to use, while si-

multaneously being deemed too dangerous to leave broadly accessible.

Less than two years ago, DeepSeek demonstrated that it could approach American AI frontier performance on a fraction of the budget. This time, a Washington day after Washington pulled the plug on Anthropic's flagship models, Beijing-based Z.ai released an open-weight model that scored within a point of Anthropic's best on a closely watched coding benchmark while reportedly costing around a fifth as much to run – and doing so on Chinese-made chips.

Z.ai's co-founder didn't bother hiding the comparison, calling the American suspension "regrettable" and arguing that frontier intelligence shouldn't disappear because of a government letter.

China is not the only contender this time. In Japan, Sakana AI launched its own frontier model, marketing it as delivering cutting-edge capability without the risk of export controls. A Chinese cybersecurity firm released a competing cyber-focused model the very same week.

Once a frontier model has been trained and its weights released – as several of China's strongest models now have been under permissive open licenses – no government order can pull them back off the internet. Export controls work because hardware is scarce. But software is not.

The immediate consequence of the present export restrictions has not stopped Chinese firms from competing. Instead, companies and govern-

ments elsewhere are beginning to ask whether dependence on American frontier models is itself becoming a strategic risk.

Japan's Sakana AI has already made export-control resilience part of its sales pitch.

European policymakers are reportedly weighing new AI sovereignty investments as businesses cannot build using technology that might disappear overnight.

American AI companies are heading to public markets on the promise that the world's most capable models will continue to come from the U.S. That promise becomes harder to sustain once "best" comes with a "conditions apply" label.

Between Mythos and Fable, America's frontier AI strategy increasingly seems caught between openness and control. The question is whether that balance slows competitors or simply encourages the rest of the world to build something it cannot lose access to.



Question Corner

A fine balance

Do phone batteries last longer when it's cooler outside?

You might think so – but the answer is not always. Smartphones use lithium-ion batteries. This battery works by moving lithium ions back and forth between two electrodes through a liquid electrolyte. In colder weather, like in North India during the winter, the electrolyte becomes less conductive and the lithium ions move more sluggishly. The battery's internal resistance also increases. As a result, the voltage can drop faster if you use the phone heavily. Your phone might interpret this drop

as low battery and trigger power-saving measures even when the battery has more charge. In hot weather, the battery chemistry becomes more active and can deliver power easily. But heat also speeds up unwanted chemical reactions, which over time permanently reduce the battery's capacity and shorten its lifespan. If the battery gets too hot due to fast charging, gaming, direct sunlight, and/or a bad phone cover, the phone may stop charging as a safety measure.

Readers may send their questions/answers to science@thehindu.co.in

FAQ

What are ICC's 'Return to Play' Post-Pregnancy' guidelines?

Why was this policy necessary? What does it entail?

Abhinava K.

The story so far:

On June 22, 2026, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced a framework to assist women players who are returning to the sport after pregnancy and childbirth. The Return to Play Post-Pregnancy Guidelines can be used by the boards of member countries of the ICC to design their own policies in line with local laws for the welfare of the cricketers. "Motherhood and elite cricket should not be seen as mutually exclusive," said a spokesperson for the ICC via a press release.

What does the policy say?

The guidelines, drafted by a team led by ICC Medical Advisory Committee member and Australia Team Doctor Dr. Philippa Inge focuses on "practical, physical and psychological considerations" to support return to play. It calls for the appointment of a case manager (usually a doctor or a physiotherapist), who will serve as the primary point of contact.

Centered on the welfare of the mother and child, the policy urges flexible and focussed communication. While recommending exercise during pregnancy, it also highlights the lack of evidence on designing programmes for elite athletes. The board recommends that players stop competing at the end of their first trimester.

For return to play, the guidelines outline the 6

Rs framework:
Ready (0-6 weeks), Review (6-8 weeks), Restore (8-16 weeks), Recondition (12-16+ weeks), Return, and Refine, which includes

addressing social barriers such as childcare, and the mental well-being of the player.

Practical assistance, such as access to childcare facilities (including spaces to change or rest the baby), breastfeeding areas, travel support, and opportunities for alternative employment, is also addressed in the guidelines.

Which countries have maternity policies?

Among the cricket-playing countries, Australia has a comprehensive parental policy which includes paid leave, benefits, support till the child is four years old, and contract extension guarantees. Other countries, including New Zealand, South Africa, England, Pakistan, and the West Indies, also have maternity or parental policies, though the level of support varies. India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh do not have dedicated board-level maternity policies for women cricketers. In Taliban-led Afghanistan, women are barred from playing cricket.

Have mothers played at the international level?

Players including Bismah Maroof (Pakistan), Afi Fletcher (West Indies), Amy Satterthwaite (New Zealand), Megan Schutt (Australia), and Masabata Klaas (South Africa) are mothers who have competed on the global stage. The 2022 Women's ODI World Cup saw the participation of eight mothers; a few even captained their side. In India, while there are no mothers on the national side, Sneha Deepthi played at the domestic level and the Women's Premier League after giving birth.

Why is such a policy necessary?

During the 2022 World Cup, a video of Indian players interacting with Pakistan captain Bismah Maroof and her daughter after a game went viral. Such scenes are uncommon as women players have historically been forced to choose between their careers and starting a family.

The 'motherhood penalty' – the economic disadvantages women face in the workplace as a result of becoming mothers – plagues women across sectors, including sports. In sport, players face the additional burden of making a physical comeback after pregnancy. Balancing motherhood and professional sports is an uphill battle for women, with many of them being forced into early retirement. Limited research on reproductive health in athletes also restricts insights into how such factors interact with performance outcomes.

These situations persist due to lack of systemic support, protections, and failure to take into account the practical realities of parenthood for players. A strong and robust maternity policy will not only support players, but will also help retain a talented pool of cricketers, which will benefit the sport.

Speaking about the guidelines, ICC Chairman Jay Shah said, "No player should have to choose between motherhood and representing her country at the highest level."

Cricket is growing increasingly global and is set to return to the Summer Olympics in the 2028 edition. Fixed policies are needed to help players make informed and secure choices about their futures. The release of the guidelines is a step in the right direction and shows ICC's "commitment to building a game where women can thrive, both on and off the field."

What did SCOTUS rule on birthright citizenship?

Why and how did U.S. President Donald Trump seek to limit birthright citizenship and what did the Supreme Court rule? Has this always been a political issue in the U.S.? What is the link between birthright citizenship and slavery? How has the judgment affected MAGA supporters?

Varghese K. George

The story so far:

On June 30, 2026, the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) upheld birthright citizenship provided under the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The SCOTUS struck down President Donald Trump's Executive Order (EO) 14160, which sought to end unconditional birthright citizenship that the U.S. grants. With the 6-3 judgment, anyone who is born on U.S. soil becomes a citizen, regardless of the status of their parents. Exceptions include children of foreign diplomats and invading militaries.

What did Trump's executive order say?

Mr. Trump's EO directed federal agencies to stop issuing citizenship-renewing documents – social security numbers and passports – to children born after February 19, 2025 (i) to mothers unlawfully present when the father was not a citizen or lawful permanent resident, or (ii) to mothers lawfully but temporarily present (students, tourists, guest workers) when the father was not a citizen or permanent resident.

What provisions of the U.S. legal system allow and protect birthright citizenship?

The 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified in 1868, says "all persons born or naturalised in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 1952, is the foundational body of U.S. citizenship and immigration law, which draws from the above constitutional provision with regard to birthright citizenship. The INA declares that a person born in the U.S. and

The majority judgment took the position that the framers deliberately chose sweeping, universal language so the promise wouldn't be limited to one group or vulnerable to a future court narrowing it

subject to its jurisdiction is a citizen "at birth." Among the questions that SCOTUS examined was whether birthright citizenship is only a statutory guarantee or both statutory and constitutional. One of the judges who struck down the EO – Justice Brett Kavanaugh – limited it as a statutory question.

How and when did birthright citizenship become a political issue in the U.S.?

It was Mr. Trump's 2016 presidential campaign that put the spotlight on birthright citizenship as a question of population management. This was in the broader context of the anti-immigration politics, a central concern of the politics of the 'Make American Great Again' (MAGA) movement. In fact, when the Court heard the oral arguments in the case on April 1, 2026, Mr. Trump was personally present. This showed how critical this was to his politics of influencing the population composition of the country.

But before it was adapted by Mr. Trump, birthright citizenship was more a concern of Democrats, who are traditionally more anti-immigrant than Republicans. Democratic Senator Harry Reid's 1993 Immigration Stabilization Act proposed a narrower reading of the 14th Amendment. The argument against birthright citizenship is based on the assumption that a large number of non-citizens – both authorised residents (such as visa holders) and unauthorised residents (including illegal immigrants) – were having children who would automatically become citizens at birth.

What do numbers suggest about children born to non-citizens in the U.S.?

It has been estimated that births to unauthorised immigrant mothers rose from roughly 1.2 lakh in 1990 (about 3% of all U.S. births) to a peak of approximately 3.7 lakh-3.9 lakh in 2006-2007 (roughly 9% of all U.S. births.) This growth mirrored the tripling of the unauthorised immigrant population between 1990 and 2007.

After the 2008 financial crisis, the trend reversed. By 2016, births to unauthorised immigrant mothers had fallen about 36% from the 2007 peak, to roughly 2.5 lakh (about 6% of that year's U.S. births in total).

Pew Research Center's most recent analysis found that births to unauthorised or temporary-status immigrant mothers grew rapidly again between 2019 and 2023, reaching an estimated 9% of all U.S. births in 2023.

What is the argument against birthright citizenship?

Apart from its place within the broader anti-immigration politics of the MAGA movement, opposition to birthright citizenship is also rooted in allegations of its misuse. An

entire industry of 'birth tourism' facilitates expectant foreigners to give birth in the U.S. Opponents also say the 14th Amendment provision was meant to address the citizenship status of freed slaves; it cannot apply universally and unconditionally in the changed circumstances. The SCOTUS held that the text of the Constitution is clear, and changes in circumstances can't justify new meanings to it.

What is the link between slavery and birthright citizenship in the U.S.?

The evolution of the U.S. citizenship regime is closely linked to slavery and racism in the country. In the original Constitution of the U.S., there was no definition of the word citizen; instead, citizenship was guided by multiple factors. In practice, citizenship depended on the laws of individual States governing civil and political rights, including voting and property ownership. The Federal Naturalisation Act, 1790, made it clear that only "free white persons" can be eligible. The result was varied practices across the U.S.: in northern States, free Black residents had some rights including voting rights, but in southern States, citizenship was denied to them.

This changed in 1857, when the Supreme Court held that no Black person can ever be a citizen of the U.S.; and that the political community established by the Constitution did not include them at all. This followed a plea by an enslaved Black man, Dred Scott, for freedom. In 1865, the 13th Amendment abolished slavery, but the 1857 judgment stood as law, making the citizenship status of freed slaves ambiguous.

In 1866, the Civil Rights Act was passed by Congress, legislating that any person born in the country is a citizen. President Andrew Johnson vetoed it, and Congress overturned the veto. To pre-empt a future Congress or a future President from overturning it, the principle of birthright citizenship was written into the Constitution in 1868, as part of the 14th Amendment.

How did that link play in the current case?

The Trump administration argued that birthright citizenship was a remedy for the specific situation of former slaves, and the provision must be read with that narrow view.

The majority judgment took the position that the framers deliberately chose sweeping, universal language so the promise wouldn't be limited to one group or vulnerable to a future court narrowing it the way the judgment in *Dred Scott* had narrowed citizenship before.

What can we expect next?

The Trump administration has said it will pursue a legislative path to end birthright citizenship, but the move will not have enough support for a constitutional amendment in the U.S. Congress. The administration argues that an ordinary statute can achieve the objective but that is contested. For now, birthright citizenship will continue, but so will the political slugfest over it.



Activists celebrate the U.S. Supreme Court's birthright citizenship ruling, on Capitol Hill, in Washington, DC. AP

Why are there concerns over WhatsApp usernames?

What is the username feature that WhatsApp intends to roll out? How does it work and what privacy safeguards are built into it? Why is the Indian government asking WhatsApp to stop its roll-out? Can the government dictate an app's features?

Aroon Deep

The story so far:

On July 1, 2026, the Union government sent a notice to Meta asking it to stop the rollout of WhatsApp's username feature, for which the Meta-owned messaging platform is currently taking reservations. In a notice to the social media platform, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) wrote that hiding phone numbers and only showing usernames may increase the incidence of online fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams and impersonation attacks.

What is the WhatsApp username feature?

WhatsApp advertises usernames as a way to chat without sharing phone numbers. Instead of a mobile number, new contacts will only see your chosen username. This is an optional feature.

There is no search directory of usernames within WhatsApp. To contact someone, you need to know the person's exact username. For those who are concerned that someone could guess their username, WhatsApp has said they would be able to set a personal identification

If you receive a message from a user who has hidden their phone number, Meta says WhatsApp will display the sender's country of origin and indicate whether they are already saved in your phonebook

number (PIN). In that case, even someone who knows your username will not be able to contact you if they don't know your PIN.

The feature is yet to be rolled out. Meta has said it will be made widely available over the next few months with multiple safeguards in place.

Why is the government concerned about the feature?

MeitY said in its notice, a copy of which was reviewed by *The Hindu*, that the feature could "facilitate impersonation and identity spoofing, including impersonation of individuals, public authorities, financial institutions, and government agencies, by permitting the adoption of usernames closely resembling those of genuine persons or institutions".

Echoing MeitY's concerns, some public personalities have said that variations of their names have already been reserved by users. In a post on X, Mubikwik founder Bipin Preet Singh said this had happened to him. He wrote: "Not a good idea at all. Will lead to proliferation of fraud and impersonation."

MeitY also said in its notice that the feature may materially increase the incidence of online fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams, and impersonation attacks, "by enabling bad actors to solicit and message victims."

Shortly thereafter, it sent similar notices to Telegram, Signal, and Arattai, which have had username features that allow phone number concealment for quite some time already.

What is WhatsApp's response to these concerns?

A WhatsApp spokesperson said that Meta had already "reserved" usernames of prominent personalities to prevent those handles from being claimed by imposters. As per its statement, prominent personalities include public figures, government entities, celebrities, and verified Meta accounts.

If you receive a message from a user who has hidden their phone number, Meta says WhatsApp will display the sender's country of

origin and indicate whether they are already saved in your phonebook.

WhatsApp officials met MeitY officials on July 3 to present these views. A written response to the government's notice was due on July 4.

Users can choose to avoid responding to strangers, a spokesperson said on July 1.

Can the government dictate an app's features?

It is unclear whether a feature on a privately owned and operated app such as WhatsApp can be vetoed by the government. "The notice treats the launch of a lawful feature as a wrong the company must justify," said the Delhi-based digital rights advocacy group, Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF), in a statement.

In its notice, the government said that WhatsApp is an "intermediary" and a "significant social media intermediary" within the meaning of Section 20(w) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, read with Rules 20(v) and 20(w) of the Information Technology Rules, 2021. A significant social media intermediary is defined as a platform that has more than 50 lakh registered users in India; WhatsApp has an estimated user base of over 80 crore. The government said the platform is therefore squarely subject to the due-diligence and other obligations set out under the rules.

The notice also cited Sections 66C (identity theft), 66D (cheating by impersonation) and 79 (intermediary liability/safe harbour) of the Information Technology Act, 2000.

The IFF said that those rules do not permit such a notice. "MeitY does not name any provision that lets it approve a product feature before release or order one withdrawn, because there is none, and the provisions it does cite do not supply that power," the group said. "Section 79 of the IT Act, 2000 is a safe harbour that protects an intermediary from liability for what its users post, so long as it observes due diligence. It decides when a platform can be held liable. It is not a power for MeitY to decide what features the platform may offer."

WhatsApp is possibly the largest digital platform in the country and the government has scrutinised its operations in the past. For instance, when the app went down globally in October 2022, IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the government had asked the company to share the reasons for the outage.



The upcoming username feature on WhatsApp displayed on a smartphone against the backdrop of the Indian flag. AFP

PROFILES

A symbol of resistance

Aung San Suu Kyi

The junta, which has made some territorial gains in the civil war and held a farcical election to legitimise its coup, seeks international recognition, but it lacks what the NLD leader, now under house arrest, has always symbolised — popular support

Srinivasan Ramani

When Thailand's Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow met Myanmar's newly designated President Min Aung Hlaing in April 2026, he was told that the regime in Naypyitaw was "considering good things" for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. This was the same general who, as chief of the dreaded junta, had deposed the country's civilian government yet again in 2021, plunging Myanmar into a protracted civil war before refashioning himself into a "civilian" leader.

Ms. Suu Kyi — the former State Counsellor and the symbolic head of the pro-democracy movement — had meanwhile been jailed in a high-security prison in the capital, Naypyitaw, after a sentence of close to three decades was handed to her in a farcical trial that followed the coup. The junta sought to legitimise its rule through a stage-managed election, which was held with a low-turnout vote, largely in areas the military controlled, and handed victory to its proxy Union Solidarity and Development Party. After the "victory", it reduced Suu Kyi's sentence several times. Yet when ASEAN asked for access to her, it refused outright.

The 81-year-old is understood to have been moved to "house arrest" somewhere within Naypyitaw, though very few even among the junta know her whereabouts. This led to a "proof of life" campaign online demanding details of her detention. Ms. Suu Kyi's limbo is symbolic of the state of the pro-democracy movement, which still regards her as its icon, even in an ethnically fractured country that has been at war with itself since the coup.

Ms. Suu Kyi, President Win Myint, released only recently, and other leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD) were arrested in 2021, months after the party's landslide victory in the 2020 elections. But the movement did not collapse with them. Ousted parliamentarians and party figures regrouped to form a government in exile, the National Unity Government (NUG), which took

up armed resistance against the junta by raising People's Defence Forces in the Bamar-majority heartland and fighting alongside ethnic armed organisations that had renewed their own wars against the military.

Today, more than five years on, the civil war has claimed more than a lakh lives. While the junta has regained the initiative after heavy setbacks, the resistance remains formidable.

Hard-won authority

Ms. Suu Kyi's authority as the symbol of the pro-democracy movement was hard-won, even if it was later tarnished by the stances she took as State Counsellor. The daughter of the independence hero Aung San, assassinated when she was two, she was educated in New Delhi and later at Oxford. She married a British academic and raised two sons abroad before returning in 1988 to a Burma going through a revolt against military rule. She soon led that uprising in a role that would cost her nearly 15 years of house arrest across two decades, and make her an international cause célèbre. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 while confined. Her release in 2010 came only after the dictator Than Shwe staged a controlled election and began cautiously opening the country to Western investment and legitimacy. The NLD swept by-elections in 2012 and then won a genuine landslide in 2015.

The military, forever wary of her clout and her intent to widen the democratic space, had sought to keep her from the presidency through a clause in the 2008 constitution barring anyone with foreign-national children. But she outwitted the generals by getting the NLD to use its parliamentary majority to legislate a new office, the State Counsellor, placed above the president and serving as effective chief executive.

Working pragmatically within a parliament where the military still held a quarter of the seats, Ms. Suu Kyi contained the generals politically but her accommodation of them carried a heavy cost. When the military, then commanded by Min Aung Hlaing, led a genocidal campaign against the Rohingyas in Rakhine State in 2017,



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

leading to an exodus of more than 700,000 and killing thousands, she did not condemn it. In 2019, she personally defended Myanmar against the genocide charge before the International Court of Justice.

This pragmatic accommodation did not benefit her. The junta did not want to share power and wanted all of it. As the veteran analyst Bertil Lintner argues, the military had expected the NLD to lose in 2020, convinced that it had shed support in the cities and ethnic-minority areas. It was proven spectacularly wrong and refused to accept the result when the NLD won another landslide. It manufactured claims of mass fraud and orchestrated

violent protests through its proxy USDP, using the "crisis" as a pretext to seize power in the coup.

After losing vast territory during the civil war in 2023 and 2024, the junta has now turned the tide, clawing back some of what it lost. Propitious circumstances made that possible — China's changed stance in particular. Having earlier indirectly enabled the gains of ethnic armies in the north, Beijing swung behind the regime once prolonged war began to threaten its border stability and economic corridor. It pressured the Ta'ang National Liberation Army and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army — two members of the

Three Brotherhood Alliance, the third being the Arakan Army — to accept ceasefires and pull back from crucial towns they held in Shan State and neighbouring areas.

With pressure easing in the north, and a forced-conscription law bringing new recruits, the junta could redirect its forces to other fronts, against the People's Defence Forces and ethnic armies such as the Kachin Independence Organisation and the Karenni forces.

Seeking legitimacy

It is now trying to regain international legitimacy through the civilian-government route. On taking the presidency, Min Aung Hlaing installed loyalists in the high command, elevating former intelligence chief Ye Win Oo to commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Among his first visits as President was one to New Delhi, where he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi. India, wary of Beijing's outsized sway over Naypyitaw and eager to revive its stalled connectivity projects and secure access to rare earths, has sought re-engagement with the regime. ASEAN nations, too, are slowly doing the same.

Does this mean Myanmar's pro-democracy and pro-federal forces are facing defeat? Some developments suggest the military will not have it easy. The NUG and other Bamar democratic forces have joined with key ethnic organisations to form a Steering Council for the Emergence of a Federal Democratic Union (SCEF), which many observers term an improvement over the National Unity Consultative Council formed after the coup. It may be a key step to centralise the resistance against military rule and its proxies. Led by a battle-hardened younger generation of activists still inspired by Ms. Suu Kyi's example, the initiative may still depend on fissures within the junta, and on the indulgence of a perennially frayed and somewhat insular ethnic resistance, for a genuine breakthrough. But it has something the junta lacks, and that Ms. Suu Kyi has always symbolised: the popular support of the long-suffering people of Myanmar.

THE GIST

Suu Kyi, 81, is understood to have been moved to "house arrest" somewhere within Naypyitaw, though very few even among the junta know her whereabouts

This led to a "proof of life" campaign online demanding details of her detention

Suu Kyi's limbo is symbolic of the state of the pro-democracy movement, which still regards her as its icon, even in an ethnically fractured country that has been at war with itself since the coup

King of the North

Andy Burnham

The Labour leader, likely to succeed Keir Starmer as U.K. Prime Minister, has to steady the party and government while confronting the challenge from Reform UK

Joan Sony Cherian

On June 22, Keir Starmer stepped down as the U.K.'s Prime Minister via a tearful speech in front of 10 Downing Street, just two years into his term. Elected with a landslide in 2024, he leaves office with abysmally low poll rates, having lost the confidence of both the public and his own party.

On the same day, Andy Burnham, the former Mayor of Greater Manchester, was sworn in as the new MP of Macclesfield, a seat which he won on June 18 via a highly contested by-election. By taking his oath in Parliament, he is now being seen as the most likely successor to Mr. Starmer.

If elected by Labour to lead, Mr. Burnham will be the U.K.'s seventh Prime Minister in 10 years. He will also be the U.K.'s first life-long Catholic PM.

Mr. Burnham has had a long history with Westminster. Starting out as a researcher to an MP when Tony Blair first came to power in 1997, he climbed through the ranks and got elected as MP for the first time from his home town of Leigh in Greater Manchester in 2001. He served as a Junior Health Minister under Mr. Blair in his second Prime Ministership, and was later, under Prime



ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR

Minister Gordon Brown, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and subsequently Health Secretary.

Mr. Burnham had previously run for Labour Party leadership twice, once in 2010 and later in 2015. Following the rejections over his bid for leadership, in 2017, Mr. Burnham made a curious shift in his political journey — he decided to run for the post of Mayor of Greater Manchester, which lies towards the north of the country. Politics in the U.K. has always been very London-centric, with the general logic being that one had to stay in Westminster for any sort of career progression.

Mr. Burnham went against this logic, stating that governments were too focused on London and did not give any attention to northern regions.

As Mayor, Mr. Burnham brought in various changes in the Greater Manchester region, which is now one of the fastest-growing city

regions in the U.K. He stands out for two of his main achievements — one was the decentralisation of bus services, where he brought public transport back under the local government, and the second was his fight against Westminster for the lack of support for the region during the COVID-19 pandemic.

His constant defence of the northern province and negotiations for higher financial support during the pandemic earned him the moniker "King of the North" after a character from the popular TV show, *Game of Thrones*.

Policy stances

Mr. Burnham's stance on major policies has been pragmatic and one which changes with time, or as his critics call it, one which wavers and is dependent on who is in power. While during the Brexit referendum, he, along with major Labour party leaders, campaigned to remain in the EU, post Brexit, he has of

ten played down his pro-European sentiment.

He had also voted for the 2003 Iraq invasion, which he later said in 2013 was the "worst foreign policy mistake in my lifetime." Regarding the recent wars in West Asia, Mr. Burnham was one of the first people to call for a ceasefire after the Hamas attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. However, he has stopped short of calling Israel's actions in Gaza genocide.

As Prime Minister, he will be up against a strong opposition in Nigel Farage's far-right Reform UK party, which has a strong hold in the northern region due to its anti-immigrant rhetoric. Mr. Burnham has taken a diplomatic approach with respect to immigration, arguing for bringing down asylum applications, reducing net immigration and at the same time, also talking about the positive impact of immigration in the U.K.

One of the major policy shifts that Mr. Burnham is advocating for, is a "devolution of powers" to local-level governments. He has called the U.K. one of the "most over-centralised countries in the world".

As he prepares to take over as Prime Minister, the task before him is cut out: lead the party and the country out of its crisis of leadership and stagnancy.

A race to catch up

GLM-5.2

Researchers say Z.ai's most advanced LLM can seriously challenge leading U.S. systems in specialised coding and cybersecurity tasks

Smriti Sudesh

"Won't take that long." That was Tang Jie's response after billionaire businessman Elon Musk posted that Chinese artificial intelligence companies were still years away from matching the world's leading AI models. Less than two weeks later, Mr. Tang, the 49-year-old co-founder of Zhipu AI, set out to back up his claim.

On June 16, Zhipu AI (Z.ai), listed in Hong Kong as Knowledge Atlas Technology, unveiled GLM-5.2, its most advanced large language model yet, alongside ZCode, an AI coding platform designed to write, edit and manage software. Early results suggest the model is now competing closely with Anthropic's latest systems, including

Mythos, adding momentum to China's AI race with the U.S. The timing could hardly have been more significant. While American companies continue to dominate the frontier of AI, the U.S. has tightened export controls on advanced chips and AI technologies in an effort to slow Beijing's progress. China, meanwhile, has doubled down on homegrown innovation. Over the past year, companies such as DeepSeek, Alibaba, Baidu and Moonshot AI have unveiled increasingly



REUTERS

capable models. Z.ai is now seeking to join the list. Born in China, Tang Jie, also a professor of computer science at Tsinghua University, co-founded Zhipu AI in 2019 as a university spin-off and today serves as its chief scientist. Before launching the company, Mr. Tang was best known for creating AMiner, an academic search engine and knowledge graph platform used by researchers around the world.

Since its founding, Z.ai has steadily released successive generations of its GLM (Generative Pre-trained Language Models) family of language models, with each version edging closer to the capabilities of leading American systems. GLM-5.2 is the company's biggest leap so far. Researchers say GLM-5.2 is among the first to seriously challenge leading U.S. systems in specialised coding and cybersecurity tasks.

In tests conducted by cybersecurity firm Semgrep, GLM-5.2 outper-

formed Anthropic's Claude Opus 4.8 on certain software engineering tasks. In other evaluations, researchers found it could match the bug-finding capabilities of Anthropic's frontier models. The model has also climbed into the top 10 most-used AI systems on OpenRouter, a platform that provides developers access to hundreds of AI models.

'DeepSeek moment'

The launch has drawn comparisons with DeepSeek, the Chinese startup whose breakthrough model shook the global AI industry last year. According to *South China Morning Post*, some developers in Silicon Valley have described GLM-5.2 as another "DeepSeek moment" for China's open-source AI ecosystem, praising both its coding capabilities and its affordability.

According to *The Wall Street Journal*, unlike OpenAI's ChatGPT or Anthropic's Claude, GLM-5.2 has

been released as an open-weight model. In simple terms, developers can download, modify and run it on their own hardware rather than relying on Z.ai's servers. Supporters say that makes cutting-edge AI significantly cheaper and more accessible. Critics, on the other hand, argue the same openness could allow hackers and malicious actors to deploy AI systems without the many safeguards imposed by commercial providers.

Alongside the model, Z.ai has also introduced ZCode, a coding assistant that can write, edit and manage software projects with minimal human input. Together, the company says, the two products are designed to make AI a more capable partner for software developers.

Yet, for all the excitement, GLM-5.2 is not without its critics. Researchers note that it still trails OpenAI and Anthropic on several complex reasoning and general-purpose tasks. Others point to the constraints Chinese AI companies continue to face because of U.S. restrictions on access to advanced semiconductor hardware.

According to Z.ai, however, the model delivers near-frontier performance at a fraction of the price charged by comparable proprietary systems.

BEIJING

China launches coast guard patrol east of Taiwan despite pushback



China said on Saturday it had launched a new coast guard patrol east of Taiwan, drawing a sharp response from Taipei after a task force last month off the island's coast caused alarm in some Western capitals. The fleet will conduct "law enforcement patrols" in the area, China's Coast Guard said in a statement. REUTERS

MOUNT RUSHMORE

American identity under 'renewed' attack, says Trump as U.S. turns 250



U.S. President Donald Trump lashed out on Friday at what he called a fresh threat against the country's identity, taking aim at domestic "radicals and extremists" on the eve of America's 250th birthday. "As we approach this magnificent anniversary, we see our American identity under a renewed attack," he said. APF

BAMAKO

Jihadists, their separatist Tuareg allies hit Mali with new attacks



Jihadists and their separatist Tuareg allies hit Mali with fresh coordinated attacks on Saturday, striking multiple towns and a prison. The fighting comes after the al-Qaeda-linked JNIM jihadists and Tuareg FLA separatists in late April captured the strategic northern town of Kidal and killed Mali's Defence Minister. APF

ERFURT

Alternative for Germany re-elects leaders as protesters, police clash



Delegates at the national convention of the far-right Alternative for Germany party on Saturday overwhelmingly re-elected its leaders, including Alice Weidel, as tens of thousands of protesters aimed to disrupt the meeting and some clashed with police. Police said some 31,000 people attended Saturday's protest rallies. AP

A window into how China sees a world in disorder

Politically, the Iran war has led more nations to view China as more trustworthy than the U.S.; Beijing's strategic credibility has risen, while Washington's has declined, Yan Xuetong, a leading Chinese foreign policy scholar, said at the World Peace Forum; technological disruptions, especially AI, are seen as emerging as the next key battleground, especially with regard to the setting of standards

NEWS ANALYSIS

Ananth Krishnan
BEIJING

A decline in U.S. credibility after the Iran war and the rising importance of technology, specifically AI capabilities, in determining a country's place in the world were two key trends likely to shape the immediate future of the global order.

That is the view of China's top experts who gathered in Beijing on Friday and Saturday for the country's premier annual top foreign policy forum.

"Politically, the [Iran] war has led more nations to view China as more trustworthy than the Unit-

ed States. China's strategic credibility has risen, while America's has declined," said Yan Xuetong, a leading Chinese foreign policy scholar who convenes the annual World Peace Forum at Tsinghua University, speaking before the opening of the conference, which provides a rare window into how Chinese strategic thinkers view the world order and China's place in it.

U.S. and allies Mr. Yan and other Chinese experts spoke of weakening U.S. relations with allies as reflective of a changing order. "[West Asian] states that were traditionally U.S. allies are now questioning America's security guarantees on two fronts," Mr. Yan said, referring to both

U.S. resolve and capability to protect them.

Recent ups-and-downs in India-U.S. relations also received mention, seen as part of a broader trend in how the Donald Trump administration was engaging with U.S. partners.

The Indo-Pacific strategy under the previous Biden administration and the revival of the Quad worried China, seen as a renewed U.S. commitment to the region. "With the renaming [of the Indo-Pacific Command] back to the Pacific Command, my understanding is that [the U.S. believes] using India as a key partner to contain China has proven ineffective," Wu Xinbo, a leading expert on China-U.S. relations and Dean of the Institute of International Studies, Fudan



Iranian ambassador to China Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli arrives for a press meet during the World Peace Forum in Beijing on Saturday. AP

University, said at the forum. "Initially, the U.S. held high expectations for India's role. The Trump administration has become much more realistic... If this renaming signifies anything, it is that India's status in America's region-

al strategy has noticeably declined," he said.

Shift in order Mr. Trump referring to a U.S.-China "G2" during his recent visit to China may not have officially received Beijing's endorsement, but

it has appeared to have reinforced views among Chinese scholars of a changing global order amid what they see as a shift from unipolarity to bipolarity.

Historically such shifts have been "very dangerous" moments, pointed out Jia Qingguo, a Peking University scholar who is also a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference or upper house of Parliament, referring to the "Thucydides" trap of the dominant power looking to preserve the status quo and a rising power wanting to change it.

That might not necessarily be the case now, he said, as "China, the rising power, is a country rela-

tively satisfied with the existing international order." "It supports the UN, endorses multilateralism... so chances are China is not going to use force to challenge the existing international system."

Different values

Citing the example of the UN Charter, he said Beijing was seeking to preserve older institutions while, in a sense, looking to change how they function, for instance by emphasising different values. "We have had a period where the West dominated and chose to take an approach [emphasising] human rights over sovereignty rights," he said. "Now that's gone, but that does not mean the UN charter itself is not functioning any more."

Technological disruptions, especially AI, were seen as emerging as the next key battleground, especially with regard to the setting of standards, where the U.S. and China were seen as the two key players.

Mr. Yan said the world was "fracturing into three categories of nations", referring to AI standard-setters, AI innovators and AI consumer nations. "Within a decade," he predicted, "it will become a universally recognised classification, much like the World Bank's division of high, middle, and low-income nations. The impact of technology on international relations will become far more pronounced. We will see that even in the next 12 months."

Oil terminal in St. Petersburg hit in Ukrainian drone strike

Reuters
MOSCOW

Russia's second city of St. Petersburg and the surrounding region came under a major Ukrainian drone attack overnight on Saturday, with a local port and oil infrastructure hit, Russian and Ukrainian authorities said, as Kyiv's drone strikes continue to deepen fuel shortages in Russia.

St. Petersburg Governor Alexander Beglov said the city of 6 million had been subjected to a "large-scale" drone attack, with the city's oil terminal struck. He said there were no casualties and that the aftermath of the attack had been dealt with.

Alexander Drozdenko,



Vladimir Putin visits a command post for the joint force grouping, amid the ongoing Russian-Ukrainian conflict. APF

governor of the surrounding Leningrad region, said a drone had struck the area of Vysotsk port on the Baltic Sea. The port handles oil, grain, coal and liquefied natural gas.

Elsewhere, the governor of Russia's Bryansk region and the Russian-installed

governor of Crimea said that drone strikes had killed one person in each region, with several more wounded.

South of St. Petersburg, the governor of Pskov region said more than 30 drones had been shot down overnight.

Russia's claim of capturing Kostiantynivka a lie, says Kyiv

Reuters
KYIV

Ukraine still controls the strategically important city of Kostiantynivka, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Saturday, rejecting Russian claims that it has been captured.

Russia's military told President Vladimir Putin on Friday that it had taken control of the key city that Moscow has long sought in its advance through the Donetsk region.

"It is just another Russian lie, an attempt to generate some kind of a news story," Mr. Zelenskyy said. The General Staff said the city remained under the control of Ukraine's forces.

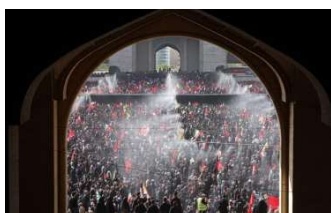
Iranians flock to week-long funeral ceremonies for slain leader Khamenei

Reuters
DUBAI

Mourners thronged a vast prayer complex in Tehran on Saturday as the week-long funeral ceremonies of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei began with the national anthem, religious eulogies and readings from the Koran.

Iran is staging mass funeral processions for Khamenei in a show of public devotion to the Islamic Republic's theocratic state and revolutionary zeal.

Television footage showed his coffin draped with the Iranian flag and topped with his black turban. It was placed, along with four other coffins of his slain family members,



Mourners gather at the Grand Mosalla as they pay their final respects to Ali Khamenei, in Tehran on Saturday. APF

on a large black platform that resembled the Kaaba.

The vast courtyard of the complex, the Imam Khomeini Grand Mosalla, was filled with mourners, many waving Iranian flags and carrying photographs

of the slain leader.

"Death to America" chants echoed through Tehran's Mosalla on the day of the farewell to "Mr. Martyr," a broadcaster said. In other video posts, mourners were also heard

chanting: "Our slogan is one word: Revenge, revenge," and "We will kill, we will kill he who killed our Imam."

Representatives of Tehran-backed militant groups attended the funeral ceremonies, with envoys from Hezbollah and Hamas meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, state media reported.

Khamenei's coffin will remain in the Mosalla until Sunday evening. His body was expected to be taken to Qom, Najaf and Kerbala, the great Shia centres of Iran and Iraq, before being laid to rest on Thursday in Mashhad, home to the country's holiest pilgrim shrine.

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HUGE COMPLIMENT

We could not find our rhythm: Messi praises Cape Verde players



Lionel Messi said the Cape Verde players did not let Argentina relax and find its rhythm in the World Cup round-of-32 match. "It is no coincidence that this team had not lost to Spain or Uruguay. We felt that we would find our rhythm and be more relaxed after the first goal, but it was the complete opposite".

PROUD MAN

We showed our identity: coach Bubista on a memorable campaign



After a memorable World Cup run, Cape Verde head coach Bubista said his team "showed its identity" during the campaign. "We drew against the World champion (Argentina) and took it to extra time. More than anything, I am proud of our players who were dignified in the World Cup. We showed our identity," said Bubista.

GREAT TEAM

This game left the biggest mark on me as a coach, says Scaloni



Of the 100 [games], this one (against Cape Verde) has surely left the biggest mark on me as a coach. It would have been crazy had we lost. I want to congratulate the opponent. Today, it proved that it is a great team — Argentina head coach Lionel Scaloni after his 100th match in charge of the national team.

FAIRYTALE

My teammates were fantastic, we realised the dream: Vozinha



Cape Verde goalkeeper Vozinha said that his teammates and the staff can leave the World Cup with their "heads held high". "We qualified and realised the dream, not just for me or the national team but for all the people of Cape Verde. My teammates were fantastic, they were incredible," said Vozinha.

Argentina dodges a bullet named Cape Verde

The dogged Blue Sharks fight back from a goal down twice before Borges turns the ball into his own net to save the holder's blushes; Messi's scoring form continues with another sublime strike

FIFA WORLD CUP

Agence France-Presse
MIAMI

Argentina was given a huge scare before ending Cape Verde's fairytale run as Lionel Messi netted his 20th World Cup goal in a 3-2 win after extra-time to take his team into the last 16.

Messi's sublime control and finish for his seventh goal at this tournament in four games put the defending champion in command at the Miami Stadium, but the Blue Sharks doggedly refused to go away.

Deroy Duarte's strike on the hour mark forced Argentina to expand more energy than it would have wanted in the sapping heat. Lisandro Martinez briefly restored Argentina's lead early in extra time before Sidney Lopes Cabral's stunning shot rocketed into the top corner.

Another Argentina corner finally got the job done as Christian Romero scored highest to head Messi's corner, the ball going in off a



Unfortunate: Cape Verde's Borges, jersey No. 3, heads in an own goal under pressure from the Argentina players. AP

deflection from Diney Borges for an own goal. La Albiceleste will face Egypt on Tuesday in Atlanta, but there were con-

cerns for Lionel Scaloni after his 100th match in charge of the team. Scaloni said it "would have been madness" to

lose to the underdogs. "A very tough match; you always have to take the positives — this team (Argentina) never gives up,"

Scaloni said. "When people say that there are no easy opponents, they (Cape Verde) proved today that they are

THE RESULTS

Round of 16: Canada 0 lost to Morocco 3 (Ounahi 50, 82, Rahimi 90+8).

Round of 32: Australia 1 (Hany 55) drew with Egypt 1 (Ashour 13) (aet, Egypt wins 4-2 on penalties); Argentina 3 (Messi 29, Lisandro Martinez 52, Borges 111) bt Cape Verde 2 (D. Duarte 59, S. Cabral 103) (aet); Colombia 1 (J. Arias 14) bt Ghana 0.

a great team. We finished very tired," he added.

Cape Verde had served a warning of what it was capable of by holding European champion Spain, Uruguay and Saudi Arabia in Group H to reach the knockout stages in its first World Cup appearance.

The Blue Sharks coach Bubista had said the meeting with the world champion would be "the game of our lives" and it showed in a spirited display that had Argentina sweating.

Colombia advances

In Kansas City, Colombia managed to see off a toothless Ghana 1-0 to become the final team to qualify for the last 16.

Stat attack

1 Martinez became the first Argentine defender to score and assist in the same World Cup game

1 Cape Verde earned the distinction of being the first African nation to score more than one goal in a World Cup match against the defending champion

3 Messi became the third player to find the back of the net in five consecutive knockout games after Gyorgy Sarosi (Hungary, 1934-38) and Vava (Brazil, 1958-62)

5 For the fifth straight knockout match, Argentina held the lead at half-time

8 The Argentine maestro also became the first to score in eight successive appearances, and the first with seven or more goals in two editions (2022, 2026)

12 Messi's dozen goal contributions (six goals, six assists) in the knockouts are the most by a player

12 Argentina moved level with Germany at the top with its 12th extra-time win in the football showpiece

14 Messi's goal tally in the quadrennial extravaganza after turning 35

18 Vozinha made 18 saves in the net in five consecutive knockout games after Gyorgy Sarosi (Hungary, 1934-38) and Dino Zoff (27, 1982) have more

20 Messi became the first player (man or woman) to score 20 World Cup goals

100 The Cape Verde match was coach's Scaloni's 100th for Argentina. He has won four titles

Compiled by ANIRUDH VELAMURI



Egypt dashes Australia's hopes, books last-16 berth



Special feeling: Egyptian players celebrate their shootout win. AP

Ayon Sengupta
DALLAS

For all the noise, tactical planning and emotional freight that teams carry in to a knockout tie, football has a habit of reducing everything to the loneliest act in sport.

Australia and Egypt arrived in Arlington chasing the same piece of history and, after Emam Ashour's opener was cancelled out by an own goal, the last-32 tie surrendered itself to penalties. Egypt held its nerve in the 4-2 shootout victory, scoring with all four of its kicks as Harry Souttar and teenager Lucas Herrington missed for Australia.

Earlier, a year after leaving a stadium in the United States in tears with a shoulder injury during the FIFA Club World Cup, Ashour swaggered across the Arlington arena in triumph. Ashour had been stretched

turing his collarbone while playing for Al Ahly against Lionel Messi's Inter Miami on June 15, 2025.

When the Egyptian midfielder scored in the 13th minute to put the Pharaohs ahead, he celebrated with the "Billionaire Strut".

Tony Popovic kept Australia unchanged from the Paraguay game, while Egypt made five alterations, with Mohamed Salah fit enough to start along-side Omar Marmoush despite hamstring concerns.

Australia threatened first as Cristian Volpato's long-range effort kissed the top of the bar in the fifth minute, but it was Egypt that struck. Ashour's initial free-kick from the left was blocked by the wall, but he was left unmarked when Karim Hafez floated the ball back into the box, allowing him to head past Patrick Beach.

Egypt should have doubled its lead almost immediately after the restart. Sa-

lah split the Australian defence with a perfectly weighted pass, but Marmoush, who opened his body, saw his attempt bobble wide. Soon enough, Egypt was made to pay for it as Mohamed Hany, perhaps unsettled by the looming presence of Souttar, turned the ball into his own net from an Australian corner-kick.

Beach kept the dream alive deep into stoppage time, keeping out a point-blank Rami Rabia header. In extra time, Souttar stood like a wall against Salah and Egypt, somehow coaxing Australia's tired legs to keep the scoreline intact. The decisive goal never came, and Popovic sent on Matthew Ryan — a goalkeeper with 12 career penalty saves — in place of Beach for the shootout.

But football offers no guarantees — there was no rescue here. Egypt walked away with the history both had come looking for.

Ounahi's brace fires Morocco into the quarterfinals

Agencies
HOUSTON

Azzedine Ounahi scored a brace to lead Morocco to a 3-0 win over co-host Canada in the World Cup round of 16 on Saturday, making his country the first African nation to reach the quarterfinals more than once.

Morocco is set for a second straight appearance in the last-eight stage after having made it to the semifinals in Qatar in 2022.

Neither team was able to break the deadlock until Ounahi struck in the 50th minute. He received a pass off a free-kick from Achraf Hakimi and delivered a right-footed shot through traffic from outside the box, finding the bottom-right corner.

In the 82nd minute, Ounahi made it 2-0 with a right-footed shot from the middle of the box after a pass from Ibrahim Diaz. Soufiane Rahimi, who re-

placed the injured Ismael Saibari in the opening period, added another goal in the final minute of stoppage time.

The loss ended a historic run for Canada, which had won its first knockout game with a 1-0 victory over South Africa.

The co-host was the clear underdog and its fans were outnumbered by Morocco supporters at the air-conditioned Houston Stadium. Yet it looked the more confident at the start, with Tani Oluwaseyi turning sharply in the box and forcing Morocco's Montreal-born goalkeeper Yassine Bounou to save with an outstretched leg.

There was a flashpoint shortly before half-time when Morocco captain Hakimi and Canada's Richie Laryea had a brief shouting match. Ounahi, who was named the Player-of-the-Match, stole the limelight for the right reasons with his double.



Opening salvo: Ounahi celebrates with Bouadidi after putting the Atlas Lions ahead. REUTERS

Ancelotti's Brazil wary of Norway and Haaland

Ayon Sengupta

Brazil's World Cup campaign has offered reassurance and alarm in almost equal measure.

Carlo Ancelotti's side has won three of its four matches but needed a stoppage-time Gabriel Martinelli strike to squeeze past Japan in the round of 32. It is yet to fully hit its stride and, as a result, Sunday's pre-quarterfinal against Norway in New Jersey could be an intriguing one.

The fixture comes with a historical quirk. Brazil has never beaten Norway, drawing twice and losing twice in four previous meetings, including a 1-2 defeat at the 1998 World Cup when Tore Andre Flo and Kjetil Rekdal overturned Bebeto's opener. Norway coach Stale Solbakken was a playing member of that side.

While Solbakken is quick to show Brazil the respect it deserves, he insists that this will be no walkover for the five-time champion. "Brazil is finding its feet, gradually getting better and better, and it has strong players in all positions," he said.

"Brazil is the favourite, of course it is, but we are hopeful that we will give it a match. We are not playing the game for fun. We are playing to win and go into the quarterfinals."

Brazil also has concerns over personnel. Lucas Pa-



Dangerous duo: Vinicius and Endrick could pose a challenge to the Norwegian defence. AFP

Monday's matches

Round of 16

Brazil vs. Norway, 1.30 a.m.

Mexico vs. England, 5.30 a.m.

The day and time(s) pertain to India

queta's injury against Japan has left Ancelotti short of a midfielder who knits his side together. Raphinha has returned to training, and Neymar is fit again, though Ancelotti is unlikely to hand him a start.

Endrick, who offered a direct threat after coming on at the beginning of the second half against Japan, and Martinelli, after his dramatic strike, are in contention for a place in the starting XI. Vinicius Junior had scored in all three group games, while Bruno Guimaraes has four goals.

The Selecao's 24th win over Japan was their first co-

meback victory in a World Cup knockout match since the 2002 quarterfinal against England.

Norway, meanwhile, arrives after a 2-1 victory over Ivory Coast. Martin Odegaard has assisted in three straight matches, while Erling Haaland has already scored five goals in this edition. Brazil is wary of the Manchester City forward, who scored the winner against the West Africans after being largely peripheral for much of the night.

"Haaland is a great player, and he has already shown that on several occasions," Brazil forward Mateus Cunha said.

For all of Brazil's pedigree, this night might be decided by whether it can contain the most ruthless penalty-box striker of this generation. Against a side still searching for complete control, Haaland can punish even the briefest lapse.

Sport

England chases glory against a marauding Australia

Skipper Sciver-Brunt, Knight and Wyatt-Hodge hold the key with the willow for the home team in the summit clash; Molineux & Co. have the edge in a clash between two unbeaten sides at Lords

T20 WORLD CUP

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LONDON

The Globe Theatre is just five miles away from Lord's. Cricket's most famous ground has witnessed, in its long history, moments that could compare well with the drama of a Shakespearean play.

Most of them have involved men's cricket. Women haven't played as much cricket at Lord's. But times are changing. Remember, in Shakespeare's time, women were not even allowed to perform on stage, though he penned some of literature's greatest female characters.

Lord's, in fact, is going to host next week its first-ever Women's Test match, between England and India. The Englishwomen are unlikely to be thinking of that game yet, though.

They are focussed completely on a game played in a much shorter format: the Women's T20 World Cup final against Australia on Sunday.

For all the interest a final involving India would have generated, especially



When the titans meet: England and Australia, the two best sides in the tournament, will battle it out for the top prize. REUTERS

in a country of a billion cricket fans, there surely could not have been a bigger contest to end what has been a fascinating tournament.

Fitting finale

The final fits the bill in every way. The best side against the host, which also happens to be the second best team. The game's oldest rivals. A team whose talent is so deep, it is unreal, against a

side that has some exceptional players and is captained by one of the most skilled, competitive women that has ever played cricket.

Her teammates will indeed be hoping for another superwoman effort from skipper Nat Sciver-Brunt, who had led them from the front to take them to the final.

After a rare top-order failure, she put the England innings back on the

track, and with ample support from fellow-veteran Heather Knight, registered a total that would prove far too much for South Africa.

Danni Wyatt-Hodge, who didn't click in that game, is still on top of the run-charts. The seam of Lauren Bell and the spin of Linsey Smith, Sophie Ecclestone and Charlie Dean, has served England well.

As for Australia, this is one of those great teams in sporting history that can

intimidate any opposition. Runs could come anywhere. So could wickets.

Ellyse Perry, Ashleigh Gardner, Beth Mooney, Annabel Sutherland, Georgia Wareham, captain Sophie Molineux, Phoebe Litchfield... It is not easy to prepare for players like that.

But, the England women will be backed by their supporters. And they have the Lionesses and the Red Roses, their sisters in football and rugby respec-

Today's match

THE FINAL

Lord's, 8.00 p.m. IST

HEAD-TO-HEAD

England 21 | Australia 23

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIHOTSTAR

tively, to draw inspiration from.

Rival captains gear up for a tough outing

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LONDON

Sophie Molineux grew up watching cricket with her father. Some 15 years ago, she said she would one day like to watch a Test at Lord's.

Molineux is going to do better than that. She will on Sunday lead Australia in the final of the Women's T20 World Cup at the home of cricket.

The Australian captain expects a tough challenge. "It is going to be a huge challenge," she said.

"They have played some really brilliant cricket over the last few weeks. Lottie (coach Charlotte Edwards) has got the team in a really good place, and they seem to be full of confidence. And you add on to that, 30,000 English fans here at Lord's."

Molineux, however, pointed out that her team matched up well against England.

"We don't look too far into the past, but we should be very confident heading into this," she

said. "And if we just look at how we want to play and what we can do."

Her counterpart Nat Sciver-Brunt is also relishing the challenge.

"Every time we come up against Australia, it is going to be a tough battle," said the England captain.

"Both teams have got players that have got massive experience, and also some youngsters who are hugely talented as well."

She is glad that her team is a nice blend of youth and experience.

"We have had some great performances from Freya (Kemp) and Dani (Gibson), obviously, with the bat, taking the game on in the last five-six overs," Sciver-Brunt said.

"And Kemp has been bowling really well and sticking to her skills."

Looking ahead to the summit clash with a most familiar rival, she said: "Finales like this don't come around that often."

Among those watching the final at Lord's will be Mark Molineux, Sophie's dad.

SNAPSHOTS

India-A rides on Sai Sudharsan's ton to take big lead

GALLIE: B. Sai Sudharsan's fluent 168 and an excellent effort from the middle and lower-order batters helped India-A reach 541 for eight after a rain-affected third day of the second 'Test' against Sri Lanka-A on Saturday. India-A has secured a lead of 175 runs with a day to go.

The scores: Sri Lanka-A 366 vs India-A 541/8 in 142 overs (Sai Sudharsan 168, Devdutt Padikal 94, Dhruv Jurel 53, Saranah Jain batting 68; Keshara Numantha 41/58).

Bhawna bags recurve gold, Sheetal completes triple-medal haul

NOVE MESTO (CZECHIA): India enjoyed another fruitful day at the World Para Archery Series here on Saturday with Bhawna clinching the women's recurve title, while Sheetal Devi completed a three-medal haul by adding an individual silver to the compound mixed team gold and women's team bronze she had won earlier. Bhawna beat compatriot Pooja G 6-5 (9-8) in an all-Indian women's recurve final that was decided in a shoot-off.

Paris Paralympics gold medalist Harvinder Singh settled for silver after going down 4-6 to Italy's Stefano Travisan in the men's recurve final. Armless World champion and Paris Paralympics bronze medalist Sheetal lost 141-143 to Great Britain's Jodie Grinham in compound women's final. Earlier, Sheetal partnered Shyam Sundar Swami to win the compound mixed team gold, overcoming Indonesia's Teodora Audi Ayudia Ferelly and Ken Swagumilang 147-143. India also claimed bronze in both the compound men's and women's team events.

The results: Recurve: Women: Final: Bhawna bt Pooja G 6-5 (shoot-off 9-8).
Men: Final: Stefano Travisan (Ita) bt Harvinder Singh 6-4.
Compound: Women: Final: Jodie Grinham (GBr) bt Sheetal Devi 143-141.
Doubles: Team: Sheetal & Pooja Nag bt Mariia Petrovich & Liliana Lascova (Svk) 140-139.
Men: Final: Nathan



Bhawna. FACEBOOK/WORLDDARCHERY



Udara. AFP

MacQueen (G.Br) bt Toman Kumar 144-136.
Doubles: Third place: Toman & Shyam Sundar Swami bt Maxime Guerni & Thierry Joussame (Fra) 150-148.

Mixed doubles: Final: Sheetal & Shyam Sundar bt Teodora Audi Ayudia Ferelly & Ken Swagumilang (Inda) 147-143.

Udara hits Test maiden century

NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA): Opener Lahiru Udara compiled a maiden century (188) in a 215-run partnership with Kamindu Mendis (84) which lifted Sri Lanka from 25 for two to 338 for five against West Indies at stumps on the first day of the second Test on Friday.

The scores: Sri Lanka 338/5 in 83 overs (Udara 188, Kamindu Mendis 84) vs West Indies.

Pragg ends Rapid section as joint leader

ZAGREB: Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa won three matches in a row on the final day to tie for the first place with Alireza Firouzja of France on 12 points as the Rapid section of Croatian leg of Grand Chess Tour ended here. The standings (after round nine, Rapid):
1.2. Alireza Firouzja (Fra), Praggnanandhaa 12 points; 3.4. Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra), Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb) 11; 5-6: D. Gukesh, Vincent Keymer (Ger) 10; 7: Anish Giri (Ned), 8-9: Dac Bogdan-Daniel (Rou), Leontin Savu (Svk) 140-139.
Men: Final: Nathan

Antonelli wins sprint race and takes pole position

FORMULA ONE

Associated Press
SILVERSTONE

Kimi Antonelli returned to winning ways in Formula 1 with a sprint race victory and pole position for the British Grand Prix on a day of struggles for his title rival George Russell.

After overtaking Lewis Hamilton to deny the British star a crowd-pleasing victory in the sprint, Antonelli doubled up with pole position for Sunday's race.

He went fastest on his last lap by 0.175 of a second from Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, with Hamilton third.

Russell was fourth in the sprint and then again in qualifying, after contact with the wall early on, and will start Sunday's race behind the two Ferraris.

Hamilton started on pole and held off Antonelli until lap eight of 17, when the Italian swept past him with the help of electrical power.

"Let's go! Let's go!" Antonelli told the team over the radio after taking the win.

"It was a very fun first 10 laps with Lewis, we were



Perfect day: Antonelli denied Hamilton a victory in the sprint and doubled up with the pole. AFP

both pushing very hard," Antonelli added later. "Obviously the momentum is there and we are doing a great job together with the team."

The race was a prime example of F1 in 2026, with the strategy of charging and deploying electrical power central to the battles on track.

It allowed drivers like Lando Norris to swap places with rivals lap after lap but also meant drivers lifting off through Silverstone's best-known fast corners to recharge power.

Hamilton was back fighting for a win again af-

ter a breakthrough victory last month at the Barcelona-Catalunya Grand Prix, his first since moving to Ferrari last year.

Qualifying results: 1. Antonelli (Mercedes); 2. Leclerc (Ferrari); 3. Hamilton (Ferrari); 4. Russell (Mercedes); 5. Hadjar (Red Bull); 6. Norris (McLaren); 7. Verstappen (Red Bull); 8. Piastri (McLaren); 9. Lindblad (Racing Bulls); 10. Lawson (Racing Bulls); 11. Bortolotto (Audet); 12. Gasly (Alpine); 13. Hultberg (Audet); 14. Bearman (Haas); 15. Saiz (Williams); 16. Albon (Williams); 17. Ocon (Haas); 18. Bottas (Cadillac); 19. Colapinto (Alpine); 20. Perez (Cadillac); 21. Stroll (Aston Martin); 22. Alonso (Aston Martin).

We can beat any team if we stick to our game plan: Fulton

HOCKEY

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India can beat any country in the world if the team sticks to its game plan, national men's hockey team head coach Craig Fulton said after a strong performance in the last leg of FIH Pro League.

India registered confidence-boosting victories over reigning World champion Germany and 2024 Olympics gold medalist Netherlands, while taking the fight against World No. 3 England down to the wire during the European leg of the Pro League.

India, however, finished eighth out of nine teams with 19 points from 16 matches, one rung above Pakistan (0, 16 matches).

"One of the biggest takeaways from the Pro League run has been watching the team's confidence grow. Wins over Germany and Netherlands, and a strong showing against England, prove that when we stick to our game plan, we're capable of matching and beating anyone in the world," Ful-



Job on hand: Fulton says the Indian team is focused on staying consistent from quarter to quarter. FILE PHOTO



One of the biggest takeaways from the Pro League run has been watching the team's confidence grow.

Fulton was particularly impressed with the team's composure and hunger to do well. "Even more encouraging is how much this group has matured.

We've stayed calm under pressure, adjusted to different playing styles and pulled out wins in tight games. That kind of experience is exactly what we'll need. The World Cup and Asian Games will test our resilience and belief, and I think we're building the right foundation for it."

Harmanpreet Singh, who came back to lead the side, also spoke about the return of confidence.

"Beating top-ranked sides is always special, but more importantly, it shows that the hard work we're putting in as a team is paying off. We will take these positives forward as we prepare for the World Cup and the Asian Games."

Manwar bags D.M. Kumaraswamy Memorial Trophy

RACING

BENGALURU: P.S. Chouhan trained Manwar (G. Vivek up 4 and 3/4, Im 29.0.8. Rs. 21 (w), 11 and 26 (p), SHP: 22, THP: 52, FP: 29, Q: 14, Favourite: 246/78, Exacta: 1,312/625.

THE RESULTS:
1. MAURITUS PEARL PLATE (1,400M): YARRA YARRA (Antony) 1, Garzian (Jagadeesh) 2, Mysic Dew (Neeraj) 3 and Shining Dawn (Sandeesh) 4. 3/14, 1/3/4 and 1/2. Im 26.37s. Rs. 16 (w), 15 and 18 (p), SHP: 33, THP: 30, FP: 57, Q: 46.
The standings:
1.2. Alireza Firouzja (Fra), Praggnanandhaa 12 points; 3.4. Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra), Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb) 11; 5-6: D. Gukesh, Vincent Keymer (Ger) 10; 7: Anish Giri (Ned), 8-9: Dac Bogdan-Daniel (Rou), Leontin Savu (Svk) 140-139.
Men: Final: Nathan

Flamingo Dream (Vivek) 3 and Wakashizi (Vishal Bunde) 4. 1/3/4, 4 and 3/4, Im 29.0.8. Rs. 21 (w), 11 and 26 (p), SHP: 22, THP: 52, FP: 29, Q: 14, Favourite: 246/78, Exacta: 1,312/625.

Owner: Mr. Prashant Datta Kankonkar. **Trainer:** S. Dominik. **3. VETERANARIAN'S CUP (1,200M):** VIBRANT QUEEN (R. Pradeep) 1, Aarthar (Akshay K) 2, Magestic Persona (S. Sachin) 3 and Khazana (Neeraj) 4. 5/3/4, Snk and 3/4, Im 12.49s. Rs. 92 (w), 15 and 11 (p), SHP: 30, THP: 51, FP: 457, Q: 125. **Trinella:** 577/272, Exacta: 4/935/2,115. Favourite: Magestic Persona. **Owner:** Mr. V. Shankar. **Trainer:** Pradeep Amalath.

4. D.M. KUMARASWAMY MEMORIAL TROPHY (1,600M): MANWAR (G. Vivek) 1, Circle Of Dreams (Akshay K) 2, Hazel (Antony) 3 and Scarlett Lyla (Girish R) 4. 2/12, 4 1/2 and 2. Im 37.79s. Rs. 15 (w), 10, 12 and 14 (p), SHP: 24, THP: 27, FP: 27, Q: 17. **Trinella:** 47/22, Exacta: 451/522. Favourite: Manwar. **Owner:** Mr. Marthand Singh

5. SKYLINE PLATE (DIV. IIV, 1,400M): WHITNEY (G. Vivek) 1, Double Scotch (Antony) 2, Mahindra & Mrs. Rina Mahindra. **Trainer:** P.S. Chouhan. **6. SKYLINE PLATE (DIV. IIV, 1,400M):** FIERY LOVE (P.P. Dhebe) 1, Best Of Us (Md. Talib) 2, White Settling (Rafique) 3, 3 and Diesel (Sandeesh) 4. 1/1/4, 1/2 and 1/12. Im 27.54s. Not run: Indian Mission. **Rs. 125 (w), 29, 35 and 27 (p), SHP: 56, THP: 40, FP: 375, Q: 223. Trinella:** 20,745/17,781, Exacta: 55,447 (c/o) 25,763. Favourite: Diesel.

Zuccaro may score an encore

BENGALURU: Zuccaro, who is in fine nick, may score an encore in the 'Maharaja's' Gold Cup (2,200m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Sunday (July 5). False rails: width about 6.5m from 1,600m till 300m. Again from 300m to the winning post, it will be placed at its original position. A cutaway will be given at 300m marker.

1. LAGARDE PLATE (1,200m), rated 60 to 85, 2.30 p.m.: 1. Never Ghe In (c) 162, 2. Crosswater (c) Aleemuddin 60, 3. Power Of Beauty (D) 54 and 6, 4. Steelantis (D) S. Sachin 55, 5. Dun It Again (A) Vinod Shinde 54 and 6, N R I Ace (2) Jagadeesh 53. **1. POWER OF BEAUTY,** 2. STELLANTIS

3. MAHARAJA'S GOLD CUP (2,200m), 4.90 p.m. over (Terms), 3.00: 1. Aprameya (A) Aleemuddin 60, 2. Darringer (7) Arvind K 56, 3. Azaadi (I) G. Vivek 54.5, 4. Evermore (2) Shreyas 5, 5. Sigrid (8) Antony and 8, 6. Starnishereyes (6) Arul 54.5.

1. AZADI, 2. DARRINGER, 3. PORTUEX

4. GALILEE PLATE (1,800m), rated 20 to 45, 4.30: 1. Angelisa (2) Yash 61, 2. Sassy (1) Kiran Rai 59, 3. Stentorian (7) Barshan 58.5, 4. Stallguard (4) Arvind K 57.5, 5. Star Honour (3) M. Prabhakaran 55.5, 6. Theos (8) G. Vivek 55 and 7. Mandate (6) Aleemuddin 55.

5. SOUTHERN EMPIRE PLATE (1,400m), rated 20 to 45, 6.50: 1. Double Vision (7) Neeraj 61, 2. Oxytocin (5) Kiran Rai 59.5, 3. Acantha (8) Srirath 58.5, 4. Disruptor (10) L.A. Rozario 58.5, 5. Breeze Bluster (2) Vishal 58, 6. Ebotse (9) Antony 58, 7. Absolute Force (10) Sandesh 57.5, 8. Gandolfini (4) R. Pradeep 56.5, 9. Shahenshah (3) Faizan Khan 56.5, 10. Augusto (12) Arvind K 55.5, 11. Elveden (1) Aleemuddin 54.5 and 12. My Solitaire (6) Abhishek Mhatre 53.5. **1. ABSOLUTE FORCE,** 2. ELVEDEN, 3. DOUBLE VISION

Day's best: ENCINO Double POWER OF BEAUTY - ANGELISA (Jkt: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6; Mini Jkt: 3, 4, 5 and 6; Tr (0): 1, 2 and 3; (0): 4, 5 and 6, 6.

Sport



Giant-killer: Eala can scarcely believe her win over Swiatek. AP

Swiatek's title defence crumbles

WIMBLEDON
Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Reigning champion Iga Swiatek was dumped out of Wimbledon on Saturday as an inspired Alexandra Eala created more history for the Philippines with a straight-set victory on Centre Court.

Eala edged a dramatic 84-minute first set before powering to a 7-6(9), 6-2 victory over a stunned Swiatek to reach the last 16.

"It's difficult to describe I'm in the second week of a Slam and it's incredible for me," said Eala.

It is six-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek's earliest exit from a Major since another third-round defeat, by Yulia Putintseva, also at Wimbledon two years ago.

Eala will be bidding to become the first player from the Philippines to reach a singles Grand Slam quarterfinal since Feliciano Panatta in 1976.

IMPORTANT RESULTS

Men: Third round: 5-de Minaur (Phi) bt Svajda (USA) 6-2, 5-7, 6-2, 6-4.
9-Cibolli (Ita) bt 19-Khachanov 0-6, 7-6(4), 6-7(5), 6-2, 6-2;
13-Lehecka (Cze) bt Munar (Esp) 6-4, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4; 2-Zverev (Ger) bt Giron (USA) 6-2, 7-6(4), 6-4.
Women: Third round: Krueger (Phi) bt Snigur (Ukr) 6-3, 6-2;
12-Kostyuk (Ukr) bt 23-Navarro (USA) 6-2, 4-6, 6-1; 13-Paolini (Ita) bt Sakrari (Gre) 6-1, 6-2; 29-Eala

mo Ampon at the 1953 French Open.

Mertens ousts Rybakina
Joining Swiatek on the sidelines was former champion Elena Rybakina who lost 7-6(4), 6-1 to Elise Mertens. Rybakina, 27, also endured a disappointing early departure from the recent French Open, losing to Yulia Starodubtseva in the second round.

The Russia-born Kazakh has failed to make it past the third round on her last two visits to south-west London.

Meanwhile, Serena Williams pulled out of the doubles with her sister Venus after failing to recover from a knee injury.

Men's French Open champion Alexander Zverev brushed aside American Marcos Giron 6-2, 7-6(4), 6-4.

The German second seed has never got past the last 16 in nine previous appearances at Wimbledon. He faces Czech 13th seed Jiri Lehecka in the fourth round.

Bethell's blitz and Curran's spell do it for England

The batter's 46-ball unbeaten 76 helps the host canter to victory after initial hiccups; Bishnoi's no-balls prove costly for the visiting side; Sooryavanshi becomes youngest Indian man to debut

INDIA IN ENGLAND
Press Trust of India
MANCHESTER

England rode on an unbeaten 76 from Jacob Bethell to beat India by four wickets in the second T20I and take a 1-0 lead in the five-match series here on Saturday.

Bethell smashed five sixes and an equal number of fours in his 46-ball knock as England chased down the target of 191 in 19 overs.

England was jolted early when left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh dismissed the openers - Phil Salt and Jos Buttler - for ducks in a sensational opening over.

However, skipper Harry Brook (39), Bethell and Tom Banton (39) rebuilt the innings before the left-hander steered the team home. Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi had a miserable day, bowling no-balls and witnessing the free hit deliveries getting smashed for sixes.

His spell (4-0-60-0) proved a turning point in England's chase.

Earlier, the visitors posted 190 for seven after Vaibhav Sooryavanshi made his much-awaited debut.

However, his innings lasted just 10 balls and he hammered two sixes before being stumped by Butler off Will Jacks for 14.

The extra bounce and cross-winds on a skiddy surface made batting difficult for the 15-year-old, who became the youngest man to play for India.

Sooryavanshi, however, provided a glimpse of what he was capable of during his short stay - a whip-scoop off Jofra Archer that sailed over the fence and a powerful shot off Josh Tongue that went into the



Game-changer: Bethell took advantage of some poor bowling by India. REUTERS

SCOREBOARD

INDIA
Abhishek Sharma c Banton b Curran 43 (24b, 4x4, 1x6), Vaibhav Sooryavanshi st. Buttler b Jacks 14 (10b, 2x6), Ishan Kishan c Dawson b Curran 49 (40b, 6x4), Shreyas Iyer c Banton b Dawson 37 (22b, 2x4, 1x6), Shivam Dube c Banton b Curran 5 (7b), Tilak Varma (not out) 24 (11b, 1x4, 2x6), Arsh Patel run out (2), Harshit Rana c Buttler b Archer 6 (3b, 1x6), Extras (lb-1, w-9); 10; Total (for seven wks, in 20 overs): 190.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-50 (Sooryavanshi, 5.6), 45 (Abhishek, 5.6), 3-130

stands over wide long-on. Opener Abhishek Sharma (43, 24b, 8x4, 1x6), Ishan Kishan (49, 40b, 6x4) and skipper Shreyas Iyer (37, 22b, 3x4, 1x6) were the major contributors.

LIVE TELECAST

Wimbledon: Star Sports 2, SS Select 1, 2 & JioHotstar, 3.30 p.m.
West Indies vs Sri Lanka: Second Test, Day 3, FanCode, 7.30 p.m.
Formula One: British GP, F1 TV, F1 TV Pro App & FanCode, 7.30 p.m.
Women's T20 World Cup (Final): Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 8 p.m.
FIFA World Cup: United Sports 1, 2 & Z5 App, 1.30 & 5.30 a.m. (Monday)

(Shreyas, 12.6), 4-146 (Dube, 15.6), 5-157 (Kishan, 17.2), 6-165 (Axar, 18.3), 7-190 (Harshit, 19.6).

ENGLAND BOWLING
Archer 4-0-40-1, Tongue 4-0-46-0, Jacks 3-0-22-1, Curran 4-0-33-3, Dawson 3-0-27-1, Rashid 2-0-21-0.

ENGLAND
Phil Salt c Kishan b Arshdeep 0 (1b), Jos Buttler c Varun b Arshdeep 0 (3b), Harry Brook c Kishan b Axar 39 (15b, 4x4, 3x6), Jacob Bethell (not out) 76 (46b, 5x4, 5x6), Tom Banton c Tilak b Arshdeep 39 (32b, 6x4), Will Jacks lbw b Varun 9 (8b, 1x4), Sam Curran c Sooryavanshi bt Harshit 7 (5b, 1x4), Jofra Archer (not out)

11b, 1x4, 2x6), whose batting approach has been heavily criticised, scored 17 off Archer in the final over of the innings to take India to 190.

Despite striking early, the visitors couldn't stop the hosts. Incidentally, it would have been doubly sweet for Bethell, whose incredible knock almost took England to victory in a high-scoring thriller in the T20 World Cup semifinal against India in March.

Vingegaard takes Tour de France lead

Agence France-Presse
BARCELONA

Jonas Vingegaard took the first leader's yellow jersey of the 113th edition of the Tour de France as his Visma-Lease a Bike outfit won Saturday's opening team time-trial in Barcelona.

Vingegaard will wear the yellow jersey on Sunday for the first time since he last won the Grand Boucle in 2023.

He finished the 19.6km course eight seconds quicker than Filippo Ganna for Netcompany Ineos,



Vingegaard. AP

with reigning champion Tadej Pogacar earning third place for UAE Team Emirates at 12sec.

Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals extends tie-up with Angkor Tiger FC



At the launch: Dr. Gaurav Katyal, COO, Apollo Hospitals, Mansi Rajpoot, associate vice-president, Apollo Hospitals and Dr. Harinder Singh Sidhu, senior vice-president, Apollo Hospitals, unveil the jersey. SUSHI KUMAR VERMA

Sports Bureau

Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals has extended its support to Cambodian Premier League club Angkor Tiger FC's Youth Academy for the second straight year.

Angkor Tiger, part-owned by Indian firm SKaSports, currently competes in the top division of Cambodia and is based in Siem Reap. The Angkor Tiger FC under-16 and under-19 teams play in the Cambodian Youth League.

Shivakumar Pattabhiraman, Managing Director of

Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi, said, "At Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, we believe healthcare goes beyond clinical care. Our continued partnership with Angkor Tiger FC reflects this shared commitment."

Akihiro Kato, Owner and Chairperson of Angkor Tiger FC, said, "We are proud to continue our partnership with Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals. Strong partnerships like this play an important role in providing better opportunities for young Cambodian footballers."

ANDAMAN LAKSHADWEEP HARBOUR WORKS
NOTICE INVITING e-PROCUREMENT

The Executive Engineer (ALHW), Sri Vijaya Puram invites on behalf of the President of India online item rate of e-procurement from the empaneled list of consultants for "Environment Work" of the following work:-

RFP Notice No. : ALHW/ENV/RFP-1/2026-27/1283 dt 20.06.2026

Name of Work:- Conducting EIA studies & Procuring CRZ / Environmental Clearances for the following ALHW Projects in Andaman & Nicobar Island namely "Reconstruction jetties & wharfs at 1. Yereita Jetty 2. Diglipur Jetty 3. Chatham Wharf 4. Panigat Jetty 5. Mayabunder Wharf 6. East Island Jetty 7. NSCB Jetty (Ross Island) 8. Champin Jetty 9. Rangat Jetty 10. Chain Nallah Jetty & 11. Swarg Jetty in A&N Islands".

a) Estimate Cost: Not Disclosed
b) EMD: @ 2% on quoted value
c) Period of Completion: 06 Months
d) Period of downloading: 20.06.2026
e) Last date of submission: 22.07.2026 upto 1500 Hrs.
f) Date of opening technical bid: 29.07.2026 at 1530 Hrs.
g) Date of opening financial bid: will be notified later.

The tender forms and other details can be obtained from the website www.eprocure.gov.in

Executive Engineer (ALHW),
Tender ID: 2026_ALHW_914029_1 ALHW, Sri Vijaya Puram

OFFICE OF MUNICIPAL BOARD BIDASAR CHURU RAJ
SRI RAJ-19/26/2026-27/1855 Date: 25-06-2026

Notice Inviting Tender (NIT)

Municipal Board Bidasars invites two part bid i.e. technical and Financial Bids from the prospective bidders for Door to Door Collection of Waste for Municipal Board Bidasars, Rajasthan per below details:-

MB Code-DL.B2627A354
UBN No.-DL.B2627SL089834
Administrator Municipal Board Bidasars Executive Officer Municipal Board Bidasars

Reg.Samwdd/2266988

अगरवाल विकास प्राधिकरण, अगरवाल
गुजरात, भारत
सूचना संख्या: 19/26/2026-27/1855
दिनांक: 25-06-2026

E-TENDER - 16/2026-27

Bids for various electricals work amounting Rs. 567.56 Lacs are invited from interested bidders upto 22.07.2026 6:00 pm. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>) and (<http://sppp.raj.nic.in>), <http://www.urban.rajasthan.gov.in> and (<http://ada.departamental website>).

UBN No.-ADJ2627WSOB00076-00077
Reg.Samwdd/C26/6134 Executive Engineer

BENGALURU WEST CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Malleshwaram
Division, Zone-2, 2nd cross, Jaladarshini Layout,
MSR Nagar, Mathikere, Bengaluru-560 054.

No: BWCC/EE/MLM/TN/KPPP/05/2026-27 Date: 04-07-2026

SHORT TERM Tender NOTIFICATION (Two Cover System)

(Through GOK KPP Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> only)

Tender for the following work on item rate basis are invited as Standard Bid Documents KYV-4 by the Executive Engineer Malleshwaram Division on behalf of the Commissioner, BWCC from the registered contractors of Bengaluru West City Corporation or equivalent registration with CPWD/KPWD/ Railways/MES or any State Government Organizations may apply through e-procurement portal as per schedule of events

Sl. No.	Name of the work / Category
1.	Comprehensive development work to Park at GD Park and Sports Complex Building in Malleshwaram Assembly constituency of Ward No- 52 Kodandarampura (Old Ward No- 65) Estimate cost of tender : 5.00 Crores, Amount put to Tender: ₹.4.16 Crores, EMD: ₹.6.24,600.00

Calendar of Events: 1) Tender documents can be downloaded from the KPP portal from 10-07-2026, 4:30 pm, onwards (2) Pre-Bid meeting on 13-07-2026 at 4:00 pm, (3) Last Date & Time for uploading Tender documents on 16-07-2026 upto 4:00 pm, (4) Opening of Technical document on 17-07-2026 at 4:30 pm, (5) Opening of Financial document on 18-07-2026 after 4:30 pm.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Malleshwaram Division, Zone-2, BWCC

BENGALURU SOUTH CITY CORPORATION
Office of the Senior Assistant Director of Horticulture, (Jayanagara Zone), BSCC, Jayanagara Shopping Complex, 3rd Floor, Jayanagar 4th Block, Bengaluru - 560011.

No: SADH(JNZ)/TENDER/01/2026-27 Date: 04-07-2026

INVITATION FOR RE-TENDER (IFT) - (SHORT TERM) (Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal only)

The Senior Assistant Director of Horticulture (Jayanagara Zone), BSCC, (Referred to as Employer in these documents) invites Tenderers to Implement Works in accordance with KTP Rules 2000, from eligible and experienced Person / Agencies / Firms (Referred to as Tenderers in these documents) registered in Labour Department for Development of Parks and Borewells.

(Standard Tender Document - KW-1, 2, 3 & 4)

Sl. No.	Name of the Work / Category
1	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Yarab Nagar Ward Parks (Ward No. 3). (CAT-I) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 1,73,460.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 2,170.00
2	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Tilak Nagar Ward Parks (Ward No. 8). (CAT-II(A)) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 3,56,300.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 4,455.00
3	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Marenahalli South Ward Parks (Ward No. 13). (SC) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 4,91,960.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 6,150.00
4	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Beguru Ward Parks (Ward No. 36). (Other) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 5,64,500.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 14,113.00
5	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Banashankari Temple Ward Parks (Ward No. 4). (CAT-II(A)) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 5,04,270.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 6,304.00
6	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in NAL Layout Ward Parks (Ward No. 9). (Other) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 7,35,140.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 18,380.00
7	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Kothanur Ward Parks (Ward No. 41). (Other) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 13,80,000.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 34,500.00
8	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Shakambhari Nagar Ward Parks (Ward No. 15). (SC) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 17,91,100.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 22,390.00
9	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Uttarahalli Ward Parks (Ward No. 49). (SC) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 13,05,920.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 23,825.00
10	Maintenance of Horticulture Works and Road Medians in Sarakkhi Ward Parks (Ward No. 16). (CAT-II(A)) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 21,27,190.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 25,000.00
11	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Gowdanapalya Ward Parks (Ward No. 6). (Other) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 24,22,750.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 50,000.00
12	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Vasanthapura Ward Parks (Ward No. 48). (SC) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 28,35,010.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 28,351.00

Sl. No.	Name of the Work / Category
13	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Yelachenahalli Ward Parks (Ward No. 46). (Other) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 29,37,950.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 58,760.00
14	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Gottigere Ward Parks (Ward No. 39). (Other) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 46,89,370.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 93,790.00
15	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Byrasandra Ward Parks (Ward No. 7). (Other) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 49,46,080.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 98,925.00
16	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Anjanapura Ward Parks (Ward No. 40). (Other) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 49,89,860.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 99,800.00
17	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Konanakunte Ward Parks (Ward No. 45). (ST) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 50,89,354.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 50,895.00
18	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Padmanabha Nagar Ward Parks (Ward No. 1). (SC) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 56,18,920.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 56,190.00
19	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in J.P. Nagar Ward Parks (Ward No. 14). (Other) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 61,33,340.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 1,22,670.00
20	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in R.B.I Layout Ward Parks (Ward No. 42). (CAT-II(A)) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 58,86,230.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 58,860.00
21	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Pattabhiramanagar Ward Parks (Ward No. 12). (ST) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 86,06,410.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 86,070.00
22	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Kane Muneshwara Ward Parks (Ward No. 5). (Other) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 1,23,70,072.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 2,00,000.00
23	Maintenance of Horticulture Works in Subramanyapura Ward Parks (Ward No. 51). (Other) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 1,37,54,845.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 2,06,325.00
24	Maintenance of Borewells in Padmanabhanagar Assembly Constituency Parks. (ST) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 44,91,525.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 44,920.00
25	Maintenance of Borewells in Jayanagara Assembly Constituency Parks. (Other) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 49,15,243.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 98,305.00
26	Maintenance of Borewells in Bengaluru South Constituency Parks. (SC) - Amount Put to Tender (in Rs.): 54,23,723.00, EMD Amount (in Rs.): 54,240.00

Calendar of Events: 1) Tender documents can be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> from 07-07-2026, 2) Date of Pre Bid Meeting: 09-07-2026 at 11:30 AM, 3) Date of Opening of Technical Bid: 20-07-2026 upto 4:00 PM, 4) Date of Opening of Financial Bid: 21-07-2026 at 4:30 PM, 5) Date of Opening of Financial Bid: After Approval of Technical Bid. Further details can be had from the above office.

Sd/- Senior Assistant Director of Horticulture, Jayanagara Zone, BSCC.



Luck of the draw: Committee members blindfold a volunteer while drawing lots to determine the race order, before the bullock cart race in Pedgaon village.



Before the charge: A racing team helps a bull get off a transport truck after arriving at the Pedgaon grounds.



Pre-race ritual: Handlers walk a racing bull across the grounds at sunset, easing its muscles after the long journey and preparing it for the next day's race.



On edge: An aerial view captures the intense action of a traditional bullock cart race at Pedgaon, with thousands of spectators lining the dirt tracks as racers kick up dust in a thrilling display of speed and heritage.

Fastest hooves first on the track

Widely regarded as one of Maharashtra's most prestigious bullock cart races, the Hindkesari Bailgada Sharyat once again drew a massive turnout in Pedgaon



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The annual Hindkesari Pedgaon 'Bailgada Sharyat' (bullock cart race) once again showcased Maharashtra's deep-rooted rural sporting tradition, attracting more than 1,000 entrants and thousands of spectators from across the region. Pedgaon has earned a reputation as one of the most prominent and prestigious venues on the State's bullock cart racing circuit, drawing competitors and enthusiasts year after year who vie for unmatched glory.

The event began around 7 a.m., with competitors arriving well before sunrise to prepare their prized bullocks for the day's competition. As the morning progressed, a massive crowd gathered around the *maidaan* (ground), while many spectators occupied a nearby hilltop that offered a panoramic view of the racing track.

The competition unfolded over multiple rounds, testing the speed, endurance and precision. Because of its standing as a highly prestigious race, the stakes were incredibly high; only one grand winner could ultimately claim the coveted top prize of ₹1,21,000 and the legendary honour associated with Pedgaon. Every single

run down the track was crucial. The atmosphere remained electric throughout the day as supporters cheered for their favourite teams and celebrated every strong performance.

The buzz on the ground reached a fever pitch as spectators eagerly anticipated the run of champion bull 'Bakasur'. Across the venue, people spoke of his legendary track record, with many calling him the "Sachin Tendulkar" of the bullock cart racing world for his unmatched speed and remarkable consistency.

Bakasur lived up to his reputation. As he crossed the finish line to win the race, the entire *maidaan* erupted in celebration. The bull was instantly thronged by a massive, ecstatic sea of spectators and fans rushing to catch a glimpse, take photos, and celebrate the victory.

The contest of speed and skill proved once again why it is one of the most anticipated and revered events on Maharashtra's rural sporting calendar.

More than a race, it was a celebration of the State's agricultural heritage, the enduring tradition of Bailgada Sharyat, and the passion that continues to bring competitors and spectators to Pedgaon year after year.



Race ready: A participant guides his bull towards the starting line as spectators crowd the hillside in anticipation of the next round.



Full throttle: A participant races towards the finish line, with speed, endurance and precision.



Waiting game: Spectators gather beyond the finish line, cheering every strong performance throughout the day.



Holding steady: A racer balances on the narrow chassis as his decorated bulls thunder down the dusty track for the Hindkesari title.



Sudden scare: Moments after crossing the finish line, a team of racing bulls veers into the crowd, sending spectators scrambling for safety in a tense few seconds.



Sea of people: Thousands of spectators stream gather around and on the track between rounds. An enduring passion continues to bring competitors and the crowd to Pedgaon every year.