

Current Affairs (15 July 2025)

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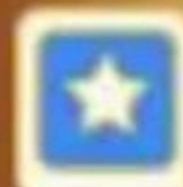
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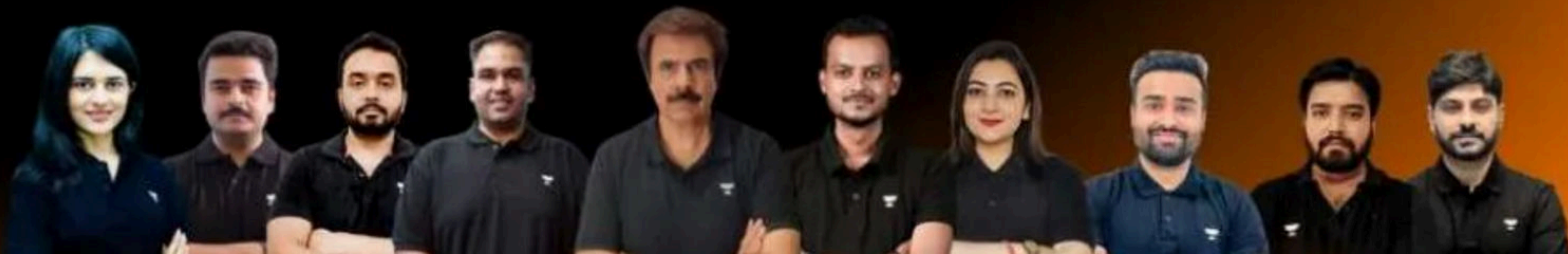


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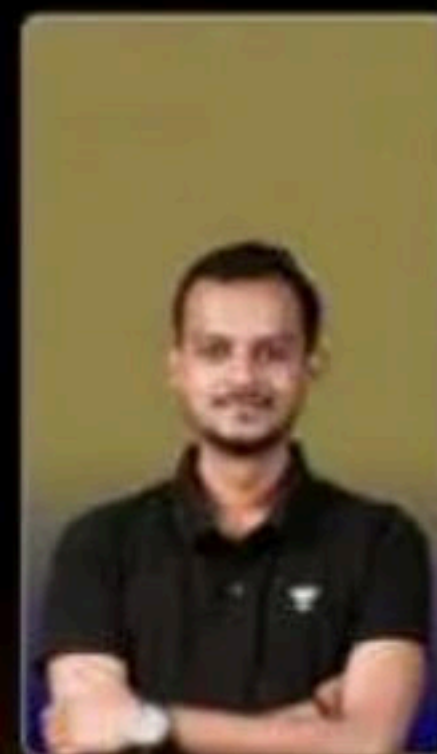
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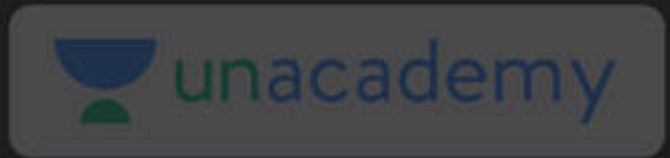
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President appoints one L-G, two Governors
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Capsule carrying Ax-4 crew to splash down today
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The ties can result in a more equitable world
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England beats India by 22 runs, goes 2-1 up
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IN BRIEF

In act of defiance, Omar pays tribute at J&K graveyard
 BENGALURU: Defying the stand of the I-G's administration, J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah reached the Hazrat Nizamuddin Dargah in Srinagar on Monday and paid tributes to the 22 civilians killed during an uprising against the Dogra ruler in 1931. ► Page 13

Murmu inquires after Odisha college student
 BHOJIPATNA: President Droupadi Murmu on Monday visited Ahmedabad in Odisha, where a student has been admitted after a self-immolation bid to protest against alleged neglect of her annual harassment complaint against a teacher. ► Page 4

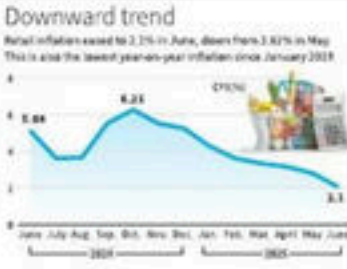
Easing food prices drive inflation down

Retail inflation at a 77-month low of 2.1% in June as food inflation falls for the eighth consecutive month; wholesale inflation eases after 20 months

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
 NEW DELHI

Inflation continued to cool in June with retail inflation coming in at a 77-month low of 2.1% and wholesale inflation registering a contraction after 20 months. In both cases, easing food prices were a major driver of falling inflation, while the drop in crude oil prices further pushed wholesale inflation down.

According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for June released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Monday, the last time the growth in the index was lower was in January 2003. The 0.25% reading in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, was last lower in October 2023.



Within the CPI, the food and beverages category was the only main one to have seen a contraction, of 0.2%, in June. This is compared with inflation of 0.4% in June 2023. This is the eighth consecutive month of easing food inflation.

"In the food basket, there was deflation in key items such as vegetables, pulses, spices, and meat," Rajni Sinha, chief economist at CareEdge Ratings, said. "Looking ahead, food inflation is likely to remain contained, supported by healthy agricultural activity and a favourable base."

CONTINUED ON
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India, China must move forward on de-escalation, Jaishankar tells Wang

Subashini Halder
 NEW DELHI

India and China must move forward on de-escalation at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar told Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing on Monday, indicating that disengagement, which was achieved nine months ago, has still not been followed up by the actual withdrawal of troops.

Mr. Jaishankar is in China for the first time since 2019, and since the Galwan clashes began in 2020. He met with Mr. Wang, and also called on Chinese Vice-President Han Zheng, discussing both the positive momentum in ties and outstanding issues between the two countries.

During the bilateral talks, Mr. Jaishankar called for "normalising" people-to-people ties and avoiding "restrictive trade measures and roadblocks", a reference to Chinese export restrictions on critical minerals.

Mr. Jaishankar also stressed the need for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to address the issue of terrorism with "zero tolerance".

"We have made good progress in the past nine months for the normalisation of our bilateral relations. It is a result of the resolution of friction along the border and our ability to maintain peace and tranquillity there," Mr. Jaishankar said in opening remarks at the meeting with Mr. Wang. "It is now incumbent on us to address other aspects related to the border, including de-escalation."

In talks with Mr. Han, Mr. Jaishankar said that the "continued normalisation of ties can produce mutually beneficial outcomes".

CONTINUED ON
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External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, in Beijing on Monday.

Saroja Devi, pioneer superstar, dies at 87

Ramya Kannan
 CHENNAI

Veteran actor S. Saroja Devi passed away at her residence at Malleswaram in Bengaluru on Monday. She was 87 and died of age-related illness.

Often referred to as the first female superstar of Kannada cinema, Saroja Devi ruled the screens for decades while venturing out to become the top female star in Telugu and Tamil, besides enjoying a few movies in Hindi as well.

She had acted in over 200 films in four languages and was known for her prowess in acting and dancing. Her ability to and intense emotional deliveries made her the favourite of directors.

She is survived by her two children.

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 ► PAGE 12



1938-2024

DGCA orders Boeing fuel switch inspection

Isurjit Chandra
 NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Monday ordered airlines that operate specific Boeing aircraft to carry out inspections on the locking feature of the fuel control switch by July 28, following the interim report into the Air India crash on June 12.

The report had said that there was flipping of the two switches that supply fuel to the engines and subsequently, there was a double-engine failure resulting in the accident.

The UAE-based Etihad airline too directed its crew to "exercise caution" while switches on Boeing 787s while ordering an inspection of their locking mechanism. South Korea was also preparing to order all airlines in the country that operate Boeing aircraft to examine the same, according to Reuters.

The DGCA order will be applicable to Air India's 23 Boeing 787s, Air India Express's 26 Boeing 737 NGs and 49 Boeing Max aircraft; Akasa's 29 Boeing 787s; and an estimated 14 Boeing 737 NGs of SpiceJet. Air India said 50% of its 787 fleet and the entire fleet of Air India Express 737s had already been inspected.

CONTINUED ON
 ► PAGE 12

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 No more "My favorite app showed this fund on top."
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 No more panic selling at the first gruesome fall.
 No more euphoric buying during dazzling peaks.
 No more saying "I don't need advice."
 No more being my own worst enemy.

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 Reason over emotion.
 Discipline over drama.
 Patience over instant results.
 Resilience over running away.
 Commitment over escape.
 Decades over months.

Because I owe myself better.
 I owe my daughter, husband, parents better.
 It will take time. It will be hard.
 Change is never easy.
 Perhaps I will need help.
 But this time I won't let my pride come in the way.
 Of asking for it.

From now, I want to be different.
 Not just from others.
 But from my own earlier self too.
 Yes, I won't get everything right.
 But I know I have to try.

It is time.
To be unaverage.

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IN BRIEF



Rain brings relief from humid weather, more showers likely

Parts of the Capital received rain on Monday evening, bringing much needed relief from the humid weather. However, the showers also led to waterlogging and traffic snarls in some areas. At 8.30 p.m., Pragati Maidan received 4.9 mm of rainfall, while the Saldarjyng observatory, Delhi's primary weather station, registered 3.2 mm of rainfall. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the maximum temperature recorded at Saldarjyng was 33.6-degree Celsius, which is 1.9 degrees below normal. The IMD has forecast more showers for Tuesday with a possibility of thunderstorms in a few areas.

Allocation of ₹1.5 lakh for CM to buy cell phone sparks row

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Monday criticised the Delhi government's recent move to increase the budget allocation for the Chief Minister and Ministers to buy cell phones. The CM and her Cabinet colleagues have been allocated ₹1.5 lakh and ₹1.25 lakh respectively for the purpose. The previous allocation in 2020 was ₹50,000 and ₹15,000 respectively. AAP legislator Anil Joshi criticised the move for "blowing up taxpayers' money on latest phones". In response, Delhi BJP leader Praveen Shankar Kapoor alleged that cars worth ₹1.43 crore were bought between 2015 and 2022 for then CM Arvind Kejriwal.

Delhi to get 7 super-speciality hospitals, be developed into a world-class medical hub: CM

Major transformations in healthcare sector under way, says Rekha Gupta; adds that her govt. will ensure a comfortable Kanwar Vatra for pilgrims, take strict action against those creating obstacles

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI



A group of devotees creating a bridge over the Yamuna river in Delhi while carrying water from the four Ganga. (AP Photo, Anand Anand)

Seven under-construction ICU hospital beds, commissioned by the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government during the pandemic, will be turned into super-speciality medical facilities, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Monday. She added that each facility will be equipped to treat cases of a specific nature, such as cancer, high-risk deliveries, and transplants, which require advanced medical expertise. Ms. Gupta said Delhi's healthcare sector is undergoing "major transformations" and on the way to becoming a "world-class medical hub for people from India and abroad". She also said the government will ensure a "safe and comfortable" Kanwar Vatra for devotees and that the police will

In September 2021 to create 6,000 beds in the Capital over six months. Two of these were to be set up near existing medical facilities - Chacha Nehru Raj Chikitsalaya and GTB Hospital - and the remaining in Sarita Vihar, Raghbir Nagar, Shalimar Bagh, Kirti, and Saldarjyng.

In 2022, Lieutenant-Governor V.K. Saxena had ordered a probe into allegations of irregularities in awarding tenders for the project.

On June 26 this year, the Delhi government's Anti-Corruption Branch registered an FIR against AAP leaders and former Health Ministers Sayendra Jain and Saurabh Iyengar over "irregularities" in the project. The agency alleged that the "₹1.25-crore ICU Hospital Project remains only 50% complete after nearly three years and expenditure of ₹800 crore despite an initial six-month completion timeline". In response, AAP had dared the Delhi government to make the details of the case public.

Bengali-speaking people from Assam detained in Gurugram by Haryana police, claim residents

Abhishek Datta NEW DELHI

The Haryana police have allegedly detained 26 Bengali-speaking people from Assam in Gurugram since Sunday morning on suspicion of being illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, according to eyewitnesses and residents of the area.

The residents alleged that 21 men were picked up from Gurugram's Sector 133 on Sunday, while five others were rounded up from the same spot on Monday. The residents claimed that five detainees were released later in the day, and they boarded trains back to their home towns in Assam. However, the remaining 21 men are still in detention, they said. When reached for comment, the Haryana police did not respond.

Over the past few days, police in several States, including Odisha, Assam, Haryana, and Delhi, have been accused of illegally detaining Bengali-speaking migrant workers on suspicion of being illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and harassing them. "Around 11.30 a.m. on Sunday, I saw the 21 men,

Five detainees were released on Monday and they boarded trains back to their home towns, according to locals

who work as ragpickers, being picked up by policemen dressed in civvies," claimed Anwar Hussain, 45, who lives a block away from the spot in Sector 133 from where the men were allegedly rounded up.

"When the men said that they are Indian citizens, the officers asked for their documents. Before any of them could go back to their rooms to fetch the ID cards, the police bundled them into vans and took them away," alleged Mr. Hussain, who works as a garbage collector and claims to be from Assam.

Another person from the locality, who did not wish to be named, alleged that five more persons were picked up around 9 a.m. on Monday. "Later in the day, five persons were released by the police. All were taken straight to a railway station in Delhi to board a train for Assam," the resident said.

Dispute over parking lands man in hospital with 20% burns

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

A dispute over a parking space in R.K. Puram led to a man being doused with petrol and sustaining 20% burn injuries on Sunday night, the police said on Monday. The injured man has been identified as Raj Chaudhary, a sanitation worker at the Municipal

The 40-year-old man's cousin told the police that the accused had asked them to move their parked car.

Corporation of Delhi. He is being treated at a hospital and his condition is stable, the police added.

The accused, Gopa Prasad, a 42-year-old mechanic, is being questioned by the police. Based on Mr. Chaudhary's statement, a case has been registered against the accused under Section 309D (attempt to murder) of the BNS.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South West) Anil Goyal said a PCR call was received at the R.K. Puram police station on Sunday night about a man being set ablaze. A police team reached the spot and found Mr. Chaudhary with burn injuries. He was then rushed to a trauma centre in the PCR van, the police officer added.

Mr. Chaudhary's cousin, Siddhant Raj, who was at the spot during the incident, told the police that they were sitting inside their parked vehicle near Mr. Prasad's shop when he asked them to move. This led to an argument and the accused poured petrol on Mr. Chaudhary, which instantly sparked a fire, Mr. Raj said. "As per the preliminary investigation, the fire could have been caused by a cigarette lit inside the car," Mr. Goyal said.

DoE to start admissions for EWS students for Class 2 and above against vacant seats

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

The Directorate of Education (DoE) has issued a circular stating that it will initiate online admissions against vacant seats meant for students from the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) for Classes 2 and

above in private and unaided recognised schools running on last-allocated-by-the-DoE basis. The announcement comes after the Delhi High Court allowed the DoE to develop a mechanism to fill the EWS seats. In its July 30 circular, the department directed all District Deputy

Directors to update data on the current vacancies across schools. While the DoE hasn't specified the date when the process will start, a senior official said the admissions will be done for the ongoing academic session as per the process worked out during the past three sessions.

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Protesting teachers' march to West Bengal Secretariat halted amid heavy security

Representatives submit demands to Chief Secretary; protesting teachers press for publication of list of 'unaided' and 'untanned' candidates, demand job reinstatement without reappearing for exam

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Thousands of teaching and non-teaching staff of West Bengal government schools, whose jobs were terminated after the Supreme Court order on April 3, marched to the State Secretariat on Monday. Though they were stopped midway, a group of 20 protesters was allowed to meet Chief Secretary Manoj Patil at Howrah Police Lines in Shibpur.

Monday's march came in response to the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) starting a fresh recruitment process as per the apex court order. The last date to submit the application was to end on Monday but the WBSSC extended it to July 21.

Tight security arrangements were made outside the Secretariat and the surrounding areas. A contingent of police and Rapid Action Force personnel, armed with water cannons, was deployed to stop the protesters. They clashed



Protesters marching towards the State Secretariat in Kolkata on Monday. (ANAND BHASKAR)

with the police at several locations while trying to cross the barricades.

According to the representatives of 'Jogya Sikkhak Sikkhika Adhikar Manch' (Deserving Teachers' Rights Forum), they did not get the form for fresh recruitment. "The government is standing beside the people who acquired jobs dishonestly through money, and the ones who deserved it through merit are being deprived and ignored. This is a shame on the administration," Chintan Mondal, a representative of JSAM, said during the march.

The protesters have been demanding that the government publish the OMR optical mark recognition sheets of the 2016 examination, along with a complete list of 'unaided' candidates, and an unconditional reinstatement of their jobs.

"The Chief Secretary and Education Secretary were present at the meeting, but the meeting remained inconclusive," Mohan Mondal, a representative of the JSAM, said.

The protesters said the Chief Secretary only gave them 10 minutes to discuss the issue, and the government is conducting its own internal meeting with the representatives. They vowed to boycott all income meetings if no concrete solution on publishing the list of "unaided" appointees is reached by Monday midnight.

Meanwhile, Leader of the Opposition, Savitri Adhikari, wrote a letter addressing the teachers on social media and stated that the BJP stands by them.

"Today, once again, your call for the National assignment remained unfulfilled... [Chief Minister] Manu Bhanu knows very well how to scatter your movement with deceit and false promises," Mr. Adhikari wrote on X.

Responding to it, Trinamool Congress spokesperson Kamal Ghosh said that political parties are trying to use the teachers' cause to do politics. "The State government is trying to resolve things. We are with the deserving teachers," Mr. Ghosh said.

U.P. CM reviews preparations for Kanwar Yatra

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

Chairing a high-level meeting in Lucknow to review preparations for the Kanwar Yatra, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday directed officials to ensure surveillance in sensitive areas amid the rush of devotees. The Chief Minister stressed the need for adequate arrangements along the yatra route, including cleanliness, medical services, drinking water, canteens, rest areas, and toilets.

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W.B. workers' detention: HC to hear pleas tomorrow

Pranav Tripathi
KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court said it would hear two habeas corpus petitions alleging illegal detention of migrant workers from West Bengal in Odisha and Delhi on Wednesday.

However, the court was verbally informed by one of

Marathoner Fauja Singh dies at 114 in accident

Pranav Tripathi
CHANDIGARH

Veteran marathon runner Fauja Singh died on Monday after being hit by an unidentified vehicle while out for a walk in Punjab's Jalandhar district. He was 114.

His demise was confirmed by author Khushwant Singh, who spoke to

Three schools in Delhi receive hoax bomb threats

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Three schools in Delhi received bomb threats on Monday morning, which were later declared a hoax. The threats were sent via e-mail to the Navy Children School in Chanakypuri and two CBSE schools in Sector 8, Dwarka, and President Vihar, the police said. The Delhi Fire Service said a fire tender was rushed to each school after learning about the threats.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Aditi Singh said the cyber police experts are ascertaining the source of the email. "Dwarka North police station received a call informing about a bomb threat at the CBSE school here. Local police, sniffer dogs and bomb disposal squads reached the school and conducted due checks. Nothing suspicious was found," Mr. Singh said, adding that security has been tightened at the school.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CONSTRUCTION DIVISION (E, W) U.P. JAL NIGAM (URBAN) DELHI

Letter No. 1425/Work-2/187 Dated 08.07.2022

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Tender for "Construction of 01 No New Sub-station (T.W. No. 21) 200kV/200kV size and its allied works including pipe & accessories at Team Delhi Signature City East, Team situated in the vicinity of UPSIDA under Durgam Chaudhary" is invited by U.P. Jal Nigam (Urban) that shall be purchased from 14.07.2022 to 24.07.2022. Last date of receipt of tender is 25.07.2022 up to 15:00 hrs and tender shall be opened on 25.07.2022 at 15:00 hrs. onwards at office of the Superintending Engineer, Construction Circle (E, W) U.P. Jal Nigam (Urban) Shalimar. The cost of tender document is 1,000/- INR. GST for each tender. And/or conditions shall be upon 10% tender document.

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THE HINDU PRESENTS SCHOOL BUZZ

FOUNDATION DAY CELEBRATED

Delhi Public School Rohini celebrated their Foundation Day, marking three decades of educational excellence and community engagement. The event began with a ceremonial lamp lighting, music, and a star performance showcasing mental well-being. Highlights included a sports showcase, a talk show featuring alumni and parents, and a fire safety drill. Alumni Divyanshu Gandhi and Aryan Gupta shared insights on personal growth. The Principal addressed critical thinking and launched the new school website and social media presence. The day concluded with a flash mob, the National Anthem in Sign Language, and a refreshing get-together inviting students to pluck grapes.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD CEREMONY

Gyaneshwari School, Noida, held their Academic Excellence Award Ceremony to honour Shineyans who excelled in the CBSE Board examinations. The event was graced by CBSE Regional Director Shrinani S. Dhanraj Anand and ADM Shri Rajesh Kumar, Chairman DSI ML. Agrawal appreciated students and teachers for their dedication. School topper Akanksha Chhabra was felicitated for scoring 99.75% alongside other achievers Bharvi Dhillon, Furlu Gupta, Saanvi Dasgupta, and Aaravya Gupta. Sports achievers were also recognized. Principal Mrs. Shivani Bharti expressed gratitude to a contributor, celebrating Gyaneshwari's commitment to academic excellence and holistic development.

BHARTIYA BHASHA SUMMER CAMP

The Mathuram School, Gt. Noida (N), successfully conducted a vibrant Bharatiya Bhasha Summer Camp in alignment with the National Education Policy's objectives. With enthusiastic participation from 120 students, the camp focused on promoting multilingual and cultural appreciation through the Bengali language. Students learned basic greetings, conversational phrases, and explored Bengali art, dance, music, and cuisine. A grand stage performance marked the culmination of their learning, with each participant receiving a certificate. The initiative not only enhanced language skills but also celebrated India's rich linguistic heritage, fostering cultural unity and awareness among young learners in an engaging environment.

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

Sl. No.	NAME OF THE TENDER	ESTIMATED DATE OF OPENING OF BIDS (PMD)	ESTIMATED DATE OF RECEIPT OF BIDS (PMD)	MODE OF RECEIPT OF BIDS (PMD)	MODE OF BIDDING (PMD)	MODE OF BIDDING (PMD)
1	CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD AND BRIDGE AT...	08/07/2022	08/07/2022

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IN BRIEF



Complaint against MNS chief over 'provocative' remarks

A complaint was filed on Monday against Maheshwari Navinman Seta (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray over alleged comments made during a speech at Mumbai on July 5. The nephew of Bal Thackeray, Mr. Raj, allegedly said that "if people from other States are beaten, they should be beaten, but no violence should be made". A written complaint was filed by three lawyers, Prakash Kumar Mishra, Nityanand Sharma and Ashish Rai to investigate the statements made in the speech. The lawyers asked the authorities concerned to take legal action against Mr. Raj so that "public peace" is not disturbed.

SC nixes appointment of 1,158 teachers, librarians in Punjab

The Supreme Court on Monday quashed the appointment of 1,158 assistant professors and librarians in Punjab observing "total arbitrariness" in the selection process. A bench of Justices Sanjay Kumar and R. Vinod Chandran set aside the September 2024 decision of the Division Bench of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which upheld the appointments. The process began in October 2023 when the Punjab Director of Higher Education issued a public notice inviting online applications for assistant professor posts for various subjects and for librarians ahead of the State Assembly elections. The recruitment later came under legal scrutiny.

Murmu inquires after Odisha college student, meets mother

Even as the 20-year-old's condition in AIIMS Bhubaneswar remains critical, principal of Balasore college arrested, govt. asks all colleges across the State to form internal committees for sexual harassment within 24 hours; Governor seeks report

Satyansunder Barik
Bhubaneswar

President Droupadi Murmu on Monday visited the burn unit at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, where a college student is undergoing treatment after self-immolating in protest on July 12 over the reported neglect of her complaint of alleged harassment by a teacher at F.M. Autonomous College in Balasore. Soon after addressing the fifth convocation ceremony of AIIMS, Bhubaneswar in the evening, she expressed her desire to visit the burn unit and - accompanied by Chief Minister Mohan Mahanta and Union Education Minister Charanmukha Pradhan - met the woman's mother and relatives. The 20-year-old remains on life support.



Members of Biju Odisha Jansata Dal protesting in Balasore on Monday after a college student set herself on fire for allegedly being denied justice over 'sexual harassment' by a teacher.

Government had sought a report from Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Saraj on the circumstances leading to the incident and the measures being taken in response. The woman's condition, "I was taken to my daughter's bedside along with other family members. Her entire body was bandaged. Doctors said chances of survival are always slim in cases with over 60% burn. My daughter has suffered more than 90% burn injuries," said the woman's father, his voice choking with emotion. The opposition Biju Jansata Dal on Monday staged a massive demonstration at the main gate of F.M. Autonomous College in Balasore demanding justice for the college student. The State Congress also held a march towards the Balasore District Collector's office and demanded a judicial probe into the incident. "If you are in distress, please call Kisan (0800-599-0000) or Aarav (0824466720 helpline.)"

Cong. seeks resignation of Chief Minister

The Hindu Bureau
New Delhi

The Congress on Monday hit out at the BJP's "double-engine government" in Odisha and demanded a judicial probe into the self-immolation attempt by a 20-year-old college student after allegedly being denied justice in a sexual harassment complaint lodged against her teacher. The party also sought the resignation of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Mahanta over the issue. Addressing a joint press conference with Congress MLAs from Baramahal, Sakti Firdous, All India Mahila Congress chief Alka Lamba urged President Droupadi Murmu, who is on a visit to the State, to meet the woman and ensure that she receives justice. "The PM should break his silence and answer to the people of the State," Ms. Firdous said.

Punjab govt. tables Bill on strict action for sacrilege

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

To ensure stringent punishment for those committing the crime of sacrilege, the Punjab Cabinet on Monday approved the Punjab Prevention of Offences Against Holy Scriptures Bill, 2024, which was later tabled in the State Assembly. The Bill was introduced by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and a discussion on it would be held on July 15.

Life imprisonment

"The Bill mandates strict punishment, extending up to life imprisonment, for the destruction of scriptures" including Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Bhagavad Gita, Holy Bible, Quran Sharif, and other revered scriptures. With the enactment of this law, the State seeks to further strengthen the ethos of communal harmony, brotherhood, peace, and unity," a statement from the Chief Minister's Office said. The statement also said until now, no specific legislation existed that directly addressed offences against holy granths, often resulting in culprits escaping serious punishment after committing sacrilegious offences.

Implement U.P. school merger plan, says Adityanath; bid to shut down institutions: Cong.

Mayank Kumar
Lucknow

In a bid to enhance the quality of education and ensure optimal utilisation of resources, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday called for the effective implementation of the school pairing system, which was initiated in June. Chairing a meeting of the Basic Education Department, the CM stressed the need to execute the plan "with a long-term, inclusive vision that benefits students, teachers, and parents". According to a statement, Mr. Adityanath said schools with over 50 students should function as independent institutions and that smaller (pre-primary) schools should be set up in school buildings that became vacant due to the pairing system. It involves merging schools with less than 50 students with nearby institutions. "The transition must be done within a fixed time frame, with no room for delay or negligence," he stated. The CM directed school management committees, comprising principals and village heads, to take full responsibility of ensuring the smooth transition. He said the implementation of the School Cluster Addition is needed to ensure that every child is enrolled in school and attends regularly.

The system, initiated in June, involves merging schools with less than 50 students with nearby institutes

"Financial aid of ₹1,200 to buy uniforms, shoes, socks, stationery, and study material would be transferred directly to the bank accounts of the parents of students enrolled in co-educational schools without delay," the statement added. "Anti-poor move" The move has drawn flak from teachers and Opposition parties, which have termed it "anti-poor". Congress leader Prakash Ka Gandhi Vadra alleged that the BJP government is set to shut down 5,000 schools in the name of merger, which would affect the right to education and harm Dalits, backward classes, tribals, minorities, and the poor. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court on Monday agreed to lit for hearing a plea challenging the government's merger plan.

CBI team begins probe into custodial death of guard in T.N.

The Hindu Bureau
MADRAS/CHENNAI

A six-member CBI team began its investigation on Monday into the custodial death of B. Ajith Kumar, a temple security guard in Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu. As the CBI registered a First Information Report on July 12 against the police personnel responsible for the death of the youth, a team visited the Adikalai Karthi Ayyanar Murugan Hindu Kalasaram Temple at Madapuram. The team, headed by Deputy Superintendent of Police Mohit Kumar, also visited the "secluded" place behind the office of Assistant Commissioner of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department, Thavalakulam Kamal, and other places where the youth was taken by a special police team. Sivaganga Superintendent of Police (in charge) G. Chandrasekhar told The Hindu that the Madras High Court had ordered the Madurai and Sivaganga Collectors and SPs to provide the CBI officers with assistance required for the investigation. However, he accompanied the team to various locations. Material evidence After the team members arrived at the CBI office in Madurai, they collected the material evidence and the report of S. John Sundaresh Senthil, Fourth Additional District Judge, Madurai, from the Registrar of the Madurai Bench of the High Court. Hearing a batch of pleas on the custodial death on July 8, the Madurai Bench ordered the CBI to appear in an investigating officer within a week to take over the probe and submit a final report by August 20.

Maharashtra clears Bill to bring drug peddling under ambit of organised crime

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The bill amending the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) to include drug peddling and narcotics-related offences was passed on Monday in the Maharashtra Legislative Council nearly a week after it was cleared by the Assembly on July 9. Announcing that the amended Bill has been passed within 12 days of the Maharashtra Legislative Council, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis promising that drug peddlers would be booked under MCOCA, Minister of State for Home Affairs, Yashraj Kadam said, "We are bringing drug-related activities under this law as things are getting worse. Drug-related crimes will be treated as organised crime." The passage of the Bill, once it receives the Governor's assent, will make it tough for drug peddlers to obtain bail after arrest. At present, those involved in drug trade are booked under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1988. The MCOCA has several stringent provisions, including extended detention periods for accused, stricter bail conditions, and the admissibility of confessions made to police officers. Also, police get a longer period of 90 days to file a charge-sheet compared to the standard 60 days under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita for serious offences. The government is also mulling exploring the possibility of lowering the legal age for defining 'juvenile' in drug-related cases to 16, similar to cases of gruesome rape cases. "We are also considering whether to hold individuals connected to the minors accountable and charge them," Mr. Fadnis, who holds the Home portfolio, told the Assembly on Monday while replying to a question on a calling attention motion. During the discussion, Shiv Seta (BJP) leader Varun Sardesai raised concern over the involvement of foreign nationals in drug peddling in his constituency. Replying to him, the Chief Minister said the state government is in the process of forming standard operating procedures to deport foreign nationals involved in drug-related cases. (With input from PTD)

'Marriage is spiritual union, not a legal battle': Bombay HC flags misuse of matrimonial laws

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

The Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court has quashed a criminal case involving serious charges of cruelty, unnatural sex, and dowry harassment, observing that marriage is a sacred institution and should not be reduced to prolonged legal battles that serve no constructive purpose. A Division Bench comprising Justices Nitin K. Ladhoo and M.M. Neelkar in an order dated July 8, 2025, that was made available on Monday, allowed three connected criminal applications seeking to quash a First Information Report (FIR) registered at Belzard police station, Nagpur, under Sections 498A, 377 read with 34 of the Cr.P.C.

The Nagpur Bench stated that ending litigation early is essential in cases where reconciliation is no longer possible

the Indian Penal Code and Sections 3 and 4 of the Dowry Prohibition Act. The charges were levelled by a woman against her husband, sisters-in-law, and a maternal aunt in law following a matrimonial dispute. "Recent trend" "Needless to mention that considering the recent trend of filing FIRs against many persons on the husband's side, it has become imperative to look at matters of matrimonial disputes from a different angle, and therefore, if the parties settle their disputes amicably in order to live peacefully, it is the duty of the court to encourage such action by entertaining the prayer for quashing of the FIR, charge-sheet or criminal proceedings," the order said. The Bench noted that the parties had reached a mutual settlement, culminating in a decree of divorce passed by the family court on July 1, 2025, under Section 13(b) of the Special Marriage Act. The wife also appeared before the court and gave her consent for quashing of the criminal proceedings, stating she wished to move forward in life. The Bench observed that although the offences were non-compoundable, the court was empowered under Section 482 of the Code of Criminal Procedure to quash proceedings if doing so would serve the ends of justice and prevent abuse of the legal process. The court stated that in cases where reconciliation is no longer possible, ending litigation early is essential to protect the mental and emotional well-being of both the parties. "Not just a contract" "Marriages are not merely a social contract, but a spiritual union that binds two souls together. However, nowadays these sacred marriages receive setbacks in the above circumstances. The distress, disharmony and lack of adjustment among the persons lead to conflicts," the court observed.

Famous for its rhinos, Kaziranga records high diversity of grassland birds in survey

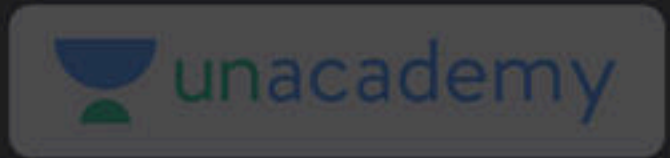
The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Researchers have found a great diversity of grassland bird species in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve. In the first such survey of its kind conducted between March 18 and May 25, a team of forest officials, bird experts, scientists, and conservationists recorded 43 grassland species across Kaziranga's three wildlife divisions. The survey report was released on Monday, marking a milestone in the documentation and protection of grassland-dependent bird species in the Brahmaputra floodplains. They included the critically endangered Bengal florican, the endangered Fairy wrenbird, and the swamp grass babbler. Among the remaining 40 species, six were in the vulnerable category - the black-breasted parrotbill, marsh babbler, swamp francolin, jerdon's babbler, slender-billed babbler, and bearded grassbird. "A highlight of this survey is that the Fairy wrenbird, locally known as rukaru chorai, is breeding successfully. This remarkable bird, a master nest-builder stopovers, is a vital indicator of grassland health," Assam's Environment Minister, Chandu Mohan Patowary, said while releasing the report. The 174 sq. km Kaziranga is a mix of grasslands, forestlands, and wetlands. "The study is significant because wet grasslands are not very well surveyed in India. Kaziranga's grassland bird diversity can, thus, be compared in terms of species richness with the dry grasslands of Gujarat and Rajasthan," the national park's director, Sonali Ghosh, said.



A variety of bird's species in the Kaziranga Range of Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve. (PTI via ANI/ANI)

New recording tool A key highlight of the study was the deployment of passive acoustic recorders, enabling non-invasive and continuous monitoring even in inaccessible or high-risk areas. This approach significantly improved species detection, especially of shy and cryptic birds, enhancing the overall accuracy and depth of the findings.



Shri Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

Shri Mohan Charan Majhi
Chief Minister, Odisha

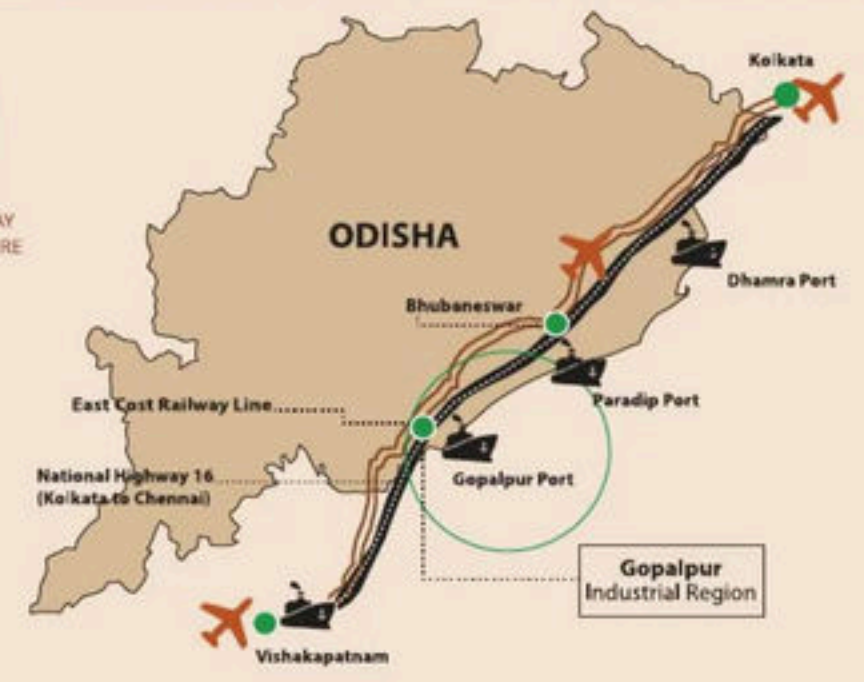
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Can't stop Kerala from withdrawing its case against Governor: SC

Krishnakant Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday made it clear to the Centre that it may have no option but acquiesce to Kerala's wish to withdraw two petitions filed against its Governor's delay in clearing crucial bills.

Appearing before a Bench headed by Justice P.S. Narasimha, senior advocate K.K. Venugopal and advocate C.R. Rao, representing Kerala, repeated a request of many months to permit them to withdraw the case. They submitted that a judgment delivered by the court on April 8 in an identical case concerning the Tamil Nadu Governor has become the established law and would apply to Kerala too.

The April 8 judgment has prescribed a maximum three-month deadline for both the President and Governors to act on State Bills sent to them for approval or reserved for consideration under Article 200 and 201, respectively, of the Constitution.

"Infrastructure plea"

Mr. Venugopal said he was under instruction from the Kerala government to submit in court that the April judgment has made the State's petition infructuous. However, the State's plea was met with stiff opposition from the Centre, represented by both Attorney General K. Venkatesh and Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta. The top law officers objected to the plea to withdraw.

The court agreed to list the case on July 25.



They informed the court that the April 8 judgment was the subject of a pending Presidential Reference. The law officers said the court ought to wait for the Constitution Bench to hear the Reference.

Nine killed as lorry carrying mangoes overturns in A.P.

The lorry was loaded with around 40 tonnes of the fruit, with 20 workers seated atop the vehicle; initial investigation suggests negligence on the part of driver as cause for accident



Police say the driver lost control of the vehicle at a hairpin bend and overturned. Critical moment

K. Umashankar
RAJAMPETTA

Nine people — five women and four men — were killed on the spot and 40 critically injured when a lorry carrying a load of mangoes to a pulp industry overturned near Reddipalle Chervu in Pullampeta mandal in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh late on Sunday night. They were agricultural labourers engaged in mango harvesting.

The lorry driver and two children, both aged under 10, escaped unhurt.

The accident occurred when the driver of the lorry, en route from Rajampeta to Rayachoti, lost control of the vehicle. At

to the early hours of Monday. An earthshaker was brought to pull the lorry out of a ditch and to clear the debris.

The victims — all aged between 25 and 50 — hailed from Sottiganga village in Rayachoti mandal and were reportedly related to one another.

Preliminary investigations suggest that the accident may have been caused by the driver's negligence and reckless driving.

District in-charge Minister B.C. Janardhan Reddy directed medical personnel to ensure quality medical care for the injured. He said the government would provide all necessary support to the bereaved families.

Death toll from spurious toddy rises to 9

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The death toll in the adulterated toddy case in Hyderabad has risen to nine, following the death of P. Gangamoni, 42, who died of complications on Monday. She was among the 23 patients admitted to Gandhi Hospital after consuming allegedly adulterated toddy.

Of the 16 persons currently undergoing treatment at Gandhi Hospital, two patients, G. Bethalaiah and B. Laxmalah, were discharged, while another, Ch. Sanyasimoni, left the hospital against medical advice. No new admissions have been recorded since 1 p.m. on July 12, said a source at the hospital.

At Gandhi Hospital, four are in a critical condition, including 61-year-old Vadda Saganamma of Hyderabad; 47-year-old K. Nirmala; 55-year-old B. Latha from Kakatpally, and 26-year-old Manjula Swarna of Jagadhrigutta. They were placed on ventilator support, oxygen therapy and isotropic medication.

Meanwhile, a statement issued on Monday by Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) stated that 36 patients were admitted in total following consumption of adulterated toddy. Of these, 23 are currently undergoing treatment.

Thirteen patients were discharged in the last three days, and seven others were declared fit for discharge on Monday. A hospital spokesperson said a multi-specialty team is monitoring the condition of the patients.

One patient was admitted to NIMS on Sunday with diarrhoea and low blood pressure. She had earlier received treatment for a week at a private facility in Kakatpally and is now under observation.

The Excise Department and police are continuing their investigation into the source of toddy. Those arrested in connection with its supply and distribution are being questioned.

Sigachi plant blast: death toll rises to 45

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

The death toll in the Sigachi Industries explosion climbed to 45 after a 23-year-old employee, Tarak, died from injuries while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Chandragarh on Monday.

Srinivas Reddy, Patancheru Government Hospital Superintendent, confirmed that Tarak died from injuries on Monday afternoon. Meanwhile, eight workers are still 'missing' since the June 20 blast at the company's facility in Puchampylam, in Sangareddy district. Despite extensive rescue efforts, eight workers remain unaccounted for.

Health authorities have warned people to avoid visiting patients in hospitals, particularly in Palakkad and Malappuram districts, in the wake of an increased Nipah scare. To minimise risk, hospitals are limiting attendants to one person per patient and mandating masks for all staff, patients, and caregivers.

As health officials compiled the contact list of the 16-year-old man from Kumaramangalam, near Manamarkad, who died due to Nipah at a private hospital in Perinthalmanna on Saturday evening, it

Amid Nipah scare, people warned against visiting hospitals in Malappuram, Palakkad

The Hindu Bureau
PALAKKAD

Health authorities have warned people to avoid visiting patients in hospitals, particularly in Palakkad and Malappuram districts, in the wake of an increased Nipah scare. To minimise risk, hospitals are limiting attendants to one person per patient and mandating masks for all staff, patients, and caregivers.

As health officials compiled the contact list of the 16-year-old man from Kumaramangalam, near Manamarkad, who died due to Nipah at a private hospital in Perinthalmanna on Saturday evening, it was revealed that he had mainly used KSRTC buses for travel.

The man's family members, including his wife, children and grandchildren, are among the primary contacts. As a precaution, the school attended by the grandchildren has been shut down.

Before his death at the Perinthalmanna hospital, the man had visited three other private hospitals for treatment, which may result in a lengthy contact list. As many as 12 persons who came into contact with him in the last three weeks were traced, and a route map was made by examining, among other things, surveillance camera footage.

609 under observation

The number of people under observation for Nipah rose to 609 on Monday. When 207 of them are in Malappuram district, 296 are in Palakkad, 114 in Kerala and two in Ernakulam.

Eight persons are under treatment in intensive care units in Malappuram, when five are under treatment in Palakkad. Health Minister Vesna George said that 72 quarantined persons tested negative for Nipah in Malappuram. She said 38 persons in the State continued to be in the highest risk category and 13 in high risk category.

Health officials are carrying out a fever survey. As many as 17 wards in the vicinity of Kumaramangalam were declared as containment zones, covering areas within a three-kilometre radius of the Nipah-infected person's residence.

Shops there can function from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. There are restrictions on people from outside entering the zones.



Nipah management: Hospital staff are limiting attendants to one person per patient and mandating masks for all visitors and staff. (A. Prasad)

Congress national OBC panel to meet in Bengaluru today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The first meeting of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) advisory council of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) will begin in Bengaluru on Tuesday.

The two-day meeting will deliberate on strategies for the party to win back OBC voters across the country and comes months before the crucial election in Bihar.

Among the agenda for discussion will be the caste census and provisions of Article 164 (b) in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha. The

We are against religion-based quota, not BC reservation: Telangana BJP

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP president N. Rameshwar Rao, who is currently on a tour to Nagaland, on Monday reiterated the party's stand against the inclusion of 30% quota for Muslims in the 42% Backward Class quota.

The former MLC said the Supreme Court had rejected reservations based on religion and said BCs would be losing out if Muslims were included in the category. "We are not against BC quota but only against the quota based on religion," Mr. Rao said.

Issue new ration cards

He also demanded that the party government had not been giving due credit to the Bhamu grain supply and had even removed the Prime Minister's photo from the ration shops.

The BJP leader also warned against restricting the issuance of new ration cards to ruling party followers as it being alleged in certain quarters. He also criticised the BRS government for not issuing a single new ration card during its two terms in power.

Laying into the current government, he said, "They have been in power for 18 months but are yet to act on the pending SKBC and D&I irrigation projects. The party is taking the local body polls in all seriousness and will contest for all posts from the village level to the district level."

party government had not been giving due credit to the Bhamu



Party headliner: Telangana BJP president N. Rameshwar Rao with supporters in Surajpet on Monday. (S. Srinivas)

Moitra raises questions over 'illegal' detention of workers from West Bengal in Chhattisgarh

Shubhanshu Sankar
RAJPUH

The recent detention of migrant labourers from West Bengal's Nadia district by the Chhattisgarh police in Kondagan district of Bihar region has led to a war of words between a Trinamool Congress MP and the State police.

TMC MP Malina Moitra has called it "state-sponsored terrorism and kidnapping" by the Chhattisgarh government, police, while the police claim it was done as a "preventive measure".

Let off on Monday

Chhattisgarh Police said the men were detained on July 12 as they were staying in the district for a prolonged period without providing documents that the law mandates, but were let off on Monday.

In a video posted on X, Mr. Moitra said Chhattisgarh Police had detained nine men, all residents of her constituency (Krishnaganj, West Bengal), despite their names and IDs, they did not produce any and started misbehaving with us. So we produced them before the local SDM (Deputy Collector) and he ordered their preventive detention under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Section 128 (security for good behaviour from suspected persons) for two to three days," Mr. Kumar said, adding that they were let off on Monday and it was up to them to decide where to stay.



Malina Moitra. FILE PHOTO

"Didn't inform police"

Responding to the allegations, Mr. Kumar told The Hindu that the workers were residing in Kondagan for the past three months but had not informed the local police station despite repeated notices.

"We found them during patrolling day before yesterday. When we asked for their names and IDs, they did not produce any and started misbehaving with us. So we produced them before the local SDM (Deputy Collector) and he ordered their preventive detention under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Section 128 (security for good behaviour from suspected persons) for two to three days," Mr. Kumar said, adding that they were let off on Monday and it was up to them to decide where to stay.

Telangana and A.P. to discuss water-sharing in Delhi tomorrow

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, will discuss water-related issues in New Delhi on July 16 at a meeting to be facilitated by Union Minister for Jal Shakti C.R. Patel.

The Telangana government has decided to mount pressure on the Centre for its "rightful share" of the Krishna and Godavari river waters. Mr. Chandrababu Naidu, will discuss water-related issues in New Delhi on July 16 at a meeting to be facilitated by Union Minister for Jal Shakti C.R. Patel.

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N. Chandrababu Naidu with A. Revanth Reddy in Hyderabad. (A. Prasad)

Awaking clearances

On the Palamuru Rangareddy and Dindi Lift Irrigation Schemes (LIS), he said these were yet to get clearances and water allocation, including 45 cusec of State's additional share in Krishna waters in lieu of Andhra Pradesh's diversion of Godavari water to the Krishna Delta.

He reminded Mr. Patel that the Prime Minister's Office had in 2010 proposed national project status to the Dindi LIS to address the fluoride problem.

The issue State clearance for Saravali Sarakka Project (Thapalakudem Barrage) was also pending (despite Telangana's readiness to pay compensation for submergence) (S. Srinivas)

Chhattisgarh was not giving a no-objection letter.

He alleged that Andhra Pradesh was diverting "a huge quantity (8-10 tmc ft a day) of Krishna water" to the non-benefit areas

UTTAR PRADESH: A BEACON OF RESILIENCE IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT



In the heart of India, Uttar Pradesh stands as a beacon of resilience, tackling the challenges of natural and human-induced disasters with unwavering determination. The Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (UPSDMA), established under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, and led by the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, is at the forefront of creating a safer, disaster-resilient state. Through a proactive, multi-hazard, technology-driven, and community-focused approach, the Uttar Pradesh government ensures that its citizens are protected, supported, and empowered in times of crisis.



Vision of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath
"To build a disaster-resilient Uttar Pradesh within the framework of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 10-Point Agenda for Disaster Risk Reduction and post-2015 global frameworks on disaster management and to empower communities for disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response"

Before 2017: Disaster management in UP faced outdated planning, weak early warning systems, poor infrastructure, frequent flood crises, low community preparedness, and slow, manual relief delivery.

After 2017: A Mission-Mode Approach to Saving Lives

Modernised Infrastructure
 State Emergency Operation Centres upgraded to 24x7 high-tech facility with GIS-based decision support

Advanced Early Warning Systems
 Partnership with IMD and CWC for real-time flood and weather forecasting

Timely Compensation Disbursement
 Since 2017, the Uttar Pradesh government has ensured faster, streamlined compensation for disaster-affected communities. The UPSDMA's 2023 plan emphasizes time-bound delivery through coordination between the Relief Commissioner, district authorities, and the State Executive Committee

Relief Commissioner & UPSDMA: A Holistic Approach to Disaster Management

The Office of the Relief Commissioner, in partnership with UPSDMA, is committed to a strong disaster management framework:

- **Prevention & Mitigation:** Reducing risks by integrating disaster risk reduction into development plans.
- **Preparedness:** Enhancing community awareness and training for disasters like floods, earthquakes, and cyclones.

Uttar Pradesh: Pioneering Disaster Resilience

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Uttar Pradesh is transforming its disaster management framework to ensure safety and resilience for its citizens. The state is proactively addressing challenges posed by floods, heatwaves, lightning strikes, and other calamities through innovative strategies and robust preparedness.

- **Strengthened Disaster Response:** The Uttar Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) conducted a statewide mock drill on June 28, 2025, across 118 tehsils in 44 districts, simulating flood scenarios like boat accidents and relief camp operations to enhance readiness.
- **Policy Advocacy:** Proposals submitted to the 16th Finance Commission aim to revise the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) and State Disaster Mitigation Fund (SDMF) norms, advocating for the inclusion of state-specific disasters such as heatwaves, lightning, and snakebites. Recognizing these localized risks will ensure timely support, better preparedness, and targeted mitigation efforts, ultimately saving more lives and building a safer.
- **Monsoon Preparedness:** The state is proactively ensuring the safety of residents and livestock with well-planned, swift relocation to safer zones, highlighting its commitment to reducing flood risks.
- **Expert Deployment:** Twenty One disaster management specialists have been assigned to the state headquarters to bolster flood response strategies, ensuring rapid and effective action during crises.

Monsoon Alert

Stay Safe from Floods & Lightning

As monsoon rains arrive, so do the risks of floods and lightning strikes. Protect your family with these simple but vital precautions:

Flood Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Identify safe high ground in advance ☑ Stock dry food, medicines, and drinking water ☑ Keep important documents in waterproof bags ☑ Use boiled or chlorinated water ☒ Avoid food or water touched by floodwater 	Lightning Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Take shelter in a concrete building or vehicle ☑ Avoid windows, electrical devices, ponds, and trees ☒ Don't touch metal objects or stand near electric poles
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Download the Damini/Sachel App for early lightning alerts. Be alert.

BE READY: STAY SAFE THIS MONSOON



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UTTAR PRADESH : PREPARED TODAY, RESILIENT TOMORROW



Too close for comfort

Canada is looking for new friends after the Trump-induced uncertainty

In July 80, U.S. President Donald Trump announced a 25% tariff on Canadian imports, despite Ottawa rescinding a 3% digital services tax (GST) that was to go into effect on June 30. Mr. Trump had dubbed this as an 'attack on American firms'. Canada expected that it would generate about \$5 billion from DST on revenues from Canadian source digital services over five years during it back to January 1, 2022. The 3% tax was imposed despite ongoing trade talks, which Canada was hoping would result in a trade deal by July 21 – as agreed upon between Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Mr. Trump on the sidelines of the G7 summit in mid-June. The new 3% tax, that was conveyed to Mr. Carney through a letter, which Mr. Trump sent to more than 20 U.S. trading partners, is likely to exempt items compliant under the 2018 United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. Canada and the U.S. are each other's largest trading partners. In fact, despite Mr. Trump's constant refrain about the flow ofentanyl, the opioid coming through America's northern borders (less than 0.2% of what lands in the U.S.), what has rattled the American President is the trade surplus of about \$63 billion in Canada's favour. This on-again-off again approach to tariffs as a stick against America's trading partners has forced even steadfast allies such as Canada to scramble to diversify. Hours before receiving Mr. Trump's letter, Mr. Carney posted a picture of himself with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on X, saying, "... the world is turning to reliable economic partners like Canada."

America's action against Canada brings to mind a similar episode about a decade ago between close neighbours, India and Nepal. India closed land ports following the enactment of Nepal's new Constitution citing fears about the treatment of the minority Madhesi community that has had close ties in India. This action crippled Nepal's land-locked economy that was entirely reliant on Indian ports such as Kolkata and Visakhapatnam for its trade. Acute fuel and medicine shortages followed. Nepal's GDP collapsed from 3.2% in FY20 to 0.2% in FY21, and Nepal's began harbouring a deep resentment toward India. New Delhi's move forced Nepal to recalibrate its foreign and economic policy, eventually leading it to join China's Belt and Road Initiative in 2017 and accepting massive infrastructure funds from Beijing, much to New Delhi's dismay. This episode, between two vastly different nations, would serve Washington well to realise that mending a trade imbalance must not come at the expense of losing one of its closest allies with deep running cultural and linguistic ties, as Canada, with an economy that is one-eleventh that of the U.S. albeit with a trade surplus, now attempts to redraw its foreign and economic strategies.

Courting grass

Sinner and Alcaraz look set to establish a famed rivalry

Fans on grass have a special allure. When they come to Wimbledon, the most prestigious grass court in the planet, they acquire a richer sense of history. Janek Sinner and Iga Swiatek, who won their maiden titles at the All England Club over the weekend, stand testament to this. Both were past Major champions, with Sinner having won three and Swiatek five trophies. Yet, by their own admission, very few achievements rank alongside their runs on the pristine lawns of southwest London. The wins also come at a critical juncture in their tennis lives as both players served dipping returns in recent months and had their respective careers questioned. For Sinner, the success against two-time defending and five-time Slam champion Carlos Alcaraz snapped a streak of five straight losses to the Spaniard. This sequence continued the most painful of all defeats, as Rafael Nadal lost month where the Italian lost despite being three championship points up. The victory at SW19 showed the 23-year-old's remarkable powers of recovery and mental resilience. For Swiatek, Wimbledon was her first trophy of any kind since the French Open 2021. The Pole, who had spent a combined 125 weeks as No. 1 – seventh best in history – had slid down the rankings and had lost her aura. But by winning on her less favoured surface, she has resurrected her career emphatically.

Sinner's and Swiatek's triumphs will also have side-ranging effects on their respective rivals. Sinner and Alcaraz have now split the last seven Majors between them, and Wimbledon was the second straight Slam final they were sparring in. In fact, starting from the Rome Masters in early May where Sinner made his comeback from doping suspension, they have clashed in the final in all three competitions they have both been part of, redefining the view that tennis is now men's tennis' pre-eminent rivalry. They have met 13 times – 10 of them in semifinals or better – and appear to have fully satisfied fans' desire to see a worthy follow-up to the famed Roger Federer-Rafael Nadal duel. Ranked No. 1 and No. 2, they are also head and shoulders above the rest of the field. The gulf is best explained by Sinner's ATP points tally of 12,000, which is nearly double that of third-ranked Alexander Zverev. Swiatek, meanwhile, has re-established the triumvirate atop the women's game. The 24-year-old may be the sixth different Wimbledon winner in as many editions, but she, Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff have won 10 of the past 14 Majors. Swiatek's six Slams make her the leading lady among active women.

The importance of India and Europe walking in step

In a world increasingly marked by disorder and divergence, as foreign policy moves out about for new policy initiatives, the India-Europe relationship stands as a compelling case for diplomatic renewal – rooted in foundational depth, yet animated by contemporary relevance. If history has often rendered them distant participants in each other's geopolitical imagination, the present moment demands – and enables – a more purposeful engagement.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's G-7 diplomacy and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's renewed focus on Europe reflect a conscious pivot towards a consistent in line. This is not merely a recognition of Europe's enduring economic weight or cultural capital; it is an astute reading of the evolving global chessboard, where yesterday's alliances are fraying, and new solidarities are emerging across the hemispheres.

An order suspended, a partnership emerging

The transatlantic realm, long anchored by American leadership, finds itself adrift amidst United States President Donald Trump's know-nothing. His transactional world-view, scepticism towards the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, disdain for traditional allies, and dalliance with adversaries such as Russian President Vladimir Putin have unravelled Washington's most steadfast partners. The G-7, once the de facto board of directors for global governance, convened last month not in consensus, but in contention.

For Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France – each recalibrating their foreign policies – the strategic logic of looking outward has grown sharper. Canada, disorienting itself from overdependence on the U.S., now seeks deeper integration with Europe and emerging powers such as India (the hiccup over its mollycoddling of Khalistani extremists notwithstanding). The U.K., shedding its Brexit-era illusions, embraces renewed continental ties. And Germany, awakened from strategic somnolence, has embarked on a path of defence investment and industrial reinvention. In this milieu, Europe is striving not simply to stay relevant but to become a pole of power in its own right.

The rhetoric of "strategic autonomy", once French fancy, is now echoed in Berlin, Warsaw, and Brussels alike. From French President Emmanuel Macron's nuclear umbrella to Germany's constitutional recalibration for military spending, and the Weimar Triangle's assertiveness in central Europe, the project of European reinvention is well underway.

India's external engagement, long characterised by passivity and non-alignment, is morphing into a more assertive posture of



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"multi-alignment". In a world veering toward bipolar rivalry between the U.S. and China, India and Europe, both aspirational middle powers, find common cause in championing a multipolar order that is anchored in international law, inclusive institutions and plural values. This convergence plays out on several fronts. The India-European Union (EU) engagement now unfolds on two levels. Institutionally, the EU and India are expanding their long-standing dialogue in areas of shared and exclusive competencies – from trade and technology to security and climate change. Bilaterally, ties with major member states – France, Germany, Italy and, increasingly, the Nordic and Eastern European nations – are acquiring greater strategic depth.

Economic ties as a corridor of opportunity

Few statistics capture the potential of this moment better than the startling rise in bilateral trade and investment. Between 2015 and 2022, EU foreign direct investment in India grew by 70%, with France's investments alone skyrocketing by 37%. In the last three years, EU imports from India have doubled, underscoring New Delhi's growing economic magnetism. Yet, India and Europe are still only scratching the surface.

The much-anticipated India-EU Trade and Investment Agreements must now be fast tracked with an "early harvest" accord that shows some sensitivity to India's green transition. The European Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, laudable in spirit, must be reinterpreted through the lens of equity. Climate ambition must never become climate protectionism. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) can become a modern Silk Road linking geographies not only in trade, but also in enterprise, energy, and innovation. It is an answer to the Indo-Pacific's demand for infrastructure that is transparent, sustainable and sovereign in spirit.

Perhaps the most exciting frontier lies in technology. India and Europe both view digital architecture not as a proprietary domain of Big Tech but as public infrastructure for the global good. As Mr. Modi observed at the AI Action Summit, the partnership can span the entire digital lifecycle – from innovation to governance, from standards to regulation. Europe's leadership in deep tech, digital manufacturing, and semiconductors dovetails with India's dynamism in software, digital public goods and scalable platforms. Together, they can lead in clean energy innovation, biotechnology, ocean sustainability, food security and resilient health-care systems.

In harness this, both sides must invest in human mobility. A comprehensive mobility agreement for students, scientists and scholars

Their shared values and strategic compulsions can lead to a partnership of conviction and result in a more stable and equitable world

will enrich talent pools, ease Indian unemployment and fertilise bilateral innovation. In the age of ideas, cross-border thinkers are as valuable as cross-border capital.

Strategic alignment now extends to defence and counter-terrorism. Europe remains an important source of armaments for India, and as both sides seek self-reliance – India under Atmanirbhar Bharat, Europe through ReArm 2025 – there is scope for unprecedented co-development and technology transfer. Maritime cooperation, cyber security, space collaboration, and joint responses to terrorism offer a template for trust. Europe must also adopt a firmer line on Pakistan's enabling of Islamic extremists – an issue that has scared both sides. Technical cooperation is not enough; political will must follow.

In a world where great powers often behave as if might is right, middle powers such as India and Europe must act as custodians of a rules-based order. Not as reflex of a liberal utopia, but as realities pursuing stability through coalition, not coercion. Their shared belief in multilateralism, in resisting hegemonic biases and in empowering the Global South with inclusive frameworks, sets them apart from more prescriptive paradigms. This ethic must shape their joint leadership in forums from the United Nations to the World Trade Organization (WTO), and from the Quad (Australia, India, Japan, U.S.) to the Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance tables.

Changing minds, not just policies

Finally, let us not underestimate the power of perception. Public sentiment, media narratives and political agendas must align with strategic intent. Relationships flourish not merely through summits and statistics, but through empathy, imagination and sustained effort. Europe must move beyond stereotypes of India as a reluctant partner; India must appreciate Europe's complex transitions with greater nuance. The Rabat Dialogue in Marrakech (June 2022), the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen's symbolic visit to Delhi (February 2022), and India's diplomatic investment in the Mediterranean and Nordic regions, are all promising steps.

If the last decade taught us that history has a sense of humour (think of our relations with the two iterations of the Trump Administration), the coming one demands we have a sense of purpose. India and Europe, long circling one another, must now walk in step knowing that their shared values and strategic compulsions form a partnership not of convenience, but conviction. For in each other, they may just find not a mirror, but a window into a more stable, inclusive and equitable world.

Women, STEM careers and a more receptive industry

Every year on July 15, as we observe World Youth Skills Day, we are reminded that skills development is fundamental to reducing unemployment and promoting decent work. India faces a critical paradox: 67% of India's STEM graduates are women, the highest proportion among major economies globally. Yet, women represent only 27% of the STEM workforce, limiting women's access to career opportunities offered by the STEM sector.

According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2020-21, India's overall female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) has risen to 47.7%, a meaningful jump after years of stagnation. However, the increase is sharper for rural women (47.6%) than in urban areas (25.4%), reflecting barriers in formal employment, workplace safety, and societal expectations. In STEM, the paradox is more pronounced. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), only 31.5% of researchers worldwide are women. This education-employment gap reflects systemic barriers that industry is uniquely positioned to address. The economic stakes are clear. According to estimates by the McKinsey Global Institute, enabling 10 million more women to participate in India's workforce could boost India's GDP by up to \$300 billion by 2025. Similarly, the World Bank suggests that achieving a 50% female workforce participation rate could elevate GDP growth by 1%.

Government vision and STEM skilling

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 paved the way for higher retention and opportunities in the fields of STEM. The nodal Ministry of Education (MoE) has integrated education with skills development and life skills training. The Government's renewed focus on revivifying Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and expanding



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World Youth Skills Day is a reminder that industry is looking out by not investing in STEM careers for India's women

vocational skilling is bringing high-quality technical education and training closer to villages and small towns, ensuring broader access for youth across rural India.

This progress aligns with the Prime Minister's vision of Viksit Bharat (or developed India), where women's economic mobility forms the cornerstone of inclusive development. The share of the gender budget in the total national budget has increased from 6.8% in 2021-22 to 8.8% in 2022-23 with \$4.49 lakh crore in allocation toward gender-specific programmes.

Further, the Union Budget 2025-26 introduced term loans for women entrepreneurs, new National Skill Training Institutes, and investments in technology-driven skilling. India's policy framework, from Skill India to Digital India, and from 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' to PM 'Vidyalakshmi Yojana, has the right intent. However, government policy alone cannot bridge the education-employment gap. Industry must transform from passive recruiter to active enabler of women's career transitions.

Industry as the missing link

Industry plays a critical role in bridging the gap between skilling and employment, especially for women. Persistent social norms, such as the belief that "mechanical means masculine" or that "coding isn't for girls", continue to create invisible barriers for skilled women entering technical fields. These stereotypes are well-documented in multiple studies, including those by the World Bank and UNESCO, which highlight how gendered perceptions limit women's participation in STEM and technical trades. Evidence also shows that women do not leave STEM fields due to a lack of ability, but instead because workplaces are often unwelcoming, families lack awareness of career

opportunities, and roles remain deeply gendered. Addressing these perceptions, alongside ensuring workplace safety, equitable pay, and support for career transitions related to marriage, childbirth, and caregiving, is key to unlocking the full potential of the workforce.

India's private sector is increasingly stepping up, with many companies championing structure onboarding programmes, industry-linked training initiatives and partnerships with educational institutions to create direct pathways from classrooms to careers. One such initiative is the UN Women's 'BeSTEM' programme, being implemented in collaboration with the Governments of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, and supported by the Micron Foundation. This programme provides access to skills and bridges the talent gap. By engaging families and community leaders, conducting workplace safety sessions, and introducing women role models in classrooms, the programme recognises that skill-building requires a shift in mindsets to be effective.

A blueprint for industry leadership

Industry partnerships with educational institutions, mentorship networks linking professionals with students, and workplace policies that accommodate life transitions and ensure safety, can bridge the education-employment gap. The question is not whether India can afford to invest in women's STEM careers. It is whether industry can afford not to. By equipping women and girls with the skills and training needed to succeed in STEM fields, we can create a more inclusive and robust society where a woman earns, her voice and impact echoes across dinner tables, shop floors, policy rooms and entire industries. And in that voice lies the blueprint of a future ready India.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Air crash report

The preliminary report arising from the ongoing investigation into the Air India crash at Ahmedabad has pointed to the cutoff of the fuel control switches during takeoff. However, this clarity has, paradoxically, sparked further debate among aviation experts and pilots. At this stage of the probe, varied expert opinions only confuse the issue. The focus must shift on regulators enforcement of proper checks particularly for critical components such as fuel switches. The ambivalent approach to advisories on such critical components – treating them as 'optional' or 'mandatory' – is fraught with danger for flight safety. The aviation sector and the government must act swiftly to ensure that all safety standards are complied with.

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AI SW19

Brown, Janvik Sinner, Sinner's Wimbledon triumph over Carlos Alcaraz was more than a first title. It was a statement. Calm under pressure and clinical in execution, he avenged his Roland Garros loss and ended Alcaraz's Wimbledon streak with quiet authority. In a rivalry that is fast defying a new golden era in men's tennis, Sinner's grass court brilliance shows he is not just a contender.

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The All England Club has crowned its first Italian king. And deservedly so.

K. Chidambaram, Bangalore

Novak Djokovic needs to introspect seriously about playing competitive international tennis. When he lost in the French Open last month, he said that it may be his last. Now, after the Wimbledon final, it is clear that the last of these greats must be behind.

More Slams than Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal is the only consolation.

K. Chidambaram, Trivandrum, Tamil Nadu

Sarika Devi

In the passing of Sarika Devi, the Tamil world has lost a cherished heroine most beautiful. She shot into prominence after director Srithar's Kalyana Parvati. Her career catapulted to a new height when she

number of films. Madool Manon and Arise Arise were outstanding. With Sivaig Ganesan, Pushpa Piravoni was a great box office hit. The immortal songs 'P. Suthela sang for her in her dulcet voice in almost all films. are what helped her gain cult status. Such heroines are a rarity today.

AK Narayanan, Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in

The two-state reality we see today

Perhaps the only surviving relic of the long-targeted peace process and decades of futile negotiations intended to end Palestinian suffering is the continued talk of the two-state solution. All the other once-sacred phrases – ‘land for peace’, ‘confidence-building measures’, ‘final status issues’ – have faded from headlines and memory alike. Yet today, the international community – everyone but Israel and its staunch patron, the United States – continues to pivot the words ‘two-state solution’ as if they have just discovered a miracle, or rediscovered the wheel.

But even a cursory glance at United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181, known as the Partition Plan of Palestine, reveals that the essence of the two-state solution lies within it. Passed in 1947, it called for the creation of two states – one for the Jewish and one for the Palestinians – on the land of historic Palestine. It is, in every sense, the birth certificate of the two-state idea. Yet, in practice, it gave birth to only one state: Israel. The Palestinian state remains unborn. It is trapped in legal limbo, denied by force, and smothered by a chronic lack of international political will.

A ‘two-state’ reality
Ironically, if we examine the ground today, we can see that a two-state reality has indeed taken form – but both are the wrong first state: the one declared on May 14, 1948, established through the expulsion and ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Palestinian people on 78% of the historical land of Palestine.

The second is rising now on the remaining 22% of the historical land of Palestine, within the borders of the 1967-occupied Palestinian territories: a de facto Jewish messianic state. We can refer to it as the Halakha state – or more plainly, the settler messianic state. It has its own armed militia, openly backed by the Israeli army; its own budget; its own political infrastructure. It is ruled not by



Abdullah M. Abu Shweh
Ambassador to India of Palestine

Tal Abu, but by the Yehuda Council, an acronym for Yehuda (Judea), Shomron (Samaria), and Aza (Gaza), and subdivided into semi-autonomous regions: the Shomron, Gush Etzion, and Binyamin Regional Councils. Each functions like a federal entity within a greater settler hierarchy.

This second state was conceived on the very day Israel occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza in 1967. Since then, a stream of legal documents, military orders, appropriated Ottoman and British Mandate laws, and selectively applied Israeli legislation have built its legal scaffolding. This carefully crafted system is meant not only to entrench this parallel state, but also to render the internationally supported two-state solution obsolete.

Israel has grown accustomed, perhaps even addicted, to the diplomatic niceties of international officials, knowing they hold no real consequence. Worse, Israel has now developed a counter logic, bolstered by its allies, to challenge the very foundations of the two-state vision. The current U.S. Ambassador to Israel, for instance, has gone so far as to claim there is “no such thing” as Palestinians.” This genocidal rhetoric has been met by the international community with blind eyes at best and silent complicity at worst.

By signing the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s, the Palestinian leadership made a historic and painful concession: they agreed to establish their future state on just 22% of their ancestral homeland – Palestine. This was not easy. Even UN Resolution 181 had originally allocated 46% of historic Palestine to the Palestinian state.

At a crossroads
Today, the international community stands at a crossroads. Will it act decisively in favour of a just and rational two-state solution that ends the Palestinian tragedy and brings a sustainable peace for all? Or will it continue to turn a blind eye to the entrenchment of

the messianic and evangelical vision that guarantees only bloodshed and despair for Palestinians on their homeland? This is not just a policy debate; it is a moral test. While a genocidal war is being livestreamed to every screen around the world, we must confront a fundamental truth: there can be no peace without justice. There can be no lasting solution without granting the Palestinian people their basic rights, foremost among them the right to self-determination.

International law, human rights, and humanitarian principles must be applied equally and universally. If the world continues to let Israel, an occupying power, expand and maintain its illegal settlements instead of compelling it to dismantle them, the so-called Halakha state will not only be established in the West Bank, but it will also increasingly dominate and redefine the entire Israeli state. That outcome would be a disaster for Palestine, the whole region, and the world.

The international community has the tools for action. Recently, powerful countries implemented over 16,500 sanctions against Russia. Yet, they remain unable – or unwilling – to adopt even a single meaningful sanction against Israel. On the contrary, Israel continues to receive unconditional military and intelligence support, while the cost to Palestinians exceeds 54,000 lives and counting. From economic sanctions, arms embargoes, and diplomatic pressure to legal accountability in international courts, the tools are within reach but there is no political will.

The world must stop treating Israel as a state above international law and indulging it as though it is a spoiled, reckless adolescent. Accountability is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It is the only path to peace. This may well be the final warning before apocalyptic fantasies turn into a devastating global reality, replacing the two-state solution with endless war.

The world must stop treating Israel as a state above international law and indulging it as though it is a spoiled, reckless adolescent

Reunion or reunification?

The Thackeray brothers have rekindled hope among their party cadre

STATE OF PLAY

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
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They may show of strength and unity between Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray on July 5 has rekindled hopes of their reunification among the cadre of their respective parties – the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) and the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena.

The estranged cousins, who had not shared a date for nearly two decades, came together to address a joint ‘victory rally’ in Mumbai. They celebrated the government’s rollback of two orders making Hindi the third language in primary schools in Maharashtra. The government’s revocation is being perceived as a victory for the ‘Marathi manoo’.

However, the big question remains: will the two cousins reunite on the political front as brand Thackeray at a time when regional parties feel threatened by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)? And if they do, what will that mean for the politics of Maharashtra, especially for Deputy Chief Minister Ganesh Shinde, who leads the Shiv Sena?

Mr. Uddhav Thackeray’s party continues to face an election. The former Chief Minister has publicly expressed his desire for a political reunification with his cousin. However, Mr. Raj Thackeray has maintained a stoic silence and has asked his party leadership to resist from expressing their opinions on the matter. The suspense, ahead of the crucial Mumbai municipal corporation elections, continues.

In April, the Maharashtra government introduced a three-language policy in pri-



ary education, it issued another order in June. These were largely perceived as an attempt to impose Hindi on the State. What began as an agitation against this policy has turned into a window of opportunity for the reunification of the Thackeray cousins.

Mr. Uddhav Thackeray and Mr. Raj Thackeray’s parties had publicly split 19 years ago. The two leaders have since led separate regional parties. When they came together at the joint victory rally at Mumbai’s NSCI Dome on July 5, cadre from both parties watched with excitement. For them, it seemed like a step towards a long-cherished dream of seeing the cousins together again. Their hopes went up further when Mr. Uddhav Thackeray, amid loud cheers, said, “We have come together to stay together.”

This led to speculation that the two parties will come together for the local body elections.

The Shiv Sena (UBT), which is struggling to keep its flock together, is anxious that fence-sitters may ditch it before the municipal elections. The Sena has traditionally controlled Mumbai’s civic body, which is the richest corporation in the country. The diminished strength of the Shiv Sena (UBT) after Mr. Shinde’s exit in the changed demography of the island city, and continuing exodus from the party are some of Mr. Uddhav Thackeray’s key concerns.

Mr. Raj Thackeray has his own set of woes. He has been leading a regional party with limited electoral gains so far. As he frequently changes his political stance, the public perceives him as unpredictable, which has not helped his cause.

Mr. Shinde’s party is hoping that the cousins will not patch up. Mr. Shinde has kept the communication window with Mr. Raj Thackeray open to the extent that his party cadre do not attack the MNS even as they relentlessly target Mr. Uddhav Thackeray.

The BJP is aware that Mr. Shinde will suffer a body blow if the Thackeray cousins come together. Leaders of both the Shiv Sena (UBT) and the MNS claim that the move could be a game-changer and could impact the BJP negatively as well.

So far, Mr. Raj Thackeray and Mr. Uddhav Thackeray have been fighting separately on Hindutva-related issues and Mumbai pride. Amid the BJP’s Hindutva appeal, the Thackeray cousins have stood for regional chauvinism. “We are Hindus, not Hindus,” Raj Thackeray said, as a pinch against the BJP’s Hindutva plank of the BJP and the Rashtriya Swamanevak Sangh. He has warned against national integration through homogenisation and has called for a separate cultural and linguistic identity for Maharashtra.

At the same time, Mr. Raj Thackeray has categorically stated that he came together with his cousin only for the cause of Marathi. MNS leaders say the show of strength is limited only to that issue, and that Mr. Raj Thackeray has not yet made up his mind on whether it should translate into something more. Political pundits say that if the cousins reunite and assert their political capital, they will both stand to gain.

Dowry deaths in India: Long investigations, rare convictions

A spate of dowry-related deaths in the last two months has put the spotlight back on the illegal practice

DATA POINT

Devyani Bhat
Vineesh Radhakrishnan

In the last three months, a string of dowry-related deaths have been reported from across India. In sharp contrast to Uttar Pradesh, a woman died after a hot iron was pressed against parts of her body. Her family claimed that she had been regularly assaulted for dowry. Another woman from Uttar Pradesh’s Mirzapur was burned alive allegedly after she and her family did not meet the repeated demands of her husband and his family for dowry. In Chandigarh, a young bride died by suicide allegedly due to dowry harassment. In Tamil Nadu, near Ponneri, a woman died by suicide just four days after her wedding, allegedly due to harassment from her in-laws for dowry. Another woman from Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu, took her life within two months of marriage for the same reason.

These cases show that the illegal practice of seeking dowry continues to thrive in India. Every year, in the 2017-2022 period, an average of 7,000 cases of dowry deaths were reported across the country, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. It is important to note that these were only reported cases. As several more go unreported, the NCRB data only gives us a conservative estimate.

The numbers are alarming. And when we look closely at the data, we find that investigations into these deaths were slow and convictions were few and far between. Of the 7,000 dowry deaths reported every year on average, only around 4,500 were charge-sheeted by the police. The rest were either stuck at various stages of investigation or disposed off for various reasons including ‘case true but insufficient evidence’, ‘elder case’, and ‘suicide’. It was hard

to get information. Some cases were stuck in the investigation stage for more than six months. Of the nearly 3,000 dowry death cases pending investigations at the end of 2022, 67% were stuck in that stage for over six months (Chart 1).

There were also inordinate delays in filing the charge sheets. Of the more than 6,000 dowry death cases for which charge sheets were filed in 2022, 70% were filed following investigations that lasted for over two months (Chart 2).

Even when investigations were done, charge sheets were filed, and cases reached the court, only a few resulted in convictions. The rest got stuck in court procedures or were disposed off by the courts because they were withdrawn, or compromised, or ended in a plea bargain. In some cases, the accused were acquitted due to lack of evidence.

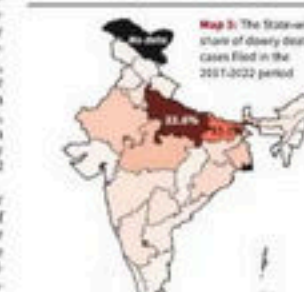
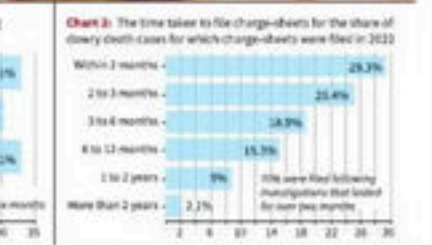
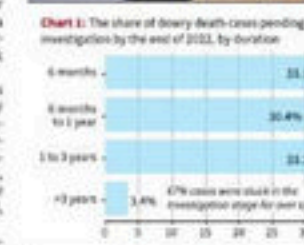
Of the average of 6,500 cases sent for trial every year, only around 100 resulted in convictions. Over 90% of the rest remained pending in court at various stages. If we look at the rest, some ended in acquittal, some cases were discharged before trial, and some were quashed.

Dowry was the main motive behind over 6,000 murders across India in the 2017-2022 period. Over 60% of these murders were recorded in West Bengal, Odisha, and Bihar. Cases from these three states and Jharkhand, and those in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Andhra Pradesh constituted 80% of all the dowry death cases filed in the 2017-2022 period (Map 3).

Among the 19 cities in India for which data was available, 30% of all the dowry death cases were filed in Delhi in that period, the highest for any city (Chart 4). Delhi was followed by Kanpur, Bengaluru, Lucknow, and Patna.

Crime and slow punishment

The data used for the charts were sourced from the Crime in India reports (Book 1 and Book II) published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 15, 1975

Essential goods: Model scheme for four cities

New Delhi, July 14: The Food Ministers of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu today agreed to introduce immediately in four selected centres the Delhi model scheme for distribution of essential commodities.

The four centres are: Durgapur, Nainital, Cochin and Coimbatore.

The model scheme, now being implemented by the Delhi administration, is expected to be implemented by other States in course of time.

At a meeting here today, the Minister of State for Industry and Civil Supplies, Mr. A. C. George, explained to the Ministers why the scheme should be introduced in the four centres immediately without waiting for the outcome of the experiment in Delhi. In the context of the economic programme announced by the Prime Minister, streamlining of the distribution system had assumed urgency, he said.

The Ministers welcomed the model scheme and said they would gear up their machinery to ensure success of the scheme. They also promised rigorous enforcement of all the provisions of the Essential Commodities Act.

They, however, wanted some more commodities to be brought within the purview of the scheme. For instance, the West Bengal Minister suggested inclusion of mustard oil, daps, pulses and fish.

The items suggested for coverage are wheat and rice, sugar, controlled cloth, kerosene and salt.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 15, 1925

Cause of cancer

London, July 14: After two years work it is believed that British doctors have made the discovery which will enable them to detect the cause of cancer. Dr. William Ewart Cope, one of the discoverers, interviewed, says that he is assisted by Dr. Barnard, a leading microscopist and that he is publishing his report in British Medical Journal in a few days with regard to the experiments carried out in the Hill Laboratories, under the supervision of the Medical Research Council. Dr. Cope says that he followed up Doctors Peyton's and Bown's discoveries and that he is hopeful of having advanced them.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of people arrested in Spain for anti-migrant violence

8 Spanish police arrested these individuals after three nights of violence erupted after an attack on a 68-year-old local on July 11. The town, which has a 30% immigrant population, mostly from Africa, saw damage to property and increasing tensions. **IN**

RE-based power generation capacity achieved in India

50 In per cent, India's total installed power capacity now stands at 484.8 GW, with 242.8 GW coming from non-fossil fuel sources. This marks the halfway point for India's ambitious target for 2030 — to generate 500 GW of renewable energy (RE) based electricity. **IN**

Deaths due to floods in the Vidarbha region in Maharashtra

8 Relief and rehabilitation efforts in the Vidarbha region are underway following heavy rains on July 8 and 9, Maharashtra disaster management minister Girish Mahajan said. In the Nagpur division, seven persons died, and four were injured. In the Amravati division, one death and one injury were reported. **IN**

Number of people in Gaza killed by Israeli airstrikes on Monday

22 The latest violence comes as clashes intensify in northern areas. This followed stalled ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas in Qatar. Gaza City and Khan Yunis were targeted during the strikes. With widespread displacement, Gaza's population faces a humanitarian crisis. **IN**

Infections averted by global vaccine reserves since 2000

5.8 In million. Global stockpiles of vaccines under programmes supported by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, helped prevent more than 3.27 million deaths from outbreaks in low and middle income countries since 2000, according to a new study. **IN**

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Why is corporate investment lagging behind?

Investment, first and foremost, depends on the demand for the goods it produces. It does not, and cannot, have a life of its own. The situation is particularly grave when the economy is in a downturn/slowdown because demand is down

ECONOMIC NOTES

Robit Anand
Indira Gandhi Chair

India is going through a rocky terrain as far as industrial production and corporate investment are concerned. On June 30, the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MOSPI) released the monthly growth rate of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), which has slipped to a nine-month low of 1.2%. This piece attempts to explain why industrial activity has not really picked up in any meaningful way since the COVID-19 pandemic.

To be fair, it is not as if the government has not tried. They have tried every trick in their book, starting with a significant corporate tax cut to the tune of eight percentage points in September 2009 (from 30% to 22%), then a significant capex push over the last few budgets, and lastly an interest rate cut recommended by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) recently. The 2024-25 Economic Survey expressed its dismay by stating that "in terms of financial performance, the corporate sector has never had it so good... (but) thinning and compensation growth hardly kept up with it... Private sector GFCF in machinery and equipment and intellectual property products has grown cumulatively by only 35% in the four years to FY22, (which will delay India's quest to raise the manufacturing share of GDP, delay the improvement in India's manufacturing competitiveness, and create only a smaller number of higher-quality formal jobs than otherwise."

Determining Investment

There is a famous debate between two Marxist scholars, Rosa Luxemburg and Eugen Baranovsky, on what determines investment in a capitalist economy which might be valuable to this discussion. To appreciate this debate and to understand the current predicaments of the Indian economy, we would like to present a basic representation of GDP and its determinants in a 'pure' capitalist economy, that is, one without any State intervention or access to external markets (see Box 1 for such a representation).

GDP can be measured in different ways. What we demand generates production in the economy, with the other side being the income generated for the producers. So, from the income side, the GDP is a sum of workers' wages and capitalists' profits and, from the expenditure/demand side, a sum of workers' consumption and capitalists' investment. The purpose of this piece is to explain the latter.

To get to the meat of the matter, we make a simplifying assumption that workers consume all their wages and capitalists do not consume at all (the argument does not change even if we remove this strict assumption). As Box 1 shows, wages and workers' consumption cancel each other out. What we are left with are profits which must be equal to investment in such an economy. This equation, however, does not tell us whether profits cause investment or investment causes profits. This innocuous relationship has led to quite a debate in economics, which continues to this day.

To resolve this apparent chicken and egg problem, Kalecki, a Marxist economist, asked a simple question: of the two, which one can the capitalists decide/control? Capitalists may decide to



THE GIST

GDP can be measured in different ways. From the income side, the GDP is a sum of workers' wages and capitalists' profits and, from the expenditure/demand side, a sum of workers' consumption and capitalists' investment.

Investment will follow if there is a revival in process; it cannot lead the revival under conditions of slowdown. Investment cannot be made for the sake of investment.

As for the incentive to finance investment through lower interest rates or liquidity, both of which the RBI has been trying, it is like putting the cart before the horse. Capitalists would take loans only if they believe they will profit from such investment to pay the loans back.

preceding one, but they cannot decide to earn more." In other words, investment determines profits in a given period, not the other way round. But if this is the case, what is the limit to investment? Why can they not invest any amount they like? In fact, why should there be a problem of a lack of investment at all?

Baranovsky argued that there is no limit to investment provided a certain proportion is maintained between consumption and investment sectors. He went to the extent to say that investment decisions need not be tied to any final consumption demand. An economy where workers' consumption is kept suppressed may still flourish with higher investment and higher profits simply by the decision of the capitalists to accumulate. Since capitalism and accumulation of capital is driven by profitability, investment provides the market for itself. Machines can produce machines to produce more machines.

However, Luxemburg countered by saying that while it's true that investment leads to profits, it does not mean that any amount of investment will necessarily be undertaken. That would be a gross misunderstanding of the relationship represented in Box 1. If the corporate sector were to collectively decide to invest, they would all be generating markets for each other, thereby, generating profits. But, unfortunately, investment decisions under capitalism are made by individual firms/capitalists and their decisions would be driven by their own assessment of demand for the products they produce. For example, in situations where the economy is not growing, it would be foolishly for an individual capitalist to invest because adding capacity, when the existing factories are not running to capacity, would entail more losses. At the same time, if they were to invest collectively,

Box 1
Income method
GDP = wages + profits = workers' consumption + investment
(workers' consumption + wages)
Therefore, profits = investment

the economy would have actually recovered, but coordinated or collectively planned investment is an anathema to capitalism.

Investment, first and foremost, depends on the demand for the goods (whether machinery, toys or cars) it produces. It does not, and cannot, have a life of its own. A pure capitalist economy, without exogenous stimuli, cannot provide an endogenous impetus for its own revival. It requires an exogenous stimulus to kickstart the cycle of more investment and profits. The situation is particularly grave when the economy is in a downturn/slowdown because demand is down. The only way there can be a turnaround is if there is a turnaround in demand itself.

The other factor behind investment is finance — interest (retained profits) or external (debt, public offerings etc).

Lagging corporate investment
The government assumed that with tax cuts and higher post-tax profits in the hands of the corporate sector, investment would pick up, but they have perhaps read the profit-investment causality wrong. Even efforts, who believe there can be an investment-led revival, miss the crucial point that Luxemburg was making. Investment will follow if there is a revival in process; it cannot lead the revival under conditions of slowdown. Investment cannot be made for the sake of investment. It requires the exogenous stimuli that Luxemburg was talking about. Where can that come from?

There are two such exogenous sources — government expenditure and external markets (see Box 2). With a slowing global demand, which is perhaps going to worsen with the "reciprocal" tariff regime under U.S. President Trump, government expenditure is the most important lever to kickstart the investment cycle. But then

Box 2
GDP = wages + profits + workers' consumption + investment + govt expenditure + exports - imports

has the government not done enough in the form of capex spending? Government indeed has spent but it has so far not succeeded as much as expected. Why?

The idea behind capex spending is that it would crowd in private investment. This crowd-in could happen through a direct impact on investment as a result of better infrastructural facilities or by generating demand for goods produced by the corporate sector.

While there is no denying that there is a possibility of crowding-in, there are multiple factors at play here. First, the crowd-in of the first kind, which is through better infrastructure, may be delayed due to the gestation lags these big scale projects usually have. For example, a port takes time to build and become operational.

Second, while it is true that all such projects, whether big or small, create an immediate demand, how much of it is domestic demand and how much it is for economies outside depends on the import component of this spending. In other words, a part of this capex may be spent on imports, which simply cancels out without providing adequate domestic demand. Third, even here much domestic demand such a capex would generate depends on the labour intensity of these projects. If most of the money is spent on heavy duty machines, the employment generating capacity will be low, which translates to lower consumption demand.

As for the incentive to finance investment through lower interest rates or liquidity, both of which the RBI has been trying, it is like putting the cart before the horse. Capitalists would take loans only if they believe they will profit from such investment to pay the loans back. With sagging demand, low costs of finance is not enough. As Keynes had famously said, "success in the weakening of either [speculative confidence or the state of credit] is enough to cause a collapse, recovery requires the revival of both." This simple lesson needs to be learnt by both the RBI and the Finance Ministry if they want the economy to revive.

Robit Anand and Indira Gandhi Chair
Indira Gandhi Chair
Chair, Economics at JNU and PGDAV

ABSTRACT



New study shows cysteine withdrawal causes rapid weight loss in mice

Diets that promote weight loss without compromising overall health are being rigorously studied and tested around the world. One such study found that removing just one amino acid, cysteine, from the diet of mice led to a dramatic loss of 30% of body weight in a week.

Arun Panichapathan

Varghese, A., Gasston, L., Gemello-Lana, B. et al. 'Unravelling cysteine deficiency associated rapid weight loss', *Nature* (2025). doi.org/10.1038/s41586-025-08996-y

In the 1930s, when scientists were beginning to uncover the molecular basis of nutrition, they already knew that proteins were a vital part of the diet, but they didn't fully understand why. More specifically, they didn't know whether all 20 amino acids, the building blocks of proteins, were equally important or if only some of them were crucial for human health. This question was answered in 1937 by Wilbert Rose, who conducted a series of experiments in which he fed rats individual amino acids instead of whole proteins. By systematically omitting one amino acid at a time from the rats' diets, he was able to identify which ones were truly indispensable. These he called "essential" amino acids: they must be obtained through food because the body cannot produce them. The others, which the body can synthesise on its own, were deemed "non-essential". The nine essential amino acids are histidine, isoleucine, leucine, lysine, methionine, phenylalanine, threonine, tryptophan, and valine.

Low-nutrition state
Rose's work was one of the founding pillars of modern nutrition science. Nearly a century later, as the world struggles with rising obesity rates, this knowledge has become more relevant. Diets that promote weight loss without

compromising overall health are being rigorously studied and tested around the world. One such study appeared in *Nature* on May 21, and it reported rather surprising results. The researchers found that removing just one amino acid, cysteine, from the diet of mice led to a dramatic and rapid loss of 30% of the body weight in a week. The results are surprising because cysteine is not an essential amino acid. Multiple researchers have explored the effects of essential amino acid withdrawal on weight loss. The idea behind these studies is that when these amino acids are removed from the diet, the body's inability to synthesise them reduces protein synthesis. The body interprets this to mean it is in a low-nutrition state and triggers fat burning. The effect has been reported in mice after deprivation of leucine, isoleucine, valine, tryptophan and phenylalanine. Interestingly, the effect is also observed when two non-essential but important amino acids, methionine and cysteine, are withdrawn from the diet. Methionine and cysteine are the only two amino acids that contain sulphur. The reactive nature of sulphur allows these amino acids to play key roles in protein folding and function. However, despite their nutritional importance, studies in mice have demonstrated that methionine restriction improves lifespan and protects against metabolic diseases.

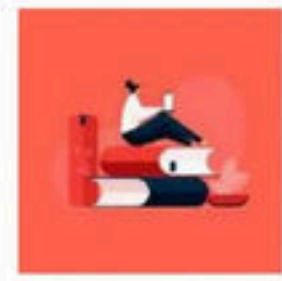
Challenging to study
Building on these findings, one study published in the *Journal of Nutrition, Health and Aging* in 2023 showed that a diet with very small amounts of

methionine and cysteine had a significant impact on weight loss in humans. The study reported no adverse effects of the diet on participants, suggesting that the results could be translated to humans. However, several questions remained to be addressed. Chief among them was the role of cysteine itself on weight loss. Studying cysteine withdrawal is challenging because it's a non-essential amino acid. Removing cysteine from the diet won't allow us to study the effects of its deficit because the body will simply make more. To circumvent this problem, the authors of the new *Nature* study genetically engineered mice so that they lacked the ability to produce cysteine naturally. This means, for these mice, cysteine is now an essential amino acid that must be obtained through their diet.

Profound effect
The authors proceeded to withdraw each of the nine essential amino acids and cysteine and methionine individually from their diet and observed the effects on metabolic health. None of the essential amino acids or methionine had an effect as profound as the omission of cysteine: 30.6% loss of body weight in one week on average. The authors also noted that the lost weight was recovered when they re-added cysteine to the diet. The finding indicates that cysteine rather than methionine is more important among the sulphur-containing amino acids. The team also reported that the effect was observed only in genetically modified mice that couldn't make cysteine. In normal mice, cysteine restriction had no effect, since they didn't depend on their diets for access to cysteine.

Importantly, the authors found that despite its effects on weight loss, withdrawing cysteine from the diet had other side effects, such as higher oxidative stress – the build-up of harmful variants of oxygen – because cysteine is a critical precursor for glutathione, one of the body's main antioxidants. Experts therefore advise caution. Dr. Jayashree Gopal, consultant endocrinologist at Hahinadodinda, Chennai, said that while the paper is fascinating in terms of the diet's ability to convert white fat into brown fat, a marker of improved metabolic activity, it is still too early to translate the findings into clinical practice. "Firstly, if you remove [cysteine], the body is going to anyway replenish it. Secondly, because it is part of a very potent antioxidant system, we should not be interfering with nature's balances until we know more about it. And third, we have to keep reiterating that the study is only done in genetically modified mice. Mouse physiology and human physiology are very, very different," she said. Still, she added a note of optimism. "To extrapolate from [the paper], it is a promising start. Maybe something may emerge from this 10 years down the line, but we are nowhere near that..." Dr. Gopal's words echo a fundamental principle of science, one particularly relevant to the study: while the research is commendable for uncovering the nuanced role of a single amino acid in fat metabolism, it also underscores the reality that scientific progress is often incremental.

Arun Panichapathan is an assistant professor at the Y.R. Gokhale Centre for AIIS Research and Education, Chennai.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

**K. Subrahmanian
S. Chandrasekhar**

"Have you finished correcting my essay?"
"Yes, I have. It's on the table."
"Thanks. Good grief! There's red ink all over the page. Wait a minute, what's wrong with this sentence? 'My sister who is in college wants to become a lawyer'. There's nothing wrong with that, is there?"
"How many sisters do you have?"
"One! You know that!"
"I know that, but your other readers don't. And according to the sentence you have written, you have more than one sister."
"What? Where do I say that I have more than one sister...?"
"...just look at your sentence. 'My sister who is in college wants to become a lawyer'. The way you have written that sentence, it implies that you are talking about the sister in college and not the sister in school, or the sister in..."
"...wait a minute. What do I need to do to make it clear that I have only one sister?"
"You need to use commas. You need to say, 'My sister, who is in college, wants to become a lawyer.'
"Really? So, in this case, 'who is in college' gives you additional information about my only sister."
"Exactly! Even without 'who is in college' I would know who you are talking about. You are talking about your only sister."
"I see. So if I say, 'My brother, who is in Delhi, is an engineer', it means I have only one brother, right?"
"That's right. If on the other hand you say, 'My brother who is in Delhi is an engineer', it would mean you have more than one brother. And that it's your brother in Delhi who is the engineer and not the brother in Madras or Bombay."
"In that sentence, doesn't 'who is in Delhi' give you additional information about my brother?"
"It doesn't give the additional information about your brother. It gives me essential information. It tells me which brother you are talking about."
"That's interesting."
"Tell me what's the difference between, 'The students who went to the beach failed the exam' and 'The students, who went to the beach, failed the exam'?"
"Let's see. The sentence 'The students, who went to the beach, failed the exam' is like 'My brother, who is in Delhi, is an engineer'.
"Good. Keep going."
"I have one brother and he is in Delhi. So, in the sentence 'The students, who went to the beach, failed the exam' would mean – the students... all the students failed the exam. Is that right?"
"And what about 'The students who went to the beach failed the exam'?"
"Well, in that sentence 'who went to the beach' gives me essential information about the students. It tells me which students failed the exam."
"Exactly!"
"And in this case, only those students who went to the beach failed the exam. Not all the students failed, only those who went to the beach failed the exam. Am I correct?"
"One hundred per cent."
Published in *The Hindu* on April 1, 1997.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Test yourself on the life of the famous Dutch painter Rembrandt on his 419th birthday

X.V. Ramanan

- QUESTION 1**
In which well-known Dutch town was he born and what does his full name Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn mean?
- QUESTION 2**
He signed his early works as RM, for his Latinized name Rembrandus.
- QUESTION 3**
Where is the 'Christ in the Storm on the Sea of Galilee' painted in 1633 now located?
- QUESTION 4**
What is special about the 'The First Rembrandt' that
- QUESTION 5**
What is the popular or common name for this Rembrandt masterpiece and where is it

1625 and now displayed in Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, Lyon, is considered his first signed painting and also features him in the work?

QUESTION 4
Which painting, set in a brooding chamber, shows the apostles reacting to the moment Jesus reveals his identity post-resurrection?

QUESTION 5
Where is the 'Christ in the Storm on the Sea of Galilee' painted in 1633 now located?

QUESTION 6
What is special about the 'The First Rembrandt' that



Visual question: What is the popular or common name for this Rembrandt masterpiece and where is it

- Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:**
1. The original purpose of the Bastille fortress. **Ans: It was built as a fortress to defend the eastern entrance of Paris during the Hundred Years' War.**
 2. This American founding father was present in Paris during the early years of the French Revolution. **Ans: Thomas Jefferson.**
 3. Number of prisoners held in the Bastille at the time it was stormed. **Ans: Seven.**
 4. The commander of the Bastille on the day it was stormed. **Ans: Bernard-René de Launay.**
 5. This newspaper editor was assassinated the day after Bastille Day's first anniversary. **Ans: Jean-Paul Marat.**
- Visual:** The relationship of this solar flare with Bastille Day. **Ans: This solar flare occurred on France's national holiday in 2000, and has since been dubbed the Bastille Day event.**
- Early Birth:** C. Saravanan (Suri Madhavani) and S. Saravanan (Suri Madhavani) are the parents of the actor.

Word of the day

Peckmark:
A scar or pit on the skin that is left by a pustule of vesicles or acne or other eruptive disease.

Usage: Her face was peppered by acne.

Pronunciation: /peck-mɑːk/

International Phonetic Alphabet: /peckmɑːk/

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

From Page One

Easing food prices drive inflation down

In the fuel and light category of the CPI, inflation eased to a three-month low of 2.55% in June, down from 2.8% in May. What further emphasises the slow growth in retail fuel prices is that the relatively low inflation rate in June came on the back of an even lower base of 3.6% in June 2024.

While inflation in the pears, tobacco, and iron-ore category remained flat at 2.4%, inflation in the housing segment inched up to 3.24% in June from 3.0% the previous month.

Dropping crude rates

In the WPI, the food articles category saw prices contract by 3.75% in June 2025, down from 0.1% inflation in June last year. The overall food group in the WPI, which looks at food in the primary articles category as well as in the manufactured products category, contracted 0.3% in June.

The other category that witnessed a significant easing in wholesale prices was the crude petroleum and mineral gas category. Prices contracted 12.2% in June, the 12th consecutive month of contractions, of which the last three have been double-digit contractions.

'India, China must move ahead on de-escalation'

Mr. Jaisankar's reference to the "continued normalisation" of ties is significant as he has held in the past that it is impossible to normalise ties without the demilitarisation of the troops that were amassed there in 2020.

In December 2024, the External Affairs Minister had said in a statement in Parliament that de-escalation of the situation along the LAC had been achieved, adding that the "next priority will be to consider de-escalation that would address the massing of troops along the LAC with associated accompaniments."

The two sides have also agreed to resume direct flight connectivity between the two countries, while India is hopeful China will restart sharing hydrological data on trans-border rivers, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement.

Saroja Devi, pioneer superstar, dies at 87

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

She started out early, in 1955, with the film Mahalaxmi, in Kannada.

She has paired with heroes ranging from Rajkumar, Kalyan Kumar and Uday Kumar in the Kannada film industry and NTR and Akhilesh Nagaveni in Telugu to MGR and Sivaji Ganesan in Tamil, besides Dilip Kumar, Rajendra Kumar, and Sunil Dutt in Hindi.

It is said that for the 1964 Telugu film Daagodu Moothala, she was paid a remuneration of ₹10,000, a princely sum at the time. Her pleasing demeanour continued to bring her roles in cinema, supporting roles, and senior roles that she ably discharged, in television and in films, even as late as 2020, when she participated as a contestant in Kotimwar, a game show.

While she was the favourite choice for filmmakers exploring period films, thanks to her traditional good looks, Saroja Devi was also known for her work in social dramas such as Pillai Sandali (1959) and Pillai Kanaka (1963), Daagadu Moothala (1964), Manchi Chelu (1963), and Pundarikapuram (1972) in Telugu.

In Tamil industry, where she was celebrated as Kannadathu Poyyalal and Abhinava Saravasthi (a testament to her dancing skills), Saroja Devi had to share the space during her heyday only with another legendary actor, Sivaji. The two had all the top films to their credit. Saroja Devi, with her slightly accented Tamil and the ability to use her eyes very well to emot, became popular quickly. The songs that she starred in, including *Love Birds* in *Anbe Va* (1966) and *Unnai Ondru Kirtanu* in *Pudhu Purnima* (1964), became runaway hits and stood the test of time.

She has received many awards over her illustrious career. The first major honour, the Padma Shri, came in 1969. She was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1992.

Her funeral will be held at her home town, Dasavara village, in Channarayana taluk of Ramanagara district at noon on Tuesday.

DGCA orders Boeing fuel switch inspection

The DGCA order has arrived despite the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau interim report stating "there are no recommended actions to EOTB-6 and/or GE GEnx-III engine operators and manufacturers."

These actions follow a private communication from U.S. regulator Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on July 11, the same day the Indian probe agency released its interim report into the Air India crash, which repeated the previous advisory of December 2008 requiring the said inspection by airlines on several Boeing aircraft.

The Air India crash left 283 people on board the

All Boeing 787s found fit to fly, says Air India CEO

Preliminary probe report provided more clarity and opened up new questions, Wilson tells staff as he says the report did not find mechanical or maintenance issues with the aircraft or engines

Legit! Chandra
NEW DELHI

Every Boeing 787 aircraft in Air India's fleet has undergone checks since last month's deadly crash, and has been found fit to fly, Air India CEO Campbell Wilson said in an internal communication to employees on Monday.

He also pointed out that the preliminary report into the accident did not find any mechanical or maintenance issues with the aircraft or engines, and warned against drawing any "premature conclusions".

"Every Boeing 787 aircraft operating in our fleet was checked within days of the accident and all were found fit for service. We continue to perform all necessary checks, as we will any new ones that authorities may suggest," the CEO said in a message posted on an internal portal.

He reiterated that the "preliminary report found no mechanical or maintenance issues with the aircraft or engines, and that all mandatory maintenance tasks had been completed".

The report of the Aircraft Accident Investiga-



Released into service: Air India's first Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft gets a water cannon salute on its arrival at the India Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi in September 2012. (IAT 16/12)

The report of the AAI had described the chronology of events leading to the crash on June 12

tion Bureau was released late on July 11. It described the chronology of events leading to the double engine shutdown that precipitated the crash on June 12, killing 260 people.

'More clarity'
Mr. Wilson acknowledged concerns raised by the report, which have led to widespread speculation re-

garding the deliberate or erroneous movement of the switches that regulate fuel supply to the two engines. The report has "provided both greater clarity and opened additional questions", he said.

He also sought to put some doubts to rest. "The Preliminary Report identified no cause nor made any recommendations, so I want everyone to avoid drawing premature conclusions as the investigation is far from over. We will continue to co-operate with the investigators to ensure they have everything they need to conduct a

thorough and comprehensive enquiry," the CEO's message said.

Earlier, in the hours following the release of the interim report on Friday, the Air India's senior vice-president for flight operations, Manish Upad, wrote to the airline's pilots, encouraging them to openly approach the senior leadership if they had questions about the findings.

He also acknowledged a range of emotional reactions to the crash, including "sorrow and even anger", and offered support resources, including company psychologists.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP calls for inquiry into 'leak' of crash report

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Pratyakha Chaturvedi

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Pratyakha Chaturvedi on Monday wrote to Civil Aviation Minister K. Ramakrishna Murthy, seeking a formal inquiry into how details of a preliminary report on the crash of Air India flight AI 171 were allegedly leaked to the international media before it was officially released in India.

For the sake of transparency with regard to the narrative being built around the AI 171 crash and the interim report.

"It is deeply troubling that sensitive details of the AAI report were available to foreign news agencies and published in outlets such as The Wall Street Journal before any official release in India. This raises urgent questions about how the contents of the report were accessed by foreign entities prior to their dissemination to the Indian public and concerned stakeholders," she added.

Ms. Chaturvedi claimed that the non-stop international publications being made against the deceased pilots through implication and selective leaks of the interim report through the internet, social media were "absolutely reprehensible".

Centre gives approval for transfers, appointments of new Chief Justices of HCs

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Monday cleared the transfers and appointments of 11 new Chief Justices and Judges of several High Courts across the country.

Union Law and Justice Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal wrote on X that the appointments or transfers of judges were cleared by the President in exercise of the power conferred by the Constitution of India. He added that the transfer of Justice Ashwini Kumar Singh Chaudhan will now head the Jharkhand High Court.

Justice Vibhu Bahadur has been named the Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court, Justice Ashutosh Kumar the Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court and Justice Vipul Mishra Pascoe, the Chief

Justice of Patna High Court. These transfers and appointments were recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India R.S. Gopal.

Meanwhile, the government also transferred Justice Anil Koberparal from the Punjab and Haryana High Court to the Delhi High Court, while Justice Suman Shyam has been moved from the Gauhati High Court to the Bombay High Court.

Justice Ashwini Kumar Mishra was transferred from Allahabad High Court to Punjab and Haryana High Court, Justice Om Prakash Shukla will move from Allahabad High Court to Delhi High Court, and Justice Jayant Bhanji moves from Allahabad High Court to Karnataka High Court.

MGNREGS digital attendance system being manipulated, Centre tells States

Subhansu K. Saini
NEW DELHI

Nearly four years after introducing the digital attendance system for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme workers and three years after making it mandatory, the government has discovered a whole range of ways the National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS) platform used for the purpose is being "misused" and has now added four layers of analog monitoring to plug the gaps.

On July 8, the Union Rural Development Ministry issued a 13-page note to the State governments on the

issue, there were at least seven ways that the NMMS is allegedly being gamed, which, the government said, was undermining the credibility of the digital attendance system and leading to "potential misuse of public funds". The Ministry also cautioned that "no relaxation will be given in matters concerning the misuse or manipulation of NMMS".

Under the NMMS, geo-tagged photographs of the workers are to be uploaded twice a day - first when they arrive for work and then at the end of their shift. Only exception for the second round of photographing is offered at sites with 20 or below workers.

The Ministry has directed the States to ensure that these photographs and attendance of workers is not

blank, district, and State level. At gram panchayat level, they want 100% verification of the present workers. The percentage of physical verification of the uploaded photographs of workers reduces at different levels. So, while at the block level, 20% of the photos at random need to be verified, at the district level, this number is down to 10%, and at State level to 5%.

The other significant change is that the government now allows for editing the number rolls before making the wage bill. So far, this could be done only at the District Collector's level, who also took action in case of complaints. Such amendments of the master

list do not have a set of institutions where we could request them formally and they would listen to us. That is the whole problem," Venkataraman submitted.

Doing everything possible to stop execution of Indian nurse, Centre tells top court

Krishnakumar Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Union government assured the Supreme Court on Monday that it is doing everything possible to save the life of Malayali nurse Nishitha Priya, who is awaiting execution in a prison in Yemen for the murder of a local man.

Appearing before a bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta, Attorney-General of India K. Venkataraman said the government is working relentlessly to stay the execution of the nurse.

The government was responding to a petition filed in the top court by an organisation, Nishithapriya - International Action Council, represented by senior advocate Raghuwath Bassant and advocate Subhash Chandan K.R., seek-



Nishitha Priya

ing the government's intervention after reports surfaced that Ms. Priya may be executed on July 16. However, both the government and the petitioner informed the court that they had so far not received any official communication from the Yemeni authorities confirming the reports.

"The government is certainly keen to save one of its citizens. But they've

Abuse of right to free speech increasing on social media, says SC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said the right to free speech was increasingly being abused, especially on social media, and called for self-restraint and regulation.

A bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and K.V. Viswanathan said the right to freedom of speech and expression carried with it reasonable restrictions. Using free speech to instigate divisive tendencies, at least on social media, needed to be curbed.

Calls for framework

guidelines to regulate abusive and divisive social media posts. "We are not speaking about censorship. But in the interest of fraternity, secularism and dignity of individuals... We will have to go into this beyond this petition," the bench said.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Kolkata resident Wazirah Khan seeking the consolidation of the FIRs registered in different States over her social media posts. The FIRs against Mr. Khan were registered soon after his complaint led to the arrest of social media influencer Sharmistha Paul and over her social media posts.

KATHMANDU
Prachanda offers support to govt. to amend Nepal's Constitution



CPN Maoist Centre Chairman and Nepal's former premier Prachanda offered support to the government to amend the Constitution to institutionalise the rights of marginalised groups. He offered the support of his party — the main opposition — as a two-thirds majority is required for any amendments. PT

BERLIN
German palliative care doctor goes on trial for murder of 15 patients



A German doctor went on trial on Monday accused of killing 15 patients with lethal injections and acting "master of life and death" over those in his care. The 60-year-old palliative care specialist is alleged to have killed 12 women and three men between September 2011 and July 2014 while working in Berlin. AP

PHNOM PENH
Cambodia to begin conscription of civilians next year, says PM Manet



Cambodia's military will begin conscripting civilians next year, Prime Minister Hun Manet said on Monday, citing rising tensions with Thailand as the reason. Cambodia's parliament in 2006 had approved a law that would require all Cambodians aged 18 to 30 to serve in the military, although it was never enforced. AP

NEW YORK
Nine killed in night-time fire at Massachusetts nursing home



A night-time fire at a nursing home has left nine persons dead in the northeastern U.S. State of Massachusetts after a desperate rescue operation, local authorities said on Monday. One person remains in critical condition and over 20 were taken to hospitals. Around 70 people resided at the facility in the city of Fall River. AP

Trump threatens Russia with tariffs if Ukraine war is not resolved in 50 days

US President warns of secondary tariffs that target Russia's remaining trade partners he unveils a deal under which the NATO bloc will buy arms from the U.S. — including Patriot anti-missile batteries — and distribute them to Ukraine

Associated Press WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday told Russia to resolve its Ukraine war within 50 days or face massive new economic sanctions as he laid out plans for new infusions of weaponry for Kyiv.

"We are very, very unhappy" with Russia, Mr. Trump told reporters as he met with NATO chief Mark Rutte in the White House. "We are going to be doing very severe tariffs if we don't have a deal in 50 days," tariffs at about 300%, Mr. Trump said, adding that they would be



Trade stallions: NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte meets Donald Trump at the Oval Office of the White House on Monday. AP

"secondary tariffs" that target Russia's trade partners — thereby seeking to cripple Moscow's ability to survive already sweeping Western sanctions.

Mr. Trump and Mr. Rutte also unveiled a deal under which the NATO military alliance would buy arms from the U.S. — including Patriot anti-missile batteries — and then distribute them to Ukraine to help it battle Russia's invasion.

"This is billions of dollars worth of military equipment is going to be purchased from the United States, going to NATO... and that's going to be quickly distributed to the battlefield," Mr. Trump said.

Mr. Rutte, a former Dutch Prime Minister, said on Monday they had captured new territory in eastern Ukraine with the seizure of two villages, one in the Donetsk region and another in the Zaporizhzhia region.

In Kyiv, Mr. Zelensky also proposed a major political shake-up, recommending Economy Minister Yulia Boyshenko take over as the country's new Prime Minister.

Gaza truce talks enter second week as Israeli strikes kill 30

Stuttering Gaza ceasefire talks between Israel and Hamas entered a second week on Monday, with U.S. President Donald Trump still hopeful of a breakthrough and as more than 30 people were killed on the ground.

The indirect negotiations in the Qatar capital, Doha, appeared deadlocked over the weekend after both sides blamed the other for blocking a deal for a 60-day ceasefire and the release of hostages.

Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip overnight and into Monday killed at least 30 people, according to local hospitals. The Israeli military meanwhile said it killed a senior Hamas militant last month who had held a hostage in his home. City also received 12 bombers, including three children and two women, after a series of strikes in the north, according to the hospital director.



Little girls: Children gather up with toys to receive meals from a charity kitchen in Gaza City on Monday. AP

Al-Azka Hospital in central Gaza reported six killed and eight wounded in strikes in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp.

Israel strikes Syrian tanks after 99 killed in sectarian clashes



Keeping guard: A member of the Syrian security forces stationed in Sweida in southern Syria on Monday. AP

Syrian government forces were advancing towards the southern city of Sweida on Monday amid clashes in the region between Druse fighters and Bedouin tribes that have killed nearly 100 people, according to a war monitor.

As the violence escalated, Israel — which had previously warned that it would intervene in Syria to protect the Druse — said it struck "several tanks" in the area, citing security concerns.

The fighting underscores the challenges facing Israeli leader Ahmad al-Shara (Muhammad al-Jarrah), whose Islamist forces ousted President Bashar al-Assad in December after 14 years of civil war.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor raised its death toll to 99 killed since fighting erupted on Sunday, including 60 Druse, four of them civilians, 18 Bedouin fighters, 14 security personnel and seven unidentified persons in military uniforms.

Syrian forces on Monday took control of the Druse village of Al-Matraa, where Bedouin fighters were also located. A commander, Izardine al-Shaymouh, said the forces "are heading toward Sweida" city.

No specific date set for nuclear talks with U.S.: Iran



Iran said on Monday it had "no specific date" for a meeting with the U.S. on Tehran's nuclear programme, following a war with Israel that had derailed negotiations.

"For now, no specific date, time or location has been determined," Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Bagheri said regarding plans for a meeting between Iran's top diplomat Abbas Araghchi and U.S. envoy James Dore.

"We have been serious in diplomacy and the negotiation process, but before the sixth round, the Zionist regime, in coordination with the U.S., committed military aggression against Iran," Mr. Bagheri said.

Australia hosts largest drills involving 19 nations, with chances of Chinese scrutiny



HIMARS rockets are fired as part of the Tallman Sable 2021 joint war fighting exercise at Shoemaker Bay on Monday. AP/USMC

The largest ever war fighting drills in Australia, Exercise Tallman Sable, are under way and expected to attract the attention of Chinese spy ships.

Australia launched missiles from its M24 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, known as HIMARS, on Monday during the Shoemaker Bay Training Area, a 4,500 sq km, Outback expanse in Queensland State. The HIMARS launchers were recently bought from the United States Defense Industry M-

Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Thailand, Tonga, and the United Kingdom, will take part over three weeks, Australia's defence department said.

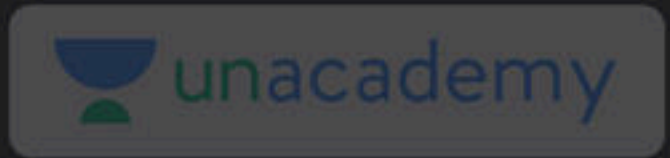
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2	Project Officer (IC)	2	B.A., B.L.	1,40,000/-
3	Project Officer (Planning and Monitoring)	2	B.A., B.L.	1,40,000/-
4	Project Officer (Rural Extension)	2	B.A., B.L.	1,40,000/-
5	Project Officer (Rural Extension, M&E and DRT)	2	B.A., B.L.	1,40,000/-
6	Junior Project Officer (Planning and Monitoring)	1	B.A., B.L.	1,20,000/-
7	Junior Project Officer (Finance)	1	B.A., B.L.	1,20,000/-
8	Junior Project Officer (Rural Extension)	1	B.A., B.L.	1,20,000/-

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PULLED UP
Siraj fined 15% of match fee for fiery send-off to Duckett



India pacer Mohammed Siraj was on Monday penalised 15% of his match fee and given one demerit point following an aggressive reaction to the wicket of England opener Ben Duckett in the Lord's Test. Siraj was found guilty of breaching Article 2.5 of the ICC's Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel.

CAHILL'S REVELATION
Sinner watches more Alcaraz matches than any other player's



Jannik Sinner watches more Carlos Alcaraz matches than he does anybody else because he's fascinated with the improvements that are coming in his game, and he's pushing us as coaches to make sure that he's improving. So the rivalry is real. Hopefully, it's going to be there for the next 20 or 22 years - Sinner's coach Cahill.

TIMELY EFFORT
Suryavanshi's knock helps India under-19 extend advantage



Vishwakarma Suryavanshi's half-century propelled India under-19 to 128 for three in its second innings against England on the third day of the Youth Test in Beckenham on Monday. **The scores:** India 128 340-6, 128/11 in 27 overs (Suryavanshi 50) vs England 128-4/26 in 124.5 overs (Hewson 84, Flintoff 55, Easton 38, Albert 30, Ward 1/81).

CLIMB TO THE TOP
Healy takes Tour de France lead as Simon Yates wins stage



Geraint Thomas (in pic) climbed top of the overall rankings at the Tour de France on Monday on a mountain stage won by Britain's Simon Yates in a breakaway group. Race favourites Tadej Pogacar and Jonas Vingegaard crossed the line together five minutes behind the escape group after eight climbs in the Massif Central.

Heartbreak for Jadeja and Team India as England snatches win amid drama

Lion-hearted Stokes and a fired-up Archer help the home side take a 2-1 lead. Bumrah and Siraj's plucky show with the bat not good enough

INDIA VS ENGLAND

Shayan Acharya
LONDON

There couldn't have been a better advertisement for Test cricket. As Lord's went nearly full on the first working day of the week, the players from both sides gave it their all in the heat of the battle, with England eventually clinching a thriller.

As England players celebrated their 22-run victory over India and gained a 2-1 lead in the five-match series, the crowd cheered for them.

However, it was heartbreak for Ravindra Jadeja (63 not out, 105, 1st, 1st), who fought a lone battle, bringing up his second fifty of the game, but couldn't guide the team home.

Fighting stand
Pursuing a target of 210, after India lost eight wickets at lunch, not many imagined a fightback. But Jadeja refused to buckle, and paired with Jasprit Bumrah to delay the inevitable with a determined stand that lasted 132 balls.

They batted for nearly the entire second session before Ben Stokes broke the partnership by claiming the wicket of Bumrah.

As the ball got older, England tried the traditional lengths - but Bumrah thwarted most of them before being tempted to go for a hook. He got a top edge and was caught at mid-on by visiting opener Sam Cook.

However, even after his departure, there was hope for a miracle.

Jadeja tried hard with



Agony and ecstasy: Siraj and Jadeja are over the moon as the England players are jubilant at the end of the game. (GPTV IMAGES)

Mohammed Siraj and took the game into the final session, with the former taking most of the strike and changing ends only once in an over.

While that approach left the England bowlers frustrated, Jadeja and Siraj seemed to be in no hurry.

The defensive tactic may have hurt India in the end as the run-flow dried up, adding to the pressure.

England eventually got lucky as Shoaib Akhtar bowled Siraj off an under-edge.

As Siraj shook his head in disbelief and walked towards the pavilion, visibly shattered, Stokes walked up to Jadeja and gave him a warm hug. It, indeed, was a fine gesture given the fact

that tempers flew over the last couple of days.

These late wickets overnight had given England a shot at a comeback, and in the opening session, Stokes and Jofra Archer ripped apart

middle-order.

The visitors' hopes rested on K.L. Rahul and Rohit Sharma, but both were hit early in the morning.

After being hit for a couple of boundaries, Archer sent Pant's off-stump cart-

wheeling and followed it with an animated send-off.

Stokes trapped Rahul in front with a rip-bouncer soon.

Though the on-field umpire turned down England's appeal, ball-tracking

validated that it was indeed hitting the stumps.

Stunning return catch
The five fell continued as Archer grabbed a low one-handed stunner on his follow-through to send back Washington Sundar.

As India lost three wickets for just 11 runs in the space of four overs, it seemed just a matter of time before England romped home.

But with Jadeja digging in with Nitish Kumar Reddy, India's deficit was brought down below 100 before Chris Woakes' action accounted for Nitish.

Jadeja gave it his all during his four-and-a-half-hour stay at the crease, but fell short in the end.

Pant's run-out biggest moment of the Test: Gill



Turning point: Pant was caught short of the crease by Stokes' direct hit on the third day of the Lord's Test. (GPTV IMAGES)

Shayan Acharya
LONDON

India captain Shubman Gill admitted that Rishabh Pant's run-out in the first innings was the "biggest moment" of the Lord's Test as it allowed England to bounce back.

Following his team's 22-run defeat in the third Test, Gill termed the run-out as a "judgement of error."

At the stroke of lunch on the third day, K.L. Rahul, batting on 96, was eager to get back on strike and called for a risky single after Pant defended a Shoaib Akhtar delivery to the off-side.

Seeing Pant's hesitation, England skipper Ben Stokes ran in from cover and effected a direct hit at the non-striker's end that caught Pant short of the crease.

Though Rahul said that he had told Pant of his plan to get to the contrary before the break with a couple of overs to go for him, Gill said, "Sometimes, these small moments create a hiccup. That was the big moment."

"We could have got a lead of 150 runs, but we missed it. We talked about this a lot, but I think it was an error of judgment, rather than (Rahul) wanting to score a hundred," Gill said.

All praise for Jadeja
Gill also lauded Ravindra Jadeja for his efforts.

"He is one of the most valuable players in India. The experience and the skillset that he brings in with his bowling, batting and fielding is very rare and hard to find. And the kind of composure that he showed today, it was just tremendous to watch."

Backing his instinct
Stokes said that his men knew that anything beyond 190 will be tough to chase. He backed his instinct and opened the bowling with Jofra Archer on the final day. "And, he swung the game for us," Stokes said.

He, however, downplayed the astonishing transition among the players from both the teams, saying, "In a big series, there will be moments like this. I'm all for it."

Mithali emphasises on role clarity for players ahead of ODI WC

Shayan Acharya
LONDON

With just a couple of months to go for the Women's ODI World Cup, to be held in India and Sri Lanka, the series against England will be crucial for the team to get its combination right.

And former India captain Mithali Raj believes that the team management should not shuffle its core players, leading up to the marquee event.

"It's good that we seem a T20 series in England. They will now be playing three ODIs and we will have to ensure that our core players are not shuffled here and there," Mithali said.

Having closely followed the women's team's campaign in the T20I series, which it clinched 2-2, Mithali said, "We need to ensure they get to play in the roles that you envision that they will play in the World Cup."

"We should ideally put them into these roles from the forthcoming ODI series itself, so that they have enough time to prepare themselves individually."

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Sinner's Wimbledon purge and its effect on rivalry with Alcaraz

N. Sudarshan
LONDON

For all of Carlos Alcaraz's brilliance, big-match temperament and high skill, it is Jannik Sinner who currently holds three of the four Grand Slam titles, and came within a whisker of the other at Roland-Garros last month.

In a parallel universe, "This is the part where I'm the proponent because it really has not been easy," Sinner said about his bounce back after Paris.

"But things can happen, if you lose a Grand Slam final that way, it's much better than when someone kills [for] you."

"I said after Roland-Garros that it's not the time to put myself down because another Slam is coming up, and I did go out."

"If they understand their roles well, it helps in the Open Era."

Hindsight, of course, is 20/20, but this is just to show how good the Italian has been. Starting from his first Major triumph at the 2024 Australian Open he has by far been the best player, with a stupendous run of titles.

victory over two-time defending champion Alcaraz in Sunday's Wimbledon final, that snuffed a run of five straight defeats to the Spaniard. Including the five-set reverse at French Open from being three championship points up, is surely the acme.

"I know that I could play well here [Wimbledon] because of my ground strokes," said Sinner.

"They're quite fit, and the slams had had a bit of a break through. On the other hand, I know that I could play well here [Wimbledon] because of my ground strokes," said Sinner.



Champion Sinner (left) cheered he can hold his own against Alcaraz on grass also. (GPTV IMAGES)

out of that match," instead Cahill.

"But yes, he caught a break. Nobody goes through a tournament without a hiccup. Everybody has a story in a Grand Slam. Maybe this was going to be his story."

Shifting sands
What Sinner's performance does is that it moves the needle in his era-defining rivalry with Alcaraz. Handing down the best player on hard courts - he has two Australian Opens and one US Open - the 23-year-old is now proving the World No. 2's equal even on clay and grass.

"I know that I could play well here [Wimbledon] because of my ground strokes," said Sinner.

"They're quite fit, and the slams had had a bit of a break through. On the other hand, I know that I could play well here [Wimbledon] because of my ground strokes," said Sinner.

there. But I played five-and-a-half hours against Carlos (French Open) and it was a good move forward."

As to the next trajectory of this match-up, it depends on how Alcaraz responds. It is similar to the situation the World No. 2 found himself in after losing to Djokovic in the Paris Olympics - gold medal match barely a month after outwitting the Serb in the Wimbledon final.

"It was really, really hard to accept that moment [in the Olympics]," Alcaraz said on Sunday.

"But in the last year, I have learned. I accept everything that is coming. I just lost a Grand Slam final, but I am really proud about being in a final. I want to keep the momentum going."

Sport

IN BRIEF



Palmer wins Golden Ball, Golden Glove for Sanchez

Chelsea midfielder Cole Palmer, in pic., earned the Golden Ball for the top player at the Club World Cup after scoring three goals. Chelsea's Robert Sanchez, in pic., was awarded the Golden Glove for the best goalkeeper and PSG's 20-year-old forward Deshaun Brown, in pic., received the best Young Player award. Real Madrid's Gonzalo Garcia won the Golden Boot for most goals with four strikes. He was tied with Benfica's Angel Di Maria, Borussia Dortmund's Serhou Guirassy and Al Hilal's Marcus Leonardo, and Garcia won the award on a deft strike with one assist.



Gotterup outlasts McIlroy to register his second career win

Chris Gotterup-outbound Rory McIlroy to win the Scottish Open by two strokes from the Masters champion. Gotterup's four-under-par round of 66 to finish on 65 under was too good for McIlroy. The American had only won once previously on the PGA Tour and also secured himself a spot in next week's British Open at Royal Portrush. "I hung in there like a champ and finished it off in style," he said. Nicolai Huggard also qualified for the British Open thanks to his share of fourth with Matt Fitzpatrick on 62 under.

Prarthana goes down in Newport WTA doubles final

Fourth seeds Carmen Corley and Inna Corley defeated third-ranked Ariane Hartono and Prarthana Thombare 2-6/4, 6-3 in the doubles final of the \$200,000 WTA tennis tournament in Newport on Sunday. The champion team collected US WTA points and \$9,500. The Indo-Dutch team got 81 points and \$5,700.

Railways downs Maharashtra

In terms of strategy, execution and aesthetics, the two Pool-A matches of the 96th MCC Maragappa Gold Cup hockey on Monday failed to rise above the mundane and ordinary. First, defending champion Indian Railways thrashed Maharashtra 4-2 to top the table with nine points from three matches, and then Indian Army edged out SAI Noida (Bhopal) 1-0 for its first win in three matches.

Aditi finishes T-28 in Evian Championship

Aditi Ashok, who looked good for a top-10 finish all week, faltered on the final day to end a disappointing two-over 73 to sign off the 28th at the Amundi Evian Championship.

Press Trust of India

Aditi Ashok, who looked good for a top-10 finish all week, faltered on the final day to end a disappointing two-over 73 to sign off the 28th at the Amundi Evian Championship.

Palmer does the star turn as Chelsea outclasses PSG to emerge champion

The blues cap a memorable season and take away around \$25 million in prize money, disappointing end to the French side's campaign

CLUB WORLD CUP

Agence France-Press

Cole Palmer scored two goals and made another as Chelsea stunned Paris Saint-Germain in the final of the Club World Cup on Sunday, beating the European champion 3-0 before lifting the trophy alongside US President Donald Trump. PSG was the favourite after coming to the United States fresh from winning the Champions League and having destroyed Real Madrid 4-0 in the semifinals.

But having been three goals ahead early on in the semi, this time the roles were reversed as PSG found itself 3-0 down by the break.



Beating display: Palmer, third from right, scored a brace and set up a goal in the final. (AFP/REUTERS)

Palmer opened the scoring midway through the first half and struck again to make it two on the half-hour mark, before taking advantage of passive defending to set up Joao Pedro for the third on 43 minutes. A bad day for PSG was summed up when Joao Neves was shown red following a VAR review four minutes from the end for pulling Marc Cucurella by the hair of the ball.

"Being Club World Cup champion is something for us to be proud of. We are very happy, especially against a team in PSG who I consider the best in the world with one of the best managers in the world," said Chelsea coach Enzo Maresca, before hailing match-winner Palmer. Before Chelsea got to lift the trophy, emotions spilled over at full-time with players facing off on the pitch and PSG coach Luis Enrique raising his arms to the neck of Pedro. "There was a lot of pushing and shoving. It was a situation that obviously should have been avoided, but my intention was clearly just to try to separate the players," said Enrique. The scoreline was one few could have predicted

as Chelsea capped what has been a long but memorable season - it is the first-ever winner of the 32-team Club World Cup having also won the UEFA Conference League and finished fourth in the Premier League. Chelsea took away around \$25 million in prize money, meaning the prospect of a drastically curtailed summer break before returning for next season will surely feel worth it. For PSG, meanwhile, the financial rewards are similar but there will be genuine disappointment at falling short of adding this title to its Champions League triumph and French league and cup double.

The result: Chelsea 3, PSG 0.

Harika, Vaishali move into last 16; Vantika out

CHINA WORLD CUP

Press Trust of India

With Kusuma Hanu and Divya Deshmukh already in last 16, India has four players in the last 16. However, WGM Vantika Agrawal made an exit after losing to Katsuyuki Nagano of Russia. She showed a lot of grit and determination but in the end the experience of Nagano came in handy. There are three places up for grabs for the next women's Candidates' that will decide the challenger for reigning champion Wenjun Ju of China. Harika capitalised on some unforced errors to get the better of Stavroula. Vantika was the favourite while Vaishali was at her best, handing out Yip a defeat in the first set.

Press Trust of India

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Rohan takes the honours in Senior Max class

MOTORSPORTS

Sports Bureau

Bengaluru's Rohan Madhok (Progressive Racing) topped the Senior Max category in the first round of the MCO-FRACI National karting championship. Rohan Madhok (Progressive Racing) topped the Senior Max category in the first round of the MCO-FRACI National karting championship. Rohan Madhok (Progressive Racing) topped the Senior Max category in the first round of the MCO-FRACI National karting championship.



In front: Rohan leads the field on his way to glory.

Junior Max Final (28 laps): 1. Vikram Singhania (WGP), 2. Ansh Shukh (Crest Motorsports), 3. Thirumalaiah (Progressive Racing). Pre-Finals (14 laps): 1. Kisan Shah (Kyan Racing), 2. Eshwarth, 3. Ansh. Senior Max Final (28 laps): 1. Rohan Madhok (Progressive), 2. Arjun Vijay Chhabra (Crest Motorsport), 3. Laksh Narain (Kyan Motorsports). Pre-Finals (14 laps): 1. Vikram Singhania (WGP), 2. Ansh Shukh (Crest Motorsports), 3. Thirumalaiah (Progressive Racing). Pre-Finals (14 laps): 1. Kisan Shah (Kyan Racing), 2. Eshwarth, 3. Ansh. Senior Max Final (28 laps): 1. Rohan Madhok (Progressive), 2. Arjun Vijay Chhabra (Crest Motorsport), 3. Laksh Narain (Kyan Motorsports).

Alzari leads West Indies fightback in final Test

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESS

AGENCE-FRANCE-PRESS

West Indies fought back on Sunday to reduce Australia to 99 for six in its second innings, a lead of 81, as the pink-ball Test at Sabina Park remained on a knife-edge at the close on day two. Australia extended its five-innings lead of 82 but was kept in check by the West Indies bowlers as the pink ball proved almost unplayable under floodlights in the final session for the second day in a row. Alzari Joseph snared three and Shamar Joseph two to keep their team in the game after their partners earlier collapsed to 143 all out in an eventful middle session. Shamar Joseph took his series haul to 20 victims with only Cameron Green preventing a complete capitulation by compiling an unbeaten 42. He will resume on the third day in the company of Pat Cummins. "We were looking for seven wickets tonight and got six, so we'll take that," said Shamar Joseph.

Srishti makes it to Europe in style

Sports Bureau

Sports Bureau

Srishti Kiran had a memorable time reaching Europe from her training base in Florida, USA, when called to make the Asian under-14 team as part of the Grand Slam Player Development Programme (GSDPP) of the International Tennis Federation (ITF). It was Jemi Kanbur who was selected following back-to-back girls singles titles over a fortnight in the Asian event held in Delhi, Jemi who made it to the Wimbledon under-14 event, could not accept the invitation for Europe. The 13-year-old Srishti had directly left for USA after the Asian event in April, in Delhi, with her father. Once the opportunity came from the Asian Tennis Federation and ITF, the necessary clearance was quickly processed for Srishti. Since the ITF does not allow parents to accompany the players, and there would be dedicated coaches to take care of them, Srishti had to fly alone from USA to Paris. "Originally her ticket was from West Palm Beach International airport, which was close to the academy where she trains. However, due to bad weather at her connecting centre, the airlines was not allowing unaccompanied minor minors, instead, she had to fly from the last minute (Shimoga) to USA.

South Africa beats Zimbabwe

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESS

AGENCE-FRANCE-PRESS

South Africa beat Zimbabwe by five wickets in the first match of a T20 triangular series, also involving New Zealand, on Monday. The series: Zimbabwe 142 & 20 runs (Max 20 runs), India 130 (20 runs), South Africa 142 & 20 runs (Max 20 runs).

Vidarsa hopes to make a mark in Asian shooting

M.R. Praveen Chandran

M.R. Praveen Chandran

The moment of truth has finally arrived for Vidarsa K. Vinod, who is set to take aim at her first international shooting competition - the Asian Shooting championship in Kazakhstan in August. Vidarsa earned her place to compete in the 50m rifle prone event after securing silver and bronze medals in the National shooting selection trials held in Dehradun last month. Vidarsa also won the gold in the 50m rifle 3-position at the National shooting trials, which featured a star-studded field that included former world Championship silver medalist and two-time Olympian Anjana Moodgal, as well as World Cup silver medalist Nishal.

Milestone

Vidarsa is now working hard to improve her ranking in the 50m rifle 3 position and the 50m air rifle. "I believe the decision to shift to Delhi was a wise one. I have been training under him for the last five years. "He was very supportive and took only a token fee from me. "However, shooting is an expensive sport, and with little support, I even thought of quitting, but things changed for the better when I came under the SA's NCOE scheme and coaches all my first international meets as well as World Cup silver medalist Nishal. Vidarsa is now working hard to improve her ranking in the 50m rifle 3 position and the 50m air rifle. "I believe the decision to shift to Delhi was a wise one. I have been training under him for the last five years. "He was very supportive and took only a token fee from me. "However, shooting is an expensive sport, and with little support, I even thought of quitting, but things changed for the better when I came under the SA's NCOE scheme and coaches all my first international meets as well as World Cup silver medalist Nishal.

Tanweer clinches overall title

Sports Bureau

Sports Bureau

Team Petronas TVS Racing rider Abdul Wahid Tanweer clinched the overall title in the Rally of Coimbatore, the fourth round of the MRF MCGP FIMCI National Rally Championship for two wheelers, promoted by M/s Godspeed and organised by the Coimbatore Auto Sports Club, here on Sunday. The results (Top three categories): Class 1: Abdul Wahid Tanweer (Petronas TVS Racing) (0:49:15), 2. Samudh Jacob (Petronas TVS Racing) (0:49:24), 3. K.L.Rajendra (Petronas TVS Racing) (0:49:51). Class 2: 1. R. Sathya (Mysore) (0:47:02), 2. Saraj, Sankshita (Bengaluru) (0:48:05), 3. Iwan France (Kerala) (0:48:26). Class 3: 1. Nishan (Coimbatore) (0:50:28), 2. Shashank (Bengaluru) (0:50:51), 3. Abdul Wahid (Shimoga) (0:51:41).

SRH names Aaron as bowling coach

Sports Bureau

Sports Bureau

Sunil's Hyderabad has appointed Varun Aaron as the new bowling coach for the 2026 IPL season. He will take over from James Franklin, who was to be among the top selectors in the country. "I don't have any equipment, and I am using a borrowed one... sometimes I face a shortage of ammunition. But I am training hard to be among the top selectors in the country." "I don't have any equipment, and I am using a borrowed one... sometimes I face a shortage of ammunition. But I am training hard to be among the top selectors in the country."

Tanweer clinches overall title

Sports Bureau

Sports Bureau

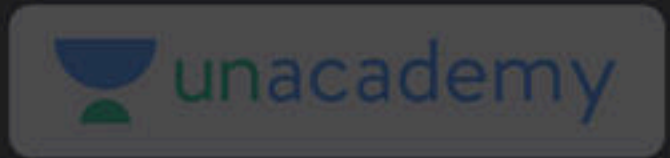
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Breaking into top-50 is the main target

The 17-year-old shares her experience of participating at the Worlds, working with her coach Gaultier, areas that need improvement and the road ahead

INTERVIEW

Anahat Singh

S. Prasanna Venkatesan

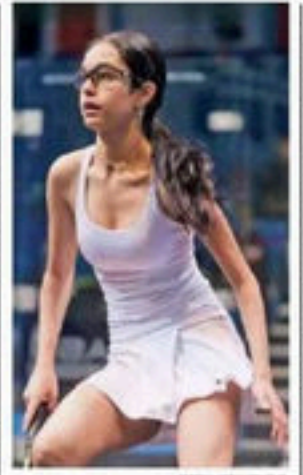
The 17-year-old Indian squash sensation Anahat Singh, who recently won the U-19, women's doubles, and mixed doubles Asian titles, played her maiden senior World championships in Chicago in May this year. She reached the second round, beating American Martina Stefanoni (World No. 26) and losing to Egyptian Fayrouz Abdelkheir (World No. 10).

Shortly after the Worlds, she won the women's and mixed doubles National titles with Joshua Chinappa and Abhinav Singh, respectively, at the Indian Squash and Table Tennis Academy (ISTA) here. On the first day of the event, Anahat, who later in June was honoured with the Women's Challenger Player of the Season and the Women's Young Player of the Season awards for the 2024-25 season, spoke about her World championships experience and the key takeaways from it, training with her coach and former men's World No. 1 Gregory Gaultier, and her goals for now.

Excerpt:

How was your maiden senior World championships experience?

I mean, the experience was really good. I got to be around all the top players. It's the biggest event of the year, and just getting to see what it's like as well. Going into the tournament, I knew it wasn't really much of a pressure to win. It was more of just going and doing my best.



SPIKA ASSOCIATES

well. But my first match was extremely tough. So, I wasn't fully recovered. But yes, I'm happy with how the whole tournament went.

What are the major takeaways from the event?

I think just getting to see what it's like — how the senior players go about it. I mean, I've not really gotten to be at tournaments, and see what they're like and how they're playing their matches.

And I think playing at a tournament like the World Championships is completely different to playing at a normal PSA event. The whole

events of the year.

Just getting to see how the top players are reacting, even when their body's extremely tired and how they're coping up with it. It's just that I'm still quite young. There's still a lot for me to learn on and off the court from them.

Did you get to interact with any top players there? Did anyone give you any memorable advice?

A few of them said I played well and that I've improved a lot since they had last seen me. And my coach Gregory Gaultier (France, currently resides in Prague) is a former World No. 1.

He's training a lot of the top players like the women's World No. 2 (Egyptian Nour El Sherbini), who won the World championship as well. He's overseeing a few of the top-50 players as well. I was able to spend a lot of time with them and once again see what it's like for them playing at one of these events, and how it's different for me and different for them.

What key differences did you see between you and the top players?

Obviously, the experience they have is on another level. I don't really have much of that right now. But besides that, I'd say the strength that they have on the court. I'm still working on that. I've not really gotten to it yet.

I've not had much time to do it. But yes, that's something I've been trying to figure out — how to fix a little bit of that and work towards it a bit more for the past few years.

I don't really like to warm up and cool down, and everyone has been saying that it's really important. Actually, just the game is only like 20% of it. Besides that, there's a lot more to it. So yes, I think just a few things like

What does your coach Gaultier bring to the table? Has he brought about any specific changes to your game?

There wouldn't be anything specific. But I think overall, my game has definitely improved a lot. Just the confidence I'm feeling when I'm going into court, because when I go to Prague and train with him, I only play with people who are a lot better than I am compared to when I'm in India, where it's people who are a bit worse or even the same level as me.

I think just getting to play with people who are a lot better than me has improved my game a lot overall. It's given me confidence to play at the top events as well.

How often do you visit Prague and train with him?

It's whenever I get the chance, honestly. Because, I don't really get much time. I have school going on as well, so I don't really get too much time to go. But whenever I'm playing a tournament which is maybe in the Europe area, or if I have a big tournament coming up, like the World Championships, I make time to go for at least a week; or if in the middle of two tournaments, I get to go and just train with him for a few days, that's also really helpful.

You've said that you like to watch videos of your opponents before facing them. Did that help in your first round match against Stefanoni, or were there a lot of nerves?

No, I wouldn't say I was really nervous. But yes, I've been watching whoever I play. It's something that I always do, even if I know I'm going to win — I still do it. Because, it's just important to see what you're going to do inside

It definitely helps in getting to know what the player is going to do with you. And people's game styles are very different. It's always good to be familiar with the way they're playing as well.

In that match against Stefanoni, you were trailing 1-2 before going on to win 3-2. So, how did you manage to cope and make a comeback in the contest?

I mean, I had heard about her. Obviously, she's a top-30 player. So, I had seen her play for the past couple of months as well, and she's been doing extremely well. Her ranking has gone up to the top-30 very recently. And I knew I was going to be in for a battle. It wouldn't have been easy at all. I'd say our games are quite similar, but she runs a lot and so do I. But I think she runs a bit more than I do.

I realised that I needed to just incorporate my shots as well and play my best. I didn't really go in thinking too much about it. I just went in and played the best I possibly could.

What goals have you set for yourself now?

I don't think there are too many PSAs lined up for the rest of the season. I have the World Juniors coming up. So, hopefully a medal or even win the World Juniors. I've been thinking about that for the past three years. I've lost in the quarters every single time. I hope I can break the curse this time around.

I'm not in the top-50 (currently ranked World No. 54) yet, and I got into the top-100 just at the beginning of this year. So, I mean, yes, I've been watching whoever I play. It's something that I always do, even if I know I'm going to win — I still do it. Because, it's just important to see what you're going to do inside

Scientists find pheromone that causes locusts to swarm and a way to block it

In a new proof of concept, researchers from the Institute of Zoology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing have shown that it's possible to manipulate pheromones released by locusts to prevent them from swarming or engaging in group behaviour that leads to the feeding frenzy.

Sandhya Ramesh

Human societies have struggled to fend off locust infestations for millennia. The insects' destructive effects persist to this day, especially when they collect in large swarms and eat through thousands of hectares of crops in a matter of days. Such swarms have occurred once every few years of late. Most recently, in 2019-2020, a record number of locusts emerged in East Africa and eventually passed through Pakistan and India, making it the region's worst infestation in 25 years.

In the last century or so, experts and farmers have tried to control locusts using synthetic pesticides, but unfortunately they also damage the land, food security, and the environment. Thus finding suitable, eco-friendly alternatives to pesticides has been an active area of research.

In a new proof of concept, researchers from the Institute of Zoology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, have shown that it's possible to manipulate pheromones released by locusts to prevent them from swarming or engaging in group behaviour that leads to the feeding frenzy. The team was able to identify the pheromone responsible for triggering swarming and also tested a candidate molecule to block its function.

The study, published in *Nature* on June 23, also recommended more research to identify other molecules that can safely keep locusts from swarming, including at large scales. Overall, the study offers potentially one of the earliest pollution-free solutions for locust control.

Living to jump
Several canines, birds, and insect species - including locusts - exhibit a social behaviour called gregariousness. It helps them form societies in which large numbers of individuals work together, instead of competing, in order to survive. In the first phase of their lives, individual locusts are solitary creatures; then they transition to their gregarious phase and begin to collect and operate in physical groups, including feeding together.

Scientists have sought to identify the hormones that trigger this behaviour for many decades now. In fact the same team behind the new study had identified a pheromone of interest, called 4-vinylthiazole (4VT), in 2020.

After a locust eats food, it often emits large quantities of 4VA from its hind legs. This hormone is an aggregation pheromone: it promptly begins to attract other members of the species when it's released into the air. Other locusts nearby subsequently collect together and rub their hind legs against each other. This in turn triggers the release of serotonin, a neurotransmitter, which leads to swarming.

In the new study, the researchers figured that preventing locusts from releasing 4VA could potentially prevent swarming, so they set to work on understanding its production.

Locusts release 4VA only after they eat, which means certain molecules in the plants that locusts feed on could be triggering its production. The researchers figured right: the culprit was a compound called phenylalanine.

When locusts digested phenylalanine, two enzymes - mainly 4VPMTH and



The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has estimated that 1 sq. km of swarming locusts, numbering about 40 million, can eat as much in a day as 25,000 people. (AP/REUTERS)

4VPMTH less so - were found to be responsible for converting the non-aggregating pheromone 4VP in solitary locusts into the aggregating pheromone 4VA. To confirm the link, the researchers turned to genetic engineering. When they deactivated the gene that encoded for 4VPMTH, the insects stopped transitioning from their solitary to gregarious phases and didn't exhibit any swarming tendencies.

Molecular deactivation
The researchers also studied how the 4VP molecule bound to the 4VPMTH enzyme and the amino acids on its structure. Then they identified chemically similar molecules that could bind to the enzyme. When they did, they'd block the receptor for the 4VP molecule, thus stopping enzyme activity and preventing it from converting to 4VA.

Among the many molecules the researchers studied, they found 4 nitrophenol (4NP) fit the two 4VPMTH binding sites the best as well as prevented the biosynthesis of 4VA.

Xiaojiao Guo, the first author of the paper and insect behaviour researcher at the State Key Laboratory of Integrated Management of Pests and Rodents with a focus on locusts, said locusts' bodies could synthesise the 4VA in only two steps, so the team needed a way to precisely regulate the expression of the 4VPMTH enzymes and quickly halt the release of 4VA.

"The two 4VPMTHs are key enzymes in the biosynthesis of 4VA and are important targets for inhibiting locust aggregation," Guo said.

"It's worth noting that the binding affinity of 4NP to the 4VPMTHs is higher than that of 4VP, thus it can competitively occupy the enzyme's active site."

"From the perspective of protein

structural characteristics, the specific interaction between 4NP and 4VPMTH ensures the selectivity of the inhibitor and minimises the off-target effects when interfering with other metabolic pathways. Therefore, the small molecule regulation of 4VA biosynthesis is an efficient strategy for sustainable locust plague management," she added.

There is one catch, however: nitrophenols can be dangerous in an open environment.

Industries widely use compounds like 4-nitrophenols to make dyes, dark leather, and manufacture drugs - and in fungicides and insecticides. The compounds are toxic and are often detected in polluted water and in human-made waste. They also persist in the environment for a while - roughly two weeks in soil and over two months in sea water - and have shown to irritate the eyes, skin, and airways in humans.

"As an alternative to small-molecule inhibitors, RNAi insecticides targeting 4VPMTH could also be developed to control locust swarming behaviours," the team wrote in the published paper. RNAi is a process in which RNA molecules are used to prevent genes from being expressed inside cells, preventing the corresponding proteins (including enzymes) from being produced.

Non-toxic insecticides
In a swarm, the millions of locusts eat their own body weight in food and can fly

more than 150 km in a day.

Human attempts to tame these swarms go back thousands of years, and have taken forms like creating noise and smoke and even shooting arrows.

In the 19th century chemical insecticides came to the fore. Even today, spraying locust swarms in the air with insecticides is still the most commonly used method, and its efficacy is unclear.

The 2019-2020 swarm originated in East Africa after heavy rains and floods created the right conditions for dormant locust eggs to come to life, rendering an 8000-fold increase in the insects' numbers.

The havoc they subsequently wrought reminded the world to develop an effective control strategy.

In one response, for example, scientists from 24 organisations worldwide penned an article in *Journal of Orthoptera Research* detailing major topics of interest via a vis swarming behaviour and organisational weaknesses in the field that allowed the problem to persist.

As alternatives to 4NP, this paper identified seven candidate compounds for further study.

Likewise, the Guo et al. study also proposed a five-step locust control strategy: using synthetic or other 4VA substitutes to attract locusts to a trapping area, where they can be killed by fungal pathogens or pesticides at a small scale; spraying 4VA to prevent aggregation; monitoring population dynamics by tracking 4VA signatures; releasing genetically modified locusts into the field to establish non-gregarious populations; and using the combined strategy of small molecule regulators in conjunction with biopesticides.

(Sandhya Ramesh is a freelance science journalist. sandhyar@gmail.com)



Filmmaker Peter Jackson, left, and Colossal CEO Ben Lerner hold up moa bones in Wellington, New Zealand.

Lord Of The Rings director backs idea to revive moa

Associated Press

Filmmaker Peter Jackson owns one of the largest private collections of bones of an extinct New Zealand bird called the moa. His fascination with the flightless ostrich-like bird has led to an unusual partnership with a biotech company known for its controversial plans to bring back lost species.

On July 4, Colossal Biosciences announced an effort to genetically engineer living birds to resemble the extinct South Island giant moa - which once stood 3.6 m tall - with \$5 million in funding from Jackson and his partner Fran Webb. The collaboration also includes the New Zealand-based Ngāi Tahu Research Centre.

Outside scientists say the idea of bringing back extinct species onto the modern landscape is likely impossible, although it may be feasible to tweak the genes of living animals to have similar physical traits. Scientists have mixed feelings on whether that will be helpful, and some worry that focusing on lost creatures could distract from protecting species that still exist.

The moa had roamed New Zealand for 4,000 years until they became extinct around 600 years ago, mainly because of overhunting. A large skeleton brought to England in the 19th century, now on display at the Forthbridge Museum, East Africa after heavy rains and floods created the right conditions for dormant locust eggs to come to life, rendering an 8000-fold increase in the insects' numbers.

Scientists say bringing back extinct species onto the modern landscape is likely impossible, although it may be feasible to tweak the genes of living animals to have similar physical traits

Unlike Colossal's work with dire wolves, the moa project is in very early stages. It started with a phone call about two years ago after Jackson heard about the company's efforts to de-extinct - or create genetically similar animals to - species like the woolly mammoth and the dire wolf.

Then Jackson put Colossal in touch with experts he'd met through his own moa bone-collecting. At that point, he'd amassed between 300 and 400 bones, he said.

In New Zealand, it's legal to buy and sell moa bones found on private lands but not on public conservation areas, nor to export them.

The first stage of the moa project will be to identify well-preserved bones from which it may be possible to extract DNA, said Colossal's chief scientist Beth Shapiro.

Those DNA sequences will be compared to genomes of living bird species, including the ground-dwelling muttonbird and emu, "to figure out what it is that made the moa unique compared to other birds," she said.

Colossal used a similar process of comparing ancient DNA of extinct dire wolves to determine the genetic differences with gray wolves. Then scientists took blood cells from a living gray wolf and used CRISPR to genetically modify them in 20 different ways. Pups with long white hair and muscular jaws were born late last year.

Working with birds presents new challenges, said Shapiro. Unlike mammals, bird embryos develop inside eggs, so the process of transferring an embryo to a surrogate will not look like mammalian IVF.

If the Colossal team succeeds in creating a tall bird with huge feet and thick pointed claws resembling the moa, there's also the pressing question of where to put it, said Duke University ecologist Stuart Pimm, who is not involved in the project.

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Don't make light of light

Yashdevan Mukund

QUESTION 1
Certain transparent crystals, such as calcite, can split a single beam of light into two separate rays, each travelling at a different speed through the material. This optical property is known for producing double images when you look through such crystals. What is the name of this phenomenon?

QUESTION 2
Light can behave both as a wave and as a particle, a concept that puzzled scientists for many years. Name the scientist who conducted an experiment in 1911, where he shined light through two closely spaced slits, producing evidence for the wave nature of light by observing an interference pattern.

QUESTION 3
When using a simple lens to focus white light, you may notice coloured fringes or blurry edges around objects in high-contrast images, especially in photography or telescopes. This effect occurs because the lens bends different colours of light by different amounts, creating a spectrum. What is this optical distortion called?

QUESTION 4
When white light passes through a triangular glass prism, it splits into its constituent colours. What is the scientific term for this process, which explains why we see a spectrum of colours?



Would Name this scientist who was awarded a Nobel Prize in 2015 for her work in developing a technique that revolutionized both internet and physics and... (Sandhya Ramesh is a freelance science journalist. sandhyar@gmail.com)

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


CURRENT AFFAIRS

15/07/2025

New Caledonia To Become New State Within French Republic



France has announced a historic deal with New Caledonia in which the South Pacific overseas territory will be declared a new state. The 13-page accord, reached yesterday after negotiations in Paris, proposes the creation of a State of New Caledonia, within the French Republic, inscribed in the French constitution, and the creation of a Caledonian nationality alongside French nationality.

 France and New Caledonia announced a new agreement that gives the Pacific territory more powers while keeping it part of France.

The agreement proposes to create a “State of New Caledonia” within the French Republic.

The agreement, shared by President Emmanuel Macron, will give New Caledonia a new status as a state within France. It will be included in the French Constitution, and other countries will be allowed to officially recognize the state. This is a compromise solution that offers greater autonomy without full independence.

The deal still needs approval from both the French Parliament and the people of New Caledonia through a referendum

फ्रांस और न्यू कैलेडोनिया ने एक नए समझौते की घोषणा की है जो प्रशांत क्षेत्र को फ्रांस का हिस्सा बनाए रखते हुए उसे और अधिक अधिकार प्रदान करता है। यह कदम 2024 में हुए हिंसक विरोध प्रदर्शनों के बाद उठाया गया है और इसे स्वतंत्रता के समर्थकों और विरोधियों के बीच तनाव कम करने की दिशा में एक बड़े कदम के रूप में देखा जा रहा है। इस समझौते में फ्रांसीसी गणराज्य के भीतर एक "न्यू कैलेडोनिया राज्य" बनाने का प्रस्ताव है।

फ्रांस के भीतर एक नया राज्य –

राष्ट्रपति इमैनुएल मैक्रों द्वारा साझा किए गए इस समझौते से न्यू कैलेडोनिया को फ्रांस के भीतर एक राज्य का नया दर्जा मिलेगा। इसे फ्रांसीसी संविधान में शामिल किया जाएगा और अन्य देशों को इस राज्य को आधिकारिक रूप से मान्यता देने की अनुमति होगी। यह एक समझौता समाधान है जो पूर्ण स्वतंत्रता के बिना अधिक स्वायत्तता प्रदान करता है।





Head Of Government: Prime minister:
François Bayrou

Capital: Paris

Population: (2025 est.) 66,607,000

Currency Exchange Rate: 1 USD
equals 0.886 euro

Head Of State: President: Emmanuel
Macron

President Droupadi Murmu appoints 3 new governors: Kavinder Gupta in Ladakh; Prof Ghosh, Gajapathi Raju for Haryana and Goa

TOI News Desk / TIMESOFINDIA.COM / Updated: Jul 14, 2025, 17:53 IST

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President Droupadi Murmu has appointed Prof. Ashim Kumar Ghosh as the new Governor of Haryana, succeeding Bandaru Dattatreya. Pusapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju takes over as the Governor of Goa, replacing PS Sreedharan Pillai. Kavinder Gupta has been appointed as the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, following the resigni... [Read More](#)



President Droupadi Murmu (left), Kavinder Gupta (ANI)

NEW DELHI: President [Droupadi Murmu](#) on Monday appointed Prof Ashim Kumar Ghosh as the governor of Haryana, Pusapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju as governor of Goa and Kavinder Gupta as lieutenant governor of Ladakh.

President Murmu also accepted the resignation of Brig (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd) as Lieutenant Governor of the union territory of Ladakh, former deputy chief minister of undivided Jammu and Kashmir. Kavinder Gupta will replace him.

Rashtrapati Bhavan made the announcements in an official notification.

Prof Ghosh would take the place of Bandaru Dattatreya, who has been serving in the role since 2021, while Gajapathi Raju will serve in place of PS Sreedharan Pillai.

MAIN POINTS OF THE AGREEMENT

- A New Caledonian state
- New Caledonian nationality
- Transfer of some sovereign powers
- Electoral and institutional reforms
- Economic stimulus pact

On July 14, 2025, President Droupadi Murmu announced the appointment of new Governors for Haryana and Goa, and a new Lieutenant Governor (LG) for Ladakh. This marks a significant reshuffle in key constitutional posts in two Indian states and one Union Territory.

New Appointments Announced

- **Prof. Ashim Kumar Ghosh has been appointed as the Governor of Haryana. He is known for his leadership roles in higher education and administration.**
- **Pusapati Ashok Gajapathi Raju, a senior leader and former Union Minister, has been appointed as the Governor of Goa.**
- **Kavinder Gupta, a senior BJP leader from Jammu, has been named the new LG of Ladakh.**

14 जुलाई, 2025 को राष्ट्रपति द्रौपदी मुर्मू ने हरियाणा और गोवा के लिए नए राज्यपालों और लद्दाख के लिए नए उपराज्यपाल (एलजी) की नियुक्ति की घोषणा की। यह दो भारतीय राज्यों और एक केंद्र शासित प्रदेश में प्रमुख संवैधानिक पदों में एक महत्वपूर्ण फेरबदल है।

नई नियुक्तियों की घोषणा

- प्रो. आशिम कुमार घोष को हरियाणा का राज्यपाल नियुक्त किया गया है। वे उच्च शिक्षा और प्रशासन में अपनी अग्रणी भूमिकाओं के लिए जाने जाते हैं।
- वरिष्ठ नेता एवं पूर्व केंद्रीय मंत्री पुसापति अशोक गजपति राजू को गोवा का राज्यपाल नियुक्त किया गया है।
- जम्मू से भाजपा के वरिष्ठ नेता कविंदर गुप्ता को लद्दाख का नया उपराज्यपाल नियुक्त किया गया है।

• **Zuari :**

- Originates at Hemad – Barshem in the Western Ghats
- Zuari and Mandovi rivers form the backbone of Goa's agriculture
- **Cumbahuem Canal** links the two rivers (Mandovi and Zuari)
- **Vasco da Gama city** is located at its mouth

Mandovi :

- Also known as **Mahadeyi** or **Mahadei**
- **Lifeline of Goa**
- 77 km. long (29 km.in Karnataka and 52km. in Goa)
- It originates at Bhimgad in the Belgaum district of Karnataka
- **Falls** – Dudhasagar Falls , Varapoha Falls
- **Cumbahuem Canal** links it with the Zuari River
- **Cities:** Panaji, Old Goa

About Ghaggar River

- The Ghaggar River is an **intermittent river that flows in India and Pakistan.**
- The river **flows only during the monsoon** season.
- **Course:**
 - It **rises** from the **Shivalik Range** of northwestern **Himachal Pradesh.**
 - After passing through the Ambala and Hissar districts of Haryana, it **disappears into the Thar Desert in Rajasthan.**
 - This seasonal river **feeds two irrigation canals that extend into Rajasthan.**
 - The **Hakra, which flows in Pakistan,** is the **continuation of the Ghaggar** River in India, and they are **together called the Ghaggar-Hakra River.**

Centre appoints Abhijat Sheth as new NMC chairperson

Dr. Sheth, a cardiothoracic surgeon, said that his priority would be to improve quality of medical education, promoting good governance, and foster teamwork to achieve governmental objectives.

Updated - July 14, 2025 10:24 am IST - NEW DELHI

THE HINDU BUREAU



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Dr. Abhijat Sheth has been appointed as the new chairperson of the National Medical Commission. | Photo Credit: C.V. Subrahmanyam

Central Government has appointed Dr Abhijat Sheth as the new Chairperson of the National Medical Commission (NMC).

केंद्र सरकार ने डॉ. अभिजात शेठ को राष्ट्रीय चिकित्सा आयोग (एनएमसी) का नया अध्यक्ष नियुक्त किया है।

About National Medical Commission:

- The National Medical Commission is a **statutory body** established under the **National Medical Commission Act, 2019**.
- The NMC replaced the erstwhile Medical Council of India (MCI) which was established in 1934.
- **Objectives of NMC –**
 - Improve access to quality and affordable medical education;
 - Ensure availability of adequate and high-quality medical professionals in all parts of the country;
 - Promote equitable and universal healthcare that encourages community health perspective and makes services of medical professionals accessible to all the citizens;
 - Encourages medical professionals to adopt latest medical research in their work and to contribute to research;
 - Objectively assess medical institutions periodically in a transparent manner;
 - Maintain a medical register for India;
 - Enforce high ethical standards in all aspects of medical services;

NMC is a 25-member body, majority of them being nominated by the Central government.

Tenure of NMC members is four years (except for part-time members whose tenure is two years).

The NMC has 11 part-time members representing states or state medical councils.

The NMC chairpersons and other members, nominated by the Central government, cannot be renominated.

Any decision requires approval of the majority (minimum 13 out of 25) of the Commission

India joins bilateral military exercise in Australia

Talisman Sabre exercise, now in its 11th iteration, brings together more than 35,000 military personnel from 19 nations

Published - July 13, 2025 07:50 pm IST - New Delhi



SAURABH TRIVEDI



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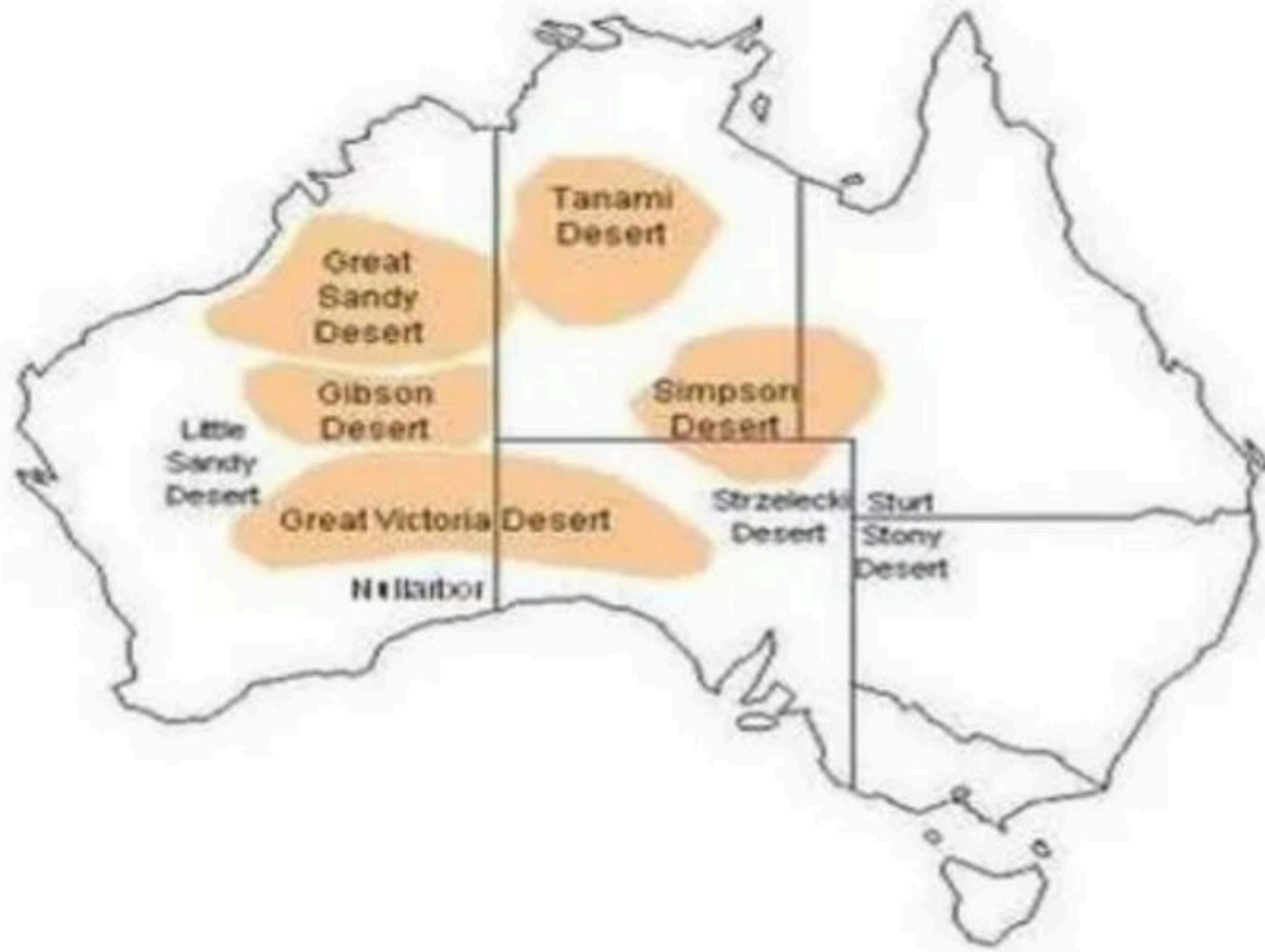


A member of the French defence forces wears a badge displaying the emblem of the annual Talisman Sabre exercise, as they stand aboard the French

For the first time ever, India has joined Exercise Talisman Sabre, Australia's largest bilateral military drill, marking an important moment in India-Australia defence cooperation. The exercise officially began on July 13, 2025, and involves 19 nations, including the United States. This participation boosts India's presence in Indo-Pacific security efforts.











About Rare Earth Elements (REEs)

- REE are a group of **17 chemical elements**.
- They comprise the 15 lanthanide elements, along with scandium and yttrium.
- They are **relatively abundant** in Earth's crust.
- They are rare because they are found in **low concentrations** and mixed with other minerals, making them **difficult and expensive to extract**.
- REEs are used to make **magnets** for electric vehicles (EVs), wind turbines, weapons, etc.
- They are used in electric vehicle (EV) motors, medical devices, weaponry, etc.

▲ 1 • Asked by Priya

Please help me with this doubt

PERIODIC TABLE Atomic Properties of the Elements

Frequently used fundamental physical constants
For the most accurate values of these and other constants, visit physics.nist.gov
1 second = 0.102 631 770 periods of radiation corresponding to the transition between the two hyperfine levels of the ground state of ¹³³Cs

speed of light in vacuum	c	$299\,792\,458\text{ m s}^{-1}$	(exact)
Planck constant	h	$6.626\,070\,15 \times 10^{-34}\text{ J s}$	($h = 5.052\,047 \times 10^{-38}\text{ J s}$)
elementary charge	e	$1.602\,176\,634 \times 10^{-19}\text{ C}$	
electron mass	m_e	$9.109\,383\,701 \times 10^{-31}\text{ kg}$	
proton mass	m_p	$1.672\,621\,923 \times 10^{-27}\text{ kg}$	
fine-structure constant	α	$7.297\,352\,5698 \times 10^{-3}$	
Rydberg constant	R_∞	$10\,973\,731.568\,525\,52 \text{ m}^{-1}$	
Bohr radius	a_0	$5.291\,772\,109 \times 10^{-11}\text{ m}$	
Bohr magneton	μ_B	$9.274\,010\,078 \times 10^{-24}\text{ J T}^{-1}$	
Compton wavelength	λ_C	$2.426\,310\,238 \times 10^{-12}\text{ m}$	
Stefan-Boltzmann constant	σ	$5.670\,374\,418 \times 10^{-8}\text{ W m}^{-2}\text{ K}^{-4}$	

Physics Laboratory
physics.nist.gov

Standard Reference Data
www.nist.gov

States of Matter Legend:

- Solids
- Liquids
- Gases
- Artificially Prepared

Group	1 IA	2 IIA	Transition Metals										13 IIIA	14 IVA	15 VA	16 VIA	17 VIIA	18 VIIIA	
1	H	He											B	C	N	O	F	Ne	
2	Li	Be											Al	Si	P	S	Cl	Ar	
3	Na	Mg											Ga	Ge	As	Se	Br	Kr	
4	K	Ca	Sc	Ti	V	Cr	Mn	Fe	Co	Ni	Cu	Zn	Ga	Ge	As	Se	Br	Kr	
5	Rb	Sr	Y	Zr	Nb	Mo	Tc	Ru	Rh	Pd	Ag	Cd	In	Sn	Sb	Te	I	Xe	
6	Cs	Ba	Lanthanides										Hg	Tl	Pb	Bi	Po	At	Rn
7	Fr	Ra	Actinides										Cn	Uut	Uuq	Uup	Uuh	Uus	Uuo

Example Element: Cerium (Ce)

Atomic Number: 58, Ground-state Level: $10s^2 4f^1 5d^1 6s^2$

Symbol: Ce, Name: Cerium, Atomic Weight: 140.116, Ground-state Configuration: $(Xe)4f^1 5d^1 6s^2$, Ionization Energy (eV): 5.5387

*Based upon ¹²C. () indicates the mass number of the longest-lived isotope. For a description of the data, visit physics.nist.gov/data. NIST SP 966 (September 2010)

SEVENTEEN RARE EARTH ELEMENTS

Rare earth name	Discovery year	Atomic name & number	Light/heavy REE	Critical/Uncritical
Yttrium	1788	Y-39	Heavy	Critical
Cerium	1803	Ce-58	Light	Excessive
Lanthanum	1839	La-57	Light	Uncritical
Erbium	1842	Er-68	Heavy	Critical
Terbium	1843	Tb-65	Heavy	Critical
Ytterbium	1878	Yb-70	Heavy	Excessive
Holmium	1878	Ho-67	Heavy	Excessive
Scandium	1879	Sc-21	Heavy	Critical
Samarium	1879	Sm-62	Light	Uncritical
Thulium	1879	Tm-69	Heavy	Excessive
Praseodymium	1885	Pr-59	Light	Uncritical
Neodymium	1885	Nd-60	Light	Critical
Dysprosium	1886	Dy-66	Heavy	Critical
Europium	1886	Eu-63	Heavy	Critical
Gadolinium	1886	Gd-64	Heavy	Uncritical
Lutetium	1907	Lu-71	Heavy	Excessive
Promethium	1947	Pm-61		

Application of Rare Earth Element

- **Electronics**: Due to their **magnetic** and **phosphorescent** properties, they are essential in smartphones, laptops, flat-panel displays, and headphones.
- **Clean Energy**: Powering **high-performance magnets** in wind turbines, electric vehicles (EVs), and solar panels is crucial for the renewable transition.
- **Defence Sector**: Used in precision-guided missiles, radar systems, sonar, and jet engines—key to **strategic** and **technological** superiority.
- **Medical Technology**: Enable advanced **imaging tools** in radiation-based cancer treatments, such as MRI and PET scanners.
- **Industrial Use**: Applied in petroleum refining, high-grade glass polishing, and production of strong, corrosion-resistant metal alloys.

