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LoP HELD OVER REMARKS DIRECTED AT ACTOR LINKED TO CM VIJAY

Udhayanidhi arrest sparks row, TN House meets today



Tamil Nadu Leader of Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin after being questioned by police in Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur district, Tuesday. PTI

HC orders release; DMK leader says row a bid to divert attention from Cauvery dispute

Arun Janardhanan
Chennai, August 4

THE ARREST of DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin, the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, on Tuesday over his alleged sexually coloured remarks at a

public meeting on the ties between Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay and a Tamil actor escalated into a showdown between the TVK-led government and the DMK in the state.

The row triggered a war of words between the Vijay-led TVK and the DMK on the eve of the Assembly's Budget Session, setting off statewide protests and a legal battle in the Madras High Court.

Hours after the police took Udhayanidhi to Thanjavur, he was questioned at the Sengipatti police station before being released on bail as per the High Court's order.

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Gen Z loud and clear on the street but invisible in Parliament, Assemblies

Only 6 MPs & 20 MLAs from GenZ, given eligibility age is 25 for candidates, but population share is nearly 26%

Anjishnu Das
New Delhi, August 4

ON THE streets, Gen Z's voice rings loud and clear, but in Parliament and the state legislatures, it remains a faint echo.

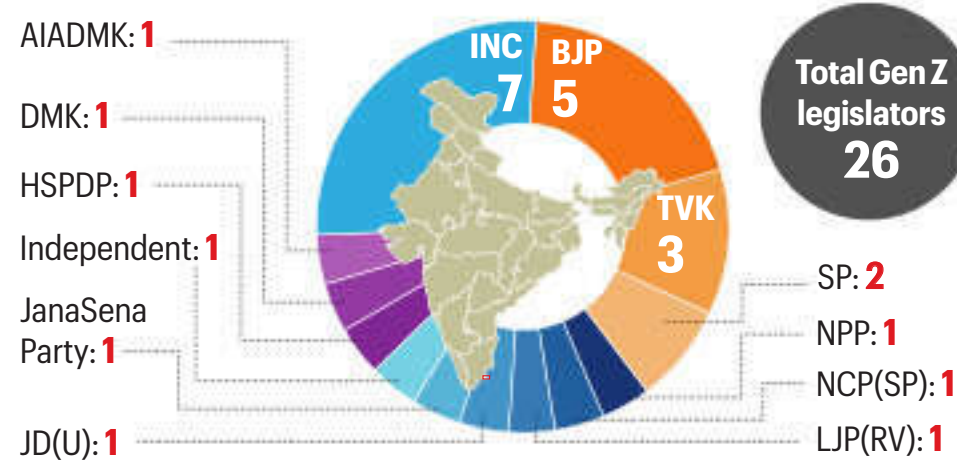
The reason: Gen Z accounts for over a quarter of the country's population, yet its

representation in politics is restricted to just 26 legislators across the country — six Lok Sabha MPs and 20 MLAs, a low number even though the minimum age to contest elections is 25, which rules out a chunk of this demographic.

Defined as those born »CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPRESS special

• Party-wise Gen Z MPs and MLAs



SOURCE: LOK SABHA, STATE ASSEMBLIES, ADR

Happening today

• **OPPOSITION PDP** will hold protests in J&K to mark the seventh anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370.

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HASINA SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO BANGLADESH: TASLIMA

INDIAN VESSEL HIT, SINKS OFF YEMEN, ALL CREW SAFE PAGE 10

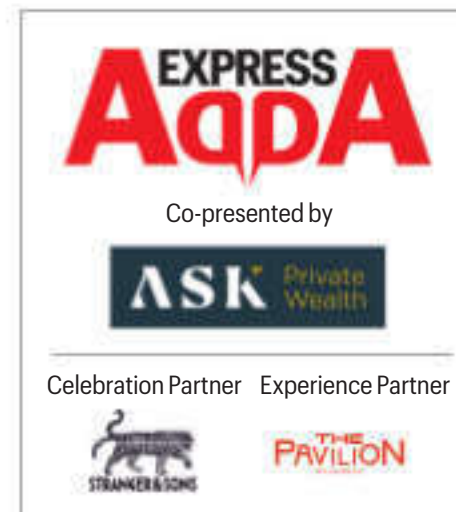
'India can reach AI frontier in one year with \$10-billion push'



Sarvam AI's Pratyush Kumar and tech investor Rajan Anandan

ENS Economic Bureau
Mumbai, August 4

INDIA CAN catch up with frontier artificial intelligence models developed in the West within a year, with the country's AI ecosystem currently only a



\$10-billion investment away from competing with global players, according to Pratyush Kumar, co-founder and CEO of »CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Business as Usual
By EP UNNY



THE BIG PICTURE

INDIA TO JAPAN, INDIA TO NORTH EAST
PAGE 11

Amdawarded the Commonwealth Games!



TWO YEARS AFTER OUSTER

Delhi distances itself from Hasina event today, Dhaka warns its media not to air

Exiled leader who faces death sentence set to announce return

Shubhajit Roy
New Delhi, August 4

MOVING TO address concerns in Dhaka, Delhi made it clear Tuesday it was neither involved in nor was it going to endorse any view aired during



Wednesday marks two years of the fall of Hasina government

ousted Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's public interaction scheduled Wednesday in the Capital. She is »CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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Can boarded-out cadets be given quota as ex-military personnel, asks SC

Express News Service
New Delhi, August 4

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will consider what benefits can be provided to officer cadets boarded out from the military on account of disability suffered during training, even if the ex-servicemen tag could not be extended to them.

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and R Mahadevan said this after the Centre cited problems in extending the ex-servicemen nomenclature to the outboarded cadets.

“Without using the word ex-servicemen, what benefits you can get we will see,” Justice Nagarathna said.

The court also asked the government to “reconsider the recommendations made by the Sabharwal Committee in light of the fact that the matter is now taken up by this court in order to ameliorate the condition of the outboarded candidates”.

The July 2015 report by a committee headed by Lieutenant General (ret'd) Mukesh Sabharwal had looked into the issue of the disabled candidates and made some recommendations, including treating them as ex-servicemen and providing disability pension to them.

Justice Nagarathna said if the outboarded cadets cannot be treated as ex-servicemen, they can be brought in the cat-

egory of ex-military personnel and be provided reservation benefits.

The court said that “States and UT’s could also consider granting reservation to outboarded cadets in the quota of ex-military personnel...”.

Justice Nagarathna told the Centre’s counsel, “See the plight of the parents, see the plight of the child. Arm is not there, amputation, wheelchair-bound. Who will look after (them), after the parents go...They were qualified to be in the training. So they are not just an ordinary student...that is why the degree of disappointment is high. We have kept that in mind. That is the only reason why we instituted this – the degree of disappointment... for that person, family, parents, is so high, because the expectation was so high...”

The SC had taken suo motu cognizance of the matter following a report in The Indian Express on August 11 last year about how these officer cadets have been battling severe disability with mounting medical bills and little benefits. According to the report, around 500 officer cadets have been medically discharged from top institutes such as the National Defence Academy since 1985 due to varying degrees of disability incurred during training.

The court will now hear the matter on September 8.

India slams Pakistan over civilian killings in PoK during polls

Express News Service
New Delhi, August 4

INDIA ON Tuesday upped the offensive on Pakistan over the elections in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), calling them a “complete farce” and slamming the killing of at least 90 civilians in the crackdown by its forces.

This is the second time in the last four days that Delhi has responded sharply to Islamabad’s “ruthless” use of force against peaceful protesters.

Earlier, on July 31, India had called upon the international community to scrutinise and hold Pakistan accountable for the “atrocities” being committed in the PoK.

On Tuesday, responding to questions, the Ministry of Ex-

ternal Affairs’ official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, “This so-called local election in PoK is a complete farce. The real happening is that of public protests and wanton killings by Pakistani forces. Such hollow exercises cannot hide reality.”

“Since June this year, at least 90 civilians have lost their lives in the continuing crackdown. The Pakistani establishment has answered public discontent with bullets, blackouts, intimidation and repression, and now seeks to manufacture legitimacy through a hollow electoral exercise. It must be held accountable, and the world should see through the flimsy veneer of Pakistan’s hypocritical lecturing on human rights,” the MEA spokesperson said.

Adopt SOP against mule accounts in 4 weeks, SC directs states & UTs

Ananthakrishnan G
New Delhi, August 4

EXPEDITING EFFORTS to check the menace of ‘digital arrest’ scams, the Supreme Court Tuesday directed states and UTs to formally adopt and circulate within four weeks the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) prescribing temporary debit holds on suspicious amounts/ accounts to prevent mule activities and cyber-enabled fraud.

Issuing a series of directions, the bench of CJI Surya Kant, Justice Joyymaya Bagchi and Justice V Mohana said, “While the progress reported at this juncture is appreciable, the mechanisms already put in place require wider adoption, faster disposal, and continued follow-up.”

In April this year, the Supreme Court was told by the Centre that the Inter-Departmental Committee (IDC), constituted following directions from the Court, had agreed with the SOP framework, proposed by the Reserve Bank of India, prescribing action by banks for placing temporary debit holds on suspicious amounts/ accounts.

On Tuesday, the bench asked states and UTs to notify and operationalise State Cyber Crime Coordination Centres within the time period. It said the SOP must additionally incorporate a grievance redressal mechanism, a money restoration module and measures for public awareness regarding both.

The bench asked the Registrar Generals of all High Courts to bring the grievance redressal mechanism to the attention of

[FROM PAGE 1 | FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM]

Udhayanidhi arrest

Earlier in the day, at around 9.30 am, a joint team of police from Thanjavur and Chennai’s Neelankarai arrived at Udhayanidhi’s residence in the East Coast Road neighbourhood in the state capital. Security had been tightened outside the house. As television cameras gathered, officers escorted the former deputy chief minister into a police vehicle at around 11 am. Before leaving his residence, the LoP accused the Vijay government of “manufacturing” a controversy to divert attention from the Cauvery water dispute.

“I spoke for over 20 minutes on farmers, their welfare and the Cauvery river water issue. They have manipulated something that I never spoke about and are using it as a diversion tactic,” Udhayanidhi, son of DMK president MK Stalin, told reporters. “Even a basic member of my party will not be threatened by such arrests. We will face it legally.”

His arrest followed a complaint filed by a functionary of the TVK women’s wing over Udhayanidhi’s purported remarks at a farmers’ protest in Thanjavur Monday. During his speech, while he attacked CM Vijay over the Cauvery row, someone in the gathering shouted the name of a popular Tamil actor associated with Vijay. Udhayanidhi responded with what critics described as a sexually suggestive double entendre, triggering widespread outrage and demands for action against him.

Police registered a case against Udhayanidhi under multiple sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment of Women Act and the Information Technology Act. Police sources said six FIRs have since been registered across the state against him.

As Udhayanidhi was driven by the police for over 300 kilometres to Thanjavur for questioning, his lawyers rushed to

the Madras High Court to seek anticipatory bail. During the hearing, Advocate General P S Vijay Narayan told Justice G K Ilanthiraiyan that the state had no intention of remanding the LoP in judicial custody and that he had been taken to Thanjavur only for interrogation.

Recording the submission, the court directed the police to release Udhayanidhi on station bail after questioning. Disposing of his anticipatory bail plea, the judge also directed him to cooperate with the investigation and appear before the investigating officers whenever required.

Hitting out at the Vijay government, M K Stalin questioned why his son had been transported by the police to Thanjavur if the intention was only to question him. “If the purpose is to conduct an investigation, why not conduct it in Chennai?” he asked.

Calling the HC’s direction to release Udhayanidhi “a blow to the fascist nature” of the TVK government, the DMK chief alleged that the LoP’s arrest was intended to keep him away from the Assembly a day before the tabling of the Budget.

The ex-CM accused the Vijay government of trying to deflect attention from its alleged mishandling of the Cauvery dispute. “The incompetent dummy Chief Minister could not bring Cauvery water, could not even speak to stop the Mekedatu dam,” he said, alleging that the TVK was preoccupied with arresting critics instead of answering the Opposition’s questions.

Stalin claimed that Udhayanidhi had neither named anyone nor made any obscene remarks, accusing their political opponents of circulating edited versions of his speech. “Arrogance leads to destruction. Continued arrogance will hasten destruction,” he said.

The TVK, however, defended the police action. Energy and Law Minister R Nirmalku-

mar said a person holding a constitutional office has a greater responsibility to maintain dignity in public life. He said Udhayanidhi was “unfit to remain Leader of the Opposition” and “unfit to be in public life”.

The political reactions over the LoP’s arrest from across the spectrum reflected both condemnation of his remarks and unease over his arrest. AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami or EPS criticised Udhayanidhi’s comments as unbecoming of the office he holds but urged the government to withdraw the arrest move, describing it as “politically motivated” on the eve of the Assembly session.

MDMK general secretary Vaiko alleged that Udhayanidhi had reduced himself to the level of “a fourth-rate platform speaker” and that his remarks were unbecoming of the LoP.

The BJP, which demanded Udhayanidhi’s arrest immediately after his speech, maintained its stance. BJP leaders called his comments “vulgar and shameful”, with senior party leader Tamilisai Soundararajan saying that they reflected poorly on public discourse while shifting attention away from farmers and the Cauvery issue.

Udhayanidhi’s arrest triggered demonstrations by the DMK workers across the state. DMK cadres blocked roads and raised slogans in Chennai, Tiruchi, Madurai, Coimbatore, Erode, Ooty and other districts, accusing the government of suppressing the Opposition.

The TVK workers organised counter-protests condemning Udhayanidhi’s remarks. The party’s national spokesperson petitioned the National Commission for Women, seeking action against him while alleging that his remarks objectified women.

With hundreds of the DMK workers gathering outside the Thanjavur East police station, where Udhayanidhi was supposed to be taken for questioning, police shifted him to the Sengipatti police station, about 20 km away, citing security concerns. The move came after he

had been brought all the way from Chennai on the ground that the case fell under the jurisdiction of the Thanjavur East police station.

On reaching Sengipatti, Udhayanidhi initially refused to get out of the police vehicle, questioning the change of venue. He was then assured by the police, sources said, that his interrogation would be completed within an hour so that he could board his scheduled 10 pm flight from Tiruchirappalli to Chennai in accordance with the high court’s direction that he be released after questioning.

During the brief standoff, Udhayanidhi was learnt to have spoken to the DMK’s Thanjavur district leaders, following which the party cadres began moving towards Sengipatti. After his questioning there, Udhayanidhi received a rousing reception from the DMK workers outside the police station before he headed to the Tiruchirappalli airport.

Speaking to reporters at the airport, the LoP dismissed his arrest as a “diversion tactic” by the Vijay government to shift attention from the DMK’s farmers’ protest and prevent the Opposition from raising the Cauvery issue in the Assembly.

Maintaining that his 25-minute speech at the Thanjavur event was entirely about farmers’ issues, the Mekedatu dam and the TVK government’s “mishandling” of the Cauvery row, Udhayanidhi denied making any derogatory remarks. “I did not speak in double meaning... I only demanded that Cauvery water be secured for Tamil Nadu,” he said, alleging that portions of his speech had been “cut, copied and pasted” to create a “false narrative”.

Rejecting allegations of misogyny against him, he said he had never intended to disrespect any woman and added that he had been brought up to treat every woman with dignity. Calling his arrest “a comedy”, he accused the TVK government of “behaving like a circus tent staging a performance”.

Gen Z

between 1997 and 2012, or in the age band of 14-29, or Gen Z accounts for 36.74 crore, or 25.8% of the country’s 142.6 crore population in 2026, as per 2011 Census projections. The Gen Z population aged 25 and older alone accounts for an estimated 8.9% of the country’s population.

When the age band is stretched to 40, the number of legislators in this group expands to 397 MLAs and 40 MPs.

6 MPs in Lok Sabha

The current Lok Sabha, elected in 2024, offered the first opportunity for Gen Z representatives to enter the Lower House. The Congress has the most Gen Z MPs at three, followed by the SP at two and the LJP(RV) at one. UP and Karnataka have two Gen Z MPs each, while Bihar and Rajasthan have one each.

The Gen Z MPs are: SP’s Pushpendra Saroj (27) from Kausambi and Priya Saroj (27) from Machhlisnahr in UP; Congress’s Sagar Khandre (28) from Bidar and Priyanka Satish Jarkiholi (29) from Chikkodi in Karnataka, and Sanjina Jatav (28) from Bharatpur in Rajasthan; and LJP (Ram Vilas)’s Shambhavi (28) from Samastipur in Bihar.

These six MPs were the only winners among the 98 Gen Z Lok Sabha candidates in 2024 who accounted for just 1.2% of all 8,360 candidates in the fray.

Four of these six Gen Z MPs are women; four are college graduates; and two hold post-graduate degrees. According to their election affidavits, Priya Saroj, Khandre and Jatav are trained lawyers, Shambhavi holds an MA in sociology. Jarkiholi is an MBA, and Pushpendra Saroj holds an accounting and management degree from a

London university.

Five of these six Gen Z MPs belong to established political families; only Jatav, a Dalit MP, does not.

Pushpendra Saroj’s father Indrajit is a former UP minister and national general secretary of SP, while Priya Saroj’s father is a sitting SP MLA and three-time former Lok Sabha MP.

Among the Congress’s Gen Z MPs, Khandre’s father Eshwara is a sitting Karnataka MLA, former state minister and the party’s state working president, while his late grandfather Bheemanna was a four-time MLA and prominent Lingayat leader. Priyanka Jarkiholi, the other Karnataka MP, is the daughter of four-time sitting MLA Satish Jarkiholi, from the prominent Jarkiholi political family that also has members in the BJP.

LJP(RV) MP Shambhavi’s father Ashok Choudhary is a Cabinet minister in Bihar’s NDA government and national general secretary of the Nitish Kumar-led Janata Dal (United).

The Lok Sabha has another 34 MPs aged 40 or under, taking the total number of under-40 legislators to just 40 in the 543-member House. UP has the largest representation in this group at 10 MPs, followed by Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh at five each, and West Bengal and Maharashtra at four each.

20 MLAs in states

Of the 4,131 MLAs across 28 states and three Union Territories, just 20 belong to Gen Z. Six were elected from seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and three from Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Since a Gen Z candidate would have hit the eligible age to contest an Assembly election only in 2022, most of these MLAs were elected in the last two years, with as many as nine elected in 2026 alone.

Tamil Nadu has the most

Gen Z MLAs at four after its 2026 Assembly poll — three from the ruling TVK and one from the AIADMK. West Bengal has the next highest at three, all from the BJP, while Bihar, Meghalaya and Telangana have two each. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Maharashtra, Odisha, Puducherry and Rajasthan have one Gen Z MLA each. All these states last went to polls between 2023 and 2026.

A party-wise breakdown puts the BJP on top with five Gen Z MLAs, followed by the Congress at four and the TVK at three. Among the other parties with Gen Z MLAs are the AIADMK and DMK in Tamil Nadu, the Jana Sena Party in Andhra, the JD(U) in Bihar, the NCP(SP) in Maharashtra, and two regional parties in Meghalaya — all with one MLA each — besides one Independent in Rajasthan.

Of the 20 Gen Z MLAs, 16 are at least college graduates, including five postgraduates. One is a diploma holder, another has studied up to Class 10 and two others up to Class 12. Nine were elected from reserved seats (six from SC and three from ST seats) and eight of them are women.

Twelve of these 20 Gen Z MLAs are political newcomers without prior electoral experience or family backgrounds, including Tamil Nadu MLA Dhillipan Jaishankar, a doctor; West Bengal MLA Santu Pan, a former journalist; and Bihar MLA Maithili Thakur, a prominent playback singer.

Keerthana S, the youngest minister in Tamil Nadu’s newly elected TVK government, has no electoral experience but was a political consultant with I-PAC before contesting the 2026 polls. Ravindra Singh Bhati was a student leader before becoming a Rajasthan MLA as an Independent.

The remaining eight Gen Z

MLAs come from political families. Most prominent among them are Aditya Surjewala, a Haryana MLA and son of senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Randeep Surjewala; Rohit Patil, a Maharashtra MLA and son of former Deputy CM R R Patil; and Puducherry MLA Vignesh Kannan, whose father is former Lok Sabha MP and ex-Puducherry Assembly Speaker P Kannan. Several others, such as Mynampally Rohith in Telangana, Tanzil Husain in Assam, Upasna Mohapatra in Odisha and Damanbait Lamare in Meghalaya, are also children of former legislators.

Under 40, bigger basket

As many as 397 MLAs across India are 40 or younger, including the 20 who belong to Gen Z. As a share of an Assembly’s total membership, Chhattisgarh has the highest proportion of MLAs aged 40 or younger at 35.6%, followed by Tamil Nadu at 20.9%, Meghalaya at 16.7%, West Bengal at 15.7%, and Bihar at 15.6%. Of these states, Tamil Nadu and Bengal held their latest elections this year, while Bihar voted in late 2025. In absolute terms, Tamil Nadu has the most MLAs aged 40 or younger at 49, followed by Bengal at 46, Bihar at 38, UP at 37, and Chhattisgarh at 32.

These numbers matter because, by the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, Gen Z could account for the largest share of India’s voting-age population. While the 2011 Census does not have age-wise projections for 2029, its projections for 2031 place the Gen Z population, which will then be aged between 19-34, at approximately 26.3%. Millennials, in contrast, will comprise 21.7% of the population in 2031, down from roughly 22.2% in 2026. Older generations, including those born in 1980 or before, will together account for 24% of the population by then.

“The massive public anger against the ‘ED Party’ (BJP), as witnessed during the Jantar Mantar protest, has clearly rattled Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Instead of addressing the growing public outrage, the ED Party (BJP) has chosen to misuse central agencies and pursue political vendetta against its opponents,” it said.

The searches were conducted at premises linked to

AI frontier

Indian AI unicorn Sarvam AI.

Speaking at the Express Adda on Monday, Kumar said, “The gap (between Indian and global AI) is actually not as big as it looks. It’s actually \$10 billion. If we were to invest \$10 billion today, we could reach the frontier by Independence Day next year.”

Sarvam AI has emerged as a key player in India’s push to build indigenous AI capabilities, developing homegrown models and deploying them across private enterprises as well as the country’s strategic sector.

Rajan Anandan, managing director at venture capital firm Peak XV Partners, said 2026 is the year India formally entered the global AI race, pointing to new investments in computing capacity, the launch of domestic models and growing demand for enterprise applications such as voice AI.

“The way that we think about it is that India is early in the AI game, and 2026 is the year that India has entered the AI race,” Anandan said. “Compute was a big constraint, but starting at the AI summit in February in Delhi, we’ve had over \$400 billion of AI capex that has been announced.”

The India AI Impact Summit, held in New Delhi in February, had seen big names like the Reliance Group, Adani Group and the Tata Group, among others, commit to investments in the country’s AI ecosystem.

At the Express Adda, Kumar and Anandan were in conversation with Anant Goenka, Executive Director, Indian Express Group, and Soumyarendra Barik, Assistant Editor, The Indian Express.

Anandan said voice AI, in particular, will be the “first billion dollar revenue category” for Indian enterprises in the AI space, with the overall market projected at around \$10 billion. Voice AI, which uses artificial intelligence to conduct and respond to spoken conversations, is emerging as one of India’s earliest large-scale enterprise AI opportunities, particularly in customer service and call centres.

Asked why India had defined its AI goals in the context of having “sovereign” models, a narrative Sarvam has also leaned on, Kumar said India should focus on deploying “whatever are the best” AI models on “price and accuracy” tradeoffs. He added that India “needs to have its own story, which we rely on and continue

Hasina

expected to announce her return home and outline her vision for Bangladesh.

The event, being held at the Foreign Correspondents’ Club of South Asia, is timed to coincide with the second anniversary of the fall of the Hasina government on August 5, 2024.

Faced with widespread protests in Bangladesh, Hasina had fled the country. She has been living in India ever since. This is the second time she will be addressing the public via a virtual mode in Delhi. Bangladesh has sought India’s cooperation to ensure that Hasina, or anyone linked to her organisations that have been banned, is not allowed to use Indian territory to deliver political speeches or carry out activities aimed at creating instability in Bangladesh.

News agency Reuters reported Tuesday that Bangladesh Information Adviser Zahed Ur Rahman warned his country’s media that announcing or publishing Hasina’s planned speech would violate a December 2024 order by Bangladesh’s International Crimes Tribunal that prohibits media outlets and social media platforms from publishing or broadcasting Hasina’s speeches, statements, interviews, and audio or video messages.

Hasina aide Abu Obaidha Arin said the event would go ahead, adding that Dhaka’s “ef-

to compound”.

Addressing anxieties around AI’s impact on jobs, which has already seen some of India’s largest employers in the IT services sector signal a slowdown in headcount addition, Anandan said, “The largest companies have never been the source of employment growth, ever... We had a period of time where IT services (hired in large numbers)... but they will not hire lots and lots of people because they will leverage AI.”

Though he agreed there will be “significant dislocation” of current jobs -- for instance, in sectors like customer care requiring companies and individuals to upskill, he said a large share of new jobs would need to come from the innovation ecosystem.

“Upskilling is going to be the single biggest thing. We have the world’s largest young population, and we have to make sure that we’re upskilling them to unleash innovation. A million Indians turn 18 every month, which means 12 million Indians are entering the workforce every year, so we have to create 100 million jobs in the next eight years... a few top companies are not going to be able to do that, so it has to be done by a large number of entrepreneurs starting businesses,” Anandan said.

Anandan cited the example of Microsoft hiring 6,000 forward-deployed engineers, a role which, he said, did not exist 18 months ago. Forward-deployed engineers combine software development with an understanding of business problems, working inside client organisations to tailor and implement AI systems for specific use cases.

Anandan also said that the recent students’ protest at Jantar Mantar could represent early signs of a broader anxiety over jobs and economic opportunities. “What we saw possibly was early signs of (what can happen) if we don’t create opportunities for 100 million Indians over the next decade, you’re going to see things like this possibly happen,” Anandan said.

The Express Adda is a series of informal interactions organised by the Indian Express Group, featuring those at the centre of change.

Previous guests include Union Ministers S Jaishankar, Mansukh Mandaviya and Hardeep Singh Puri; Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen; His Holiness the Dalai Lama; cricket icons Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma; chess legend Viswanathan Anand; Olympic gold medalist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra; and motivational strategist Gaur Gopal Das.

forts to silence dissent cannot extinguish voices” beyond the country’s borders.

In New Delhi, responding to questions about Hasina’s scheduled interaction, Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs, said, “The interaction you refer to is being organised by a private media entity. The government has no involvement whatsoever in it. Neither does it endorse any views that may be expressed at the forum.”

This is a carefully calibrated response to an issue that is a diplomatic hot-button for the Bangladesh government led by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, who is chief of ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

Rahman’s Foreign Affairs Adviser Humaiun Kobir raised the issue of Hasina’s interaction during a meeting with Dinesh Trivedi, Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, at the Prime Minister’s Office Monday.

Kobir said such activities could undermine the positive progress in Bangladesh-India relations. In response, Trivedi assured him that the matter would be considered appropriately, saying the Indian side would conduct the necessary inquiries and remain vigilant on the issue.

India and Bangladesh have been working towards repairing ties since February when Rahman’s BNP won the elections. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first to congratulate him on his victory, which was followed by a phone call.

Industrial plot scam: Punjab CMO officials on radar, ED searches 11 sites

Kanchan Vasdev
Chandigarh, August 4

The Enforcement Directorate, Tuesday, conducted searches at 11 locations across Punjab as part of its ongoing investigation into alleged irregularities in the allotment and transfer of industrial plots by the Punjab Small Industries and Export Corporation Limited (PSIEC).

Although ED was yet to re-

lease an official statement about its findings from the day-long searches, sources revealed that certain high-ranking officials with their linkages in the chief minister’s office and the state government have come under scanner. The role of each individual is yet to be elaborated by the investigating agency.

Sources said that ED’s action was related to the ongoing investigations into the money

laundering case against Cabinet Minister Sanjeev Arora. However, the ruling Aam Aadmi Party termed the ED action a witch-hunt and “political vendetta” by the BJP-led union government.

The AAP, in a late night statement, alleged the ED was being misused to target the Punjab government after failing to find any evidence of any wrongdoing against Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann.

“The massive public anger against the ‘ED Party’ (BJP), as witnessed during the Jantar Mantar protest, has clearly rattled Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Instead of addressing the growing public outrage, the ED Party (BJP) has chosen to misuse central agencies and pursue political vendetta against its opponents,” it said.

The searches were conducted at premises linked to

current and former PSIEC officials, property dealers and alleged benamidars [pseudo-owners]. Those searched included PSIEC executive director Bhai Sukhdeep Singh, retired chief general manager Surendra Pal Singh, retired general manager Jaswinder Singh Randhawa and retired sub-divisional engineer Savtej Singh.

The money laundering investigation stems from a Vigi-

lance Bureau FIR registered on March 8, 2024, against PSIEC officials and private persons for allegedly conspiring with property dealers to obtain prime industrial plots in the names of relatives and associates. According to the ED sources, private persons used fake firms and fictitious addresses while applying for industrial plots and, in connivance with PSIEC officials, managed to secure allotments.

PAYS TRIBUTE TO SOCIAL REFORMER BEGUM ROKEYA IN PANIHATI

Sheikh Hasina should be allowed to return to Bangladesh: Taslima

Author calls for lifting the ban on Awami League to ensure democratic participation

Atri Mitra
Kolkata, August 4

EXILED BANGLADESHI author Taslima Nasrin on Tuesday said former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina should be allowed to return to her country and the ban imposed on the Awami League, Hasina's political party, should also be lifted to ensure democratic participation.

Nasrin made the remarks while addressing a gathering after paying tribute at the grave of social reformer Begum Rokeya at Panihati in West Bengal's



Taslima Nasrin's remarks came a day before the second anniversary of Sheikh Hasina's ouster after student protests in Bangladesh. FILE

North 24 Parganas district. Her remarks came a day before the second anniversary of Hasina's ouster following violent student-led protests in Bangladesh.

Strongly criticising religion-based politics, the author said she would have no objection if

Jamaat-e-Islami remained banned in Bangladesh, alleging that the party supported Sharia-based laws and policies detrimental to women and minorities.

"I would have no objection if Jamaat-e-Islami's politics were

banned in Bangladesh. Because the party's principles are based on Sharia law and are anti-women, which could be extremely dangerous for the rights of minorities and women," Nasrin said.

"Religious politics is inherently misogynistic and harmful to society. Sheikh Hasina should be allowed to return to Bangladesh, and the ban on her party should be withdrawn so that it can participate in politics. Democracy demands that all political parties have the opportunity to participate in democratic activities," she added.

Reiterating her stand on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), Nasrin said, "Women, including Hindu women in Bangladesh, continue to face discrimination under religion-based personal laws. Laws should be based on equality, not religion."

While addressing a press

conference in Kolkata on Sunday, Nasrin had pitched for the implementation of UCC in India and also advocated for a similar law in neighbouring Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Recalling Begum Rokeya's struggle against religious orthodoxy, Nasrin said there had been opposition over her burial because of her advocacy for women's education and equality. "Begum Rokeya fought against fundamentalism and stood for women's education. Many people do not know that Begum Rokeya was buried here because of opposition from fundamentalists. More people should know about this historic place," the author said.

After paying tribute to the social reformer, Nasrin also spoke to the teachers and students of Panihati High School for Girls.

Rokeya was born in Bangladesh's Rangpur in 1880 and was laid to rest in Sodpur in 1932.

'Bengal turned into mega prison': Mamata targets BJP, calls for 'mass movement'

Ravik Bhattacharya
Kolkata, August 4

LAUNCHING A scathing attack on the Suvendu Adhikari-led BJP government in West Bengal, former Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee highlighted several issues, alleging political intimidation, suppression of opposition voices and misuse of police force.

Addressing the public over Facebook Live, Banerjee alleged that thousands of false cases have been filed against TMC workers and common citizens in the state, many of whom do not even know what their alleged offence is.

"Panchayats, municipalities and zilla parishads are being taken over by force. Our MPs and MLAs are being threatened. Police have been coercing them to either join the BJP or face imprisonment. Thousands of TMC workers have been jailed. The BJP has turned Bengal into a mega prison," she said.

Calling for a "mass movement" against the alleged actions, Banerjee said, "Delimitation is being planned behind closed doors, and the Census exercise has begun without consulting political parties, including us. We have even approached the Supreme Court in hopes of justice, but I feel that justice has remained elusive. That is why I believe a mass democratic movement and greater public awareness are now essential."

Speaking about the freeing of TMC's bank accounts, Banerjee alleged that while her party accounts are facing restrictions over charges of money laundering, accounts of other parties are not under scanner.

"Our party's bank accounts have faced restrictions. I want to know why there has been no scrutiny of others? These are



Mamata Banerjee addresses the public over Facebook Live on Tuesday. PTI

questions that deserve transparent answers. The BJP has so many accounts. RSS is not registered. RSS gets foreign funds. In the name of Ram Mandir, donation boxes are allegedly being looted, and thefts are being reported in several places. Such allegations have also emerged from Varanasi, Madhya Pradesh and Assam. I have even heard complaints about alleged encroachment of ponds. These are serious allegations that deserve proper attention and investigation," Banerjee said.

Expressing solidarity with the Cockroach Janta Party movement, Banerjee alleged that the young generation, who protested against exam irregularity, are being branded anti-national and tortured, while their families are being threatened.

"Today, I see attempts to brand young people who protest as 'anti-nationals'. They are being harassed, and even their families are being targeted. I want to tell every young Indian not to lose courage. Democracy belongs to the people, not to those in power. Stand united, protect the values of the Constitution, defend our national icons, and never allow fear to silence your voice. That is the only way we can protect our country, our democracy and the ideals for which our freedom fighters sacrificed their lives," she said.

Appealing to the people to raise their voices, Banerjee said, "I have always believed in following the law, which is why I seek permission before holding meetings and public programmes. But if those entrusted with enforcing the law themselves act unlawfully, then people also have the constitutional right to organise, protest and raise their voices. Democracy cannot survive if one side is allowed to speak while the other is silenced."

Taking a dig at the breakaway MPs, she said, "You have gone to a party which has no present and no future. BJP wants to form government and also decide on the opposition. Soon there will be a wave of condemnation against this trend. This is bound to happen."

Boy suffers burn injuries at anganwadi centre, locals protest over 'negligence'

Atri Mitra
Kolkata, August 4

A FIVE-year-old boy sustained burn injuries at an anganwadi centre in Bhangar in South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal after reportedly spilling hot water on his body, police sources said, adding the incident led to protests by locals who alleged negligence on the part of the authorities.

According to locals, the child had gone to the anganwadi centre and during the time of the incident, neither the designated cook nor any teacher was present

at the centre. On their behalf, a representative was teaching the children, attending to them, and cooking, locals said.

According to his family, the boy suffered severe burn injuries in his chest, arms, and other parts of the body. He was first taken to Jiren Gacha Rural Hospital in the area where the doctors referred him to R. G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. He is currently undergoing treatment and his family said the child's condition is extremely critical.

"The centre did not even arrange treatment for our child.

After getting the news, we rushed him to the hospital," the child's father said.

As news of the incident spread, tension flared in the Swarnapurnagar area, as locals gathered outside the centre alleging negligence of the authorities. They also demanded a thorough investigation and strict action against those responsible. The protests prompted police to reach the spot to bring the situation under control.

Police have initiated a probe, sources said, adding that it will also be investigated whether all safety regulations were followed.

2 from Bengal, Bangladesh get jail for trafficking, rape

Express News Service
Ahmedabad, August 4

THE SPECIAL POCSO court in Ahmedabad has convicted and sentenced two persons, including a Bangladesh national, for sexual exploitation and trafficking of minor girls from the neighbouring country in a 2024 case filed in Ahmedabad.

The accused, identified as Sagar Milan Mandal of West Bengal and Mahammad Faruq of Bangladesh were sentenced to jail for 20 years and 14 years, respectively.

The court also awarded Rs 4 lakh as compensation to a 15-year-old victim and Rs 75,000 to another 17-year-old victim under the Gujarat Victim Compensation Scheme.

Investigation Officers (IO) Inspectors I N Ghasura and SJ Jadeja told *The Indian Express* that the victims and their mother were deported to Bangladesh in December 2024 after their statements were recorded before a magistrate.

However, there is a lack of clarity on how the compensation will be paid to the victims who are no longer in India.



ऑयल एण्ड नेचुरल गैस कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड
Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.

**ENGAGEMENT OF DOCTORS ON
FIXED TERM BASIS — ADVT. NO. 3/2026 (R&P)**
ONGC, a 'Maharatna' Public Sector Enterprise, intends to engage total 24 Medical Officers-Occupational Health/Homeopathy/ Specialists on fixed term basis for a period upto 30.06.2028 on a consolidated Annual CTC ranging from ₹7,80,000-₹15,60,000/- (depending upon the nature of the post) at various locations of ONGC across India.
Interested & eligible candidates need to register on www.ongcindia.com from 05.08.2026 to 18.08.2026. Candidates may visit the website for detailed advertisement containing complete relevant information.
**Head Corporate R&P
ONGC**



manipalhospitals
LIFE'S ON 



Your trust.

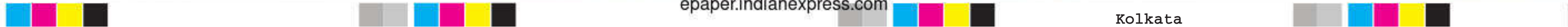
To everyone who believed in our IPO, thank you for your trust.

For decades, people and families have walked through our doors and handed us the thing they value most – their health.

We will honour that faith by taking advanced healthcare to more people, more families and more tomorrows. So that, through every uncertainty, life can keep moving forward.

Life's On India.

50 hospitals | 24 cities | 11,000+ doctors | 13,000+ licensed beds | 24,000+ employees



कार्यालय जोधपुर विकास प्राधिकरण, जोधपुर
 क्रमांक - सकार/सी/26/85/16 दिनांक - 31/07/2026

ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या - जौन दक्षिण/08/2026-27

जोधपुर विकास प्राधिकरण, जोधपुर की ओर से प्राधिकरण एवं राजकीय विभाग में नियमानुसार उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीकृत टेकदार से सिविल कार्य हेतु मुहबंद विड आमंत्रित की जाती है। इन कार्यों की अनुमानित लागत, बिड बेचे जाने तथा प्राप्त करने की दिनांक, बिड शर्त आदि का सम्पूर्ण विवरण वेबसाइट www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in, www.jodhpurjda.org एवं www.sppp.raj.nic.in पर देखा जा सकता है।

NIB Code :- JOD2627A0118
 UBN No. :- JOD2627WS0800215 To JOD2627WS0800218
 का.सा.पार/सी/26/85/16 अधिराणी अभिलेख (दिनांक)

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF KASHMIR
 Ganderbal www.cukashmir.ac.in

ADMISSION NOTICE 2026 MASTER OF EDUCATION PROGRAMME (M.Ed.)
 (For Working Professionals/In-service Candidates)

The Central University of Kashmir invites applications from Working Professionals/In-service candidates for admission to Two-Year Master of Education Programme (M.Ed.) under New-Normal Mode / Blended Mode for the Academic Session 2026-2027. The registration process shall begin from 5th August, 2026. The last date of registration is 11th August, 2026 upto 11:55 PM. For registration process & detailed information, candidates are advised to visit the University website: www.cukashmir.ac.in

Date: 04.08.2026
 S/d Director (I/C)
 Directorate of Admissions

इंडियन बैंक Indian Bank
 Indian Bank, Zonal office, Chinsurah Senco building, 2nd Floor, Balli More, Bandel PO & Dist.-Hooghly, Pin - 712103 (W.B)
 Phone No. : (033) 2680 2990
 E-mail : zochinsurah@indianbank.co.in

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR LEASING OF BRANCH PREMISES FOR DANKUNI BRANCH

Indian Bank, a public Sector Bank invites tender under 2 bid system (Technical & Financial) from owners of office premises willing to offer on lease basis (readily built/Premises Under Construction) for shifting of Dankuni branch at DANKUNI, Chanditala Road, Hooghly West Bengal measuring 1500sq ft carpet area preferably at Ground Floor on the main road in business conducive area having good frontage, visibility and parking space with minimum lease period of 15 years with onsite ATM facility.

The tender forms can be obtained and deposited at the following address from 05.08.2026 to 19.08.2026 on payment of Rs. 250/- (Non-Refundable) by way of DD/IOI favouring **INDIAN BANK** payable at Dankuni. Last date for submission of bid 19.08.2026 upto 3:00 PM. Details of the tender can be obtained from our website www.indianbank.nic.in. The Bank reserves the right to reject any or all Tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Sd/-
 Zonal Manager

GUJARAT METRO RAIL CORPORATION (GMRC) LIMITED
 (SPV of Govt. of India and Govt. of Gujarat)
 Block No.1, First Floor, Karmayogi Bhavan, Sector 10/A, Gandhinagar, 382010, Gujarat. (CIN): U60200GJ2010SGC059407

TENDER NOTIFICATION
 Dated : 05.08.2026

E-Tenders are invited from reputed and experienced Contractors for the following tender:

Tender No. and Name	Tender Fees
Tender No. GMRC/Utility Shifting-1/Ph-3C/2026 "Utility Identification & diversion / shifting of utilities for proposed Metro Ring Corridor (i) From APMC Station to Prakash Nagar Station (From Chainage 0.00 to 9612.332 M) (ii) From Vadaj Station to APMC Station (From Chainage 27106.277 to 36169.007 M) of Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project, Phase -3C"	INR 25,000/-
Tender No. GMRC/Utility Shifting-2/Ph-3C/2026 "Utility Identification & diversion / shifting of utilities for Proposed Metro Ring corridor from Prakash Nagar Station to Vadaj Station (From Chainage 9612.332 to 27106.77) of Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project, Phase -3C"	INR 25,000/-

Interested bidders are requested to visit <https://tender.nprocure.com> for eligibility criteria, applying/ downloading the tender document. Last date and time for Bid Submissions is 15:00 Hrs. on 05.09.2026.

Any alterations in Eligibility Criteria and terms of the Tender Document, or any amendment to the Tender Document, etc. will be uploaded on <https://tender.nprocure.com> and GMRC's Website www.gujaratmetrorail.com without any obligation or press notification or other proclamation.

General Manager (Civil), GMRC

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यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India
 Regional Office : Durgapur
 UCP-23, Bengal Ambuja, City Centre, Durgapur, Pin - 713216

Tender Notice for Empanelment of Rate Contract, Maintenance of CCTV, Fire Alarm, Electronic Alarm and Fire Extinguisher at Branches / ATMs / Offices

Union Bank of India, Regional Office, Durgapur, invites sealed tender under Two Bid system for Annual Rate Contract and Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) of CCTV, Fire Alarm, Security Alarm and Fire Extinguishers installed in Branches / ATMs / Offices under Regional Office, Durgapur. Interested Agencies / Firms / Vendors who comply Bank's standard guidelines can get Tender documents from the above-mentioned address. The detailed information/documents regarding the Tender can also be downloaded from the websites: www.unionbankofindia.bank.in & <https://tender.nprocure.com>. Bidder can bid with all the desired documents at the given address of Regional Office on or before 26.08.2026 by 3.30 PM. Complete Information and RFP (Request For Proposal) Forms are available at the websites from 05.08.2026 to 26.08.2026.

Date : 03.08.2026
 Place : Durgapur
 Regional Head
 Union Bank of India

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Union Bank of India, Regional Office, Durgapur, invites sealed tender under Two Bid system for Annual Rate Contract and Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) of CCTV, Fire Alarm, Security Alarm and Fire Extinguishers installed in Branches / ATMs / Offices under Regional Office, Durgapur. Interested Agencies / Firms / Vendors who comply Bank's standard guidelines can get Tender documents from the above-mentioned address. The detailed information/documents regarding the Tender can also be downloaded from the websites: www.unionbankofindia.bank.in & <https://tender.nprocure.com>. Bidder can bid with all the desired documents at the given address of Regional Office on or before 26.08.2026 by 3.30 PM. Complete Information and RFP (Request For Proposal) Forms are available at the websites from 05.08.2026 to 26.08.2026.

Date : 03.08.2026
 Place : Durgapur
 Regional Head
 Union Bank of India

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India
 Regional Office : Durgapur
 UCP-23, Bengal Ambuja, City Centre, Durgapur, Pin - 713216

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Corrigendum To Tender No. Y/SG/36/2026-27/15, Dated: 03.08.2026

On behalf of the president of India, Sr. Division Signal & Telecom Engineer, Hyderabad Division, South Central Railway, Secunderabad invites open tenders for the following works through e-Procurement up to 11.30 Hours of 18.08.2026.

Tender Dated 03.08.2026

Sl. No.: 1, Tender No. Y/SG/36/2026-27/15, Name of the work: Hyderabad Division: SC-MUE Section: Malkajgiri - Signalling and Telecommunication arrangements in connection with Doubling of Malkajgiri - Moula-ali Gate Cabin & (2) Malkajgiri - signalling arrangement in connection with Malkajgiri Yard Remodeling: Provision of Down Loop Line and 02 additional lines.. Tender Value (Rs.): 19,54,25,308.03, EMD (Rs.): 39,08,500.00

For bid document and other details log in to <https://ireps.gov.in>. Any corrigendum issued online only.

Sr. Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer/ Hyderabad

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ODISHA RISING



Odisha Emerges as Eastern India's Next Food Processing and FMCG Growth Engine

FOR decades, Odisha's economic story has largely been associated with minerals, metals and heavy industries. But another transformation is quietly unfolding one that is rooted not beneath the ground, but above it.

Across the State, a combination of abundant agricultural and marine resources, expanding food processing infrastructure and investor-friendly industrial policies is beginning to reshape Odisha into one of eastern India's most promising destinations for food processing and FMCG manufacturing.

The shift is driven by a simple economic reality. Consumers today are buying less raw produce and more packaged, processed and ready-to-consume food. As demand for convenience foods, dairy products, beverages, frozen seafood and branded agricultural products continues to grow, states capable of supplying both raw materials and modern manufacturing infrastructure are likely to become the next growth centres of India's food economy.

From Policy to Projects: The Government's Facilitative Approach

A significant factor behind Odisha's growing attractiveness for food processing investments has been the State Government's emphasis on creating an enabling business environment rather than relying solely on fiscal incentives. Over the past few years, the Government has focused on simplifying regulatory processes, strengthening industrial infrastructure, improving

logistics and ensuring faster project implementation.

The Odisha Food Processing Policy 2022, together with the Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR) 2022, provides a comprehensive framework for investors by supporting capital investment, food parks, cold-chain infrastructure, common facilities, export-oriented manufacturing and value-added processing. Digital governance initiatives, including the GO SWIFT single-window system, have further streamlined approvals and significantly reduced the time required for establishing industrial projects.

Supporting this policy ecosystem is the Industrial Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha (IPICOL), the State's nodal investment promotion and facilitation agency. Beyond promoting investment opportunities, IPICOL serves as the primary interface between investors and the Government, coordinating with multiple departments to facilitate project approvals, provide guidance on policy incentives, assist in land identification, and support investors throughout the project lifecycle.

Working closely with the Industries Department and other stakeholder agencies, IPICOL facilitates investments through a structured single-window mechanism that enables faster decision-making, coordinated inter-departmental clearances and time-bound implementation. The organisation also plays an important role in investor outreach, sector-specific engagement, project monitoring and aftercare services, helping companies transition efficiently from investment proposals to com-



mercial operations.

For the food processing and FMCG sector, this institutional framework is particularly important because projects often require coordinated approvals involving industrial land, utilities, environmental clearances, infrastructure connectivity and multiple regulatory agencies. By functioning as a dedicated investment facilitator, IPICOL helps reduce procedural complexity and provides investors with a single point of engagement throughout the investment process.

As Odisha seeks to build an integrated food processing ecosystem, the Government's policy reforms, coupled with IPICOL's investment facilitation framework, are creating an environment where businesses can establish operations with greater certainty, transparency and speed, while enabling the State to attract

high-quality investments, generate employment and strengthen agricultural value chains.

Infrastructure is gradually catching up with this policy push

Mega Food Parks, specialised seafood infrastructure, industrial estates and expanding logistics networks are creating conditions that were largely absent a decade ago. Odisha's nearly 575-kilometre coastline, supported by Paradip, Dhamra and Gopalpur ports, provides manufacturers with efficient access to both domestic and overseas markets, particularly for seafood, processed foods and FMCG products.

The State is also witnessing the emergence of a broader manufacturing ecosystem around food processing. Leading companies such as Tata Consumer Products,

Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages, Parel Agro, Indo Nissin, Varun Beverages, Britannia and ITC have operational projects in Odisha, while Nestlé India has broken ground for its global lighthouse factory in the State. These investments are creating demand for packaging manufacturers, logistics providers, cold chain operators, food testing laboratories and engineering services. As contract manufacturing gains prominence within India's FMCG sector, Odisha has an opportunity to become a preferred production base for national brands, private labels and emerging direct-to-consumer companies seeking cost-efficient manufacturing locations.

The diversity of commodities further strengthens this proposition

Dedicated production clusters have developed around rice, maize, sweet potato, jackfruit, mango, cashew, dairy, seafood, turmeric, ginger, millets, mushrooms and honey, while Odisha's 11 GI-tagged food and agricultural products offer opportunities for premium branding and export-oriented marketing. Value addition in these segments has the potential to improve farmer incomes while expanding industrial activity beyond traditional urban centres.

Seafood remains one of the State's strongest export stories

Odisha has steadily improved its position in marine exports, supported by growing aquaculture production and investments in processing infrastructure. The Seafood

Park at Deras, where common infrastructure is being developed is expected to strengthen processing capacity for frozen, ready-to-cook and value-added seafood products, enabling exporters to move beyond commodity exports towards premium international markets.

The same logic increasingly applies to dairy, fruits and horticulture. Products such as mango, jackfruit, sweet potato, tomato and cashew are gradually moving beyond primary markets into processing streams that include beverages, snacks, concentrates, frozen foods and packaged consumer products. This transition is central to improving value realisation across the agricultural supply chain.

The next phase of Odisha's food economy, however, will depend on more than production alone. Cold-chain infrastructure, food testing facilities, quality certification, contract manufacturing, export logistics and supplier ecosystems will determine whether the State can evolve from a supplier of raw agricultural commodities into a competitive manufacturing hub for processed food and FMCG products.

The foundations are already being laid. The challenge now lies in scaling investments, strengthening industry linkages and integrating farmers, processors, MSMEs and global markets into a single value chain.

If that momentum continues, Odisha's next industrial success story may not come from its mines or metals. It may well emerge from its farms, fisheries and food factories.

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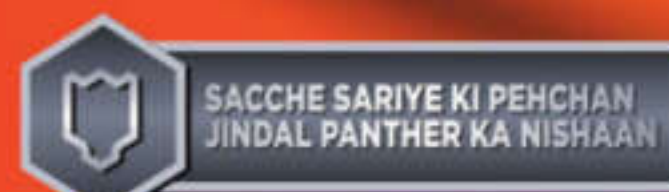
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BJP takes stock after bypoll setbacks

Liz Mathew
New Delhi, August 4

A DAY after the BJP lost two of its bastions in the bypolls in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, the party appears to have begun the stock-taking exercise, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussing the political situation with senior leaders from the states concerned on Tuesday.

Modi met former Bihar chief minister and JDU leader Nitish Kumar and former Madhya Pradesh CM and Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in his office chamber in Parliament House.

While the meetings were to discuss "development issues", sources said "political developments" also came up. The party is trying to come to terms with the embarrassing defeats in Bihar's Bankipur seat vacated by its national president Nitin Nabin, and Datia in Madhya Pradesh, a stronghold constituency of the party for almost three decades until 2023.

Jan Suraj Party founder Prashant Kishor won the high-stakes Bankipur bypoll against Neeraj Kumar, while Congress candidate Ghanshyam Singh defeated BJP's Ashutosh Tiwari by 6,016 votes in Datia.

Nitish, now a Rajya Sabha member, was accompanied by JDU leaders — Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Lalan Singh and Sanjay Jha. "The discussion was about the social, economic



PM Narendra Modi and Rajya Sabha MP Nitish Kumar during a meeting at Parliament House, Tuesday. PTI

and development issues. It was about how to take the state forward. Of course, the political scenario also came up for discussion," said a source. The PM wanted to take feedback directly from the senior leaders of the coalition partner.

However, a senior party leader insisted that "it was more of a courtesy meeting" as Nitish has not met Modi since he came to Rajya Sabha. In his meeting with Chouhan, during which the issues related to the Agriculture ministry, including the farmer protests in different parts, were discussed, the BJP's rout in Datia also came up.

Meanwhile, the BJP's dismal performance in the bypolls was a hot topic in party leaders' conversations inside and outside Parliament. The defeat in Bankipur, which has a high presence of forward castes, a key support base of the BJP, has alarmed the party leadership. "It was clearly an angry response to the UGC regulations and the NEET paper leaks," said a senior BJP MP.

The UGC regulations on caste discrimination on campuses, which were withdrawn after many upper caste groups protested in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and the NEET paper leaks that affected many families could "hurt the party's prospects in the coming polls

too". Assembly polls are due early next year in five states — Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa.

"There is an assessment process. The party has begun collecting feedback, and we will certainly do the needful correction," said a senior office-bearer of the BJP. "We have to plug the holes... there is no doubt about it. Party leadership is aware of the resentment among the Brahmins and Thakurs... as well as OBC communities over the UGC guidelines. We will chalk out strategies to address their concerns before we launch the campaign for these elections."

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BJP dissolves Datia district organisation

Anand Mohan J
Bhopal, August 4

LESS THAN 24 hours after suffering one of its most politically significant defeats in recent years, the BJP on Tuesday dissolved its entire Datia district organisation, signalling the scale of introspection triggered by the party's loss in the high-stakes Assembly by-election.

In an order issued by BJP state office secretary Shyam Mahajan, the party said that following the directions of state president Hemant Khandelwal and on the recommendations of a committee constituted to review the Datia bypoll results, the entire existing organisational structure of the district had been dissolved with immediate effect.

The order removes the district president, district office-bearers, district executive, mandal committees, morchas, cells, projects, departments and all other organisational units in Datia from their responsibilities. The organisational overhaul followed an intense day of introspection within BJP. Before dissolving the Datia unit, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav chaired a high-level review meeting at his official residence attended by state BJP president Khandelwal, Deputy Chief Minister Jagdish

Devda, ministers, senior office-bearers and leaders who had managed the Datia campaign.

Party sources said that the meeting examined the reasons behind the 6,016-vote defeat, allegations of factionalism, the performance of the party organisation and complaints of sabotage by local leaders. The review is also expected to have disciplinary consequences. Sources said complaints against Datia district president Raghuvir Kushwah and several office-bearers would be compiled and sent to the central leadership. Internal reports have flagged allegations that more than a dozen BJP councillors worked against the official candidate during the campaign, with disciplinary action under consideration.

The action comes a day after the Congress retained the Datia Assembly seat, with veteran leader Ghanshyam Singh defeating BJP debutant Ashutosh Tiwari in a contest that had evolved into a prestige battle for both parties. BJP's defeat exposed deep organisational fault lines. Mishra's supporters had openly protested after BJP replaced him with Tiwari, with road blockades, resignations and clashes with police forcing the party into damage-control mode during the campaign.



V-P and Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan conducts proceedings during Monsoon Session on Tuesday. PTI

Amid Opp protests, RS passes Registration of Births and Deaths Bill

Express News Service
New Delhi, August 4

THE RAJYA Sabha passed the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026, by a voice vote on Tuesday afternoon, amid slogans from the Opposition. The Lok Sabha had cleared the Bill last week. The Upper House ran for less than an hour in the afternoon, before being adjourned for the day soon after the passage of the Bill.

The Bill, which has stricter provisions for delayed registrations, was introduced by MoS Home Nityanand Rai. The Bill seeks to amend provisions of the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, to tighten the existing norms, mandating an order from a Judicial Magistrate (First Class) for birth and death registrations made over two years after the event.

Under the existing law, registrations delayed by over one year require an order from a district magistrate, sub-divisional magistrate, or an authorised executive magistrate, and the provision will continue to apply for delays of up to two years under the amended law.

Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge started the discussion by saying that the only way to see the House function normally is if the Prime Minister shows up, but he was cut short by the Deputy Chairperson Harivansh. While BJP members supported the Bill, some members such as BJD's Santrupt Misra, United People's Party Liberal member Pramod Boro, and Shiv Sena's Jyoti Nagnath Waghmare objected to the provision of a

judicial magistrate's order for birth and death registrations. Boro said the judicial magistrates are overburdened and this requirement will lead to delays in registrations. He said there was a disparity in the number of judicial magistrates across states.

Waghmare said the registration process should be made easier with camps and door-to-door activities, and penalties should be removed. BJP member Biswajit Sinha, who gave his maiden speech in the House, said that the Congress members were against the Bill because they were allowing Pakistani and Bangladeshi citizens to register in India.

The Opposition members, on the other hand, tried to again raise the issue of the Home Minister's absence in the House. Congress's Phoolan Devi Netam and DMK's Tiruchi Siva said the Home Minister himself should have presented the Bill.

CPIM member V Sivadasan said the Bill was very important and there was a need for proper documentation. He went on to say that the cause of death should be accurately documented, such as malnutrition and paper leaks.

In his reply, Rai said there was a need for the members to understand the Bill. He said late registration, especially beyond two years, was being misused and therefore should happen on orders of a Judicial Magistrate. "This has been done so that ghosts do not continue to be voters for certain parties or babies born elsewhere are not registered here by some states," he said.

LS passes Appropriation Bill, adjourned amid protests by Opposition

Express News Service
New Delhi, August 4

THE LOK Sabha passed the Appropriation (Number 3) Bill, 2026, on Tuesday amid protests from the Opposition benches over police action against protesting students and the alleged theft of donations from the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

The Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, was also tabled in the House which ran for less than an hour in the afternoon and adjourned for the day soon after the passage of the proposed legislation.

The House was adjourned at 11 am after Speaker Om Birla's

appeals to let question hour continue didn't find any takers from the Opposition benches. The Lok Sabha reassembled at 2 pm, but sloganeering by the Opposition members continued.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the Taxation and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, but it was not taken up for consideration.

However, the Appropriation (Number 3) Bill, 2026, dealing with demands for excess grants was put to a voice vote and passed. As sloganeering by opposition members continued in the well of the House, Dilip Sankia, who was in the Chair, adjourned the House for the day.



Pat on the Back

SEVERAL OPPOSITION MPs seem to be impressed with the "political clarity" of Samajwadi Party's chief whip in the Lok Sabha, Dharmendra Yadav, when he speaks at the Opposition bloc meetings at Rajya Sabha LoP Mallikarjun Kharge's chamber in Parliament. Some of the Opposition leaders were heard praising Yadav at an event at the Constitution Club of India on Tuesday. One of them said his style of working was very "straightforward", something that other party leaders should try to emulate. Yadav takes charge of party affairs in Parliament when SP chief Akhilesh Yadav is busy or travelling.

No Comments

JOURNALISTS EXPECTING soundbites from MPs attending Parliament were left confused, and mildly amused, when BJP MP Ravi Kishan told them he was observing a "maun vrat" (vow of silence) as advised by his Pandit ji (priest). The Gorakhpur MP went on to verbally request the journalists to let him remain *shaant* (quiet) so as to honour his "maun vrat".

Old Friends And New

A DAY after the BJP's defeat in two by-polls — Bankipur and Datia — PM Narendra Modi was seen engrossed in an animated conversation with the party's national president, Nitin Nabin, who was seated to his right in the first row during NDA MPs' 'Mangal Milan' at Parliament House. 'Mangal Milan' is a weekly strategy meeting of the NDA allies when Parliament is in session. A video of the meet released by the BJP showed Nabin smilingly listening to the PM. The others present in the meeting included new NDA member Sudip Bandyopadhyay, who was attending the first 'Mangal Milan' after breaking away from the TMC and joining the NCPI in June.

Prashant Kishor's win a setback for BJP, but it will worry RJD more

Deeptiman Tiwary
New Delhi, August 4

THE BJP'S shock defeat in the Bankipur Assembly bypoll has delivered a rare setback to the ruling party in one of its strongest urban bastions, but the result has also exposed a dilemma for Bihar's principal Opposition party, RJD.

There are clear signs that a section of the Tejashwi Yadav-led party's core support base shifted to Jan Suraj Party (JSP) founder Prashant Kishor in an election where defeating the BJP appeared to become the overriding objective for many voters.

Kishor polled over 64,000 votes to defeat the BJP. The RJD's Rekha Kumari finished a distant third with around 14,000 votes. In the 2025 Assembly polls, Rekha Kumari had secured over 46,000 votes while the BJP had won Bankipur with more than 98,000 votes. Kishor's JSP had managed just over 7,000 votes.

For the RJD, the outcome is particularly significant because Bankipur, despite being an upper-caste-dominated traditional BJP stronghold, also has a sizeable population of Yadavs and Muslims who form the party's core social coalition. The sharp fall in the RJD's vote share has fuelled concerns that a section of these voters backed Kishor, believing he was better placed to defeat the BJP.

At the same time, the BJP's defeat has reinforced a growing belief within the Opposition that the party is vulnerable even in seats long considered impreg-



Some in the RJD are concerned about a section of the party's core voters shifting towards the Jan Suraj Party. PTI

nable, potentially giving fresh momentum to anti-BJP forces.

What RJD leaders say

In his first comments on the bypoll verdict, Leader of Opposition (LoP) Tejashwi Yadav chose to focus on the BJP's loss, saying its defeat was the result of the "negative politics" of Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary.

"The Bankipur results have made it clear that in Bihar and the rest of north India, the BJP can be defeated. It shows that public frustration with the government's failures has reached a critical level. The BJP's problems are only going to grow," RJD MP Sudhakar Singh told *The Indian Express*.

However, senior RJD leaders in private acknowledged that the result had also forced the party into introspection. "We were not fancying our chances because Bankipur is a BJP bastion... But an atmosphere developed in which voters concluded that the BJP had to be defeated,"

a senior RJD leader said.

"Yes, the concern for us is that in this desire to defeat the BJP, some of our core voters saw Prashant Kishor as having a better chance. But there is also a silver lining. This victory will convince our cadre that the BJP can be defeated even in its strongholds if they work hard on the ground. We will see how to

harness the momentum building against the BJP." According to the RJD leader, one factor that contributed to the anti-BJP sentiment was resentment over a series of police encounters since Samrat Choudhary became Chief Minister. The RJD has alleged that around a dozen encounters have disproportionately targeted Yadavs and Muslims. "The anger over these encounters influenced many Yadav and Muslim voters. They were more inclined to ensure the BJP's defeat than remain loyal to one particular party," the leader said.

Another RJD functionary ar-

gued that the shift should not be read as a structural erosion of the party's support base. "This is an urban constituency dominated by upper-caste voters. Once they began moving towards Kishor, some of our voters also consolidated behind him to maximise the chances of defeating the BJP. Such momentum sometimes develops in the final days of an election," the leader said.

"Our core support remains intact. We are a cadre-based party with a deep organisational network. Kishor cannot match that... He will eventually have to engage with questions of caste and identity. That is a politics the RJD has practised for decades."

BJP sees silver lining

The BJP, while acknowledging the setback, also believes the bypoll may have longer-term political benefits. "The rise of Kishor is not necessarily bad news for us. This bypoll was an aberration in which he managed to attract some of our voters... In the longer run, his party is more likely to divide anti-BJP votes," a senior BJP leader said.

Within the BJP, leaders attributed the defeat to a combination of local and political factors. Party sources said resentment among upper-caste voters over the proposed UGC equity regulations coincided with heightened youth discontent following the Cockroach Janata Party-led protests. They also pointed to the party's last-minute change of candidate, which deprived it of the advantage of a well-known local face.

'Sangh Parivar is far more democratic than Gandhi parivar'

RAJYA SABHA member **SUSHMITA DEV** recently joined the BJP, weeks after switching over from the TMC. Her stint in the TMC lasted five years, much shorter than her decades-long association with the Congress before that. In an interview with **DIVYA A.** Dev speaks about what caused her disillusionment with her former parties, the government's handling of the protest against the NEET paper leak, and the RSS. Excerpts:

You have been with three political parties. How has your experience been?

I started my career in student politics with NSUI, the Congress' student wing, and left in 2021. So, going from the Congress to the Trinamool was not an ideological change... Mamata didi herself exited from the Congress

and formed this party.

What I realised very quickly is that the TMC's vote-share in Bengal or anywhere else in the country is not ideological; it's leader-centric. In contrast, the Congress has an ideological base, if you don't like the BJP, you vote for the Congress. But the BJP's vote is entirely ideological. When they had two MPs or when they had no MPs, and today when they are on the Treasury benches, they have never compromised with their ideology.

What about the top leadership of the parties?

The Congress does a lot of review meetings after every election. So, it comes across as democratic, but when it comes to implementation, there is a lack of internal consensus. And in Trinamool, there are hardly any forums for discussion.



SUSHMITA DEV
BJP RAJYA SABHA MP

Power is concentrated in the hands of one person, because she built the party and ran it.

The critics will tell you that you don't have a voice in the BJP. It's only two people, PM Modi and the Home Minister (Amit Shah). I don't think it's true because all the MPs have a Gujarati minister; you can talk to them about what you're facing

in your state. Apart from that, you have the organisation... If nothing works, whether you like it or not, the Sangh Parivar has its eyes and ears to the ground.

Have you met anyone from the Sangh Parivar?

No, but it is very clear to me that very tall, experienced Sangh leaders are very much a part of the parliamentary system. So there are so many layers of engagement. In the Congress, if somebody at the top gets upset with you, your career is over. You can't take on the family and survive in the Congress. But if you're a meritorious person in the BJP, they will always be a platform.

What do you think about the role of Sangh Parivar in the BJP?

The Congress is also ruled by a parivar. One party is with

the Gandhi Parivar and for the BJP, their ideology is Sangh Parivar. And it's better to have a large organisation like the RSS, where there are different views, than one family. *Parivar toh dono taraf hai.* (There is a family on both sides). There is a first family on that side and on this side, there is a Sangh Parivar. But Sangh Parivar is far more democratic as it is a larger institution than one family.

Why did you quit the TMC?

My situation in the Trinamool was like no one else's because I was not a person doing politics at the grassroots level in Bengal. I felt it was extremely difficult for the TMC leader to pursue the growth of her party outside Bengal. I had a choice between the Congress and the BJP. I felt that the way they (BJP) are working in the northeastern

states, their acceptance is growing. After talking to the Assam CM (Himanta Biswa Sarma) and Home Minister Amit Shah, it was clear to me that if I want to work for the next 10-15 years for my people, the BJP is the party.

What do you think of the government's handling of the students' protest?

The way the Modi government responded — whether it is by bringing new legislation, by Dharmendra Pradhanji stepping down — they handled it well. What is now sub judice is whether the force used there was proportionate and necessary or was it disproportionate. However, looking at thousands of people marching towards Parliament, would they have stopped at the gate? That is also the Home Minister's responsibility to protect Parliament.

DKS: Will accept resignations

Bengaluru: Undeterred by threats of resignation by a few MLAs over their non-inclusion in the state Cabinet, Karnataka Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said he would accept their resignations within minutes.

He said tendering resignation was part of politics. "Nobody can stop them," he said, adding the legislators can secure their future only in Congress. "...Party is important. If anyone resigns, I will accept it within a few minutes." The remark was in response to queries regarding resignations announced by Congress MLAs Yashvantharayagouda Patil, Belur Gopalkrishna and B K Sangameshwar. There were speculations that legislators from Kolar and Chikkaballapur were contemplating mass resignations as none from the districts featured in Cabinet. ENS

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Provision to Rule 8 (6) & 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Constructive/ Physical / Symbolic Possession of which has been taken by the authorized officer of the bank/secured creditor, will be sold on "As is Where is", "As is What is" and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the bank/ secured creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantors (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

ANNEXURE-B												
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY												
Sl. No.	A) Name of Branch B) Name of the Account C) Name & Address of the Borrower/ Guarantors Account	Description of the Immoveable Properties Mortgaged/ Owner's name [Mortgagors of Property(ies)]	A) Date of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 B) Outstanding Amount C) Date of Possession u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 D) Nature of Possession (Symbolic/ Physical/ Constructive)	A) Reserve Price B) EMD C) Bid Increase Amount	Date/ Time of E-Auction Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors	Sl. No.	A) Name of Branch B) Name of the Account C) Name & Address of the Borrower/ Guarantors Account	Description of the Immoveable Properties Mortgaged/ Owner's name [Mortgagors of Property(ies)]	A) Date of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 B) Outstanding Amount C) Date of Possession u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 D) Nature of Possession (Symbolic/ Physical/ Constructive)	A) Reserve Price B) EMD C) Bid Increase Amount	Date/ Time of E-Auction Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors	
1.	A) Khajuri Dasagram (097820) B) Aswini Kar Account No. 097820NC00000102 C) Borrower: Mr. Aswini Kar, S/o Gora Chand Kar, Vill. Pratappur, P.O. Khurshi, P.S. Narayangarh, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, Pin-721437 Co-Borrower: Mr. Pintu Kumar Kar, S/o Aswini Kar, Vill. Pratappur, P.O. Khurshi, P.S. Narayangarh, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, Pin-721437	Equitable mortgage of land & building located at Mouza- Pratappur, under P.S. Narayangarh, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, J.L. No. 589, L.R. Kh. No. 265, L.R. Plot No. 247, Area 5.00 dec. Bastu in Nature Vide Deed no. 2197of 2018 in the name of Aswini Kar . Butted & Bounded By: North: Property of Sudhir Ch. Sahoo, South: 5ft. Wide PCC Road, East: Property of Gopal Jana, West: Braja Gopal Das & Nani Gopal Das	A) 11.09.2025 B) Rs. 30,96,455.80 (Rupees Thirty Lakh Ninety Six Thousand Four Hundred Fifty Five and Paise Eighty only) + further interest and costs C) 28.11.2025 D) Symbolic Possession	A) Rs. 21,20,000.00 B) Rs. 2,12,000.00 C) Rs. 25,000.00	24.08.2026 11:30 AM to 03:30 PM Not Known to Bank	8.	A) Dantan (018920) B) M/s New Maa Tarani Concrete Firm Prop. Siddheswar Jana Account Nos. 018920EG00000136, 0189250812184, 0189307228632 C) Borrower: M/s New Maa Tarani Concrete Firm, Prop. Siddheswar Jana, P.O. Jamuapati, Dantan, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal- 721426 Proprietor & Mortgagor: Mr. Siddheswar Jana, S/o Shatrughna Jana, Jamuapati, Paschim Medinipur, Dantan, West Bengal- 721426 Co-Borrower: Partha Sarathi Jana, S/o Siddheswar Jana, Jamuapati, Paschim Medinipur, Dantan, West Bengal- 721426 Co-Borrower: Chinmoy Jana, S/o Siddheswar Jana, Jamuapati, Paschim Medinipur, Dantan, West Bengal- 721426	Equitable Mortgage of Land and Building situated at Mouza- Jamuapati, A.D.S.R.O. Dantan, P.S. Dantan, Dist. Paschim Medinipur vide deed no. 1408 dt. 21.06.2020, J.L. No. 109, Khatian No. 128 & 129 modified LR Khatian No. 127 RS Plot No. 204, LR Plot No. 217 comprising of 05 Dec. executed in the name of Mr. Siddheswar Jana . Boundary:- North- Pond of Owner, South- 7 ft. wide Concrete Road, East- House of Kishori Jana, West- House of Bakul Dey	A) 04.01.2024 B) Rs. 31,66,701.32 (Rupees Thirty One Lakh Sixty Six Thousand Seven Hundred One and Paise Thirty Two only) + further interest and costs C) 31.05.2024 D) Symbolic Possession	A) Rs. 35,10,000.00 B) Rs. 3,51,000.00 C) Rs. 25,000.00	24.08.2026 11:30 AM to 03:30 PM Not Known to Bank	
2.	A) Narayangarh (069520) B) Mr. Bharat Bera Account No. 0695306812568 C) Borrower & Mortgagor: Mr. Bharat Bera, S/o Manmatha Bera, Vill. Handala Ghat, Post- Kanthalia- Narayangarh, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, Pin- 721437	Equitable mortgage of land & building located at Mouza- Bisarpur, under P.S. Belda, ADJR- Narayangarh having J.L. No. 453, L.R. Kh. No. 517, L.R. Plot No. 683, 684, 685, area 1.50 Dec. Bastu out of 3.00 Dec. (southern side) in nature, vide deed no. 5492/2011 dated 14.10.2011 in the name of Mr. Bharat Bera , S/o Manmatha Bera Butted & Bounded By: North: Property of Ratan Singh, South: Plot of Gangadhar, East: Property of Kalipada, West: Wide Road & Pond	A) 12.02.2021 B) Rs. 4,35,622.33 (Rupees Four Lakh Thirty Five Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Two and Paise Thirty Three only) + further interest and costs C) 18.09.2021 D) Symbolic Possession	A) Rs. 7,40,000.00 B) Rs. 74,000.00 C) Rs. 10,000.00	24.08.2026 11:30 AM to 03:30 PM Not Known to Bank	9.	A) Madpur (320900) B) Mr. Pintu Samanta Account Nos. 320900NC00082720 & 3209009900000080 C) Borrower & Mortgagor: Mr. Pintu Samanta, S/o Sambhu Nath Samanta, Vill. Rampurchak, P.O. Shyamchak, P.S. Debra, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, Pin-721124 Guarantor: Mrs. Srimati Samanta, Vill. Rampurchak, P.O. Shyamchak, P.S. Debra, P.S. Paschim Midnapur, Pin- 721124	Equitable mortgage of land & building located at Mouza- Rampurchak under P.S. Debra, J.L. No. 371, Kh. no. 152, (HAL No. 87/3) L.R. Kh. No. 188, Plot No. 19, Area 4.00 dec. Bastu in nature, vide gift deed no. 528/2011 dt. 04.02.2011 in the name of Pintu Samanta . Butted & Bounded By: North: Property of Jahar Maity, South: Common Road then Srimati Samanta, East: House of Shrimati Samanta than PMGSY Road, West: Land of Shrimati Samanta	A) 25.08.2021 B) Rs. 15,34,699.72 (Rupees Fifteen Lakh Thirty Four Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Nine and Paise Seventy Two only) + further interest and costs C) 17.09.2021 D) Symbolic Possession	A) Rs. 17,20,000.00 B) Rs. 1,72,000.00 C) Rs. 10,000.00	24.08.2026 11:30 AM to 03:30 PM Not Known to Bank	
3.	A) Keshiary Road (320700) B) Mr. Bulu Charan Nath Account No. 320700NC20047329 C) Borrower & Mortgagor: Shri Bulu Chandra Nath, S/o Sarat Chandra Nath, D.H.M.S. College at Koushalya, P.O. Kharagpur, District- Paschim Medinipur, Pin-721301	Equitable mortgage of land & Building located at Mouza- Koushalya, P.S. Kharagpur, District- Paschim Medinipur, J.L. No. 311, Khatian No. 117, Hal Khatian No. 2191, Plot No. (R.S.) 266, L.R. 1707, Area- 04 decimal vide Deed No. I-3923/2012 in the name of Shri Bulu Chandra Nath Butted & Bounded By: North: Property of Aswani Dolai & Drain, South: Property of Rabin Khilari & 05 ft. wide Kacha Road, East: Property of Mohan Dolai, West: Property of Ramkrishna Guchhait & Drain	A) 01.11.2019 B) Rs. 9,45,414.00 (Rupees Nine Lakh Forty Five Thousand Four Hundred Fourteen only) + further interest and costs C) 21.03.2020 D) Symbolic Possession	A) Rs. 13,42,000.00 B) Rs. 1,34,200.00 C) Rs. 10,000.00	24.08.2026 11:30 AM to 03:30 PM Not Known to Bank	10.	A) Jamna (199600) B) Sanatan Banua Account Nos. 199600NC00001227, 1506008000002428, 0187250032285 C) Borrower: Mr. Sanatan Banua, S/o Lt. Jagannath Banua, Vill. Amrageria, P.O. Jhanjia, P.S. Debra, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, Pin-721124 Guarantor: Mr. Subhash Banua, S/o Sanatan Banua, Vill. Amrageria, P.O. Jhanjia, P.S. Debra, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, Pin-721124	Equitable mortgage of land & building located at Mouza- Amrageria, P.S. Debra, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, Pin- 721124, vide deed no. 6267/2000 J.L. No. 409, HAL Khatian no. 35, LR Khatian no. 112/1, Plot no. 88, bearing 5.62 dec. Bastu in nature in the name of Mr. Sanatan Banua , S/o Lt. Jagannath Banua. Butted & Bounded By: North: Kalipada Banua, South: Tapan Jana, East: Panchayat Road, West: Land of Rupchand Banua	A) 12.07.2018 B) Rs. 11,80,809.00 (Rupees Eleven Lakh Eighty Thousand Eight Hundred Nine only) + further interest and costs C) 24.09.2018 D) Symbolic Possession	A) Rs. 8,11,000.00 B) Rs. 81,100.00 C) Rs. 10,000.00	24.08.2026 11:30 AM to 03:30 PM Not Known to Bank	
4.	A) Pingla (069620) B) Dinabandhu Das Account No. 0696210031426 C) Borrower & Mortgagor: Mr. Dinabandhu Das, S/o Satish Das, Vill. Belun, P.O. & P.S. Pingla, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, Pin-721140 Guarantor: Mr. Ramnarayan Chakraborty, S/o Kamal Kanta Chakraborty. Vill. Dangra, P.O. & P.S. Pingla, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, Pin-721140	Equitable mortgage of land & building located at Mouza- Belun, under P.S. Pingla, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, ADJR- Pingla, J.L. No. 47, L.R. Kh. No. 157/2, L.R. Plot No. 391, Area 5.00 dec. Bastu in Nature Vide Deed no. 1660/2012 in the name of Dinabandhu Das , S/o Satish Das. Butted & Bounded By: North: Satish Chandra Das, South: Road, East: Satish Chandra Das, West: Ganesh Ojha.	A) 18.12.2021 B) Rs. 7,84,707.00 (Rupees Seven Lakh Eighty Four Thousand Seven Hundred Seven only) + further interest and costs C) 18.04.2022 D) Symbolic Possession	A) Rs. 23,00,000.00 B) Rs. 2,30,000.00 C) Rs. 25,000.00	24.08.2026 11:30 AM to 03:30 PM Not Known to Bank	11.	A) Keshiary (232200) B) Soumya Pattanayak Account No. 232200NC00002329 C) Borrower & Mortgagor: Mr. Soumya Pattanayak, S/o Prabir Kr. Pattanayak, Vill. Khandrui, P.O. Turkagarh, P.S. Dantan, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal- 721445	Equitable Mortgage of land & building located at Mouza- Bindopur, J.L. No. 328, LR Khatian No. 347, Area- 06 Dec, P.O. Belda, under Belda BO. 1 Gram Panchayat, under P.S. Belda, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal-721424 in the name of Soumya Pattanayak (Borrower) , Deed No. 7216 dated 21.07.2022. Butted & Bounded By: North: 10 ft Wide Moorum Road, South: Drain, East: 10 ft. Wide Moorum Road, West: Canal	A) 20.11.2025 B) Rs. 10,27,366.62 (Rupees Ten Lakh Twenty Seven Thousand Three Hundred Sixty Six and Paise Sixty Two only) + further interest and costs C) 24.03.2026 D) Symbolic Possession	A) Rs. 15,45,000.00 B) Rs. 1,54,500.00 C) Rs. 10,000.00	24.08.2026 11:30 AM to 03:30 PM Not Known to Bank	
5.	A) Jamna (199600) B) MNM College of Education Trust Account Nos. 199600IB00014669 & 199600IB00014678 & MNM Teachers Training College Account Nos. 199600IB00014632, 199600IB00014641, 199600IB00014650 C) Borrower & Mortgagor: MNM College of Education Trust, at Dhaneswarpur Paikan, Dakshin Barh, P.O. Dhaneswarpur, P.S. Pingla, Dist. Paschim Medinipur (WB) Shyamapada Manna, at Lutunia, P.O. Lutunia, Dist. West Midnapore, Pin- 721166, West Bengal Mortgagor: Mirza Samsul Hossain, General Secretary, at Ruinan, P.O. Ruinan, P.S. Sabang, Dist. West Medinipur, Pin-721144, West Bengal Mortgagor: Salma Bibi, Treasurer, at Ruinan, P.O. Ruinan, P.S. Sabang, Dist. West Medinipur, Pin-721144, West Bengal Monalisa Pal, at D-6, Arabinda Nagar, WN-11 Midnapore, Pin-721101, West Bengal Trustee: Mirza Saimul Haque, at Ruinan, P.O. Ruinan, P.S. Sabang, Dist. West Medinipur, Pin-721144, West Bengal Sayed Osman Ali, at Bural, P.O. Barjogu, P.S. Sabang, Dist. West Medinipur, Pin-721144, West Bengal Abdul Kadar Moli, at Dhulagore, Uttar Mullick Para, P.O. Dhulagore, P.S. Sankrail, Dist. Howrah, West Bengal Borrower & Mortgagor: MNM Teacher Training College, at Dhaneswarpur Paikan, Dakshin Barh, P.O. Dhaneswarpur, P.S. Pingla, Dist. Paschim Medinipur (WB)	1. Property situated at Vill. & Mouza- Dhaneswarpur Paikan Dakshin Barh, J.L. No. 104, R.S. Khatian No. 15, L.R. Khatian No. 208, HAL- 112, 113, HAL 14/1 Dag Nos. 147, 154, 155, 158, 160, 161, 162, P.O. Dhaneswarpur, P.S. Pingla within Dhaneswarpur 3 No. Gram Panchayet, Dist. Paschim Medinipur, Pin-721166 executed vide Deed No. I-4367/2012 & 5681/2015 in the name of M.N.M. Teachers Training College Represented by Secretary Salma Bibi. Area=99.18 Dec. Description of Adjoining Properties: North: Vacant Land of Other's, South: 10 ft. Wide Moorum Road, East: MNM College of Education, West: MNM teacher Training College 2. Property situated at Vill. & Mouza- Dhaneswarpur Paikan Dakshin Barh, J.L. No. 104, R.S. Khatian No. 91, 94, 95 L.R. Khatian Nos. 112, 129, 133, New L.R. 207, R.S Dag Nos. 147, 154, 158, L.R. Dag Nos. 147/255, 147/257, P.O. Dhaneswarpur, P.S. Pingla, within Dhaneswarpur 3 No. Gram Panchayat Dist. Paschim Medinipur, Pin-721166 executed vide Deed No. I-1090/2015 & 4070/2011 in the name of M.N.M. College of Education Represented by Secretary Mr. Mirza Samsul Hossain Area=99 Dec. Description of Adjoining Properties: North: Vacant Land of Other's, South: Road, East: Vacant land of Other's, West: MNM teacher Training College 3. Land & Two Storied residential house property at Vill. & Mouza- Ruinan, J.L. No. 283, R.S. Khatian No. 1137, L.R. Khatian No. 1634, R.S. Dag No. 708, L.R. Dag No. 423, P.O. Ruinan, P.S. Sabang within Sabang 8 No. Gram Panchayet, Dist. Paschim Medinipur executed vide Deed No. I-5093 Dt. 31.12.1997 in the name of Mirza Samsul Hossain , Area=21.50 Dec Description of Adjoining Properties: North: House of Rabi Hazra, South: Sabang Kanta Khali Road, East: House of Samir Hazra, West: House of Sudhir Mondal 4. Equitable Mortgage of Vacant piece of land situated at Vill. & Mouza- Ruinan, J.L. No. 283, L.R. Khatian No. 1736, L.R. Plot No. 2484, P.O. Ruinan, P.S. Sabang within Sabang 8 No. Gram Panchayet, Dist. Paschim Medinipur, Pin- 721144 executed vide Deed No. I-1265, Dt. 13.03.2002 in the name of Mirza Samsul Hossain , Area=11 Dec. Description of Adjoining Properties: North: Vacant Land of Others, South: Road, East: Vacant Land of Others, West: Vacant Land of Others	A) 03.01.2019 B) Rs. 4,17,98,755.92 (Rupees Four Crore Seventeen Lakh Ninety Eight Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Five and Paise Ninety Two only) + further interest and costs C) 13.09.2019 D) Symbolic Possession	A) Rs. 3,76,00,000.00 B) Rs. 37,60,000.00 C) Rs. 1,00,000.00	24.08.2026 11:30 AM to 03:30 PM Not Known to Bank	A) Rs. 2,89,00,000.00 B) Rs. 28,90,000.00 C) Rs. 1,00,000.00	12.	A) Dantan (018920) B) Sujit Mahapatra & Mamoni Mahapatra Account Nos. 018920EG00000017, 0189250814799, 0189307226829 & 0189307229394 C) Borrower & Mortgagor: Mr. Sujit Mahapatra, S/o Subha Pada Mahapatra, Sitala Temple, Vill. Kanipur, P.O. + P.S. Dantan, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, Pin-721426 Co-Borrower: Mrs. Mamoni Mahapatra, W/o Sujit Mahapatra, Sitala Temple, Vill. Kanipur, P.O. + P.S. Dantan, Dist. Paschim Midnapur, Pin-721426	Equitable mortgage of land & building located at Mouza- Kaniapur, P.S. Dantan, ADJR- Dantan J.L. No. 52, L.R. Kh. No. 241, L.R. plot no. 399, area 3.00 dec. Bastu in nature out of 1.25 acre & LR Plot No. 402, area 1.00 dec. Bastu in nature out of 2.00 Dec., Total 4.00 dec. Bastu in nature vide Gift deed no. 3972 of 2018 dt. 26.12.2018 in the name of Sujit Mahapatra , S/o Subha Pada Mahapatra Butted & Bounded By: North: Property of Subha Pada Mahapatra (Plot No. 399), South: Property of Subha Pada Mahapatra (Plot No. 402), East: Property of Deepak Mahapatra, West: Property of Subha Pada Mahapatra (Plot No. 399)	A) 01.03.2023 B) Rs. 13,42,081.21 (Rupees Thirteen Lakh Forty Two Thousand Eighty One and Paise Twenty One only) + further interest and costs C) 03.06.2023 D) Symbolic Possession	A) Rs. 17,50,000.00 B) Rs. 1,75,000.00 C) Rs. 10,000.00	24.08.2026 11:30 AM to 03:30 PM Not Known to Bank
6.	A) Bishnupur B) Mrinal Kanti Midya & Mritunjoy Midya Account No. 136920NC00000088 C) Borrower & Mortgagor: Mrinal Kanti Midya, C/o Kanailal Midya, Village- Kalidahachara, P.O. Bishnupur, P.S. Sabang, District- Paschim Medinipur, Pin-721144, West Bengal Co-Borrower: Mritunjoy Midya, Village- Kalidahachara, P.O. Bishnupur, P.S. Sabang, Paschim Medinipur-721144, West Bengal	Equitable mortgage of land & building located at Mouza- Markanda Chak, J.L. No. 402, L.R. No. 500, L.R. Plot No. 579, Area- 05 decimal, under P.S. Sabang, ADJR- Sabang, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal-721144 in the name of Mrinal Kanti Midya (Borrower) , Deed No. 2545 dated 29.05.2019. Butted & Bounded By: North: Pond, South: 08 Ft. Road, East: Mritunjoy Midya, West: Sanjoy Midya	A) 19.11.2025 B) Rs. 14,96,0									

Cong team to meet Soren today as Ranchi job protest tests ties

Move comes after silence from Congress high command, its bid to keep spotlight on 'paper leaks', police action in Delhi

Manoj C G
New Delhi, August 4

AS THE Jantar Mantar-style protest by students and youth in Ranchi demanding a CBI probe into alleged irregularities in state government recruitment examinations continues, the Congress, a key constituent of the JMM-led government in Jharkhand, is learnt to be unhappy with the efforts — or the perceived lack of them — by Chief Minister Hemant Soren to resolve the issue. The party is keen to be seen as standing with the protesting youth.

Sources in the Congress said a delegation of party leaders, led by AICC in-charge of Jharkhand K Raju and comprising the party's ministers in the Jharkhand government, is scheduled to meet Soren on Wednesday to urge him to take steps to "address the genuine concerns" of the protesters.

Job aspirants in Ranchi have been holding an indefinite sit-in at Jaipal Singh Munda Stadium.

The protesters, who were initially demanding a CBI probe into alleged irregularities in the conduct of examinations, escalated their agitation on Wednesday by demanding that the inquiry instead be conducted by an independent panel of retired High Court judges from outside Jharkhand.

The developments come at a time when the Congress is trying to keep the spotlight on the BJP-led Centre over alleged paper leaks by focusing on the police action against protesters at Jantar Mantar in Delhi.

The Congress and other Opposition parties have been disrupting Parliament, demanding the presence of Home Minister Amit Shah in the House and seeking his accountability for the police crackdown.

The Congress high command has so far remained publicly silent on the Jharkhand protest but is apprehensive that the state govern-

ment's handling of the agitation could politically hurt the party. Sources said the leadership has also asked national office-bearers of the Youth Congress and the NSUI to meet the protesters at the stadium and extend support to them.

"(Leader of the Opposition) Rahul Gandhi has been raising the issue of paper leaks and examination irregularities for some time now. He is set to address a student convention in Prayagraj on Saturday. So if we don't support, or are not seen as supporting the protest in Ranchi, the optics would go against the party," a senior Congress leader said.

Breaking his silence on the issue, Soren said on Wednesday that his government was treating the concerns of the job aspirants with "utmost seriousness."

"With close scrutiny and complete seriousness, decisions addressing their demands and queries will be announced at the appropriate time. I am confident that the protesters will be reassured," he said.

Relations between the JMM and the Congress have been frosty since the run-up to the 2025 Bihar Assembly elections, when the Soren-led party decided to withdraw from the contest, alleging a "political conspiracy" by its allies, the Congress and RJD, to "deprive it of seats."

Last month, Congress-JMM ties came under further strain over the Rajya Sabha elections in Jharkhand. The Congress "unilaterally" announced its candidate for one of the two seats that the INDIA bloc was in a position to win, despite the JMM's insistence that it should contest both seats. The Congress refused to relent and went ahead with its nominee.

However, despite the alliance having the numbers, the Congress candidate lost following cross-voting by ruling alliance MLAs, triggering fresh unease between the two parties.



Job aspirants and students gather during a march to protest against the state government over alleged paper leaks and irregularities in JPSC and JSSC examinations, in Ranchi, Jharkhand, Tuesday. PTI

As protest enters Day 11, CM breaks silence: 'Govt stands with youth'

Shubham Tigga
Ranchi, August 4

As the students' protest over alleged irregularities in the Jharkhand Public Service Commission (JPSC) examination entered its 11th day, Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Tuesday reacted to the agitation for the first time, stating that the government stands with the youth and that they would get justice.

Speaking to reporters in Ramgarh while attending the first death anniversary of his father, Shibu Soren, the CM said, "Whatever is required for the youth, within the framework of the Constitution and the law, the government stands with them."

He said, "The government is sensitive to the issue. We are looking into the matter with utmost seriousness. I cannot literally tear open my chest and show you that, but that is the reality. One thing is certain: Whenever we take up an issue,



Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren pays tribute to his father and former CM Shibu Soren on his death anniversary, in Ramgarh, Tuesday. PTI

our objective is to resolve it properly before considering the matter closed."

He said, "The investigation agency has been working on this case. We are waiting for its report... and the outcome of the probe. Very soon, we will inform the students as well as the people of the state about the developments in this matter."

Meanwhile, as the protest at Ranchi's Jaipal Singh Munda Stadium continued for the 11th

consecutive day, more students and aspirants from different districts joined the agitation. Jharkhand Loktantrik Krantikari Morcha (JLKM) leader Devendra Mahato, who has extended support to the students, has been on a hunger strike for the past two days over the issue.

The controversy began after the declaration of the preliminary examination results of the 14th JPSC Combined Civil Services Examination.

Govt to SC: 2-stage JEE format for NEET-UG under consideration

Ananthakrishnan G
New Delhi, August 4

THE CENTRE has informed the Supreme Court that the authorities concerned are considering whether the NEET (UG) examination for medical courses should be held in a single-stage or in two stages on the pattern of the JEE for engineering courses.

The government said this in an affidavit filed Monday before the top court which is hearing petitions on the need for reforms in the National Testing Agency (NTA) framework to prevent question paper leaks.

The affidavit, which outlined the security protocol associated with the conduct of the NEET (UG) exam, said "in respect of NEET (UG), the migration from the Pen-and-Paper mode to a Computer-Based mode, whether in a single-stage or a two-stage examination on the pattern of the Joint Entrance Examination (Mains and Advanced), is presently under active consideration by all stakeholders".

The Centre said "the final approach will be adopted after considering, and with the benefit of, the recommendations of the High-Powered Task Force under the chairmanship of Shri Nandan Nilekani" constituted recently.

It said "the composition of the Task Force, with domain expertise drawn from technol-

E. EXPLAINED

Exam reforms, tougher laws

The task force on exam reforms, headed by Nandan Nilekani, was announced by the PM a day after students called off their protest over paper leaks. The government has also established fast-track courts and brought in a tougher law to deal with those behind the leaks.

ogy, space, intelligence, academia and public administration, ensures a rigorous and holistic examination of the technological, security, equity, infrastructure and pedagogic dimensions of the transition".

The Centre pointed out that the NTA "has, in the recent past, migrated seven of its eight major examinations to Computer-Based Testing, with a multi-session, multi-day schedule. These include JEE (Main), CUET (UG), CUET (PG), UGC-NET and CSIR-NET" and "NEET (UG) presently remains the only major examination of the National Testing Agency that is conducted in the Pen-and-Paper mode".

The affidavit said "it is imperative to point out that NEET (UG) is a sui generis examin-

ation on account of a multitude of factors including its scale, spread, spectrum of candidates, the wide and diverse spectrum of options contingent on the rank upon passing (ranging from MBBS, Dental, Ayush, Veterinary, Nursing) and the fee structure. There are over 22 lakhs registered candidates, with a majority of rural candidates and majority of women candidates. The figures and statistics of the NEET (UG) examination reflect its one-of-a-kind status".

The Centre said "in view of the fact that NEET (UG) is conducted on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, which acts as the Test Indenting Agency, and that the National Medical Commission is the apex regulator, any structural change in the design of NEET (UG) will be undertaken only in structured consultation and concurrence of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the National Medical Commission, under the National Medical Commission Act, 2019".

The Centre said it "also remains committed to providing candidates with adequate advance notice of any change in the mode or design of the examination, so that any transition may be smooth, equitable and free of avoidable stress to the candidates".

The Court will take up the matter on August 6.

Hit by projectile, Indian vessel sinks near Yemeni waters; 14 seafarers rescued

Express News Service
New Delhi, August 4

AN INDIAN ship with 13 Indian seafarers on board sank after getting hit by a projectile near Yemeni waters. All 14 seafarers were rescued by the Yemeni Coast Guard and brought to the Port of Mokha."

The minister added, "I have instructed the Director General Maritime Administration (DGMA) to take immediate steps in coordination with all agencies to ensure the absolute security of Indian seafarers in the region and provide all necessary assis-

tance to the rescued crew."

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said, "We condemn the attack on the Indian flagged commercial vessel, MSV Faize Noore Oliya that sank in the Red Sea, off the coast of Yemen on August 4, 2026. All 13 Indian nationals have been rescued... Our Embassy in Riyadh is closely monitoring the situation and proactively coordinating with the Yemeni authorities for the safety and security of the crew. We thank the Yemeni authorities for their support."

On Congress's 'Gungi Gudiya' jibe at Sunetra Pawar, NCP asks: Remember Indira Gandhi?

Alok Deshpande
Mumbai, August 4

TEMPERS HAVE flared in the ruling Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) a day after the Maharashtra Congress took a 'Goongi Gudiya' jibe at Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar, with party leaders accusing the Congress of endorsing a criticism once directed at former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

On Monday, the Maharashtra Congress posted a clip from Sunetra Pawar's press conference, showing MLA Dhananjay Munde stopping her from taking questions from reporters about the law and order situation in Beed. The video also shows Pawar wrapping up the presser soon after. The caption on the video read: "How long will Sunetra Pawar remain Gungi Gudiya (Silent doll)?"

The jibe at Sunetra Pawar has drawn sharp criticism from party leaders. Umesh Patil described the post as objectionable and said the party appeared to be contradicting its own political legacy.

He also recalled that during Indira Gandhi's political career, her opponents had used similar expressions against her. However, Indira Gandhi responded through her leadership and achievements, particularly during the Bangladesh Liberation War and with her decisive approach to national security, he said.

Umesh Patil also reminded the Congress that it had once regarded the term 'Goongi Gudiya' as unfair and insulting to a woman. "Does this mean the Congress is now indirectly admitting that the criticism levelled against the late Indira Gandhi at the time was justified?" he asked.

Students don't need PM's forgiveness but his apology: Rahul at Vaiko book launch event

Express News Service
New Delhi, August 4

LOKSABHA Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi said on Tuesday that the students of India are in "severe pain" and they don't need Prime Minister Narendra Modi's forgiveness but his apology for his government's actions against them.

Speaking at an event to launch the book of former MP Vaiko, Rahul said the students are on the streets because of the RSS attempts to change the country's history, adding that "India will not tolerate its history to be trampled upon by anybody". The book titled "Vaiko in Parliament" was released at the Constitution Club of India.

In his speech, Rahul said: "Whenever I judge a politician, the first thing, most important thing I look for is consistency. Does the person believe in some ideas, maintain those ideas con-



Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav during MDMK chief Vaiko's book launch function in New Delhi on Tuesday. ANIL SHARMA

sistently, or does the person say one thing one day, another thing the next day ... another thing the third day. And Mr Vaiko has been among the most consistent parliamentarians in our country. He holds a consistent position, does not compromise ... the position is clear."

Rahul added, "Students are on the streets ... in severe pain,

they don't have work, they are asking for fairness in exams, they are asking for an education system that works, and on the other side we have the Prime Minister who is forgiving them. Who is he to forgive them? I don't know. Where he gets the idea that he has the right to forgive the future of India, I don't know, but that's what he chooses to do.

And behind the thinking of the Prime Minister, and behind the thinking of his colleagues, and particularly the RSS, is a very dangerous and caustic idea. The idea that this country is not an expression of the many."

The senior Congress leader thanked Vaiko for his service to the country, saying that it was an honour to be at the launch of his book. "He is an inspiration for all of us," he said.

Among others present at the event were Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, Tamil Nadu Education Minister A Rajmohan, TMC MP Sagarika Ghosh, Congress leaders P Chidambaram and Manickam Tagore, besides former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah, CPIM general secretary M A Baby, CPI general secretary D Raja, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut, RJD leader Manoj Kumar Jha, and NCP-SP leader Supriya Sule.

Karni Sena: Police water cannon action led to protester's death

Hamza Khan
Jaipur, August 4

THE KARNI Sena on Tuesday alleged that a protester died of injuries sustained in police action during a rally they took out in Jaipur on Monday to demand rollback of the new UGC regulations. The outfit has demanded action on the guilty personnel while warning of more intense protests, including a gherao of the CM residence and a Rajasthan bandh, giving a 7-day ultimatum.

Talking to journalists, Mahipal Singh Makrana, the national president of the Shri Rajput Karni Sena (SRKS), demanded Rs 1 crore compensation for the family of deceased Devraj Singh, a government job for one of his family members, and suspension of personnel behind the water cannon and cane charge.

Slamming the police action,

former CM Ashok Gehlot accused the BJP government of adopting a "dictatorial attitude."

The SRKS, backed by other upper-caste outfits, was taking out the Savarna Nyay Yatra with the rollback of The University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026, being one of their chief demands. Before the protest, Makrana had led what he claimed was a "24 day and 800-km long march" to press for the demands.

However, as the police tried to stop them from proceeding further through barricades on Monday, the protesters clashed with some personnel, leading to some persons, including Devraj — as per SRKS — sustaining injuries.

"Water cannon was fired at women without any warning. Kids as young as seven were

cane charged; women and the elderly too were lathi-charged. We are saddened that due to a strike from the same water cannon, our OBC brother Devraj Singh, who had come to support us, was hospitalised and (he) eventually passed away," Makrana said.

He said the Sena will support Devraj's family financially as well; his Jaipur-based family was handed Rs 1 lakh on Tuesday evening. Other outfits, too, have promised financial support to Devraj's family, which includes two children — aged 5 and 7, respectively.

Karni Sena leaders told The Indian Express that Devraj was first admitted to a private hospital and later referred to the SMS hospital. Deepak Maheshwari, Principal and Controller of SMS Medical College, though, said he has no knowledge of such a case being brought to the hospital.

Visionary educationist who left a legacy in healthcare, sports too

Express News Service
Pune, August 4

FORMER GOVERNOR and education pioneer D Y Patil died in Kolhapur Tuesday. He was 90. Widely recognised in Maharashtra as "Shikshanmaharshi," or visionary educationist, Patil, who served as the Governor of Tripura and Bihar, left an enduring legacy across the fields of education, healthcare, and sports.

Dnyandeo Yashwantrao Patil began his political career with the Congress party, but later stepped away from active politics to focus on education.

He served as the mayor of Kolhapur from 1957 to 1962, and was elected as an MLA from the Panhala constituency in 1967 and 1972.

Born on October 22, 1935, in Ambap, a small agrarian village in the Kolhapur district,

he carved a niche for himself primarily in the education field.

In 1983, he established the Ramrao Adik Institute of Technology (RAIT), the first engineering college in Navi Mumbai. The Patil family runs engineering colleges, a medical college, and a school in Pimpri-Chinchwad and Pune.

As many as three deemed universities, 6 private universities, and more than 180 educational institutions operate in cities such as Kolhapur, Mumbai, and Pune under the D Y Patil Group.

In recognition of his contributions to education and social service, he was honoured with the prestigious civilian award, the Padma Shri, in 1991.

The D Y Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai is named after him. He is survived by four sons and a daughter.



{ D Y PATIL }
1935-2026

As leaders from various political parties paid tributes to Dr D Y Patil his son, Satej Patil, Congress MLC said the family has lost their biggest support.

"My father, Padmashri Dr D Y Patil (Dada), passed away today at 11:08 am in Kolhapur at the age of 91. He was my biggest support. His entire life was

devoted to social service. He took education to the lowest strata of the society and lived a life full of values and principles. He was a man of principles and a true patriot for whom country came first," Satej Patil said.

The Congress MLC said with his father's departure, the sheltering banyan tree of their lives has fallen.

"Our strongest pillar has fallen. Throughout his life, Dada connected with people, lit the lamp of education in the lives of millions of students, and made social service the goal of his life. He instilled in us the values of living as a good human being. His affectionate, loving hand, his reassuring words, and his teachings on living by values will forever remain our ultimate treasure..." It is impossible to express these feelings in

words," he said.

Paying tributes, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said Dr Patil revolutionised the education sector. "The news of the passing of Padma Shri Dr D Y Patil, founder of the D Y Patil Group and former Governor of Tripura, Bihar, and West Bengal, is extremely sad," he said.

Beginning his journey as a grassroots worker, he progressed to important constitutional positions, serving twice as an MLA and later as the Governor of various states.

"He made invaluable contributions to revolutionising the education sector and bringing educational opportunities to ordinary and needy students in society. Starting from a small school, his journey is truly astounding. The reach of his work expanded to include around 200 institutions, diverse types of univer-

sities, and thousands of students, especially through the establishment of colleges offering diverse courses such as medical, engineering, pharmacy, and architecture, alongside modern facilities, he elevated not only his educational group but also the reputation of Maharashtra, he said.

MPCC chief Harshvardhan Sapkal said Dr Patil provided millions of students with the opportunity for gaining knowledge.

"Dr Patil carved out an inspiring journey, rising from a farming family to become an educationist, a Mayor, an MLA and a Governor. He upheld the tradition of public service in his public life, while through the institutions he built in the education sector, he provided millions of students with the opportunity for knowledge," he said.

Asaram gets 20-day parole, HC slams panel for denying relief

Jaipur: Two months after it upheld self-styled godman Asaram's life imprisonment in a minor's rape case, the Rajasthan High Court Monday approved his request for a 20-day parole. It also criticised the Jodhpur district collector-led committee for turning down his parole plea.

A bench of acting Chief Justice Sanjeev Prakash Sharma and Justice Sanjeet Purohit granted 85-year-old Asaram.

The counsel for Rajasthan had placed before the HC the minutes of the meeting by the district collector in July. It was pointed out Asaram is undergoing treatment and medical officer has issued no certificate deeming him fit for release. **ENS**

JAPAN'S CALL FOR CAREGIVERS

India to Japan, via Northeast

As a rapidly ageing Japan looks overseas to plug a growing labour shortage, youngsters in small towns across the Northeast are learning Japanese, clearing skill tests and preparing to leave home for caregiving, agriculture jobs. SUKRITA BARUAH follows their journey

AFTER HER long days working as a salesperson at a store in Aizawl, managing her small online business, and helping her mother around the house, Janet Lalnungsangi often curls up with her phone on a couch in their living room, watching a Chinese movie on YouTube. But instead of subtitles, she watches them dubbed in Japanese.

"I should be watching Japanese films really, but they are too 'real life' for me. I like watching movies with drama and romance. My favourite storylines are where characters are reborn," she says, laughing.

Janet does this not just to unwind, but also as preparation for the next phase of her life. In March this year, the 33-year-old, who has a BA degree in Home Science, cleared her language and skill exams to qualify to work as a caregiver at an institution in the Japanese city of Fukuoka. She is now waiting for her Certificate of Eligibility, a document required for long-term residence in Japan, and hopes to be able to join the institution by October. While she waits, she continues to work full-time to be able to afford the costs of documentation and relocation, while also squeezing in the time to practise her primary-school-level Japanese by watching movies and having conversations with ChatGPT.

Faced with a rapidly ageing population, Japan has turned to foreign workers to make up for severe labour shortages in 16 fields, including nursing care, manufacturing of industrial products, and food & beverages. In 2019, the country introduced a new status of residence, 'Specified Skill Worker', that allows blue-collar foreign workers to get a working visa in the country for up to five years. For this, they have to pass a Japanese language test and a specified skills exam in the chosen domain.

'I missed chilli in my food'

Janet is among a growing number of people from Mizoram and other Northeast Indian states who are hoping to qualify as caregivers in Japan under the programme. Like her, many of them are young women who aim to support their families and younger siblings by moving out of home and starting afresh in a "dream country".

Japan and Japanese culture, where youngsters dress up as their favourite anime characters, are a big draw among the young in the Northeast. Janet, too, loves films made by Studio Ghibli, the Japanese animation studio, and names *My Neighbour Totoro* as one of her favourites.

Janet's family of four lives in a rented apartment in a buzzing Aizawl neighbourhood. Her father, who worked as a driver and a carpenter, passed away a few years ago, and one of her younger brothers works as a driver while the other is still in school. She describes her mother C Lalrinmawii, 61, as her "close friend".

"It is very common for people to earn something like Rs 10,000 a month from a job here, so I also run a business selling induction stoves, steamers and mosquito nets over WhatsApp and Facebook. But with the new job in Japan, hopefully, in about three months, I should be able to send a good amount of money home," she says. Janet hopes her move to Japan will help her work towards her "biggest dream" — a home for the family.

More than 4,000 kilometres away, 27-year-old Serene Malswami is living that dream. Now in her third year of working as a caregiver in an old-age home in Kanazawa, the capital city of Ishikawa Prefecture in central Japan, Serene, a nursing graduate, moved there as an SSW or 'Specified Skill Worker' when she was 24.

Much before she landed in Japan, Serene had set her heart on the country. She had grown up watching anime on the channel Animax, with *Attack on Titan* her favourite series. "Our local cable channel aired Studio Ghibli dubbed in Mizo language and I watched all of them," she says, speaking on the phone from Kanazawa.

Yet, when she landed, Japan felt very different from home. Having grown up with close community bonds — "In Lunglei, I knew everyone" — in Kanazawa, she didn't see even her neighbours for the first six months. Thankfully, she says, she had for company her cousin who works in the same senior living home and shares the apartment with her. "Work's good... we do a lot of talking, but when we get home, it's lonely because no one's coming around," she says.

She also took her time adjusting to food. "Everything is so sweet! I really missed some chilli in my food." But the toughest was her struggle with the language.

"We studied and learned Japanese back in India, but that was basic school-textbook level. To actually speak on a daily basis with people in Japan was a completely different thing. At first, we couldn't actually understand what they were saying and would

• Japan in the Northeast

Besides opening employment doors to people from the Northeast to meet Japan's labour shortage, the country has also been active in investing in the geographically strategic region in recent years. Many of the investments have been financed through Official Development Assistance (ODA) loans of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).



ROADS: Highway infrastructure, in the form of the 'North East Road Network Connectivity Improvement Project', is a key area. In June 2026, JICA announced an investment of Rs 1,592 crore in three major corridors in Meghalaya — Dhubri-Phulbari Bridge to Selsella Simbukolgre; Selsella Simbukolgre to Goeragre, and Shillong-Dawki Road.



SEMICONDUCTORS: JICA is set to be involved in Assam's semiconductor ambitions with Tata Electric's semiconductor assembly and testing facility in the state expected to commence production this year. Finance Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah announced in the Budget that the state government would launch an 'Assam Semiconductor Ecosystem on Manufacturing and Innovation' (A-SEMI) project in partnership with JICA. Last month, Japanese firm Toho Koku Seisakusho Co. signed an MoU with IIT Guwahati for collaborative research and academic exchange, especially in semiconductor manufacturing.



HEALTHCARE: JICA has extended loans for the development of a Super-Specialty Cancer and Research Centre in Mizoram, a Medical College Hospital in Nagaland, and a comprehensive 'Assam Health System Strengthening Project.'

simply smile most of the time. But people at the workplace were good to us. They would speak slowly and in simple Japanese so that we could follow them," she says.

By her third month in Japan, Serene had settled down. She now buys *dal* from an Indian store that she chanced upon, has travelled to Tokyo, Osaka and other parts of the country, and goes on hikes in the countryside around Kanazawa on her days off. After a few months on the job, her Japanese too improved considerably.

The work, she says, is not easy and the shifts can be long, including 17-hour night shifts on some days. But it all felt worthwhile when she started sending money home to her parents and younger siblings.

As a trained nurse working in Lunglei, Serene says she earned Rs 15,000 a month. "Now I am able to send Rs 50,000 to Rs 60,000 every month, which is a lot for us. Here, I manage to live a comfortable life. I buy things I like, and travel when I have time off from work," she says.

In March, when she visited her family in Mizoram's Lunglei town for the first time since she left, everything felt different. "The food we had, the social gatherings, it all felt so different already," she says.

A door opens into Japan

As Japan confronts low birth rates and an ageing society, it grapples with crippling labour shortages in several sectors.

In a 2016 research paper on demographic change, policy researchers Akim Enomoto and Hannes Bubltz wrote, "...For every Japanese teenager under 15, there will be three seniors aged 65 years-plus in 2040."

Referring to the "2040 problem", economist Oguro Kazumasa wrote that population projections indicate "that the working population (aged 20 to 64) will decrease from 66.34 million in 2025 to 55.42 million in 2040... This projection indicates that the Japanese economy could face serious labour shortages unless Japan proactively accepts immigrants."

It's this population pressure that saw Japan introducing the SSW residence status in 2019, opening an organised pathway for blue-collar foreign workers to get a working visa in the country.

In March this year, Japan's Immigration Services Agency and Ministry of Health, Labour & Welfare stated that the country expected to accept 8.05 lakh Specified Skill Workers by the end of March 2029. The highest demand for workers under the SSW programme is in industrial product manufacturing (1.99 lakh), manufacture of food & beverages (1.33 lakh) and nursing care (1.26 lakh). By March 2029, Japan is also expected to accept another 4.26 lakh foreign workers under the training-based Employment for Skill Development (ESD) programme to be launched next year, replacing an earlier Technical Intern Training Program (TITP). At the end of 2025, there were 3.9 lakh with SSW status in Japan and 4.56 lakh with TITP status.

India accounts for a small slice of this foreign worker pie, and the Northeast even smaller. According to data from Japan's Immigrant Services Agency, China was the foreign country with the most number of residents, across different categories, in Japan at the end of 2025 (9.3 lakh), followed by Vietnam, South Korea, the Philippines and Nepal. As of December 2024, there were 53,974 Indian nationals residing in Japan and in August 2025, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs announced a joint "aspirational target of the exchange of more than 5,00,000 personnel in both directions in the next five years, including 50,000 skilled personnel and potential talents from India to Japan".

As SSW and other programmes open a door, young people in small towns in the Northeast are starting to fill up classrooms to learn Japanese and prepare for the tests that promise a pathway into Japan. The opportunity comes knocking either through placement agencies that come to colleges or when they hear from friends who are already working in Japan.

Over the last few years, state governments in the Northeast and government universities in the region have backed this employment pathway. In October last year, the Assam government announced a programme subsidising SSW training fees for an initial batch of 180 students, as well as their relocation if they get placed. A Japanese Language Centre was started at Manipur University this year for language and skills training for the SSW pathway, with an initial capacity of 250 students. Mizoram University and the state's Labour, Employment, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Pu Lalhnginglova Hmar says that the state government sees the SSW as a "good opportunity" for the youth. "Since this is about migrating for work, we make



@SERENE_MALSAWMI/INSTAGRAM



(Top to bottom) Serene Malswami poses in front of the Tsutenkaku tower in Osaka, Japan; at the centre in Aizawl, Mizoram, where students are training for an exam that will qualify them for jobs in Japan; Janet Lalnungsangi (centre) and her friends Zuali (on the left) and Zau (right) are set to move to Japan in October



SUKRITA BARUAH

sure they are going through proper, legal channels, with proper documentation. Japan is a good place to go for our young people," he says. He calls it a "win-win situation". "Japan has a demand with its ageing population. India, and Mizoram, with its young population is able to deliver the services they are looking for."

Life in 'dream country'

At a training centre tucked behind a café in Aizawl, two batches of students turn up five days a week for four-hour classes. The centre, run by Japan Centre of Excellence (Jaceex), a private organisation that provides training and facilitates placements in Japan, offers classes for the Japanese language test and the skills test.

Since last year, when the centre was set up, 14 students have been placed as SSW in Japan — 10 of them as caregivers.

Rajeev Gupta, the founder of Jaceex that also has centres in Manipur and Assam, says they have facilitated the movement of 52 youngsters — 45 women and seven men — to Japan since 2023, most of them from Manipur and Mizoram. Another 75, he says, are currently in training across Jaceex's centres.

The fee for the training course is Rs 75,000. Once students clear the SSW exam, there are additional charges for placements and getting the documenta-

tion done.

The 43 students at the Aizawl centre range from fresh college graduates to people with some years of experience working outside Mizoram.

At 21, Mawi, who is from the Indo-Myanmar border town of Moreh in Manipur, has already accumulated a world of experiences. She was an undergraduate student in Moreh College when the conflict between Manipur's Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities began in 2023.

"It was my grandfather's dream for me to become a graduate but the college stopped functioning properly in 2023. When that happened, I started working as an assistant teacher in schools, but they paid very little, just a few thousand rupees. In normal times, the most obvious place to go looking for work would have been Imphal, but that was not possible because I'm Kuki. I'm the eldest of four siblings and need to support my family, so I left Moreh last year," says Mawi.

An employment agency placed her as a live-in domestic worker with a family in Hong Kong, but she returned to India less than six months later because things didn't

go as expected.

She briefly worked as a domestic worker in Noida, then in a guest house in Guwahati. After these experiences, Mawi — lively, well-spoken, and affectionately teased by her language class batchmates as the "brightest" among them — says she is clear that she wants to work and grow in "a professional environment".

While the numbers headed to Japan are still nascent, Gupta of Jaceex believes that the demand for workers, especially in caregiving, "where the work is person to person and cannot easily be automated", far exceeds the number of students who are training and moving.

Vanlalruata Ralte, who runs the Aizawl centre, says, "There is a lot of demand for girls in caregiving jobs, but many families here are hesitant to send their daughters away. But the interest is slowly growing. It helps that it is easier for people from here to assimilate in Japan because of our physical characteristics."

David, 40, is among those training at the Aizawl centre. After years of trying to land on his feet, the MBA degree holder from a private institute in Sikkim is now hoping to work as an agriculture worker in Japan.

Having grown up on a diet of Japanese media and 'samurai culture', David says he has always longed to visit Japan. But if he is leaving home, it's only because of the lack of employment opportunities in Mizoram.

"Everyone aims for government jobs. I have written all kinds of exams, from the Mizoram Civil Service to Group B officer roles, but I haven't cracked any. I've done administrative work under government projects on a contract basis. But none of those got regularised, so I now run a small laundry business here," he says.

'Planning a family vacation'

With her daughter preparing to leave in a couple of months, Janet's mother Lalrinmawii calls parting with her a "sacrifice". What gives her comfort is the belief that Japan is a safe place. Besides, she says, "Caring for the elderly is very good work. It is like a missionary job, helping people."

The mother and daughter are already discussing the possibility of the family visiting Janet after three years. "We are thinking of a family vacation. It's very exciting. We sit together and talk about it every evening. It's something to look forward to."



Extradition push:
274 fugitives
returned to
India since 2021

Mahender Singh Manral
New Delhi, August 4

INDIA HAS brought back 274 fugitive criminals from 36 countries since 2021, marking a sharp escalation in extradition and deportation efforts.

The Centre has made the return of fugitives a national priority, combining legal reforms, international cooperation, intelligence coordination and technology-driven tracking to pursue offenders wanted in terrorism, organised crime, narcotics, cyber fraud, financial offences and serious crimes such as murder, rape and offences under the POC SO Act.

Amit Shah, minister of Home Affairs, has repeatedly described fugitive offenders as a challenge linked not only to law and order, but also to India's sovereignty, economic stability and national security, a MHA spokesperson said in a statement.

"Before 2014, India's extradition framework was marked by outdated procedures, limited treaty coverage and weak inter-agency coordination. India then had extradition treaties with only 37 countries, while around 110 extradition requests were pending. Between 2004 and 2013, India secured the extradition of only four fugitives a year on average," the spokesperson said.

The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018, was among the first major steps to address this gap. "The law allowed authorities to proceed against economic offenders who had fled the country and to attach and confiscate their assets..." the spokesperson said.

UP ASSEMBLY MONSOON SESSION

SP pushes for debate on donation 'theft', BJP says no party worker named by SIT

Maulshree Seth
Lucknow, August 4

AFTER THE Samajwadi Party sought an urgent debate on Tuesday in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly linking the ruling party to the alleged theft of donations at the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, the BJP sought to distance itself from the issue, saying no party worker or leader was named in the report of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the purported embezzlement.

In its first clear response to the Opposition's allegations over the controversy, the ruling party accused the principal Opposition party of attempting to "spread confusion" around the issue.

The SP moved to bring the issue — politically sensitive for the BJP, which has placed the construction of the Ram Temple at the centre of its political and ideological narrative — into the Assembly, demanding an urgent debate over the issue of "faith".

As soon as the House convened on the second day of the Monsoon session on Tuesday, Leader of Opposition Mata Prasad Pandey demanded an immediate discussion on the alleged theft of donations, demanding that the matter be taken up before any other business of the House.

Pandey questioned why an issue involving donations of

After 11-month ordeal, 32-yr-old finally ruled as an 'Indian' by HC

Rafikul Biswas was detained in Bengaluru on suspicion of being a 'Bangladeshi', case continued even after West Bengal certified he was a resident

Mustafa Plumber & Atiya Firdos
Bengaluru, August 4

THE ORDEAL of over 11 months of Bengaluru-based Rafikul Biswas ended finally on Tuesday after the Election Commission told the Karnataka High Court that the EPIC (voter I-card) issued to him after the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) held in the state was "genuine", and that his family had been residing in India for "generations".

Detained on the suspicion of being a Bangladeshi national in September last year, Biswas, 32, spent two months in detention, only getting out on medical grounds. He has struggled to prove his identity since, despite the West Bengal government certifying that he is an Indian, and him and his family clearing the arduous SIR test in the state.

On Tuesday, Justice Suraj Govindaraj took on record the memo filed by Additional Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal, and quashed the detention order against Biswas, saying, "...the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) would not have any jurisdiction on the petitioner and the order (detention) dated 29-08-2025, would not be sustainable".

Biswas told *The Indian Express*: "I couldn't be happier. It

finally feels like I belong. It feels as though Bengaluru is mine."

His advocate Clifton D Rozario said: "This is an important case, where a detention order issued to an Indian citizen, on the erroneous allegation that he is Bangladeshi, has been quashed."

Biswas worked as a school bus driver and a scrap dealer when he was detained by the Bengaluru police, on allegations that he was a Bangladeshi national. Police produced a birth certificate and an identity document with Biswas's photograph, certifying him as a Bangladeshi.

Days into his detention, Biswas was hospitalized following a heart attack. On December 19, he suffered from another cardiac episode, and was released on medical grounds.

On directions of the court, enquiries were conducted by the Superintendent of Police, Krishnagar Police District, Nadia, and Block Development Officer, Nadia, in October 2025, after which they said Biswas is an Indian citizen by birth.

During the SIR held in West Bengal earlier this year, Biswas got a fresh voter ID card along with his other relatives.

In January this year, the West Bengal government, then led by the Trinamool Congress, filed a report based on inquiries by two different state agencies,



During the SIR held in West Bengal earlier this year, Rafikul Biswas got a fresh voter ID card along with his other relatives. EXPRESS FILE

saying that documents on record as well as the fact that Biswas and his family had cleared the SIR meant his claims of being an Indian were right.

But, on July 14, Biswas ran into another hurdle, when counsel for the West Bengal government sought time to "seek instructions", citing the fact that there was a new party in power in the state, namely the BJP. "I have instructions that the new authorities want to review the document submitted before the court," the counsel said, adding that this didn't mean they would "be filing a contradictory report".

Not amused, Justice Govindaraj slammed the West Bengal government: "How many times do you need time? Not fair. You are wasting the court's time and everybody's time."

Rozario also contested the government's stand. "Can my

citizenship depend on the vagaries of who is in power in a particular state? This is extremely dangerous," he said.

On July 23, Central government counsel Aditya Singh, representing the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO), submitted that discrepancies remained in Biswas's records. While his earlier voter I-card mentioned his date of birth as 1986, his new one said it was 1994, Singh said, adding that the ECI be called to clarify.

The Bench agreed, telling the ECI to state if the voter I-card produced by Biswas now was genuine. At the same time, it observed: "Is your submission that the SIR conducted is faulty?... If the SIR was conducted properly and this is the voter ID card issued, you are bound by it, and we are also bound by it. You cannot con-

tinuously make these submissions... There has to be a limit to something."

The ECI's submission on Tuesday followed this hearing.

'A decade lost in a day'

While relieved that the shadow over him has lifted, Biswas said that all that he had built over the past decade in Bengaluru was destroyed "in a single day" when he was arrested. "I used to work as a school bus driver, and the school removed me because they believed I was a Bangladeshi," he said.

His scrap godown and the house he was living in were also attacked, Biswas added. "Those who did so wanted me to leave. They thought they would win if I left. But I belong here. I am an Indian."

But, he was haunted by fear. "I was afraid that police would question me again or that goons would attack me, my family or friends. I had no money. Somehow we survived... Rebuilding will take years."

Biswas also talks about his acquaintances back home in Bengal being "harassed" and facing repeated questioning on the suspicion of being Bangladeshi. "Today it was me; tomorrow it could be one of my friends."

R Kalem Ullah, the national vice-president of the All India Shramik Swaraj Kendra, said the High Court's order had restored justice to an innocent man. "With Independence Day approaching, Rafikul has one more reason to celebrate. In many ways, he has got his own independence."

EXPRESS special

Siddhivinayak Temple 'theft': It began with a probe into a VVIP queue racket

Apoorva Agashe & Alok Deshpande
Mumbai, August 4

AS MAHARASHTRA is roiled by its own temple theft allegations, it may have all begun with something far smaller — a probe into complaints that some staffers of Mumbai's Siddhivinayak Temple were taking money from devotees to slip them into the VVIP 'darshan' queue.

The sum involved in the alleged scandal has since been climbing, as the Opposition spots an opportunity against the BJP, which is already on the back foot over the Ayodhya temple donation theft. MNS chief Raj Thackeray, who has taken the lead, puts the figure-phononed off at "Rs 18 crore every year".

The authorities at Siddhivinayak Temple — one of Maharashtra's richest and most visited, with thousands coming daily and lakhs during festivals — however, maintain that the accused have been caught and the theft checked.

Temple trustee Rahul Londhe said they stumbled upon the alleged theft when he and other trust members, who had taken over in late 2023, were scanning CCTV footage to identify employees involved in taking money for VIP darshan. "We scrutinised several CCTV cameras and found that some employees were stealing from the donation box. We alerted the police and they arrested the accused," Londhe said.



A view of the Siddhivinayak Temple in Mumbai. AKASH PATIL

Earlier this year, he added, suspicions rose again as the trustees were puzzled by the fact that donation collections remained flat even as devotee numbers rose.

Shiv Sena leader and Trust President Sada Sarvankar told *The Indian Express* that they observed the donation figures for months before he and another trustee, Bhaskar Shetty, decided to approach the Anti Corruption Bureau for help. "Vishwas Nangre-Patil, who was in-charge (of the bureau at that time), provided us with a few men to inspect the possibility of theft."

While they didn't find anything suspicious initially, Sarvankar said, they kept up their vigil on the advice of the investigators. The focus was narrowed to the weekly donation counting process, he said and soon, during one session, a CCTV camera was found blocked.

In March this year, temple employee Rajendra Pendurkar was caught allegedly removing cash from a donation box kept in the priests' room, while authorised representatives were absent. Further scrutiny, the trustees said, revealed that several other employees were doing the same. "It is impossible that a single person will work on this alone. We traced the racket and found eight others... Along with these, another 19 employees have been suspended for activities such as taking money to give quick darshan etc," Londhe said.

An FIR regarding this was registered at Dadar Police Station on March 20. Police subsequently recovered Rs 80,000 and said CCTV footage showed individuals repeatedly removing cash from a small donation box over about 10 days. The eight people who were arrested are out on bail, with a chargesheet filed in the case.

The trust believes the "racket" was running for at least six months before it was detected, an inference Londhe said they drew from the rise in donation collections after the scam was uncovered.

On paper, the process to secure donations is elaborate. Around 30 donation boxes are opened weekly, on Wednesdays. Each is then sealed with the signatures of the financial officer and the executive officer; emptied under a senior administrative officer's supervision; counted in the presence of select employees, a government-appointed deputy executive officer and bank representatives; and finally, the cash deposited in a bank immediately after.

The figure of Rs 18 crore annual theft is contested by the temple, neither does it appear in either the March 20 FIR or the chargesheet. Raj Thackeray's argument is that weekly donations before the alleged theft was detected were below Rs 50 lakh. After the arrests and tighter monitoring, these reportedly rose to around Rs 1.5 crore. His sum is an extrapolation of that roughly Rs 1 crore weekly jump, over a year.

Police sources said that as far as they are concerned, the matter is over. "We arrested eight individuals, all had siphoned off Rs 10,000 each. A chargesheet has been filed. If the temple trust feels the case needs to be re-investigated, they can approach the court," a senior official at the Dadar Police Station said.

'No third-party insurance, no fuel': SC asks Centre for vehicle pilot project

Ananthakrishnan G
New Delhi, August 4

THE SUPREME COURT on Tuesday said it is "shocked" to learn that nearly 56% of all vehicles plying on Indian roads do not have valid insurance, and asked the government to plan a pilot project to link fuel for vehicles at petrol pumps with their insurance status.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and P K Mishra said the direction should "be enforced through the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) and IRDA (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India).

The court was hearing an appeal which flagged lack of compliance with Section 146 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, which requires all vehicles to have a valid insurance policy covering third parties. The bench also considered whether there should be a uniform motor vehicle policy structure covering all occupants of a vehicle, in addition to the statutorily mandated coverage of third-party risks.

Writing for the bench, Justice Karol said: "As deliberated upon in court, the IRDA in consultation with the MoRTH to deliberate and evolve a pilot project whereby fuel for vehicles to be linked with valid insurance status. In the absence thereof, the vehicle concerned would be refused fuel at petrol pumps until such time that valid insurance is obtained."

The court said "the benefit therein is two-fold" — it will assist in identification of uninsured or unregistered vehicles

and also prompt the owners of these vehicles to ensure that they have valid insurance status. "Such projects would ensure ground-level compliance with the statutory mandate of Section 146 of the MVA said the bench.

The bench said this may be done through the use of ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) cameras and noted that "the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has, in principle, no objection to the same".

The court further directed that "a pilot project be implemented allowing citizens to verify insurance status, and ultimately assist in the implementation of the statutory mandate under the MV Act". The bench said this will allow citizens to know whether the vehicle they are travelling in or sending goods in or transporting employees has valid insurance and also allow for prompt reporting of uninsured vehicles.

The bench noted that though it had issued directions in July 2018 mandating purchase of third-party insurance for three years for new cars and five years for two wheelers at the time of purchase/registration of new vehicles, a large number of vehicles remained uninsured even though eight years had passed.

The court said it is "in the interest of road safety that the period be enhanced by one year" and "directed that henceforth, third-party insurance for four years for new cars and six years for new two-wheelers be required to be purchased". It asked IRDA to immediately issue necessary directions.

Report: Only 30% urban households under AMRUT have sewerage connection

Damini Nath
New Delhi, August 4

ONLY ABOUT 30 per cent of urban households under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), the Centre's flagship civic infrastructure scheme, have sewerage connection, read a report presented by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs on Tuesday.

Of the 11.32 crore urban households, as per the City Water Balance Plans (2025), only 3.44 crore had sewerage connections, while 2.84 crore have septage systems.

"The data also revealed significant inter-State variations in sanitation infrastructure, with Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand and Bihar reporting a greater dependence on septage systems than on sewer networks," the report read.

Under AMRUT (2015-2021, covering 500 cities) and AMRUT 2.0 (from 2021 till now, covering all cities), a total of 74 crore urban households have been connected to sewerage and septage systems, the report further read.

The report of the committee, chaired by TDP legislator Magunta Sreenivasulu Reddy, also flagged the slow progress of sewerage projects. Of the

59,261.67 km network that's approved, only 27,418.87 km have been laid so far.

"Out of the total 8,743 projects approved under AMRUT 2.0, only 594 projects, with an approved cost of Rs 68,309.90 crore, pertain to sewerage and septage management, accounting for about 6.79 per cent of the total number of projects... only 104 (or 17.51 per cent) have been completed, while 398 (67 per cent) are still under implementation," the report read.

"Further, 502 projects (84.51 per cent) have reached the awarded stage and 38 projects (6.40 per cent), involving an approved cost of Rs 7,564.03 crore, remain at the tender stage," the report further read.

The data provided by the Ministry also revealed that Rs 22,762.99 crore out of the total Rs 66,059.53 committed as central assistance has been released so far.

The committee recommended that the Ministry set up a database of existing sewerage network, functional status and household connectivity gaps, and carry out periodic assessments. It also recommended that manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks should be eliminated.

The AMRUT 2.0 mission period has been extended till March 31, 2027.

How Vijay may have given Udhayanidhi what dynasty never could

Arun Janardhanan
Chennai, August 4

FOR PERHAPS the first time in his political life, Udhayanidhi Stalin did not look like the son of a former chief minister. He looked like an Opposition politician.

As police escorted him out of his residence in Neelankarai on Tuesday after remarks directed at Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay over the Cauvery water row, the images were striking not because Tamil Nadu had witnessed an arrest, but because of the character in the frame.

Until recently, Udhayanidhi occupied the safest address in Tamil Nadu politics — MLA, Minister, Deputy Chief Minister

and political heir. Every chapter of his public life unfolded within the architecture of power painstakingly built over decades by M Karunanidhi and, later, by M K Stalin.

Hardly three months ago, he walked into the Assembly not as the deputy chief minister everyone expected him to remain, but as Leader of the Opposition. Across the aisle sat Chief Minister Vijay.

The two men have known each other for years. Vijay was Udhayanidhi's senior at Loyola College. Later, the relationship continued inside Tamil cinema. Vijay became the larger-than-life star who built one of Indian cinema's greatest fan cultures through nearly three decades

and around 70 films.

Udhayanidhi entered films later, producing and acting in roughly 20 films under the Red Giant banner, often portraying the amiable urban everyman rather than the invincible mass hero. Those who know them say Udhayanidhi always addressed Vijay with the deference reserved for a senior.

Yet the arrest, which comes a day before the Assembly session is set to begin, tells another story. The FIR invokes a wide range of provisions, including criminal conspiracy, promoting enmity, obscenity, criminal intimidation, provisions of the Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment of Women Act, and the Information Technology Act.



Former Tamil Nadu deputy chief minister Udhayanidhi Stalin being greeted by supporters after his arrest in Chennai on Tuesday. PTI

The controversy itself did not begin with the arrest, however; it began with Udhayanidhi's own words.

Addressing a protest over

the Cauvery dispute, he criticised the government for failing to secure Tamil Nadu's share of water. Then came the interruption from the crowd shout-

ing the name of an actress widely associated in public conversation with Vijay.

Udhayanidhi smiled, and then allegedly passed a sexually suggestive remark. He quickly issued a clarification, but it only amplified the laughter.

The protest had assembled around farmers, water and one of Tamil Nadu's oldest interstate disputes. Within seconds, the conversation had shifted from the Cauvery to innuendo.

Political wit is a dangerous instrument. When it succeeds, it punctures power. When it fails, it punctures the seriousness of the issue it seeks to defend. The Dravidian movement has never been uncomfortable with earthy political language.

For decades, its public meetings were animated by platform speakers who mixed ideology with theatre, scholarship with satire, and politics with the idioms of everyday life. They were not merely politicians but performers, translating constitutional questions into the language of tea shops and village squares.

But Udhayanidhi cannot occupy that role. He is not a travelling platform speaker warming up a crowd before the principal leader arrives. He is the Leader of the Opposition and the principal political heir of the Dravidian movement itself. When he borrowed the language of a platform performer, the joke ceased to be merely a joke; it became

the defining image of a protest that was meant to be about the Cauvery.

The criticism that followed came not merely from rivals but also from political voices outside the government. Even someone who strongly opposed the arrest questioned whether the remark itself had diminished the dignity expected of the office he now holds.

For years, Udhayanidhi's critics argued that his political life had been too protected. That criticism may no longer hold.

For Tamil Nadu, that may be the larger story. Not that the former deputy CM was arrested. But that the heir has finally begun the slower, lonelier education called Opposition.



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• GLOBAL

To become next UN chief, getting ‘P5’ onboard is key



EXPERT EXPLAINS

MANJEEV SINGH PURI

FORMER AMBASSADOR OF INDIA TO THE EU AND NEPAL

THE UNITED Nations Security Council (UNSC) held its first “straw poll” on Thursday for choosing the next Secretary-General of the UN (UNSG), whose five-year term would start on January 1, 2027.

Although the poll’s results weren’t announced, three candidates from Latin America are believed to have scored well: Costa Rica’s Rebeca Grynspan, an economist who heads UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD); Carolyn Birkett, Guyana’s Permanent Representative to the UN; and Rafael Grossi from Argentina, who is director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Appointment process

The UNSC consists of 15 members: five permanent members (P5) — China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US — and 10 non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the UN General Assembly.

Straw polls is a UNSC process which doesn’t disclose the name of the voting member-state. The slips carry the name of the candidate and UNSC members note “encourage”, “discourage”, or leave them blank. While this round didn’t distinctly mark the slips as belonging to the P5 or non-permanent members, the slips of the P5 will be coloured in the upcoming rounds. Drawing a “discourage” coloured slip indicates a likely P5 veto.

THE U.N. CHARTER

- The UNSG’s appointment is governed by Article 97 of the UN charter: ‘the Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council’.
- The Security Council’s primacy in this process is clear. It forwards one name to the General Assembly for endorsement.

UNSC and no veto.

The appointment of the UNSG is governed by Article 97 of the UN charter: that “the Secretary-General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council”. The primacy of the UNSC in this process is clear: it forwards just one name to the General Assembly for endorsement.

Candidates in the fray

Considering the current UNSG, Antonio Guterres, is from Portugal and his immediate two predecessors were from Asia (Ban Ki-moon of South Korea) and Africa (Kofi Annan of Ghana) respectively, the expectation is that this time, the choice will fall on someone from Latin America and perhaps a woman, as none have held the position.

Other candidates include Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile; Maria Espinoza, former Foreign Minister of Ecuador; Macky Sall, former President of Senegal; and Olara Otunnu, a former UN official from Uganda. Candidates need to be endorsed by at least one member-state, though not necessarily by their own country.

The three candidates who are said to have done well in the first straw poll are from countries with good relations with the Donald Trump administration in the US. This is particularly important but the others in the P5, particularly China and Russia, may have their own views.

For instance, Grossi has had to deal with sensitive nuclear issues at the IAEA. As head of UNCTAD, Grynspan appears to have been able to positively leverage developing countries on the UNSC, while Birkett would have benefited from a certain camaraderie from fellow Ambassadors as a Permanent Representative.

Considering there’s no bar on the entry of more candidates as the process unfolds, success in the end may not be with the strongest candidate in terms of multilateral and diplomatic qualifications, but one who can surmount the biggest hurdle — a certain acceptability with all of the P5.

• LEGAL

Why SC expanded scope of domestic cruelty law to women in live-in relationships

Vineet Bhalla
New Delhi, August 4

EXPANDING THE protection against domestic cruelty under criminal law, the Supreme Court has ruled that such protection, ordinarily given to married women under Section 498A of the erstwhile Indian Penal Code (IPC), extends to women in live-in relationships as well, provided the couple shares an “intent to marry”.

Since the IPC has now been replaced by the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the judgment will likely apply to the corresponding BNS provision: Section 85. The judgment, delivered on Monday by a bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and N Kotiswar Singh, recognises that women facing cruelty in domestic settings cannot be denied the protection of criminal law merely because they have not undergone a formal marriage.

The legal position until now

Section 498A of the IPC penalises a hus-

band or his relatives for subjecting a woman to cruelty. Because the provision explicitly uses the word “husband”, its application was traditionally restricted to legally valid marriages.

Over the years, the Supreme Court expanded this definition to cover such men who induced a woman into a marriage that is legally void or voidable — for instance, by hiding a previous subsisting marriage — holding that such men cannot claim that they were not a “husband” to escape prosecution for cruelty.

This was what had transpired in the present case as well. The accused man approached the courts to quash a Section 498A case filed by his partner, arguing that since he was already married to someone else, his relationship with the complainant was not a valid marriage. The Karnataka High Court rejected this argument, ruling that when “a man induces a woman to believe that she is lawfully married to him, and thereafter subjects her to cruelty, [he]

cannot be permitted to evade criminal responsibility on the plea that no valid marriage existed in law.” This led him to appeal to the Supreme Court.

Beyond void marriages

The Supreme Court could have dismissed the appeal by relying on the established precedent regarding void marriages, but the bench took up the broader question of whether a man in a live-in relationship can be prosecuted under Section 498A.

The judgment, written by Justice Karol, adopted a “purposive interpretation” of the law, noting that since the original objective of Section 498A was to deter domestic cruelty, the law must adapt to changing social realities, observing that “cruelty, any which way, does not check at the door, whether the house it enters is that of a married woman or not”. The court reasoned that if a woman faces cruelty from her partner, it makes no logical sense to offer her the protection of criminal law if she is

married, but deny it if she is cohabiting before marriage. This distinction, it said, “has no rational nexus with the object of preventing domestic violence and is as such offensive to Article 14 of the Constitution of India”, which guarantees the fundamental right to equality.

Why the DV Act is not enough

During the hearings, both the petitioner and the Union government argued against expanding Section 498A, pointing out that unmarried women are already protected under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence (DV) Act, 2005, since the Act expressly covers not just married persons but also those “related...through a relationship in the nature of marriage”.

The Supreme Court rejected this argument on the basis of the fundamental difference between the two laws. The DV Act, it pointed out, is primarily a piece of civil legislation providing remedies like maintenance and protection orders. The court

said that equating it with Section 498A would be a “misstatement of law” because “the import of civil and criminal law is different” since “[o]ne has almost singularly civil and monetary consequences, whereas the other is backed by the force of criminal deterrence”.

‘Intent to marry’ is crucial

To determine which live-in couples get this protection of criminal law, the Supreme Court borrowed the concept of a “relationship in the nature of marriage” from the DV Act. The court clarified that a “relationship in the nature of marriage” is a narrower legal subset of a general “live-in relationship”. Relying on a 2013 judgment by it, the court reiterated the features of such a relationship, which include pooling financial resources, sharing domestic arrangements, having a sexual relationship, and holding themselves out to society as being akin to spouses.

Monday’s judgment, however, added a caveat for the application of Section 498A:

The couple must, in addition to the above, also have the “intent to marry”.

This is because, according to the court, while many relationships “may meet all the requirements to be a relationship in the nature of marriage”, the partners might choose never to enter matrimony. When this intent is absent, the court held, the relationship should not be equated with marriage for the purpose of invoking a penal provision and its “long list of adverse consequences”.

“Those relationships that are in the nature of marriage and also have the requisite intent to marry are the closest to marriage itself, and it is those relationships that shall be entitled to the protection of [Section 498A],” the court ruled.

The judgment noted that the initial burden of proof to establish this intent will lie on the female partner seeking the law’s protection. But it did not lay down specific parameters for how this internal “intent” is to be legally recognised.

• ECONOMY

Cut, hike, hold: How RBI decides monetary policy



UDIT MISRA

THE MONETARY policy committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will unveil its next policy statement today.

Once every two months, the RBI’s MPC sits down to take stock of India’s economy and decide whether it wants to change the interest rates prevailing in the country.

Most economists and observers expect the RBI to “maintain a status quo” on interest rates. The lack of any change in the rates, however, should not detract from the fact that economies around the world are facing a fairly unprecedented level of uncertainty. Even when a central bank decides to do nothing, as it were, it bases its decision after considering several factors.

What’s the point of RBI monetary policy reviews?

Like all central banks, the RBI too is charged with the responsibility of maintaining stable prices in the economy. It does this by targeting the retail inflation rate at 4% (with a comfort band of two percentage points on either side).

The RBI’s research has shown that this is the ideal rate of inflation that promotes sustained economic growth. If the inflation rate remains persistently higher than 4%, it erodes the purchasing power of consumers. If it stays persistently below 4%, it weakens the profit incentive of producers.

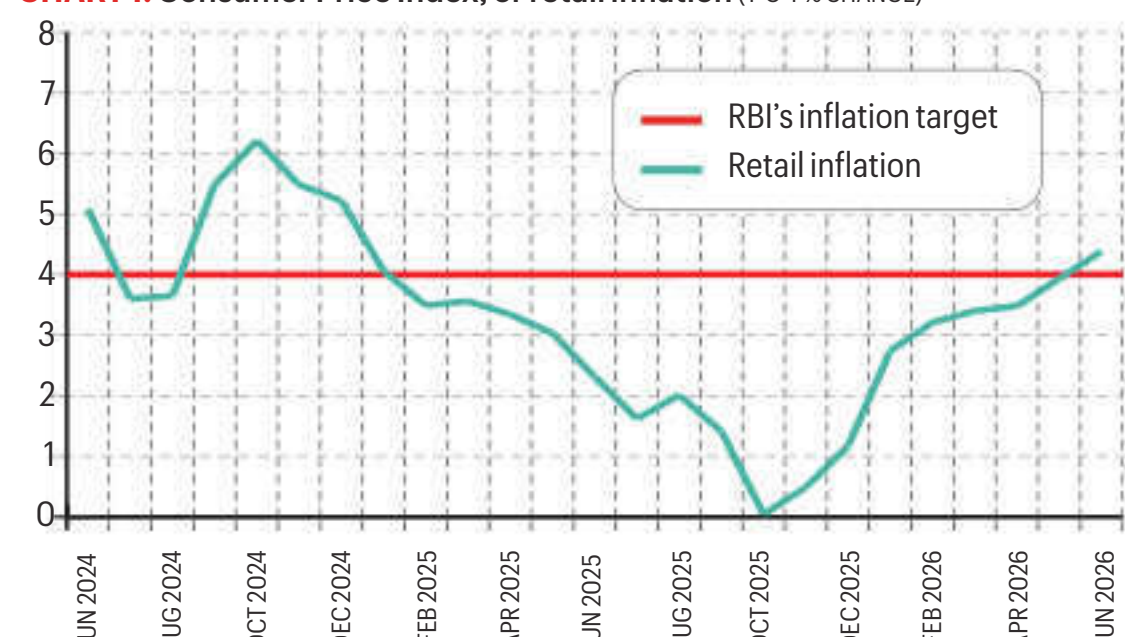
The main tool with which the RBI tries to achieve this 4% inflation target is by tweaking the interest rate it charges when it lends money to India’s commercial banks to meet their short-term needs. This interest rate is called the “repo rate”.

When the RBI evaluates that economic growth is weak and inflation rate is falling below its target, it reduces the repo rate — making it cheaper for commercial banks to borrow. When the cost of their own borrowing falls, commercial banks cut the rate at which they lend to the rest of the economy — be it a consumer seeking to buy a car or a businesswoman looking to start a firm. This is how the RBI incentivises economic growth while maintaining price stability.

When the RBI sees inflation rate going up too high — either because there is too much demand for goods and services or because there is too little supply — it raises the repo rate to dampen demand. A repo rate increase triggers banks to raise interest rates, thus forcing many to give up their demand for a new car or a new business.

• Retail inflation creeping up

CHART 1: Consumer Price Index, or retail inflation (Y-O-Y % CHANGE)



SOURCE: CENTRE FOR MONITORING INDIAN ECONOMY PVT. LTD.

What are the factors it has to consider?

In any meeting, the RBI has three choices: hike interest rates, cut interest rates or maintain status quo.

On the face of it, the RBI targets the retail inflation rate. That, of course, is the main variable on which it bases its decision.

Chart 2 shows retail inflation has risen through 2026 and is now just above the 4% target, even though it is still within the RBI comfort zone of 2% to 6%. Chart 1 shows the movement of the repo rate over the same period. But looking at just headline inflation is not enough. As things stand, one can argue for a rate cut: after all, inflation is close to the target level and well within the comfort zone even as economic growth is expected to slow down. Or, for a rate hike, since inflation is steadily rising up over the past few months. But since the effect of a repo rate tweak takes time to percolate through the economy (often several months), a central bank has to consider many other factors.

In many ways, the RBI has to continuously assess not just where growth and inflation are at present but where they will be in a few months. Here is a list of some of the other key factors that RBI is likely to take into account in its deliberations.

1. CRUDE OIL PRICES: Higher crude prices don’t just raise domestic inflation but also worsen India’s trade deficit, hit exchange rate, increase government debt and bring down economic growth. Thanks to the shaky ceasefire between the US and Iran, crude oil prices continue to swing wildly from one week to another. But, crucially, since the middle of June when the peace deal was signed, crude oil prices have gone up by around 11%. If the RBI expects crude oil prices to remain high or possibly even go higher, it may consider raising rates or, at the

Rate actions by key central banks

As of July, US Fed, European Central Bank, Bank of Japan, and Bank of England all maintained status quo on the rates in their economies.

- This brings down the pressure on the RBI to hike rates.

very least, keep rates higher for longer.

2. US-IRAN HOSTILITIES: The same argument applies here as well. If the war continues, supply of energy will remain constrained and prices will continue to remain elevated. This is more so because apart from the Strait of Hormuz, now even shipping through the Red Sea has come under threat. Such an assessment will likely single any plans within the RBI to cut interest rates.

3. MONSOON, EL NIÑO, INFLATION: Regardless of what happens to crude oil prices, there is another big threat to domestic inflation in the form of El Niño. El Niño conditions are likely to intensify in the coming months. As of end-July, rainfall is 13% below average and more than 40% of area in the country remains in the deficient category. Water reservoir levels are considerably lower than what they were at the same stage last year. These can affect rabi sowing.

Food inflation was already well above 5% in June and these developments may tilt the RBI towards either raising rates or keeping them at the same level.

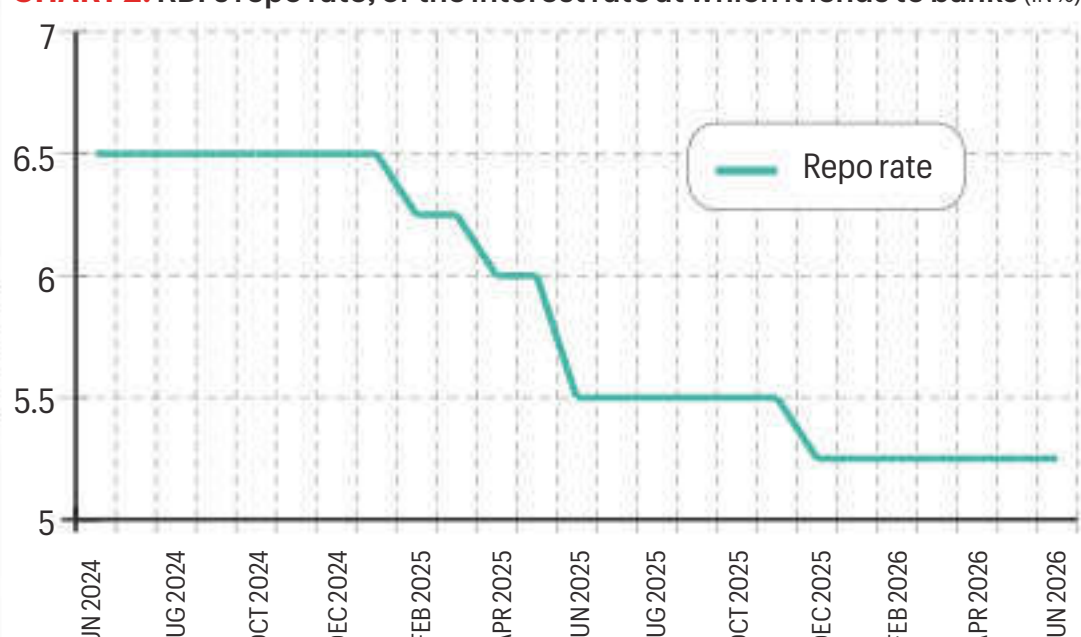
4. QUALITY OF GROWTH MOMENTUM: All central banks have to balance between controlling inflation and promoting economic growth. Further, while deciding on its rate policy, the RBI concerns itself not just with the level of growth but also assesses the quality of growth momentum. It is entirely possible that the growth rate in the past year or the last quarter was strong enough but there are emerging signs of weakness.

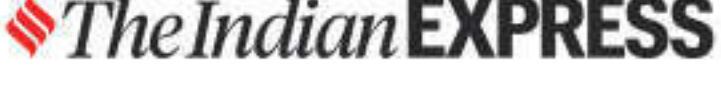
To assess this, the RBI looks at the picture painted by a whole host of high frequency indicators. For instance, as a recent report from Bank of Baroda notes, “high frequency data for quarter ending June 2026 indicates that airline passenger traffic (including domestic travel), rail freight traf-

Most economists expect a ‘status quo’ on interest rates this time. But even when RBI chooses to hold the course, it does so after weighing several factors

• Repo rate steadily coming down

CHART 2: RBI's repo rate, or the interest rate at which it lends to banks (IN %)





~ FOUNDED BY ~

RAMNATH GOENKA

IN 1932

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

In struggle for justice, a story of impunity

AFTER BRIJ Bhushan Sharan Singh's acquittal by a Delhi court in the sexual harassment case filed by six women wrestlers, Vinesh Phogat, one of the complainants, said in a social media post: "We have not given up hope and the wrestlers will continue their fight." The hope for justice has, from the beginning, been the load-bearing feature of the struggle to pursue the case against the former Wrestling Federation of India chief — he was also the BJP MP from Kaiserganj when the accusations surfaced. Hope for justice fueled their vigil at Jantar Mantar when they began their agitation in 2023; it helped them weather institutional indifference until Singh was forced to resign from his position and a case against him was finally registered by Delhi Police in April that year. And hope is what will see them through the days to come as they appeal Monday's verdict. Yet the story of this case is no longer only about one individual or one verdict. It is about the extraordinary resilience required of those seeking accountability when the accused occupies a position of power, and about the special endurance demanded by a justice system that often seems to test the survivors as much as the allegations they bring before it.

The wrestlers' fight tells a larger story of entrenched impunity. The defining images of the protest bear witness to it: Wrestlers sleeping on the footpath as they protested against lack of progress in the case; their march towards Parliament that ended with them being dragged away by the police; and the haunting sight of decorated athletes standing on the banks of the Ganga in Haridwar, saying they would immerse their medals in the river. Most sexual harassment cases have arduous trajectories. The twists and turns of the case against Singh — including a report by a government-appointed oversight committee that was never made public and the withdrawal of a complaint under the POCSO Act — have underlined how much more difficult it is to pursue such complaints when there is an overwhelming imbalance of power.

The episode also reveals why so many women hesitate to come forward in the first place. It is not simply the fear of being disbelieved; it is the knowledge that the process itself can become a punishment, with years of recounting traumatic experiences before multiple authorities, public scrutiny, political hostility and institutional delay, only to find that justice remains elusive. Irrespective of this case's legal outcome, the larger question raised by the wrestlers' struggle remains unresolved: How many times must survivors tell their stories before institutions respond with sensitivity and urgency?

Udhayanidhi's arrest is TVK's own goal

THE REMARKS made by former Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister and current Leader of Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin about a female actor are misogynistic. The DMK has said that party supremo Stalin's son was only criticising the Vijay-led government on the Cauvery water issue, but that explanation cuts little ice — his words carried a double entendre. The immediate weaponisation of the police and law and order machinery by the TVK government against Udhayanidhi is also problematic — he was arrested a day after his remarks, on a formidable array of charges, including criminal conspiracy, promoting enmity between groups, provoking riots. This rush to target a political opponent by a strong-armed state points to the blurring of lines between government and party. It reeks of a familiar politics of vendetta in Tamil Nadu. For a new government still trying to establish that it represents a break from the past, this is a misstep. That Madras High Court ordered Udhayanidhi's release is welcome. But the episode raises questions.

Actor-turned-politician Vijay rode a popular wave to office on the promise of providing a departure from politics-as-usual under the DMK-AIADMK duopoly that has marked Tamil Nadu for decades, even as he signalled affinity with key figures of the Dravidian movement such as Periyar. The heavy-handed use of state machinery against the Leader of Opposition is reminiscent, however, of dismal episodes featuring his predecessors — the dramatic midnight police swoopdown on M Karunanidhi during Jayalalithaa rule in 2001, for instance. The police has claimed, after the Madras HC order, that it merely wanted to question Udhayanidhi, but the slew of charges in its FIR, filed with alacrity after the ruling party's complaint, suggests otherwise.

In the interval between Udhayanidhi's statement and the police action, his words were condemned across the political spectrum and by large sections of civil society. That should have been the beginning of a conversation on a broader coarsening of political rhetoric. Instead, the story is now one of executive overreach, with the DMK accusing the government of using the police to settle political scores. That's an own goal by a party and government on which many in Tamil Nadu pinned hopes for change.

Love me like AI does

IT CARRIES the pathos of a 21st-century tragedy, and an indictment even of modern dating. The machine, it appears, is aching the game of love. Given the overwhelming response to AI companionship, China has introduced regulations forbidding chatbots from cultivating emotional dependence, banning virtual romances with minors, and requiring companies to issue alerts when users display signs of emotional distress. These measures are not merely about taming an emerging technology. Against the backdrop of an ageing population — China's population declined for the fourth consecutive year in 2025, while the birth rate fell to a historic low — they also reflect an attempt to nudge people back towards relationships rooted in the real world.

Yet that is easier said than done. AI companions are engineered to be infinitely patient and emotionally fluent; unlike human beings, they possess the miraculous ability to say the right things at the right moment. Not for them the awkwardness of forgotten birthdays, bitter misunderstandings, and tetchy exchanges that begin with "we need to talk". The algorithm offers companionship stripped of inconvenience or the uncomfortable possibility of rejection. In societies where loneliness is increasingly pervasive, such frictionless intimacy becomes formidable competition for the imperfect business of loving another person.

China is not alone in grappling with this reality. States such as New York and California in the US have introduced measures requiring chatbots to periodically disclose that they are not human. Such safeguards acknowledge a truth: As artificial companionship grows more persuasive, the real contest may not be between humans and machines, but relationships that demand vulnerability and those that promise affection without risk.

Seven years after August 5: Delaying J&K statehood undermines gains

ANNIVERSARIES CAN often become rituals. Worse, they can become alibis. Seven years ago, Article 370 was abrogated, and the state of Jammu and Kashmir was reduced to two Union Territories. The constitutional argument around it is over. The law that Parliament passed received the imprimatur of the Supreme Court and has attained a measure of political finality. The bigger question is: Did the 2019 intervention achieve what was promised?

Three principal rationales were given in 2019 for the abrogation and downgrading of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. First, that Article 370 had taken on a psychological resonance well beyond its legal purport. It fed the idea of conditional integration and in doing so nurtured separatism. On this score, the record is significant. The separatist lexicon has clearly lost much of its sheen. The Hurriyat exists only on paper. Apart from the occasional sermon delivered by the Mirwaiz from the pulpit at Jama Masjid, little of the once all-pervasive separatist combine survives. Political parties that forecast a constitutional apocalypse have resumed electoral politics and elections are increasingly inclusive. Cycles of mass agitation once commonplace, the ecosystem of hartals, shutdowns and street violence that routinely brought life in the Valley to a halt have significantly abated, if not ended.

The absence of an uprising, however, is not the presence of belonging. Integration cannot be judged merely by quiet streets, tourist arrivals, cultural festivals, or the National Song and National Anthem being sung with ritualistic precision. Does the citizen fully feel that this is his or her republic, too: Equal, responsive, and un-

afraid to question?

Second, the arrangement held the promise of strengthening nationalist political forces while allowing the state to deal more aggressively with cross-border terrorism and home-grown militancy. There is no denying the substantial security gains. Terrorist networks have been disrupted; the organisational sinews of violence, much of it fuelled from across the border, have been — rightly — dealt with ruthlessness. Targeted killings continue, however, to be a reminder that operational stability is not yet political certainty. The Pakistan-sponsored terrorist attack on Baisaran in Pahalgam last year was just one reminder of that.

No less significant, the Assembly election in 2024, the first in 10 years, returned the National Conference to power. August 2019, and the delimitation that followed, did not yield the political realignment that was either expected or would have served the Centre's purposes best. That the Union government gracefully accepted the verdict of polls it did not win tells you something that no amendment to the Constitution can — Indian electoral democracy functions in Jammu and Kashmir, and its sovereignty there is not contingent on winning elections. Contrast that with the manipulated governance structures in POJK, and the mass uprising and repression being unleashed across the LOC.

Third, direct central rule was also meant to cleanse the state of long-entrenched networks of patronage and corruption, improve governance, and deliver development on the ground directly from New Delhi without local interference. It is here that the promise of



AMITABH MATTOO

The biggest concern is the youth. For years now Jammu and Kashmir has reported one of the highest youth unemployment rates in India, much higher than the national average

Nolan's Odyssey remains unchanged, we remain unmoved



PAROMITA CHAKRABARTI

FOR ALL its monsters, divine retribution and shipwrecks, *Odyssey* has always been a poem about an ordinary human longing: The desire to go home. But homecoming is never a simple reversal of departure — time transforms both the place one leaves behind and the person who left it. And so, every return arrives with an element of estrangement. One can cross the threshold of one's own house and still arrive as a stranger.

Which is why watching Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey* feels oddly unfulfilling. It is spectacular in its ambition, operatic in its vision of an extraordinary man overcoming impossible odds to reclaim his place in the world and at home. Unlike most Nolan films, it even allows its women their moments of assertion. But it leaves little emotional imprint because it refuses to engage with Odysseus in his complexity — notwithstanding the travails of his journey or the ravages of time, the Odysseus who returns to Ithaca after 20 long years in the film is essentially the same man who left it.

In the *London Review of Books*, classicist Emily Wilson, whose 2017 feminist interpretation of *Odyssey* has been cited by Nolan as one of his chief source materials, writes, "Nolan's *Odyssey* lacks many of the elements that make the poem great. It has nothing convincing to say about time, memory, history, war, or about the relationship between one warrior's glorious return and the lives of his family, adversaries, comrades, friends and neighbours. It lacks psychological, emotional, political and ethical depth."

Wilson's review has drawn criticism, including from writers such as Joyce Carol Oates, for being dismissive — especially as a translator — of alternative readings of the classic. But it is difficult to ignore her critique altogether. The point of an adaptation has always been to engage with the question: What does this story mean now? But, as with most of his films, be it *Memento* (2000), *The Dark Knight* (2006), or *Oppenheimer* (2023), Nolan reads the Homeric epic as a story of masculine perseverance.

Yet Odysseus is more than the sum total of his greatness. In every telling and every translation, he is a great man. But his charisma is matched by his manipu-

lation, his compassion by his propensity for startling brutality. And, as with all epics born of oral tradition — and this is perhaps why Nolan's interpretation feels inadequate — he is also a storyteller. Homer invites us to admire his hero's ingenuity, but also to wonder what kind of a narrator he is. Odysseus survives not only because he is extraordinary but because his greatness precludes the ability to shape a narrative: What to reveal, what to conceal and how to cast himself in the best possible light. In that, both the epic and its hero are post-modern. Both are fascinated with the narrative itself, with the act and art of recounting the adventures at its core.

It makes *Odyssey* a poem about narrative authority, about whose account gets accepted as truth and whose voice is dismissed. The Homeric epic never entirely separates storytelling from self-mythologising. Much of Odysseus's adventures are revealed through his own telling. He is a man whose greatest talent lies in persuading others, and perhaps even himself, of the justness of his actions. He is the story's most accomplished spin doctor. It is this that makes the epic profoundly contemporary. We live in an age obsessed with narratives, with the idea of curated identities and personal brands. Questions about who controls the story increasingly determine who controls power and Homer asks, again and again, not who is the strongest, but who gets to tell the tale.

That complexity is largely absent from Nolan's version. Matt Damon's Odysseus joins the familiar gallery of Nolan protagonists, burdened by destiny, morally serious, defined by endurance, a Hollywood imagination of what stoicism entails. The result is an adaptation that is visually astonishing but intellectually narrow.

The greatest epics hold out because they throw up new questions for every generation, even as they refuse to settle into a singular interpretation. Nolan's film is a cinematic triumph, but in the end, it is the story of an uncomplicated man. It fails to move because it never stops to ask who ultimately gets to decide what home — and heroism — mean.

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2019 remains most unfulfilled. Direct rule may have temporarily increased accountability, but the emergency dispensation has been allowed to settle into permanence. There is now an elected Chief Minister and cabinet in Jammu and Kashmir. But powers are scattered between them, the Lieutenant Governor and New Delhi. The Lieutenant Governor cannot be held accountable at the polls; the chief minister can but does not have the authority of a full state government. Both positions are diminished by this arrangement.

I spent much of my summer vacation this year in Srinagar, which once ranked among the most liveable cities in India. Today, traffic is a nightmare, construction unregulated, public spaces being systematically reduced, and the air citizens breathe is toxic. Smart cities are not made by decorative pavements or Instagram-worthy building facades while the citizen cannot move freely or breathe with dignity. Today, Srinagar is being mutilated in the name of development. If this is normalcy, it is normalcy without governance.

The biggest concern is the youth. For years now, Jammu and Kashmir has reported one of the highest youth unemployment rates in India, much higher than the national average. This is not just an economic crisis. It is potentially a political and social time bomb. Employment in the state needs to be treated as a national security issue and not yet another bureaucratically disguised welfare programme.

The continued exile of Kashmiri Pandits from the Valley remains a profound test. No claim of

normalcy will be complete, or morally justified, until a community that was driven out by terror can return in safety and dignity. Return must not mean segregated colonies or merely employment "packages". It must be voluntary, and allowed to reclaim real, political, cultural, educational and social space instead of being announced by the government as yet another administrative "achievement". Kashmir without its Pandits is diminished; Pandits without the promise of being able to return to Kashmir remain prisoners of memory.

None of this is to deny what was gained. The permanent-resident regime that 35A entrenched — women forfeiting property on marrying outsiders, the refugees of 1947 stateless in all but name — created what was, in practice, a hierarchy of citizenship within a single republic. It is gone, and its defenders never did explain why autonomy required it. That is a real achievement, and it is precisely why the rest matters so much.

And that is why statehood can no longer be postponed. It is not a concession to separatism; it is the completion of integration. The Centre made it clear that the UT arrangement was meant to be temporary. The Supreme Court recorded the assurance that statehood will be restored at the earliest. Elections have since taken place. There is an elected government in place. Continuing to withhold statehood now will eat into the achievements of 2019. It demoralises those who participated in elections, estranges as many in Jammu as in Kashmir, and turns what was meant to be a temporary provision into a breach of trust.

The writer is dean, SIS, JNU and former Vice-Chancellor, University of Jammu

Israel's October election complicates Gaza roadmap



R SWAMINATHAN

SINCE THE war in Iran began in February this year, the world has largely lost its focus on the devastating situation in Gaza. Though a ceasefire has been in force since October 10 of last year following the 20-point Trump peace plan, a continuous, low-intensity conflict has persisted in Gaza. Additionally, while the supply of food and medical aid to Gaza has increased, no progress has been made on reconstruction. The movement of Gazans through the Rafah border crossing into Egypt, its only outlet to the outside world, remains restricted. Israel has expanded its physical occupation of Gaza's territory from the 53 per cent agreed upon under the ceasefire framework beyond the Yellow Line, to more than 60 per cent.

While Hamas has managed to retain control over the 40 per cent of Gaza's territory where more than two million residents are concentrated, the collapse of the local economy and the shutdown of smuggling through the Egyptian tunnel network have dried up its revenue generation. External funding has ground to a halt; its chief patron, Iran, is consumed by the war with the US, Hezbollah's operational capacity in Lebanon has collapsed, and traditional donors like Qatar have been applying diplomatic pressure. Left unable to pay the salaries of its cadre and with its weapons stockpiles depleted by sustained Israeli attacks, Hamas has handed over local governance to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza and agreed to surrender its heavy weaponry under a 15-point roadmap of the Board of Peace.

Besides elaborating how Hamas's disarmament and the de-commissioning of its military infrastructure will be linked to a synchronised, phased withdrawal of IDF and clarifying that no Palestinian weapons would be transferred to Israel or to any non-Palestinian entity, the roadmap also contains some concessions to Hamas. Hamas will be able to retain privately owned firearms to be registered and licensed by NCAG, in addition to the retention of some of its police officers in the new setup, subject to vetting.

While Netanyahu has avoided criticising Trump's roadmap, his far-right coalition partners have been quick to dismiss an IDF withdrawal, stating their avowed policy of Israeli settlements in Gaza. The NCAG, waiting in Cairo for about six and a half months to enter Gaza and assume governance, has still not been given the necessary clearance by Israel. The requirement that member nations contribute \$1 billion to secure a seat on the Board of Peace appears to have made no meaningful progress either.

Any immediate progress seems unlikely as elections are scheduled for October 27 in Israel. Netanyahu is trailing in the opinion polls and is also facing intense internal threats from his far-right partners. Having failed to prevent a potential agreement between the US and Iran, it is almost impossible for him to agree to specific territorial withdrawals, as he will not like to project weakness to the electorate. Netanyahu was also hoping for Trump's endorsement during his recent trip to Washington, but did not succeed. He was content in emphasising that it marked his seventh meeting with the President in just a year and a half.

Thus, while Hamas's agreement to disarm and relinquish the administration of Gaza is a critical milestone that place pressure on Israel to reciprocate, subsequent progress is expected to be rather slow.

The writer is former ambassador of India to Egypt and former Permanent Representative of India to the Arab League

40 YEARS AGO

August 5, 1986



Thatcher isolated

THE COMMONWEALTH mini-summit broke down, with a totally isolated British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, declining to fall in line with the other six participants to implement the programmes of economic sanctions against South Africa listed in the Nassau accord. "It was six against one", a conference source said.

Jayewardene hints at war

THE GOVERNMENT would be compelled to take military action to resolve the

ethnic crisis if peace negotiations failed, said Sri Lankan President J R Jayawardene. He also allayed the fears of the people who thought the provincial councils' proposal would threaten the country's unitary nature.

Gundu Rao's new party

FORMER CHIEF minister Gundu Rao's new party will be called the Indian National Congress (Indira Gandhi) and will be launched at a convention at the historic Glass House in Lal Bagh on August 22. The expelled Congress-I leader said that Pra-

nab Mukherjee, another party leader expelled by the high command, Sisir Bose, a prominent Congress-I rebel from West Bengal, and Ashok Bhattacharya, leader of the opposition in the Tripura Assembly, and another party rebel, would attend the convention.

Pakistan PM on Kashmir

THE PAKISTAN Prime Minister, Mohammad Khan Junejo, has said Pakistan would agree to a political solution to the Kashmir issue in light of the resolutions of the United Nations and the Shimla agreement.

● **WHAT THE OTHERS SAY**
Israel has closed all avenues of peacefully resolving the Palestine question.
— Dawn, Pakistan



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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2026

15

As Gen Z leads change in Subcontinent, is Pakistan doomed to be the exception?



C RAJA MOHAN

ACROSS SOUTH Asia, Generation Z has emerged as an unexpected force in politics. Over the last few years, students and youth in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka have driven unprecedented political change. In India too, the political consequences of an increasingly assertive Gen Z could be profound over the longer term. What about Pakistan? Will it forever remain the Subcontinent's exception?

Pakistan has the same youthful demographics as the rest of the region, and even deeper economic anxieties. Yet its youth has struggled to shape the country's political trajectory. The army's pervasive dominance and extensive control have made popular mobilisation exceptionally difficult. Change still appears to come from the top; the army remains the principal source of political change. While the rest of South Asia debates how young citizens are reshaping politics, Pakistan is once again discussing Rawalpindi's power grab dressed up as reform.

The latest debate was triggered by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's declaration that Pakistan's system of governance had effectively collapsed and required a sweeping overhaul. If he were an ordinary political figure, Naqvi's call for radical reform would have been dismissed as loose talk. Coming from Rawalpindi's current civilian subordinate, however, Naqvi's remarks deserve close attention.

It is evident that Pakistan's military establishment is contemplating not merely another intervention in politics but a redesign of the state. No authoritative draft of a revised political structure is in the public domain. Yet the direction is unmistakable. The discussion reportedly ranges from breaking up the existing provinces into smaller units and revising fiscal federalism in favour of the Centre to vesting greater



ILLUSTRATION: C R SASIKUMAR

authority in the army leadership and its preferred technocrats.

This represents an important evolution in Pakistan's political history. Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, Ziaul Haq and Pervez Musharraf all interrupted constitutional politics through military coups. General Asim Munir is pursuing something more ambitious: Institutionalising military predominance within the constitutional framework itself.

The confidence behind this project has been reinforced by the new White House warmth towards Asim Munir. The Anglo-American media that only a short while ago was pleading the case for the release of Imran Khan, jailed by Munir, is now celebrating the self-promoted field marshal as a strategic genius. Anglo-American support has always emboldened Rawalpindi to tighten its grip over Pakistan's polity and society.

The more interesting question, however, is not what Munir wants or what the Anglo-Americans like. It is whether Pakistan's civilian politicians are once again preparing to help the generals consolidate power and write their own political death warrant. In their endless internecine struggles, Pakistan's civilian parties have repeatedly turned to the army to gain advantage over one another. That allowed Rawal-

pindi to install and uninstall civilian governments at will. Had the civilian parties chosen collective action over short-term partisan gain, they could have pushed the army back into the barracks long ago.

There was one brief moment of hope. In 2006, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif signed the Charter of Democracy. Having both experienced repeated military interventions, they recognised that democracy could survive only if civilian parties stopped inviting the army into their partisan battles.

The moment did not last. Both the Pakistan People's Party and the Pakistan Muslim League soon reverted to the familiar temptation of seeking tactical advantage over each other. Later, Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf repeated the same mistake, initially benefiting from military patronage before becoming its victim.

That pattern is now set to repeat itself as the army shows the door to the current civilian government. The generals may design the blueprint, but they still need the civilian parliament to approve it. But the prospects of a united opposition to the Army's project appear bleak. Pakistan's missing Gen Z movement reinforces this imbalance. The country has no shortage of youthful anger. But the Army's in-

strumentalisation of religious nationalism and the ever-expanding state control over society have prevented that frustration from coalescing into a nationwide democratic movement comparable to those witnessed elsewhere in South Asia.

The Pakistan army is well placed to get what it wants. Yet Rawalpindi's ability to deliver positive change is limited. The reforms pushed by the army over the decades have been less about strengthening institutions than about concentrating greater authority in its own hands. The justification remains the same — that civilian politicians are corrupt and incompetent.

While the army's political power has steadily expanded, its capacity to generate broader social and economic gains has always fallen short. History offers many examples of authoritarian regimes that have delivered sustained economic growth. Pakistan is not one of them. Despite privileged ties with the world's leading economic powers, the US and now China, and close association with the oil-rich Gulf states, Pakistan has been on the path of economic decline over the last three decades.

There is little evidence to suggest that giving still greater authority to the field marshal will produce dramatically different outcomes. Pakistan's civilian leaders surely know this, but can they summon the will for collective action? While there is a murmur of dissent against Munir's plans, few would bet on Pakistan's political parties to prevail.

Pakistan's predicament offers a wider lesson. If there is no meaningful resistance to the dominant political force and its regressive ideology, societies have to endure prolonged stagnation and repeated humiliation. Resistance certainly imposes immediate costs. Yet it is also the mechanism through which institutions recover their balance and political systems renew themselves.

The writer is a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express. He is also the distinguished professor at the Motwani Jadia Institute of American Studies, Jindal Global University and the Korean Foundation Chair on Asian geopolitics at Council on Strategic and Defense Research, New Delhi

Bringing up miniature citizens & Jantar Mantar pushback



ASHOK LAL AND NASEERUDDIN SHAH

FOR CENTURIES, Japanese masters have perfected the art of the miniature. They take the wild, untamed potential of a majestic tree, prune its shoots, and wrap its branches in rigid copper wire. The result is a domesticated object, an ornamental dwarf, small enough to sit on a drawing-room table without ever threatening to crack the walls.

What Japan does to flora, the modern Indian state machinery is now doing to human potential. First, the state starves the roots, allowing the physical body of the child to wither through structural neglect. Then, for those children who manage to survive, the state prunes away the capacity for critical thought, wrapping the developing mind in the copper wires of myth, conformity, and sanitised history. The ultimate goal of this political project is to transform a canopy of free-thinkers into citizens who are docile enough to never challenge power.

Let us take the case of Gujarat, a region frequently touted as an ideal developmental model. Gujarat's Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) stands at 20 deaths per 1,000 live births, while in Uttar Pradesh it sits at a staggering 37. Before an Indian child can even learn to read, their physical survival is a high-stakes gamble against state apathy. For the children who beat the heavy odds of infant mortality and chronic malnutrition, the education system designed by the state acts as a massive sieve. It drops millions of students out of formal learning before they can ever develop deep roots of intellectual questioning.

In Gujarat, the secondary school dropout rate sits at 16.9 per cent. This crisis is worsened by the grim reality of over 1,600 government primary schools operating with only a single teacher. In UP, the educational cliff-edge is even steeper. Driven largely by the massive closure of public schools, a minuscule 3 per cent of Uttar Pradesh's 2.6 lakh schools offer a continuous path of education from Class I through to Class XII. The modern state treats a child's health as an unnecessary financial expense, and their intellect as a direct threat.

The most insidious pruning, however, is reserved for those who manage to stay in the classroom. The near-total erasure of the Mughal period from state-approved textbooks is a prime example. In doing so, the state deprives the child of understanding the phenomenal philosophical, artistic, and literary strides that defined early modern India.

Crucially, it removes the study of how a vast, multi-religious empire was held together through institutional negotiation. This history illuminated the architecture of diversity, showing how the ruling class was built as a multicultural mosaic to prevent majoritarian or singular factional capture. Removing this narrative is an amputation of institutional memory of pluralistic statecraft. The historical consensus on the unique, collaborative, and fiercely debated contributions of figures like Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, and Maulana Azad too is being systematically dismantled. Gandhi's radical, lifelong pursuit of communal harmony has been heavily toned down. Nehru, the main architect of India's modern scientific temper, secular statehood, and industrial planning, is routinely airbrushed out of the history of the very public institutions he built. Azad, a towering intellectual and India's first education minister, has had his name quietly excised from key historical references.

By removing the intense debates and the absolute diversity of thought within the freedom struggle, the state ensures that a child never learns how a pluralistic democracy is negotiated.

How can we truly build a modern knowledge economy on such a foundation? The country desperately needs an educational landscape deeply rooted in what Tagore famously called the "freedom of mind". Classrooms must actively celebrate dissent, foster rigorous comparative historical analysis, and re-establish unyielding adherence to the scientific temper. Only when we stop pruning our children's natural curiosity and start investing fundamentally in both their physical well-being and their intellectual liberty will the next generation grow to its natural, expansive height. Only then can they cast a wide and protective shade across the future of the republic.

Encouragingly, the Gen Z movement is already reclaiming their right to grow into citizens who can think horizontally. They are connecting the dots between systemic health deficits and policy failures, whilst actively questioning the ideological rewrite of their own past. In response, the state is employing oppressive measures. This struggle highlights a defiant generation refusing to be minimised and actively demanding the space to grow.

Lal is a playwright and a poet. Shah is a theatre and film actor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A rethink needed

BARELY NINE months after his fledgling JSP was routed in the Bihar Assembly elections, Prashant Kishor stormed a BJP bastion with a thumping victory in the Bankipur bypoll. He challenged the BJP in its fort, winning the seat that's considered its stronghold since 1995. It is a loss that comes on the heels of the Gen Z protests in the national capital ("The outsider is in: Patna sends a message via PK," *IE*, August 4). For the BJP, losing the Bankipur bypoll goes beyond the typical loss of a stronghold and should prompt a probe into internal issues and a reassessment of the electorate's changed demographic profile.

S S Paul, Nadia

What BJP must do

DESPITE THE turbulence having subsided for the time being, the leaders of the Cockroach Janta Party have warned that they will gather for the protest again if demands are not fulfilled ("What remains of Jantar Mantar after the crowds have gone home," *IE*, August 4). The BJP government should initiate reform, prioritising transparency, ethical practice, and corruption-free functioning in education, police, judiciary, and other areas of governance. They must involve Gen Z, NGOs, and prominent members of civil society to achieve efficiency and accountability. The reforms should be meaningful and effective, and for the long run.

Subhash Vaid, New Delhi

The migrant question

SPAIN REMAINS one of the principal gateways to Europe, experiencing sustained migratory pressures that extend well beyond its national borders ("In Spain's migrant crisis, fuel for Europe's far right," *IE*, August 4). As migration is inherently transnational, the challenge cannot be addressed by Spain in isolation. It requires closer cooperation with the European Union, neighbouring Mediterranean states, and countries of origin and transit to develop coordinated migration policies.

Vaibhav Goyal, Chandigarh



BABULAL MARANDI

JHARKHAND POSSESSES nearly 40 per cent of India's mineral wealth, yet many of its mining districts remain among the country's least developed. For decades, coal, iron ore, bauxite and limestone have fuelled India's economic growth, while the communities living closest to these resources have continued to struggle with poor healthcare, inadequate schools, damaged roads, polluted environments and shrinking livelihood opportunities.

It was this contradiction that prompted the Centre to establish the District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT) in 2015. PM Narendra Modi had argued that mining-affected communities bear the greatest social and environmental costs of extraction but receive the least share of its benefits. DMFT sought to correct this imbalance by ensuring that a portion of mining revenues was reinvested in the welfare of those living in mining-affected areas. Unfortunately, that promise remains largely unfulfilled.

Recently travelled through West Singhbhum, including the Saranda mining belt, and witnessed first-hand the widening gap between the district's immense mineral wealth and the condition of its people. West Singhbhum, home to some of India's richest iron ore reserves, should have been a model of inclusive development. Between 2016 and 2026, nearly Rs 3,700 crore accumulated under its DMFT. Such resources could have transformed

Why must people be poor in a state rich with minerals?

Saranda and surrounding mining villages through better hospitals, schools, drinking water systems, roads and livelihood programmes. Instead, what I saw were struggling local markets, shrinking economic activity, unemployed youth and communities asking a simple question: Where has the money gone?

The DMFT Rules require every district to make annual reports, budgets, approved works, project progress, governing council decisions, and beneficiary details publicly available. Yet, across Jharkhand, these disclosures are either missing, outdated or inaccessible. Mining-affected communities, for whom the fund was created, have little means of knowing how thousands of crores collected in their name have actually been spent. In Jamda, once a bustling mining township, local traders spoke of declining incomes. Several mining leases expired years ago. As mines shut down, employment disappeared. The effects spread far beyond mine workers. Transport operators lost business, roadside eateries emptied, shops struggled to survive, and young people increasingly migrated in search of work.

Cross the border into Barbil in neighbouring Odisha, barely 20 km away, and the contrast is striking. The geology is identical. The mineral deposits are the same. What differs is governance. Odisha ensured timely auctions after mining leases expired. Jharkhand hesi-

tated. The consequences are visible in the numbers. Since 2019-20, India has auctioned 434 mineral blocks. Odisha auctioned 45, Chhattisgarh 41, while Jharkhand auctioned only three, despite being the country's richest mineral-bearing state. The production gap is equally revealing. Between 2018-19 and 2024-25, Odisha's iron ore production increased from around 120 million tonnes to nearly 180 million tonnes. Jharkhand's production remained almost unchanged at approximately 23 million tonnes.

Revenue tells an even more compelling story. Odisha's mineral resources are less than half of Jharkhand's. Yet in 2025-26, Odisha generated nearly Rs 46,000 crore in mining revenue compared with Jharkhand's Rs 22,000 crore.

Delayed auctions reduce production. Lower production means lower royalty collections. Lower royalties translate into reduced contributions to DMFT. Mining-affected villages receive fewer resources precisely because the mining economy itself has been allowed to stagnate. The debate around DMFT, therefore, is not merely about financial accounting; it is about restoring trust. Before organising new investment summits or announcing ambitious industrial plans, the state must first demonstrate that it can effectively manage the resources it already possesses.

The writer is Jharkhand's first Chief Minister and currently the Leader of the Opposition in the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly



PRASKANVA SINHARAY

TASLIMA NASRIN's visit to Kolkata is a significant event for Bengal politics. She has been living in exile for more than three decades since Islamic fundamentalist groups in Bangladesh targeted her for her critical writings on religious texts and political fundamentalism, and issued fatwas after the publication of her acclaimed novel *Lajja* (1993). Nasrin acquired Swedish citizenship after Bangladesh revoked her passport, and kept on shuttling between countries. But she constantly expressed her wish to stay in India, closer to her homeland. She has been repeatedly attacked by right-wing Islamist groups and

Hindu nationalist forces.

Her return to the city she identifies as "home away from home" after 19 years, to speak at a public meeting, is not only important for the ruling BJP government in West Bengal, but it also raises larger questions about religious majoritarianism.

Nasrin had to leave West Bengal in 2007 when the Left Front was in power. The inability of the secular Left government to ensure her safety and maintain law and order in the face of agitations by religious fundamentalists was widely criticised. The subsequent TMC government also could not bring her back to the city. Both the Left and the TMC governments were accused of minority appeasement and giving in to the assertions of Islamic fundamentalists by failing to accommodate the writer-activist in a state with a significant Muslim popula-

tion. Nasrin's return after almost two decades is now an opportunity for the Hindu nationalist BJP to portray itself as capable of leading a strong government that can ensure the security of the feminist writer-in-exile from Islamic fundamentalist forces.

This is evident from the chain of events surrounding her arrival in the city. Billboards were put up in the streets, and people blew conch shells to welcome the writer at the airport; her visit was reported by some media houses as "ghar wapsi" (homecoming), and the BJP MLA Sourav

This is a moment to revisit Nasrin's life and writings, which foreground larger questions about democracy and freedom of speech

Sikdar called her visit a testament to the party's electoral slogan "*bhoy out, bhorosa in*" (fear out, confidence in).

The presence of the chief minister, Suvenud Adhikari, at Nasrin's public meeting at Rabindra Sadan further points to the likely use of this visit by the BJP leadership as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it is a chance for the BJP government to craft a liberal image by comparing itself with its predecessors, whom it accuses of minority appeasement. On the other hand, the BJP is likely to cite the case of Nasrin, as it has done before, as an example to essentialise and vilify Muslim culture and politics as anti-women and regressive.

Nasrin's visit to Kolkata and the celebrations around it thus present an old and known paradox. A writer who has been a victim of religious majoritarianism in her

homeland finds a safe haven in a country also witnessing majoritarian rule. This is, therefore, a moment to revisit Nasrin's life and writings, which foreground larger questions about democracy and freedom of speech, "secular humanism", and notions of home and exile. Nasrin has been an ardent advocate against religious majoritarianism and has unequivocally criticised all religious texts, labelling them as "out of place and out of time". Humanism, she has argued, should be the "new faith". Her visit to Kolkata is not a story of party politics, of *bhoy* and *bhorosa*, but the tale of the return of the writer-activist who stands against religious fundamentalism and majoritarian politics.

The writer is a political scientist based in New Delhi

WHILE NRI INTEREST IN FCNR(B) DEPOSITS IS SKY-HIGH, RUPEE'S TRAJECTORY IS LIKELY TO BE MORE SEDATE

Inflows of \$49 billion in 2 months, but no 2013-like boost for rupee

Siddharth Upasani
New Delhi, August 4

OVER JUNE and July, India has received \$49 billion in the form of Foreign Currency Non-Resident (Bank) deposits, two types of foreign loans, and net investment in government bonds. But the rupee has hardly budged: on Tuesday, it closed at 95.38 per dollar, just 0.4% stronger than where it stood on June 4, the day before the government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a raft of measures to boost foreign inflows.

Contrast this with 2013, when a similar concessional swap window for FCNR(B) deposits was announced. From 67.6-per-dollar on September 3, 2014 — the day before the incoming governor, Raghuram Rajan made the announcement — the rupee rose almost 10% to 61.7-per-dollar in the first 42 days of the scheme. “Such schemes work best when they are aimed at addressing local imbalances and adverse country-specific perceptions, not global risks,” ANZ economists Sanjay Mathur and Dhiraj Nim said in a note on Friday, pointing to the re-escalation of the West Asia conflict and the consequent rise in oil prices and the dollar’s strength.

Mismatch in numbers

The swap window for FCNR(B) deposits works like this: banks get dollar deposits and send them directly to the RBI in exchange for rupees. As

such, these dollars don’t enter the open market for foreign currencies and don’t help in meeting the demand for them.

And the exchange rate is determined by the supply of and demand for dollars in the open market.

If the supply of dollars increases, that would reduce its price and strengthen the rupee, just like any item whose supply increases. Think of farmers dumping tomatoes or other farm produce by the truckload when a good harvest leads to a jump in supply and a price crash.

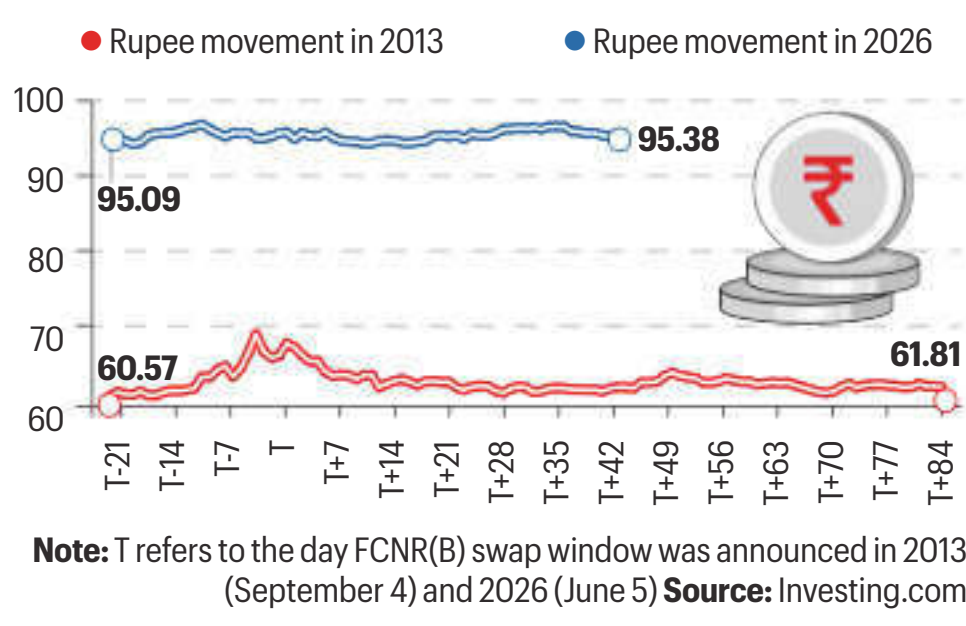
But if the dollars from the swap windows are going directly to the RBI, why is it not leading to a matching increase in the central bank’s holdings of foreign currency assets (FCA)?

Between June 8 and July 17, Indian banks raised \$17 billion of FCNR(B) deposits. Meanwhile, the central bank’s holdings of FCA only rose by \$7 billion or so.

Delays, forwards, hedges

One reason why the RBI’s FCA did not rise at the same pace as inflows under the swap scheme is the operational delay. “In principle, while RBI provides weekly change in FCA every Friday, every bank has a designated time during the week to swap these FCNR(B) deposits with RBI and get equivalent rupee resources. Thus, it is entirely possible that FCNR(B)

10% GAIN IN 2013 VS 0.4% NOW: FCNR(B) INFLOWS NOT STRENGTHENING RUPEE



deposit numbers are being captured by RBI and become a part of FCA with a clear lag,” said Soumya Kanti Ghosh, State Bank of India’s Group Chief Economic Advisor. Then there are other routes where the dollars may be going. The reemergence of tensions between US and Iran over the second half of July weakened the rupee; this was countered by the RBI’s dollar sales, which in turn would have offset some of the inflows.

This is called spot market intervention by the central bank. There is also the forward market. Selling dollars in this market allows the RBI to stop the rupee from falling without having to sell dollars immediately. And the RBI has been very active in this segment.

At the end of June, it had sold \$103 billion on a net basis in the

forward market. This means it must provide \$103 billion in the future. Data shows \$9 billion of this needs to be given in July itself. Maybe that’s where some of the new inflows have gone. Banks, too, are playing a role in the reduced visible impact of FCNR(B) deposit inflows.

With the RBI only bearing the exchanging rate risk for the principal amount of these deposits, banks must protect their dollar interest payments from any currency risk. So, banks are hedging their interest payment-related exchange rate risk, which raises demand for dollars in the future — and puts pressure on the rupee.

Future of FCNR(B), rupee

Non-residents’ interest in FCNR(B) deposits cannot be

understated. If the current pace holds and no new problems crop up, bankers expect NRIs to keep taking advantage of the 19x leverage they are being offered and potentially pour in as much as \$75 billion by September 30, when the window ends.

According to an official at a private bank, NRIs are literally lining up to make these deposits. “For banks who are sporadically taking minimum deposits of \$50,000, they will see people queue up. I heard this happened in SBI’s GIFT City branch — people were actually standing in lines because it’s such a good investment,” an official at a bank who did not wish to be named, said. Many banks have a minimum deposit threshold of around \$500,000.

While interest in FCNR(B) deposits is sky-high, the rupee’s trajectory is likely to be more sedate. According to Tanvee Gupta Jain, UBS’ Chief India Economist, shifting external conditions mean the rupee could end 2026-27 largely unchanged at around 96-per-dollar. This would reflect the balance between a “modestly improved near-term external outlook and persistent medium-term structural headwinds” such as the need to attract higher net Foreign Direct Investment, risks to IT services exports from AI-driven disruption, and a stronger dollar should the US Federal Reserve increase interest rates.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Challenges won’t alter IndiGo’s long-term direction, says new CEO

Sukalp Sharma
New Delhi, August 4

THE OPERATING environment for the aviation sector has become dynamic and is currently replete with challenges, but it won’t alter the long-term direction that India’s largest airline IndiGo has decided to take, the carrier’s new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Willie Walsh said in an address to employees on Tuesday.

He also called upon employees to be agile, disciplined, and resilient in the face of the challenging operating environment. After dominating the Indian skies with a domestic market share of a staggering 66%, IndiGo has now set its eyes on ramping up its international operations and even serving long-haul routes.

Walsh, an international aviation industry veteran who until recently was the director general of the global airline trade grouping International Air Transport Association (IATA), took charge as IndiGo CEO on Monday. His appointment follows the abrupt exit of former CEO Pieter Elbers in March. Elbers’s resignation followed the network-wide disruption that IndiGo faced in early December, leading to thousands of flights getting cancelled.

“The environment in which we operate today is becoming

increasingly dynamic. Aviation today faces evolving airspace challenges, supply chain constraints, and changing global conditions. And these realities require us to remain agile, disciplined, and resilient. Yet they do not change our direction. If anything, they reinforce the qualities that have always defined IndiGo, our unwavering commitment to safety, operational excellence, and delivering consistency to our customers,” Walsh said on the occasion of IndiGo’s 20th anniversary.

Indian carriers were already facing headwinds due to Pakistan closing its airspace to them since late April of last year. The operating environment got worse due to the West Asia war, which led to more airspace restrictions in the Gulf region and significantly pushed up jet fuel costs. Moreover, supply chain issues have plagued the global aviation industry by slowing down aircraft and engine deliveries for a few years now.

While IndiGo has also been impacted, which is evident from its recent decision to exit its damp-leased wide-body operations till it gets its own twin-aisle jets starting next year, the airline is betting big on long-range routes as its next growth frontier. IndiGo has 60 wide-body Airbus A350 aircraft on order.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Why are indices diverging under new auction system?

Akash Mandal & George Mathew
Mumbai, August 4

The Closing Auction Session (CAS), introduced by stock exchanges on Monday for cash market stocks with derivatives, got off to an unexpected start. In its first two days, the NSE Nifty, the BSE Sensex and several stocks ended with divergent closing prices.

Instead of determining the closing price based on the volume-weighted average price (VWAP) of trades during the last 30 minutes of trading, the closing price is now discovered through a 20-minute auction held between 3:15PM and 3:35 PM. The move aims to improve transparency, strengthen price discovery and reduce the scope for price manipulation at the close. For stocks without derivatives, the existing volume-weighted average price mechanism continues.

After its introduction, Nifty showed a rise of 1.60% on Monday while the Sensex gained only 0.70%, showing a big gap in closing levels. This divergence was much more than the normal 5-10% difference previously.

On Tuesday, the difference narrowed — while NSE Nifty closed with a loss of 0.64%, the BSE Sensex showed a loss of 0.27%.

Why benchmarks diverged

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) shares closed lower by 1.22% on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) while it showed a loss of 2.13% on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Tuesday. ICICI Bank closed with a loss of 0.37% on the NSE while the private lender’s stock was marginally up by 0.06% on the BSE. Infosys was down by 0.43% on the BSE but lower by 1.06% on the NSE.

The Sensex comprises 30 stocks, while the Nifty includes

50. The additional 20 stocks in the Nifty can have a meaningful impact on the index, particularly when they witness sharp price movements during the closing auction, an analyst said. Even among the stocks common to both indices, weightages differ.

Heavyweights such as Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank carry different weights in the Sensex and the Nifty. As a result, sharp gains in a few heavily weighted Sensex constituents can keep the index in positive territory even as the broader Nifty declines.

The difference is expected to narrow further in the coming days. “Both the exchanges have separate order books for CAS similar to the continuous trading session and hence, the prices of the individual stocks

are also different. As the index is calculated based on the prices determined of the individual stocks, the index values can also be different,” NSE said in an official note.

Old closing price system

The new CAS system fundamentally changes how the official closing prices of stocks with derivative contracts are determined. Until last week, the closing price — which serves as the benchmark for calculating the closing value of stock indices, valuing mutual fund portfolios, marking institutional holdings to market and settling derivatives contracts — was based on the volume-weighted average price (VWAP) of all trades executed during the final 30 minutes of the normal trading session. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) formally directed stock exchanges to introduce the CAS system through a circular issued on January 16, 2026.

The circular mandated exchanges to implement the new mechanism from August 3, 2026.

BRIEFLY

LIC OFS gets highest-ever bid

New Delhi: The government’s 6.5% stake sale in LIC saw massive interest from institutional investors who put in a whopping Rs 36,400 crore worth bids — the highest-ever for any offer for sale (OFS). Four years after its IPO, which had fetched Rs 21,000 crore for a 3.5% stake, the government is now selling a further 6.5% stake in LIC via an OFS whose size compares with the upcoming mega IPO offerings of the NSE and Reliance Jio Platforms. PTI

How does the auction work?

The CAS runs for 20 minutes, from 3:15PM to 3:35PM.

3:15PM to 3:20PM: The system calculates the reference price and shifts from normal trading to the auction session.

3:20PM to 3:25PM: Investors can place both market and limit orders.

3:25PM to 3:30PM: Only limited orders can be placed. Market orders cannot be modified or cancelled. The system closes order entry at a random time during the last two minutes (3:28 PM to 3:30PM) to prevent manipulation.

After order entry closes: The exchange matches buy and sell orders to determine the final closing price.

The closing price is determined using an equilibrium price mechanism — the price at which the maximum number of shares can be traded, with market orders getting priority over limit orders. The reference price is based on the VWAP of trades between 3PM and 3:15PM, while a price band of ±3% applies during the auction. Unexecuted limit orders from the continuous trading session are carried forward, subject to specified conditions.

Why does the index appear frozen?

During the auction period, there is no continuous matching of trades between 3:15PM and 3:30PM, so the live index graph appears unchanged even though orders continue to be collected. However, exchanges display indicative prices and index values based on continuously updated equilibrium prices. On the first day of implementation, 515 trading members participated, placing orders on behalf of 56,773 unique PAN holders — higher than participation in the pre-open auction session — indicating strong initial acceptance of the new closing auction mechanism.

MARKETS

 Sensex 78,428.95 -210.08 -0.27	 NIFTY 24,614.90 -159.40 -0.64%	 Gold ▲ ₹1,42,866	 US Dollar ▲ ₹95.38
		 Silver ▲ ₹2,18,635	 Oil ▼ \$88.12

NOTE: GOLD, SILVER RATES AS PER INDIA BULLION AND JEWELLERS ASSOCIATION GOLD PER 10G, SILVER PER 1KG; CRUDE OIL (INDIAN BASKET) AS OF AUGUST 3, 2026

ODYSSEY STILL RESONATES EVEN AFTER 3,000 YEARS AS KEY THEMES CONCERN THE TIMELESS HUMAN EXPERIENCE, SAYS YALE UNIVERSITY’S ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF CLASSICS BENEDEK KRUCHIO

Yale to Cambridge, how *The Odyssey* is reviving academic, cultural interest in epic poem

Aanchal Magazine
New Delhi, August 4

HOW DOES Homer’s glory-seeking hero, Odysseus, resist the urge to tell the cyclops Polyphemus his real name in the screen version? Why is he portrayed as more of a guilt-ridden war veteran than the complicated trickster that he was? And why is he shown patting his loyal dog Argus after his return when he doesn’t do so in the poem?

Christopher Nolan’s *The Odyssey* has sparked plenty of online debate over how it interprets and diverges from Homer’s 3,000-year-old Greek epic. The film, however, has sparked such a renewed inter-

est in the epic that many researchers are viewing it as a cultural renaissance.

The Homeric homecoming is paving way for a different kind of homecoming — tailored courses, screenings of adaptations, free access to ancient literature and Greek research — in leading universities across the world.

Academic interest

The University of Cambridge in the UK has opened up its research collection on *The Odyssey* till September 30. It had also scheduled a webinar this month. ‘Cambridge Classicists React to Nolan’s *Odyssey*’.

The interest in Nolan’s adaptation even preceded its release.

Last spring, Yale University’s Assistant Professor of Classics Benedek Kruchio taught a course called ‘Odyssean Reception: A Journey Through the History of Literature and Film’, wherein he traced Odyssean influences through the history of literature and film — from ancient epics and poetry to modern film adaptations such as the Coen Brothers’ *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* Kruchio will teach this course again in a year. “It’s going to be accompanied by a series of film screenings that are open to the public. And I’m developing another course that brings together ancient literature and film, which will investigate the relationship between Hollywood storytelling



The University of Cambridge in the UK has opened up its research collection on *The Odyssey* till September 30. @ODYSSEYMOVIE/X

and ancient literary genres,” he told *The Indian Express*.

Nolan’s adaptation is his favourite apart from films that en-

gage more loosely with Homer, such as Jean-Luc Godard’s *Contempt* (1963) and *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* (2001). “Other

exciting examples are Stanley Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and Mario Camerini’s *Ulysses* (1954). But it’s also worth branching out into contemporary literature and reading Alice Oswald’s magnificent poem *Nobody and László Krasznahorkai’s* novella *Chasing Homer* (both 2019),” Kruchio said in an e-mail.

Meanwhile, the University of Manchester partnered with Universal Pictures to showcase a rare 1,700-year-old parchment of the poem, one of the earliest surviving versions, and also threw it open for public display two days before the movie’s release.

The University of Cincinnati in Ohio, US, in a recent article

highlighted the role of its archaeologist, Carl Blegen, who had helped unearth the city of Troy — a central location in Homer’s works — during excavations he led between 1932 and 1938. Some of the most trenchant criticism has come from Emily Wilson — the University of Pennsylvania professor known for her celebrated and simple translation of *The Odyssey* which Nolan took inspiration from. Kruchio said many key episodes and characters are missing from the film.

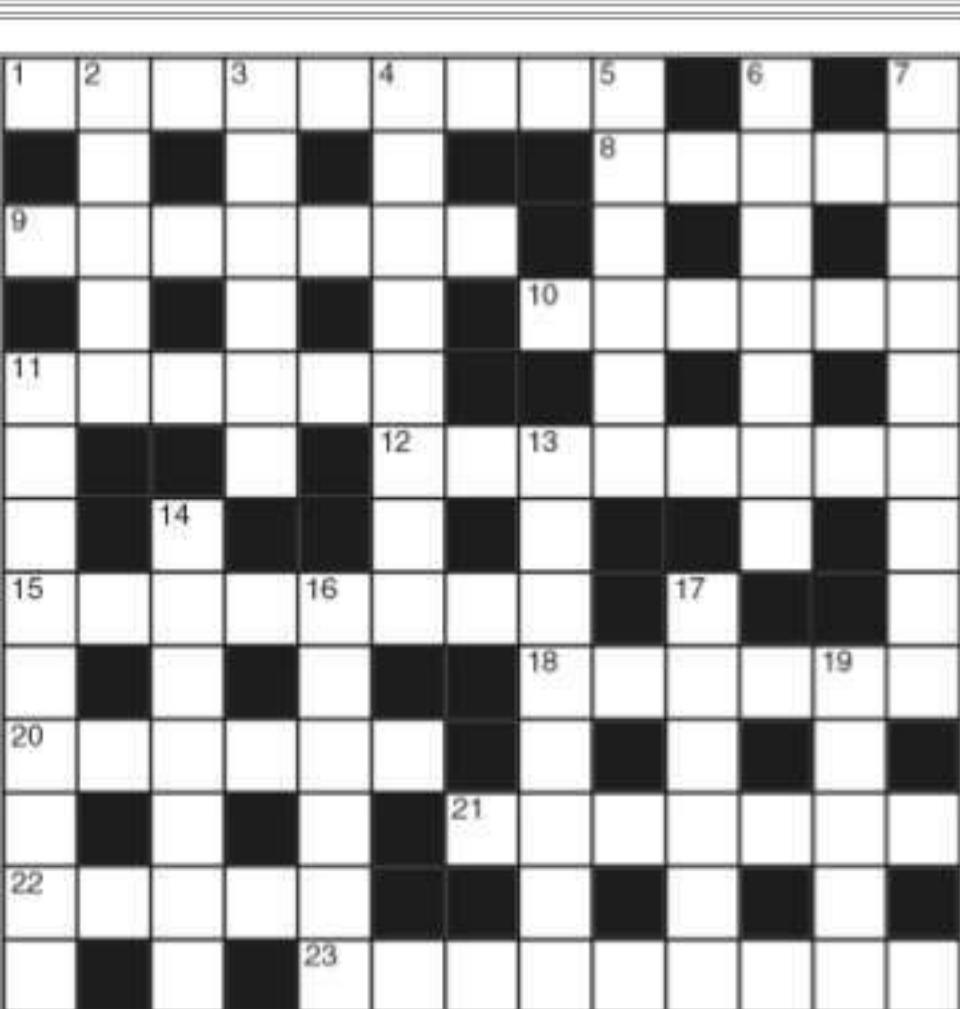
“But I don’t think this is a bad thing at all: adaptations that take creative liberties can be exciting, and in my view, Nolan has given us a thought-provoking *Odyssey* that

grapples with big topics such as the rupture of cultural memory and a civilisation in crisis,” he said.

So, why does *Odyssey* still resonate even after 3,000 years? Kruchio said many of the *Odyssey*’s key themes concern the timeless human experience — war, love, revenge, travel, and curiosity, going out and mapping the world. “And then, what it means to be civilized and mortal. As a cunning and ingenious hero, Odysseus is a really compelling character. And let’s not forget that Homer is a masterful narrator. The *Odyssey* is a compelling read, full of plot twists and suspense.”

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CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Contract debts without interest (9)
8 Potentially earn a place in the sporting world (5)
9 Sound reasonable (7)
10 Maintain there's some body in the beer (6)
11 Sort of butter made from vegetable and fruit (6)
12 I am conclusively shown to be better (8)
15 I plan too casually but it's a matter of choice (8)
18 Cathy's rocking the boats (6)
20 Stays will alter a waist (6)
21 Red wines turn scarlet (7)
22 Bones placed in a circle (5)
23 Tasty fruit centre in a new assortment (9)

DOWN
2 Ring in the nose as a halter (5)
3 Workers' associations in union perhaps (6)
4 Idleness in battle (8)
5 Some canvas or tar (6)
6 Book expresses some limitation (7)
7 New Year gifts whose days are numbered (9)
11 Play recorded music to make a show (3,2,4)
13 Versatile languages master? (8)
14 Leaves high and dry on the beaches (7)
16 Get on a bit maybe (6)
17 He puts up the points or puts them down (6)
19 A small bird and an enormous one (5)

SOLUTIONS CROSSWORD 6058 **ACROSS:** 1 Wedding, 4 Plain, 7 Ohms, 8 Foregone, 10 Pinpointed, 12 Breech, 13 Issued, 15 Out of order, 18 Fallible, 19 Dolt, 20 Demon, 21 Elapsed **DOWN:** 1 Whoop, 2 Dominoes, 3 Ground, 4 Pretension, 5 Agog, 6 Needed, 9 Conclusion, 11 Outdoors, 12 Briefed, 14 Collie, 16 Rated, 17 Plum

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective circles below. Select the letters in the shaded circles and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's _____, give him _____. (9,...,5)

IRAAE
[Shaded circles: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]

ZAORR
[Shaded circles: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]

HLUCCT
[Shaded circles: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]

EENHPW
[Shaded circles: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9]

SOLUTIONS: Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.
ANSWERS: Aerie, Razor, Clutch, Nephew

OVER THE HEDGE



CALVIN & HOBBS



MARVIN



DIFFICULTY LEVEL 2s INSTRUCTIONS
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SUDOKU 6401

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

SOLUTION SUDOKU 6400

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

ROYAL STARS

ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 20): Resist the urge to get tangled up in financial disagreements with your kids, a friend, a group or a romantic partner. Focus on social outings today. Keep things light. Tonight: Be patient.

TAURUS (APR 21 - MAY 21): Today the Moon is in your sign. However, it's at odds with two other planets, which can encourage power struggles and disputes, especially with authority figures. Therefore, keep your head down. Tonight: You're strong.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21): This is the classic day for an argument with relatives, siblings, neighbours or daily contacts. Or it might be road rage. Save your energy. The only thing anger does is make everyone miserable. Patience is your best friend today. Tonight: Enjoy solitude.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23): You're never casual about money, which is why you might end up in a dispute with a friend, group or financial institution. You might even argue about an inheritance or your fair share of something. This tension will quickly blow over. Tonight: Friendships.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUG 23): This is a tricky day because you are noticed. But you might find yourself at odds with authority figures, partners or close friends. Think of the impression you create on your audience. Tonight: Be modest.

VIRGO (AUG 24 - SEP 23): Steer clear of controversial subjects today. Very likely, they will escalate into a nasty confrontation. You can never change someone else's point of view. Stay calm. Tonight: Explore.

LIBRA (SEP 24 - OCT 23): Parents might find themselves at odds with their kids today. Likewise, romantic partners also might be angered. And some of you might be disappointed in a friend or a group. Cope as best you can with courtesy and patience. Tonight: Check your finances.

SCORPIO (OCT 24 - NOV 23): Steer clear of confrontations with partners, spouses, family members and bosses today, because it could escalate quickly into something nasty. Tonight: Cooperate.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 24 - DEC 22): Interactions at work, politics, religion, plus appointments and errands that you're juggling today are all reasons you might be at odds with someone. But this doesn't have to happen, optimism is a survival issue for you. Tonight: Work.

CAPRICORN (DEC 23 - JAN 20): Avoid money squabbles if you can, because this will only ruin your day. Instead, buckle down, work hard and get stuff done. Tonight: Share time with someone.

AQUARIUS (JAN 21 - FEB 19): Partners, spouses, close friends and family members might be at odds with you today. If you enter the fray, there's no winning. Instead, take a breath. Sit this one out. Tomorrow is a delightful, practical and productive day. Tonight: Relax at home.

PISCES (FEB 20 - MAR 20): Although you will be tempted to respond in kind if you are attacked by others today, especially work colleagues or even an enemy, think of your own peace of mind. You matter. Don't let what others say get under your skin. Tonight: Discussions.

EASTERN RAILWAY

Following E-tenders are invited by the Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (General)/Eastern Railway, Sealdah, 2nd Floor, Remote Control Building, Eastern Railway, Kolkata-700 014 in connection with the following works:
SI.No.-1. Tender No.: ELEG-OT-1370-2026-27, Date: 31.07.2026.
Particulars of the work: Electrical works in connection with Upgradation of mechanized laundry plant at Sealdah Depot. **Tender value:** ₹ 42,56,380. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 3,43,900. **Completion period:** 08 months **SI.No.-2. Tender No.: ELEG-OT-1372-2026-27, Date: 31.07.2026.** **Particulars of the work:** Electrical works in connection with Proposed construction of 07 nos. Gang Hut & ladies changing room-3/BT, 8BT, 10/BT & 11/BT PWI/BT & DTM-1, DTM-3 & 2C under PWI/Sonarpur. **Tender value:** ₹ 29,86,651. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 59,700. **Completion period:** 12 months. **Tender Publication Date on IREPS at:** 31.07.2026 (for SI.No. 1 & 2). **Bidding Start Date:** 10.08.2026 (for SI.No. 1 & 2). **Tender Closing Date & Time:** 24.08.2026 at 14.00 hrs. (for SI.No. 1 & 2). Details of tender notice and corrigendum issued from time to time are available at website : www.ireps.gov.in. (SDAH-166/2026-27) Tender Notices are also available at website: www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.ireps.gov.in
Follow us at: www.ereasternrailway.com www.ereasternrailway.com

"IMPORTANT"

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कार्यालय अधिशाषी अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, जिला खण्ड-II बीकानेर
क्रमांक-554 दिनांक:-24/7/2026
अत्यकालीन ई-बोली सूचना संख्या: 09/2026-2027
Bid for Constt of Various Various Missing Link Road Lunkaransar and SriDungargarh are invited from interested bidders from 27-07-2026 to 06-08-2026 06.00 PM. and to be opened 07-08-2026 02:00 PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajsasthagov.in>, <http://ppp.raj.nic.in>) of the state; and PWD Department website. The approximate value of the procurement is Rs 1519.00 Lacs.
UBN No. :- PWD2627WSOB07862, PWD2627WSOB07863, PWD2627WSOB07864 PWD2627WSOB07865, PWD2627WSOB07866
हस्ता/- अधिशाषी अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग- II बीकानेर
DIPRC/13440/2026

IN THE COURT OF THE CIVIL JUDGE, SENIOR DIVISION AT VASCO-DA-GAMA, GOA.
Port. Civil Misc. Application No. 51/2025/8
Ms. Sandra Lobo,
D/o. Santan Francisco Lobo, 36 years of age, Divorcee, Service, Indian National, R/o. H.No.439/2, Kesarval, Cortalim, Goa, 403710 Petitioner
versus
Mr. Abhay Krishnadas Adhikari,
S/o. Late Harimohandas Adhekar, 37 years of age, Service, R/o. B-403, Umiya Habitat, Upasnagar, Sancoale, Goa.Respondent
NOTICE
To,
Mr. Abhay Krishnadas Adhikari, S/o. Late Harimohandas Adhekar, 37 years of age, Service, R/o. B-403, Umiya Habitat, Upasnagar, Sancoale, Goa.
Whereas the above named Applicant has filed an application for Permanent custody of Minor Child, Ms. Srijiya Ayushi Lobo, under Article 1458 of Portuguese Civil Code r/w Sec. 151 of Code of Civil Procedure.
The Applicant has further filed application for substituted service by paper publication under Order V Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.
And whereas this Court after going through the said application has passed an order "Issue summons by publication which shall be published in a newspaper in circulation in Kolkata".
Now, therefore, you are hereby required to appear in this Court in person or by a pleader, on 9th day of September, 2026 at 10.00 a.m., failing which the said application will be heard and determined in your absence.
Given under my hand and the seal of the Court, this 3rd day of August, 2026

(Dattaram Shetgaonkar)
Superintendent
By Order of the Court

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala - 147001)
Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SGC033813 (Contact No. 96461-22185)
Tender Enquiry No. 384/SS(D)-403/Spares Dated: 03.08.2026
Dy.CE/ Substation Design/ TS Organization, PSPCL, C-1,, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-tender for Manufacture, Testing and Supply Of Armoured ISI Marked Single Core 11KV 300mm2 Size Stranded Aluminum Conductor, XLPE Insulated, PVC Sheathed, Screened Cable (32.50Kms) In Accordance With IS: 7098 (Part-2) With Latest Amendments Manufactured With CCV/Sioplas Technology. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 05.08.2026 (11:00 AM onwards).
Note: - Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
No. 13937/PB C 762/26

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
No.2, 2/1 and 2/3, Kalidasa Marg, 1st Main Road, Gandhinagar, Bengaluru-560 009.
Phone No. 080-22265383 website : www.kiadb.in e-Mail: cdcoe1@kiadb.in
No. IADB/ENG/ETND-Rent-Service-01/2448/2026-27 Date: 04.08.2026
SHORT-TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GoK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)
KIADB invites tender as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement for renting Plug & Play building on monthly basis under one cover system for the following:
(1) Allotment of Plug & Play Building in Plot No. AM-02, Apparel Park Industrial Area Phase-1, Mini Textile Park, Doddaballapura, Bengaluru Rural District on monthly rental basis **(2nd Call)**.
(2) Allotment of Plug & Play Building in Plot No. AM-03-P4, Apparel Park Industrial Area Phase-1, Mini Textile Park, Doddaballapura, Bengaluru Rural District on monthly rental basis **(2nd Call)**
Applicants may download bidding documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>
Last Date and Time for Receipt of Tenders: **21.08.2026 up to 4:00 P.M.**
Sd/- Engineer-in-Chief, K.I.A.D.B

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala - 147001)
Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SGC033813 Website: www.pspcl.in, (Contact No. 96461-01116)
Tender Enquiry No. 30/GCD/LDH/TS/PSPCL/2026 Dated: 05.08.2026
ASE/ Grid Construction, opp. PAU Gate No.1, PSPCL, Ludhiana invites Short Term e-Tender for Outsourcing of 1 no. New 66 KV Substation Bhamipura with 20 MVA PTF works on partial turnkey mode under Grid Construction Division, Ludhiana under Grid Construction Circle, Ludhiana.
For detailed NIT & Tender Specifications please refer to <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 05.08.2026 (01:00 PM onwards).
Note: Corrigendum and amendments, if any, will be published online at <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>.
No. 13944/PB C 767/26

मासतीय कंटेनर निगम लिमिटेड
CONTAINER CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD.
(A NAVRATNA UNDERTAKING OF GOVT. OF INDIA)
Regd. Office: CONCOR Bhawan, C-3, Mathura Road, New Delhi - 110 076
CIN: L43011DL1988GOI030915 Phone: 91-11-41222500/600, email: investorrelations@concorindia.com, www.concorindia.co.in
NOTICE TO SHAREHOLDERS
TRANSFER OF EQUITY SHARES OF THE COMPANY TO INVESTOR EDUCATION AND PROTECTION FUND
Shareholders are hereby informed that pursuant to the provisions of Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Rules, 2016 ("the Rules") as amended from time to time, the Final Dividend declared for the financial year 2018-19, which remained unclaimed for a period of seven years will become due to be credited to the IEPF on 02.10.2026. The corresponding shares on which said dividend has remained unclaimed for seven consecutive years will also be transferred as per the procedure set out in the Rules.
The Company will not transfer such shares to the IEPF Authority where there is a specific order of Court/tribunal restraining any transfer of such shares or where the shares are hypothecated/pledged under the Depositories Act, 1996.
In compliance to the Rules, the Company has communicated individually to the concerned shareholders and the details of such shares liable to be transferred to IEPF are also made available on its website. Shareholders concerned may refer to the web-link: https://cms.concorindia.co.in:8000/uploads/cms/pdf/6x1ctCPMIK75fvB_Listofsharestransferred.pdf to verify the details of their unencashed dividend(s) and to verify the details of the shares liable to be transferred.
Shareholders are requested to claim the Final Dividend declared for the financial year 2018-19 and onwards before the same becomes due for transfer to the IEPF.
Concerned shareholders holding shares in physical form and whose shares are liable to be transferred to IEPF Authority, may note that the Company would be issuing duplicate share certificate(s) in lieu of the original held by them for the purpose of transfer of shares to IEPF and upon such Issue, the Company shall inform the depository by way of corporate action to convert the duplicate share certificates into DEMAT form and transfer those shares in favour of IEPF Authority. The original share certificate(s) which are registered in the name of original shareholders will stand automatically cancelled and be deemed non-negotiable. Concerned shareholders holding shares in dematerialized form may note that the Company shall inform the depository by way of corporate action for transfer of shares in favour of the DEMAT account of the IEPF Authority.
The shareholders may further note that the details made available by the Company on its website shall be deemed as adequate notice in respect of above matter of transfer of shares to IEPF Authority.
In case the Company does not receive any communication from the concerned shareholders on or before 02.10.2026, the Company with a view to adhering with the requirements of the Rules, will transfer the unclaimed Final Dividend of FY 2018-19 to the IEPF by the due date i.e. 01.11.2026. The corresponding shares, on which dividend is unclaimed for seven consecutive years, shall also be transferred to IEPF Authority without any further notice.
Please note that no claim shall lie against the Company in respect of unclaimed dividend amount and shares transferred to IEPF. Shareholders may claim the dividend and corresponding shares transferred to IEPF including all benefits accruing on such shares, if any, from the IEPF Authority after following the procedure prescribed in the Rules.
Any shareholder(s)/person(s) who has/have any claim(s)/queries in respect of such shares or dividend or for any clarification on the above matter, may contact the Company's Registrar and Share Transfer Agents, M/s Beetal Financial & Computer Services (P) Ltd., Beetal House, 3rd Floor, 99, Madangir, Behind Local Shopping Centre, New Delhi-110062 Ph: 011-29961281/82/83; email: beetalra@gmail.com or concor@beetalfinancial.com.
For Container Corporation of India Limited sd/- (Harish Chandra)
Place: New Delhi, India Date : 02.08.2026 Principal Executive Director (Finance) & CS

BENGALURU METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT CORPORATION
Traffic (Com) Department, 2nd Floor, Shanthinagar TTMC, K.H. Road, Bengaluru-560027. Telephone No: 080-22537575
Website : www.mybmtc.com e-mail : ctmc@mybmtc.com
No.BMTC/CO/TR/COM/1936/1448/2026-27 Dated: 01.08.2026
TENDER NOTIFICATION NO:12/2026-27 (e-Procurement Platform)
Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation invites bids from eligible persons/agencies for the **Audio Advertisements inside 300 Non-AC Buses** through the e-procurement platform.

Date of Pre-Bid meeting	10.08.2026 at 11:00hrs	Place: CTM(C)'s Chamber, 2nd Floor, Central Office, BMTC, Shanthinagar, Bengaluru
Last date & time for submission of bids is on	31.08.2026 up to 17:00hrs	
Opening of Technical bids is on	02.09.2026 at 11:00hrs	
Opening of Financial bids is on	To be Intimated later	

Further details in this regard can be obtained in the e-procurement portal www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in or by Contacting: 09240214000; 09240214001; 080-22483777 or 7760997519 & 7760991222. E-mail: ctmc@mybmtc.com.
Sd/- Chief Traffic Manager (Com) (Tender inviting Authority)

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
(Regd. office PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala 147001)
Corporate Identity No. UP0109PB2010SGC033813 Website: www.pspcl.in, (Contact No. 96461-01116)
Tender Enquiry No. 32/GCD/LDH/TS/PSPCL/2026 Dated: 05.08.2026
ASE/ Grid Construction, opp. PAU Gate No.1, PSPCL, Ludhiana invites Short Term e-Tender for Outsourcing of 1 no. New 66 KV Substation Tapprian Khurd with 12.5 MVA PTF works on partial turnkey mode under Grid Construction Division, Ludhiana under Grid Construction Circle, Ludhiana.
For detailed NIT & Tender Specifications please refer to <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 05.08.2026 (01:00 PM onwards).
Note: Corrigendum and amendments, if any, will be published online at <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>.
Note: Corrigendum and addendum if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
No. 13947/PSPCL No. C769/26

NDDB Dairy Services
NDDB House, Chaudhary Jhandu Singh Marg, near Kamal Cinema Complex, 84 Block, Sardarjung Enclave, New Delhi, Delhi-110029
INVITATION FOR BID (IFB), LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (LCB)

Sr. No.	Description of Tender with Bid Ref Number	Event Start/ Close Date	Estimated Cost	EMD
1	Set up Interior Work (Electrical, Audio, Video) Artificial Insulator Training Centre at Cow Sanctuary Muzaffarnagar UP NDS/COW, SANCTUARY/ MUZAFFARNAGAR/ELECTRICAL_AUDIO_VIDEO/Aug/26-27	10 August 2026 31 August 2026	Rs. 1.0 Cr	Rs. 1.0 Lakh
2	Set up Interior Work (Furniture) Artificial Insulator Training Centre at Cow Sanctuary Muzaffarnagar UP NDS/COW, SANCTUARY/ MUZAFFARNAGAR/FURNITURE/Aug/26-27	10 August 2026 31 August 2026	Rs. 1.15 Cr	Rs. 1.15 Lakh
3	10 KL BMC for MPOs NDS/MP/ARC/BMC/10KL/26-27	05 August 2026 26 August 2026	Rs. 3 Cr	Rs. 3 Lakh
4	Supply & Testing of Aluminum Can (in Punjab & UP) 2026-27/JCANSDMPO 105Milk Can	05 August 2026 26 August 2026	Rs. 3.5 Cr	Rs. 3.5 Lakh

For further details pertaining to IFB and for downloading the bid document, please visit the websites: <https://events.ncdfmarket.com/bidder/>; <https://www.nddbdairyservices.com/> & <https://www.ncdfmarket.com/index.php/auctions-2/tabs-44753>
Please Note: Any corrigendum/modification etc. will be posted only on the above websites

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala - 147001)
Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SGC033813 Website: www.pspcl.in, (Contact No. 96461-01116)
Tender Enquiry No. 27/GCD/LDH/TS/PSPCL/2026 Dated: 05.08.2026
ASE/ Grid Construction, opp. PAU Gate No.1, PSPCL, Ludhiana invites Short Term e-Tender for Outsourcing of 2 no. Augmentation of PTF (including matching work) related works on partial turnkey mode under RDSS scheme under Grid Construction Division, Ludhiana under Grid Construction Circle, Ludhiana.
For detailed NIT & Tender Specifications please refer to <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 05.08.2026 (01:00 PM onwards).
Note: Corrigendum and amendments, if any, will be published online at <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>.
No. 13941/PB C 764/26

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
(Regd. office PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala 147001)
Corporate Identity No. UP0109PB2010SGC033813 Website: www.pspcl.in, (Contact No. 96461-01116)
Tender Enquiry No. 32/GCD/LDH/TS/PSPCL/2026 Dated: 05.08.2026
ASE/ Grid Construction, opp. PAU Gate No.1, PSPCL, Ludhiana invites Short Term e-Tender for Outsourcing of 1 no. New 66 KV Substation Tapprian Khurd with 12.5 MVA PTF works on partial turnkey mode under Grid Construction Division, Ludhiana under Grid Construction Circle, Ludhiana.
For detailed NIT & Tender Specifications please refer to <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 05.08.2026 (01:00 PM onwards).
Note: Corrigendum and amendments, if any, will be published online at <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>.
Note: Corrigendum and addendum if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>
No. 13947/PSPCL No. C769/26

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I arrive at a conclusion not an assumption.
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The Indian Express. For the Indian Intelligent. **The Indian Express JOURNALISM OF COURAGE**

INDIA'S PERFORMANCE at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games would largely focus on the haul of 39 medals, including 13 gold. But the 15 silver medals tell a story of their own. Some of them are a case study of 'what could have been', some others a gold lost, while some others broke new ground.

A look at the events where Indians finished second-best:

ATHLETICS

Indian track and field athletes won a total of 10 medals, surpassing the mark of eight medals in the 2022 edition. There was no gold this time, and the haul included five silver and five bronze medals.

BREAKING NEW GROUND

GULVEER SINGH, 10,000M
Gulveer Singh outpacing Africans and holding his nerve in the last 200m of a long-distance event is arguably one of the best moments for Indian athletics in recent times. The 27-year-old from Uttar Pradesh won a silver in the 10,000m and a bronze in 5,000m stamping his claim as a genuine medal contender at the global level. Gulveer's performance comes on the back of his consistent participation in several elite-level races over the past two years. While the upcoming Asian Games may be an easier proposition for Gulveer given the relative lack of top-level competition, he needs to participate in events like the Diamond League and Gold Continental tour events.

CONSISTENCY PERSONIFIED

NEERAJ CHOPRA, JAVELIN THROW
Returning after a long injury layoff, Neeraj Chopra was competing in a stacked field with the likes of Rumesh Pathirage, Arshad Nadeem, Keshorn Walcott and Anderson Peters. Neeraj produced a season-best throw of 85.83m in his second attempt only to be upstaged by world leader Pathirage, who threw 89.75m. There is nothing to analyse in Neeraj's medal apart from the fact that he still has got the big-event temperament to win medals. The silver reaffirms the fact that he remains one of the most consistent throwers in the world. He will have a chance to get the better of Pathirage at the Asian Games, where Nadeem will also be present.

JUST THE BEGINNING

SARVESH KUSHARE, HIGH JUMP
Sarvesh Anil Kushare is one of the most improved Indian athletes at the global level. In Glasgow, he jumped 2.25m to win the silver medal as Jamaican Romaine Beckford took the gold on countback. It may be seen as a gold medal lost as Sarvesh had cleared 2.31m to break the national record at the Inter-

State National Championships in June. However, given this is his first major medal, he is likely to improve further and has the Asian Games to look forward to.

NEED HIS BEST AT BIG EVENTS

SREESHANKAR MURALI, LONG JUMP
One of the most consistent Indian athletes over the last one year, Sreeshankar was disappointed after his last jump despite winning his second Commonwealth Games silver medal. He jumped 8.09m to finish behind Jamaica's Tajay Gayle (8.15m). Sreeshankar had recorded a leap of 8.38m at the Inter-State National Championships but couldn't repeat that performance in Glasgow. He now needs to figure out how to get bigger jumps at major events and will now target the Asian Games, where he won a silver in 2023.

NEED TO REPLICATE HIS BEST

PRAVEEN CHITHRAVEL, TRIPLE JUMP
It was redemption for the triple jumper from Tamil Nadu, who had finished agonisingly close to the podium in the 2022 edition. In Glasgow, he jumped 16.58m to finish behind Jordan Scott of Jamaica. While it was a monkey off Chithravel's back, his effort was nowhere close to what he is capable of. Chithravel failed to replicate his domestic form at global events, with his personal best being 17.37m. He won the bronze at the 2023 Asian Games. If he wants to change the colour of the medal, he will have to cross 17m.

JUDO

RAPID IMPROVEMENT

YAMINI MOURYA, 57 KG
It was a historic campaign for India, winning two gold medals for the first time. But the silver for Yamini is also a big achievement. With this medal, she has built a strong resume of international medals. She built on her success at the World University Games, where her bronze was the first medal won by an Indian judoka. While the Asian Games would be tougher, she will draw confidence from her performance at the Asian Championships, where she lost in the bronze medal match.

BOXING

GAMBLE SUCCESSFUL

JADUMANI SINGH - 55KG
His performance deserves more appreciation than the medal itself. Having moved up from 50kg to 55kg this year with the 2028 Olympics cycle in mind, the Manipuri overcame doubts over his size to reach the



Silver lining for Asiad, and beyond

Fifteen second-place finishes at Glasgow may be the first step towards greater laurels at Asian Games and other big events. PRITISH RAJ, MIHIR VASAVDA and SHIVANI NAIK analyse



Stokes rules out Ashes return, hopes to turn coach in future

Express News Service
New Delhi, August 4

FORMER ENGLAND captain Ben Stokes has ruled out any possibility of making an international comeback but has expressed a strong desire to coach the national team in the future.

"I'm doing my level three coaching now while I'm still playing, because I want, when the day comes that I'm not playing anymore, I'd love to be able to have all that stuff signed off and done," Stokes said on the *For the Love of Cricket* podcast, speaking alongside his former teammates Jos Buttler and Stuart Broad.

"I know what I want to do in terms of staying within the game, which is to be a coach. And would I love to be coach of England one day? Absolutely. I just really like the idea of being, again, like, in some form of leadership away from playing," he added.

The 35-year-old shocked the cricketing world when he announced his retirement from international cricket in June, during the home series against New Zealand. He had earlier rejected suggestions he could return for the Ashes, telling BBC Test Match Special: "I am incredibly content with everything right now. It is a decision I don't take lightly. It has taken a lot of time. I am done. I am very happy."

● RISING STAR

Yash Vir's journey: Mentored by athlete dad, inspired by Chopra's world Under-20 gold

Nihal Koshie
New Delhi, August 4

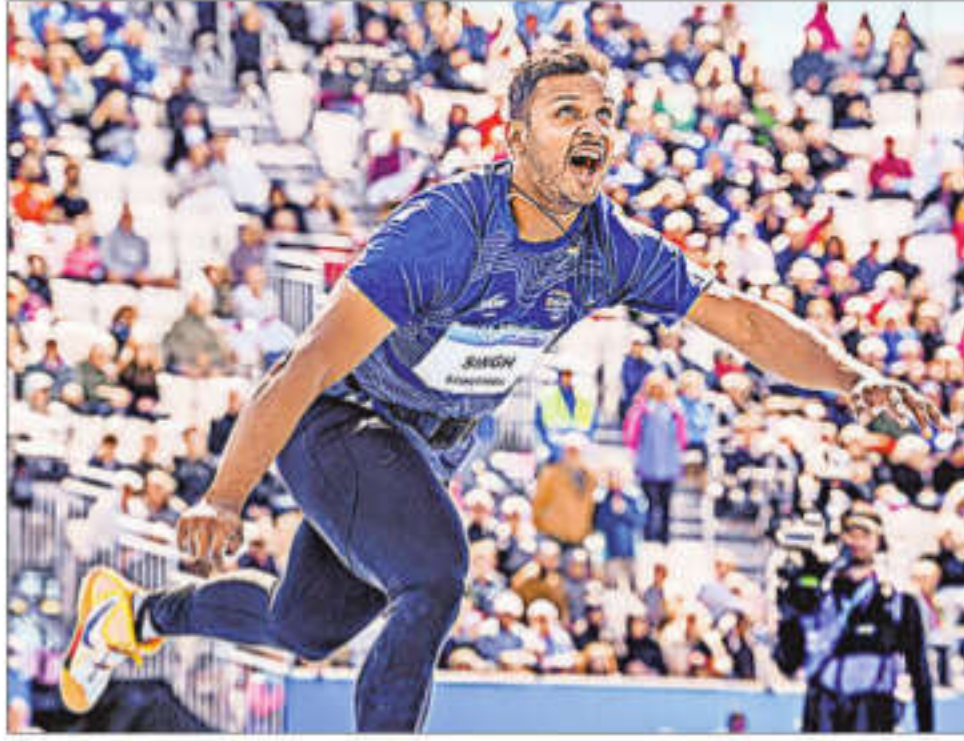
ON RETURNING home from the Glasgow Commonwealth Games, men's javelin bronze medalist Yash Vir Singh is on a break. He will spend the next few days at his paternal grandmother's home in Devsar in Bhiwani district, a boxing hub. "Being with my family is the best way to wind down and relax. I love it here... spending time with my uncles and grandmother," Singh said on Tuesday. Yash Vir lives in Jaipur, but he often makes a trip to his happy place.

He, however, never took a fancy to boxing. His father, Rai Singh, a Railways javelin champion and now coach, had a big influence on him. "I remember watching my father on television when he participated in national competitions. Back then I didn't know what javelin was, but I recall seeing him return home with medals. My grandfather Bhanwar Singh was also a Services champion in the 400-metre hurdles. Though boxer Manish Kaushik (world championship medalist) is from Devsar and so is Jitender (Olympian), it was only natural that I took up the javelin because of my father," Yash Vir said.

When in Class 8, Yash Vir

started basic drills, learning to throw with javelin-shaped wooden sticks and then moving to the aluminium version. The journey, which began nearly a decade ago, culminated in him winning the bronze medal at the Games on Friday. "My father was overjoyed. He was sitting close to the throwing area, giving me instructions. I am happy also because I could give my father something in return for all the years he coached me and believed in me. This is the biggest medal I have won to date. The bonus was about crossing 85 metres for the first time," Yash Vir said.

The conditions for the men's javelin final at the Scotstoun Stadium were tough, with athletes having to deal with a headwind. Nine of the 12 finalists couldn't throw over 84 metres. Yash Vir struggled too. 78.55 metres, 81.33m and 76.95m were his three legal throws before the sixth and last round. Sri Lanka's Rumesh Tharanga Pathirage became the runaway leader when he registered 89.75 metres in the second round, his only legal throw. Neeraj Chopra's 85.83m put him in second place. Yash Vir, who was placed sixth before the start of the final round, didn't seem like he would finish on the podium. Confident about



Yash Vir Singh won bronze in the CWG men's javelin throw. PTI

bettering his personal best of 83.72 metres, Yash Vir didn't lose hope.

Neeraj's advice

He sought advice from one of the best in the business. "I asked Neeraj about what to do about the headwind. He told me not to release the javelin too high and to try and keep it flatter and the trajectory as straight as possible. My dad also told me the same thing. But to execute it in a final is not easy. Not just the headwind; it was pretty cold too. In my fifth throw, I didn't get a good distance (76.95m) because of the headwind. I had thrown 82

metres in training, so I knew if I got the trajectory right, I could win a medal. When I released the javelin for the final time, I knew I would cross 82-83 metres from the feel of it," Yash Vir said. That he won the bronze medal after two injury scares — shoulder surgery in 2022 and a complication because of weak shoulder muscles in 2024 — made the success even sweeter. "The second time I felt discomfort in my shoulder, my initial worry was whether I had to have another surgery. Thankfully, physios at the Abhinav Bindra Targeting Performance centre in Jaipur helped me. "Injuries happen, but what

“Injuries happen, but what you do after that is important. Winning a CWG medal has given me immense belief that I can compete against the best in the world”

YASH VIR SINGH,
ON COMING BACK AFTER INJURIES

you do after that is important. Winning a CWG medal has given me immense belief that I can compete against the best in the world." Chopra's Under-20 World Championship gold had inspired a young Yash Vir during a time when his father was coaching him. "I felt if Neeraj could do it, even I could. I just needed the belief in my early years."

Yash Vir believes he needs to make changes to his technique to improve his throwing distance and not hit a plateau. "I am still not able to release my arm fully when I throw the javelin. I fall towards the left side when I throw. It is about constantly improving because javelin in India is highly competitive. I want to win more medals for India."

CWG final. He strung together four victories, beating boxers from Scotland, Pakistan, Zambia and Namibia before losing to Australia's Jye Dixon in the gold-medal bout. The weight transition had already yielded a national title and international medals, but Glasgow validated the gamble.

NOTHING NEW TO LEARN

LOVLINA BORGOHAIN - 75KG
Lovlina Borgohain was assured of a medal even before she entered the ring. Her category had just five boxers, and the Indian got a first-round bye, which meant a direct entry into the semifinals. Facing a boxer from Tuvalu can hardly qualify as a proper test. The Olympic bronze medallist, as expected, reached the final, where - in her only challenge of the competition - she lost to two-time Worlds medallist Australia's Emma-Sue Greentree. We didn't learn anything new about Lovlina at Glasgow 2026. The Asian Games will provide a more accurate reflection of where she stands.

TOUGH TASK

NARENDER BERWAL - 90KG
The heavyweight divisions have rarely been India's strongest suit internationally, and Narender Berwal's silver reinforces this point. At the CWG level, Indians seem good enough to reach the super heavyweight division final but not strong enough to clinch gold. This was the third consecutive instance of an Indian boxer reaching the final of this category, only to lose there. Before Berwal, it was Satish Kumar in 2018 and Sagar Ahlawat in 2022. This trend will be tough to change at the Asiad and world tournaments, where the Indians often fall short against physically imposing heavyweights.

WEIGHTLIFTING

Mirabai Chanu got a good workout ahead of her pursuit of an elusive Asian Games medal with a CWG gold. But the silvers hold long-term potential, after changes in weight categories and plenty of hard work.

LONG WAY TO GO

RISHIKANTA SINGH CHANAMBAM, 60KG
Manipur's first male lifter to medal at CWG, his 121kg Snatch was a Games record. But the good news ends there. He missed gold (won by Malaysia's Aniq Kasdan - 121 S + 152 C&J = 273kg), after a knee problem flared up. Coach Vijay Sharma says he was capable of 155 in clean & jerk. The North

Korean winner at the last Asian meet lifted 304 total, 3kg short of the world record.

But 60kg is not even an Olympic category, so 65kg is the target where the last Asian gold was won with 329kg. Rishikanta will need to go 135+ in Snatch and 175+ in C&J at least, to get into that bracket (He Yuji WR - 150+183).

FULL OF POTENTIAL

GYANESHWARI YADAV, 53KG
Her total lift of 199kg (88 S + 111 C&J) was 7kg short of the gold. Impressively, she had 6/6 good lifts. So, her prospects are good. At the Asiad, she will be challenged by Chinese Zhao Jinlan (most recent: 95+121) and Vietnamese Hoai Huong (87+108). At the Olympics, it's the lowest category for women. So once Mirabai moves up from 49, Gyaneshwari will need to step up to 61kg.

CARRYING FAMILY TRADITION

AJAY BABU VALLURI, 79KG
149+181 for a total of 330kg was a good start for the 21-year-old from north Andhra, whose father won bronze at Delhi 2010. He missed gold by just 1 kg after setting a snatch record. However, the North Koreans and Chinese are in the range of 345 to 364kg, going by the Asian Championships. Their Snatch scores are at least 8kg over Ajay's, while Ri Rong-hyon regularly lifts 25kg more in C&J. The Indian will need to move up to 85kg, or drop to 75, the former more likely.

CHANCE MISSED

LOVEPREET SINGH, 110+ KG
No Indian had ever lifted 176kg in Snatch, so Lovepreet's silver at 388kg (212 C&J) is outstanding, even if he missed gold by a mere 1kg. He has gone up 33kg in total since Birmingham, and is a pathbreaker in super heavyweights where India has traditionally been weak. His duel with Kiwi David Liti was one of the entertainment highlights of the Games. Iran's Alireza Yousefi, though, has the world standard at 477kg (218+261) set at Gandhinagar's Asian Championships in May, and will show up at Aichi Nagoya, a full 89kg ahead.

INJURY TROUBLE

RAJA MUTHUPANDI, 65KG
Won silver at 286kg (126+160) despite a persistent shoulder problem. But the Asian mark is at 150+183, so an Asiad medal looks tough in Aichi-Nagoya.

ASIAD, A BRIDGE TOO FAR

HARJINDER KAUR, 69KG
Her silver at 227kg (101+126) was an improvement on her bronze from Birmingham. At age 29, she did well but was 8kg off the pace for gold. North Korean Song Kuk Hyang lifted 263kg (112+151) at the Asian meet in Gandhinagar, a 11+25kg deficit that's hard to overcome in two months.

Next stop for Neeraj: Lausanne DL on Aug 21

Express News Service
New Delhi, August 4

DOUBLE OLYMPIC medallist Neeraj Chopra is set to participate in the Lausanne Diamond League, popularly known as Athletissima, on August 21.

Neeraj will be competing in a stacked field similar to Commonwealth Games 2026 along with European stars.

The field has Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem of Pakistan, reigning World Champion Keshorn Walcott of Trinidad and Tobago, freshly crowned Commonwealth Games champion and World leader Rumesh Pathirage of Sri Lanka, and former World and Olympics champions Anderson Peters of Grenada and Thomas Rohler of Germany.

Along with these athletes, Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Jakub Vadlejch, German Julian Weber and World Champion Curtis Thompson, the world number two this year, will be there. Five of these throwers, Neeraj, Arshad, Pathirage, Peters, and Walcott competed in the Commonwealth Games Javelin final four days back with Pathirage winning the title with a monster throw of 89.75m. The Sri Lankan has been in impeccable form with world lead and top five throws of the season. He is also the only thrower to cross the 90m mark this season with 92.67m throw at the Rome Diamond League. Pathirage's exploits earned

him praise from Neeraj. "He's a good boy. He's a friend of mine. This year he really threw well. It's good he's doing something great for Sri Lanka," said Neeraj about Pathirage. Neeraj, who won silver medal at the Commonwealth Games, produced a season best throw of 85.83m to finish second. This was the second major competition Neeraj participated in after an injury layoff after the Tokyo World Championships 2025 where he had finished eighth.

Shirse out for Asiad

PTI adds: India's 110m hurdles star Tejas Shirse on Tuesday revealed that he will not be able to compete in the upcoming Asian Games in Japan as he participated in the recently-concluded Commonwealth Games with "two stress fractures" on his left foot. Shirse became the first Indian to reach the 110m hurdles finals in the Glasgow CWG, with a time of 13.76 seconds. But running with a heavily taped foot, Shirse finished last in an eight-men field, clocking 15.39 seconds while grimacing in pain.

"This isn't the post I dreamed of writing. I thought I'd be holding a medal. This was the time I was prepared to win. Instead, I'm holding MRI reports," he wrote on Instagram. "Two stress fractures in my left foot. A dream paused. A season over," he added. In the post, Shirse conceded that his Asiad dreams are over.

PERSONNEL PROBLEMS

India’s injury crisis exposes deeper workload concerns

From Bumrah to Washington to Nitish, fitness woes bring rehab under scanner as Gill & Co reach Sri Lankan shores

Venkata Krishna B
Chennai, August 4

AS CAPTAIN Shubman Gill landed with his team in Colombo on Tuesday for a crucial two-Test series against Sri Lanka, he arrived with a familiar problem that confronted him in the recent ODIs in England – missing key players due to injuries. Jasprit Bumrah has been ruled out of the series, and there is no guarantee Washington Sundar would join the team for the second Test.

Sai Sudharsan is racing against time to be fit and is continuing his rehabilitation at the Centre of Excellence – whose role has once again come under the scanner.

A deeper look points to a more fundamental issue.

“First, there is no off-season for players like before,” Ramji Srinivasan, who was India’s strength & conditioning coach before 2008-2013, told *The Indian Express*. “Second, there is a missing link between the workload and the recovery protocols and the training protocols. There is not much of a sync between these three. So, that is when most of the injuries can happen,” he said.

Workload trap

Take Bumrah for example. After playing the T20 World Cup with a niggle in his knee, Mumbai Indians head coach Mahela Jayawardene revealed he had to build his workload gradually, which saw a dip in his pace. Then, after the IPL, despite

being rested for the Afghanistan series and T20Is against Ireland and England, the knee injury resurfaced following an impact injury in Cardiff.

Washington raced against time to regain fitness clearance and, in England, suffered a hamstring injury. Nitish Kumar Reddy broke down again with a quadriceps injury after he worked and increased his bowling pace by 10 yards. Whether he consulted anyone before taking the step is not known yet. And then there is Harshit Rana, who missed the T20 World Cup with a knee injury and ended up with a hamstring issue in England.

This isn’t the first instance of players suffering breakdowns after an IPL.

And Ramji felt there was a reason for it.

“In those two months of IPL, players are only in recovery mode. There is not much work that happens with regards to improving fitness in that period. This workload management, they may not be working more. They may be working less. And suddenly, you come into the Indian team, your workload increases. So during the IPL, if you don’t prepare ahead for your red ball cricket or 50 overs, there is no workload management there,” he added.

The cramped schedule has also prevented India from having pre-season camps. In 2024, prior to the two-Test series against Bangladesh at home, they camped in Chennai. They



A left knee injury has ruled Jasprit Bumrah out of the two-Test series in Sri Lanka. CREIMAS

have planned a camp in Colombo before the upcoming series, starting on August 15.

India’s switch from T20 mode to Tests after the IPL also did not help. A few contracted players told *The Indian Express* that they did not get sufficient recovery time between series to work harder on aspects as advised by trainers.

Ramji agreed. “One has to train according to the format which one transitions to. For example, somebody is training for T20. The transition should happen for them to play 50-over or Test cricket. Whether the transition is happening or not is a big question. There is a huge shift from one format to the other.

“And they (players) know the calendar in advance. They are not randomly put in a situation. So they need to plan their training better. They can-

not blame the support staff always or the coaches always,” Ramji says.

Rushed returns

In the BCCI circles, there are concerns that players are rushed back from injuries. In Bumrah and Washington’s case, the management needed them in the T20 World Cup squad. In more recent times, players have been named in squads before clearing fitness tests. Bumrah was part of the list to go to Sri Lanka, with an asterisk beside his name, but was withdrawn on Monday.

“When a player is named in the squad, immediately he prefers to get the fitness test. He may pass the test, which is basic match fitness, but whether his fitness has improved or not is often overlooked. That should not happen. The RTP (return to

play) parameters should not be compromised,” a source who is familiar with the developments said.

There was a time when players could make a comeback only after proving their fitness by playing practice matches. That yardstick has not been applied in all cases. With another gruelling schedule ahead, Ramji said, a robust system has to be put in place.

“You can have a camp for all the red-ball players well ahead. Put them in a robust place so that they peak at the right time. Before you move to red-ball cricket, you need a format-specific camp. For the last six months, you have been playing a high-intensity, power game here. And suddenly, you get into endurance mode. Imagine Usain Bolt suddenly running like (Eliud) Kipchoge. Can you do that or vice versa?”

Jordan FA president accuses FIFA boss Infantino of ‘blackmail’

Reuters
Paris, August 4

THE CRISIS triggered by FIFA chief Gianni Infantino’s abandoned proposal to sell a stake in the World Cup deepened on Tuesday with influential executives distancing themselves from the project while Jordan’s FA president accused him of blackmail.

After three days of unprecedented civil war in the world of soccer administration last week, the 56-year-old Swiss-Italian Infantino backed away from his plan to raise \$4.2 billion from a new commercial rights body late on Friday night.

Infantino apologised for how the proposal, which would have brought private investment into the World Cup for the first time, had divided the game, but his once unassailable bastion of power at the top of the global governing body was shattered. FIFA Secretary General Mattias Grafstrom sent an internal message to staff lamenting the “sad and reproachable series of events” that led to the project being “permanently abandoned”, two sources said.

“We have all been thrown into the middle of a turmoil, which is difficult to comprehend and accept,” Grafstrom wrote in the letter without mentioning Infantino by name. “But, as Secretary General, I urge you to remain focused on what has always united us: serving football and serving our 211 Member Associations, hand in hand with all relevant stakeholders and in full compliance with the FIFA Statutes and FIFA Regulations.

Arsene Wenger, the Chief of Global Football Development at FIFA and technical adviser to soccer’s rule-making body IFAB, said he was not involved in the proposal and only learned about it through



Influential FIFA executives have distanced themselves from Infantino’s sale plan. REUTERS

media reports. “The decision to withdraw the project was absolutely necessary and beyond question, because I firmly believe in an independent FIFA that serves our game with commitment, transparency, and integrity,” Wenger said in a statement.

Carlos Cordeiro, senior advisor to Infantino, resigned last week after “unequivocally” opposing the proposal.

‘We refuse to give in’

Jordan FA president Ali bin Hussein accused FIFA of “blackmail”, claiming it offered to help solve many of the kingdom’s problems in exchange for endorsing Infantino.

“We pride ourselves in Jordan in upholding ethical values. We did not endorse him (Infantino) before and certainly will not now,” Bin Hussein wrote on X.

“But the whole situation amounts to blackmail and we refuse to give in to that.” The German FA said it was not endorsing Infantino, while the Dutch FA said it would not vote for him in the next elections.

Sindhu seeded 9th, Sat-Chi 5th at Badminton World C’ships

Express News Service
New Delhi, August 4

DOUBLE OLYMPIC medallist PV Sindhu will be seeded ninth while 2022 Asian Games champion men’s doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have been handed the fifth seeding for the upcoming BWF World Championships scheduled from August 17-23 at the Indira Gandhi Stadium, New Delhi.

India has two more seeded entries with former world championships bronze medallist Lakshya Sen seeded 14th in men’s singles and the mixed doubles pairing of Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto are seeded 15th.

India has two entries each in all the five categories of the championships with at least one seeded entry in four of the five categories.

The Indians will be playing in front of the home crowd as the marquee event has returned to the country after 17 years with the 2009 edition being held in Hyderabad.

While the players qualified for the prestigious championships based on their world rankings of April 28, 2026, the seedings were decided on the basis of world ranking on July 28, 2026.

In men’s singles, Shi Yuqi of China is the top seed while South Korea’s women’s singles star An Se Young is the top seed in her category. Women’s singles world champion Akane Yamaguchi of Japan is seeded second while the third and fourth spots have gone to Wang Zhi Yi and Chen Yufei of China.

South Korea’s Kim Won Ho and Seo Seung Jae are top seeds in men’s doubles with China’s Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Ning getting the top billing in women’s doubles. The draw for the championships will take place in New Delhi on Wednesday.

● BATTLE OF SURVIVAL

Jamshedpur’s exit lays bare the financial crisis facing Indian clubs

Shuvaditya Bose
New Delhi, August 4

FINANCIAL BLEED and mounting losses are not new terms in the Indian football ecosystem. Neither is the resultant fate — the folding up of a football club. Yet, Jamshedpur FC’s decision to withdraw from the Indian Super League has sent shockwaves. That is less due to the club’s footballing stature than to who owns it — the Tata group — which has been closely tied to Indian football for nearly four decades and is currently in a Rs 2,500-crore, five-year partnership with the Indian Premier League.

FC Goa CEO Ravi Puskur admitted his astonishment. “It’s deeply unfortunate. The Tata Group has been one of Indian football’s strongest pillars for decades. Nobody could ever imagine a day a Tata-owned club would cease to exist. We did not see this coming at all,” he told *The Indian Express*.

Neither did Mandar Tamhane, the CEO of NorthEast United. “It came as a surprise to everyone involved in Indian football. You don’t expect a corporate house like the Tata Group to step away. If it were an organisation that had been involved in the sport for just two or three years, you could perhaps understand it. But this is a group that has been part of Indian football for over three decades. That’s why I think the decision caught all of us off guard,” he said.

Chennaiyin FC CEO Ekanish Gupta shared the sentiment, even as he understood the rationale. “We’re deeply disheartened to see such a major name leaving the Indian football ecosystem. Like everyone else, we’d urge the Tatas to reconsider. At the same time, we also understand that the concerns they’ve raised, particularly around finances, are genuine.”

Industry estimates suggest that the ISL clubs are facing approximately Rs 25-30 crore losses every season. A major blow, as per CEOs, is the expiry of FSDL’s commercial agreement with the AIFF. Under that



Jamshedpur FC’s ISL pullout has sent shockwaves. x

● ‘Long-planned strategic move’

Jamshedpur FC’s withdrawal from the upcoming ISL season was a long-planned strategic decision to return to grassroots football development and had “nothing to do” with the uncertainty surrounding the league’s commercial future, Tata Steel Vice President (Corporate Services) DB Sundara Raman said. “The current decision has nothing to do with whatever changes have happened in the last one year. Our decision has been independent of that,” he said. PTI

“It came as a surprise to everyone involved in Indian football. You don’t expect a corporate house like the Tata Group to step away”

MANDAR TAMHANE,
NORTHEAST UNITED FC CEO

“At the moment, club football in India is still being funded largely from the owners’ pockets. Broadcast revenue has effectively fallen to zero”

EKANISH GUPTA,
CHENNAIYIN FC CEO

deal, Reliance’s subsidiary paid the federation Rs 50 crore annually. Broadcast revenues have since collapsed, with the per-match valuation reportedly falling from approximately Rs 1.68 crore during 2024-25 to about Rs 9.5 lakh last season.

“At the moment, club football in India is still being funded largely from the owners’ pockets. Broadcast revenue has effectively fallen to zero,” informed Gupta.

Mounting losses

If shrinking revenues are one side of the equation, soaring wage bills are the other, and perhaps, the bigger factor. Hyderabad FC, unable to sustain its losses, was sold to the BC Jindal Group last year and rebranded as SC Delhi. CEO Dhruv Sood said the club consciously resisted entering the salary spiral.

“We’ve always maintained one principle: if we can’t afford a player, we won’t sign him and put the club’s future at risk. We haven’t received a single rupee in central revenues yet, so we’re still absorbing losses. But we’re working towards breaking even. The biggest cost, that is the player wages, is still in our control,” he said.

Tamhane said, “Every club

is facing losses. No club can say they are in profit. That makes it even more important to be smart with every rupee that’s spent. Financial prudence has become absolutely essential. I believe clubs should invest more in youth development, because if you develop your own players, it reduces costs considerably.”

At Chennaiyin FC, Gupta believed course correction was a solution.

“The biggest challenge today is player salaries. There has to be a market correction. Clubs have to accept responsibility too — it wasn’t just agents or players driving salaries up. We, as clubs, also contributed to that inflation. That correction won’t happen overnight because many players are on long-term contracts. As those deals expire over the next year or two, salaries will gradually reset to more sustainable levels.”

Broadcast battle

As clubs grapple with rising costs, they also face another pressing challenge: securing a broadcaster. Commercial rights for the league were handed over to the clubs last month, leaving them responsible for negotiating the next

media deal.

Puskur remained optimistic. “A lot of work is happening behind the scenes right now. Indian football is not just about doom and gloom. Yes, Jamshedpur stepping away is a setback. But if the rest of the ecosystem remains strong, Indian football can move forward. A broadcast partner is currently being finalised through a live tender, and we will have the league in a full home-and-away format that the fans will enjoy.”

“Once the broadcast tender is completed, there’s a partner in place for the next two to four years,” said Gupta.

Sood, too, argued against writing the league’s obituary. “If we keep telling people that Indian football is collapsing, then no one will invest. The league model is in place. There are still commercial discussions happening, and people are out in the market speaking to potential partners.”

The deadline for ISL’s media rights bids is understood to be August 8, with the new season scheduled to begin in October. What remains uncertain is how many clubs will line up. *The Indian Express* has learned that at least two clubs are currently facing an uncertain future.

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